

2014 AGM & OGM MINUTES

2014 Annual General Meeting of the England Touch Association

Venue: Twickenham Stadium, Whitton Road, Twickenham TW2 7BA (Room - Elgar 1)

Date: Saturday 6th December 2014, 10.00

Order of Business: **Approx start 10.00**

1 Opening address and welcome

Gregg Cropper (GC) England Touch President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to our new club members this year:

1. Blackadders
2. COYS
3. Orrell St James
4. The Swiss Exiles
5. Peterborough

Post meeting note:

6. Wixams

GC introduced the five new Sub Committee members and three new Committee members (who would be officially appointed later in the meeting):

1. Lois Lau – Association Secretary
2. Gary Lambert – RFU Liason
3. Louaz Hofton – Strategic Advisor
4. Matthew Thomas – Schools liaison
5. Denise Yarrow – Tour manager for the TWC

Committee members

6. Ken Pollard – Development Director
7. Liane Farrar – Marketing Director
8. Vicky Gaskell – Membership Director

2 Apologies

Apologies received from:

2.1 Committee and post holders:

Mike Abromowitz (Finance Director, In2Touch Clapham Common, Manchester (Burnage), Manchester (Trafford), Putney / Wandsworth, Regents Park, Surrey Quays, Wallingford); David Cope (Development Director); Georgia Yurkwich Spink (HP Logistics 2014-15); Kate Hyde (DBS Systems); Louaz Hofton (Strategic Development Advisor); Chris Simon (Partnership Development)

2.2 Members:

Bath; Bristol (League); Halton; Thames Valley Vikings; In2Touch Maidenhead, Oxford, Reading; Percy Park Pirates Club and League; COYS; Norwich Touch League; Wisborough Wizards, Mawsley

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2.3 No response:

Blackadders; Swiss Exiles; Bareback Riders; London Scorpions; Warwick; Chippenham Cheetahs; Portsmouth Destroyers; Medway; Canterbury; Hot Custard.

3 Registration and accreditation of nominated delegates

Attendees (and voting rights conferred – not all of these get a vote. Those in red are without votes):

3.1 Committee and post holders:

Gregg Cropper **GC** (President, proxy David Cope (Development Director), proxy Nancy Lyndhurst (PR / Marketing Director); proxy Steve Cleary (Membership & Affiliation Director), proxy Chippenham Cheetahs, proxy Norwich, proxy Percy Park Pirates Club and League, proxy Halton, proxy Mawsley, proxy Wisborough Wizards)

Mike Roa **MR** (Vice President)

Ben Powell **BP** (Technical Director, proxy Thames Valley)

Shelley Grace **SG** (Referee Director)

Carly Heselwood **CH** (Governance Director)

Tim Osborne **TO** (High Performance Director)

Kevin Hill **KH** (Tournaments Director)

Cari Thorpe **CT** (Head of Medical Services)

Julie Walker **JW** (**Secretary**, Manchester Chargers)

Julia Kang **JK** (**DBS**, Nottingham Club and Perfect Motion League)

3.2 Other members / attendees:

Nina Gulati (Bristol Fijians, proxy Bristol League)

Jon Lovell (Cambridge Club)

Kat Daniels (Cambridge League)

Natalie Davis (CSSC Club and League)

Douglas Benzie (Galaxy)

Rich King (Oxford, proxy Bath, proxy In2Touch x 12)

Thomas Devereux (Tumeke)

Steve Melling (Wigan)

John Kearsley (Bedford)

Gary Lambert (potential RFU Liaison)

Ken Pollard (potential Development Director)

Vicky Gaskell (potential Membership Director)

Matthew Thomas (potential Schools Liaison)

Lois Lau (potential Secretary)

Mike Beard (O2 – Lincs)

Benjamin Drake (South London)

Will Seldon

Denise Yarrow (potential Tour Manager)

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Total votes = 45 votes

Total votes above = 46. Total available votes (from all sources) = 58, however Mike Abromowitz's Finance Director vote cannot count due to conflict of interest and therefore total applicable votes = 57. As per the constitution, any one entity can only have maximum of 20% of available votes, therefore In2Touch only eligible to have 11 of their 12 votes, Thus total votes on the day was 45.

The meeting was deemed quorate as > 10 members present in person who are eligible to vote.

4 Receive and consider the minutes of the previous AGM

The minutes from 2013 AGM were accepted by all present.

<http://bit.ly/1p12sFW>

5 Directors Reports: Verbal summary.

Written reports have been published as part of the Annual report. Full report can be found here:

<http://bit.ly/1zC9rX3>

The following verbal reports are an overview summary of those.

5.1 Gregg Cropper, President

GC formally thanked those who are leaving their roles for their contributions over their time involved in the ETA: David Cope, Nancy Lyndhurst, Steve Cleary, Julie Walker, Chris Simon, and Aaron Cockfield. GC also gave special thanks to a small pool of volunteers who have gone that extra mile over the past year to help England Touch achieve all the successes it has this year: Tim Osborne, Ben Powell, Shelley Grace, and Kevin Hill.

GC gave a summary of 2014. This included continuation with the RFU partnership; achieving successes at the European Touch Championship; growing the sport in terms of coaching and refereeing courses; developing resources for schools in line with National Curriculum; England's involvement in the FIT Income Stream Committee, Children and Youth Commission, and FIT Coaching Commission; and gaining sponsorship. All areas of the association are becoming more professional, structured and planned, for example referees, Nationals, events, and medical. Details of these can be found in the formal Annual Report for the ETA.

The plan for 2015 is to create a development and legacy plan, focussing on a strong succession plan for each area of the association to ensure sustainability and maintain momentum. GC finished with his personal highlights of the year, which were the creation of the u18s team and their successes, and being able to officially present the playing jerseys to every representative player in the final England camp prior to Euros.

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5.2 Mike Roa, Vice President

MR echoed GC's sentiments and emphasised that England Touch is now in a great position with strong executive, governance, policies, and finance in place. There is a good group of volunteers involved to drive forward the momentum and the positivity to grow the sport. 2015 will be a big year with the Touch World Cup in Australia and the Rugby World Cup on home soil. MR stated that the focus is now on attracting young players (e.g. schools, universities) and on regional development. ETA now has the income to be able to invest in development.

5.3 Ben Powell, Technical Director

BP gave an overview of the technical work delivered in 2014:

6 Community coaching courses – 51 participants

9 Intermediate (L1) coaching courses – 87 participants, ranging between 19 and 63 years old

1 Advanced (L2) coaching courses – 6 participants, delivered by Pete Walters

No coaching presenters course were delivered (FIT has not finished writing the course)

11 development sessions were delivered by ETA, reaching approximately 483 participants. These excluded those organised by regions, clubs, or socially.

For 2015 ETA is looking to streamline the coaching courses and work with RFU to maximise attendance and lessen the administration burden on our volunteers. The plan is to deliver eight community coaching courses, seven L1s, one L2 for National and Regional coaches by Simon Ebbott, and one or two presenters' courses.

Nationals in September were very successful, especially given that it was on the back of a 12-month long Euros campaign. Highlight was Saxons coming back and competing well. It was disappointing the Masters division did not take place. 2015 plan is to bring the Masters division back with a possibility of adding a Midlands Masters team to compete in a three-way tournament, with a similar aim with the U18s division. It is hoped that all seven regions will be able to field teams in all categories, and potentially adding a 'development regions tier'. BP suggested that Nationals may be extended to 3 days in 2015, with fixtures starting on the Friday. The plan is to make Nationals the pinnacle of the touch calendar in the UK each year.

Disciplinary/Good behaviour policy is now in its second season. 23 players at NTS/CTS received a warning letter this year, but none made further rules infringement. ETA had walked away from Euros this year with high regards in terms of players' behaviour which is positive. BP noted that greater clarity is needed on exactly what 'behaviour' means in the policy. Scorecards may be changed so referees can feedback on why a player was sent off the pitch. Every club/league will be asked to acknowledge the policy with electronic signatures prior to NTS/CTS next year. It's likely that during individuals purchasing ETA membership, this will be a 'checkbox' to ensure each person reads/accepts it, not just club representative/manager/coach.

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5.4 Shelley Grace, Referee Director

SG gave a summary of the referee activities for 2014. Over 30 referee courses were delivered (including two L2) with over 300 attendees altogether. Not all have been assessed on-field for their L1 badge. There are 12 referee course presenters in England to run L1 courses, only three to run L2 courses, and only one who is able to do L2 badge upgrades. It is hoped that EFT can run a Refereeing and Recruitment course in 2015 to increase to a pool of 20 course presenters to help with the demand.

NTS/CTS this year has been challenging in terms of referee provisions. Up to 35 referees and four referee coaches required for each event to cover all eight pitches.

European Touch Championships were hugely successful for ETA referees. 28 expressions of interests were received for the eight allocated spots. For the first time, there had been a selection policy in place for referees with a point matrix system. 14 referees were selected and all performed well at Euros. SG listed some of the successes from Euros

(<http://englandtouch.org.uk/wp/index.php/refereeing/appointments-rankings/>). Looking forward to TWC2015, eight referees from England will be attending as part of the EFT contingent of 25 referees.

5.5 Carly Heselwood, Governance Director

CH emphasised that ETA need to continue to be more open and accountable in everything it does, and continue to progress to keep up with its growth. A Judiciary and Advisory Panel is in place. ETA continues to add to its bank of policies, e.g. Safeguarding and Welfare. CH echoed BP's earlier concern on how to ensure all members read, understand and adhere to these policies.

6 Financial Report

MR gave a brief summary of ETA finances in the absence of Mike Abromowitz. ETA is in positive cash flow balance. There are no debts or liabilities.

7 Budgets for 2015

MR circulated a high level summary of the projected incomes and expenditures for 2015. This can be found here:

<http://bit.ly/2015ETABudget>

The High Performance budget for 2015 should break even. The membership income is based on current figures and includes money from RFU for O2 Touch bases. All ETA sponsorship deals are donations in kind. The insurance fee covers 5,000 members (players, referees, coaches). Discussions were had around how more income can be generated.

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8 Election of Officers of the Executive Committee

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 President | - Standing: Gregg Cropper (GC) |
| 2 Vice President | - Standing: Mike Roa (MR) |
| 3 Governance Director | - Standing: Carly Heselwood (CH) |
| 4 Technical Director | - Standing: Ben Powell (BP) |
| 5 Referee Director | - Standing: Shelley Grace (SG) |

Each Executive Committee position had one person standing for election. Voting was therefore done by a show of hands and in each case carried unanimously by all those voting.

For: 45; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

The Finance Director post (similar to the Head of Medical Services post) is recruited by the Board based on appropriate skill sets. This is an advertised appointed and therefore not elected upon. Mike Abromowitz has expressed that he will stay on as FD if there is no other applicant, but equally is happy to step down otherwise. It was agreed to advertise the role for three months, and if no suitable candidate applies then MA will resume the FD role.

Post-meeting note: Douglas Benzie (Galaxy) has successfully applied and MA has therefore officially resigned as FD. The Board thanked MA for his time and contribution to ETA in his capacity as FD over the last two years.

9 Appointment of non-executive posts

The newly appointed executive committee then made the following appointments to roles detailed below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6 PR&Marketing | - Liane Farrer (LF) |
| 7 Elite Coaching Director | - Tim Osborne (TO) |
| 8 Development | - Ken Pollard (KP) |
| 9 Tournaments Director | - Kevin Hill (KH) |
| 10 Head of Medical Services | - Cari Thorpe (CT) |
| 11 Membership / Affiliation | - Vicky Gaskell (VG) |

Sub committees:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ○ Secretary | - Lois Lau (LL) |
| ○ RFU Liaison | - Gary Lambert (GL) |
| ○ Strategic Advisor | - Louaz Hofton (LH) |
| ○ Schools Liaison | - Matt Thomas (MT) |

*** New person taking on the role**

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10 Membership and Insurance provision and proposal

GC gave an overview of the proposal for a new membership and insurance structure. Full information can be found here:

Proposal – <http://bit.ly/1FJPsXU> (v1.1)

Benefits – <http://bit.ly/1B9AKLQ> (v6.0)

The main four reasons for the proposed changes were to cover the insurance outgoings; it is ‘good practice’ to future proof the growth of the sport; to better capture membership data to attract sponsors; and to generate an income stream to enable us to become self-sufficient.

The executive committee has the power to implement the changes without a vote, but wanted to gauge support for the proposal.

Discussions were had around the table about how this would impact clubs and leagues around the country differently in the various set-ups. GC gave some clarity over what the proposal would actually cost. Concerns were expressed with regards to the impact on grassroots players and the cost might dissuade new players from trying out touch, GC gave clarity on how clubs can make this workable. There was confusion as to who is classed as a ‘club member’.

It was agreed that a small working group of interested parties would look further into this and develop the proposal to cover the raised concerns.

A vote was taken for each of the following proposals to ascertain current level of support for the current proposed changes:

- A. Would members be in favour of changing the league affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 28; Against: 17; Abstentions: 0.
- B. Would members be in favour of changing the club affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 35; Against: 8; Abstentions: 2.
- C. Would members be in favour of changing the event affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 31; Against: 13; Abstentions: 1.
- D. Would members be in favour of introducing an ‘Individual’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 40; Against: 4; Abstentions: 1.
- E. Would members be in favour of introducing a ‘Referee’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 27; Against: 14; Abstentions: 4.
- F. Would members be in favour of introducing a ‘Coach’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 28; Against: 14; Abstentions: 3.
- G. Would members be in favour of introducing a ‘Medical’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 38; Against: 5; Abstentions: 2.
- H. Would members be in favour of introducing a ‘Combined’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 34; Against: 9; Abstentions: 2.
- I. Would members be in favour of introducing a ‘One off levy’ affiliation charging structure for 2015.
For: 27; Against: 13; Abstentions: 5.

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RESULTS					
	Vote	#	%	Support?	Votes
Vote A League	YES	28	62%	YES	45
	No	17	38%		
	Abstain	0	0%		
Vote B Club	YES	35	78%	YES	45
	No	8	18%		
	Abstain	2	4%		
Vote C Event	YES	31	69%	YES	45
	No	13	29%		
	Abstain	1	2%		
Vote D Individual	YES	40	89%	YES	45
	No	4	9%		
	Abstain	1	2%		
Vote E Referee	YES	27	60%	YES	45
	No	14	31%		
	Abstain	4	9%		
Vote F Coach	YES	28	62%	YES	45
	No	14	31%		
	Abstain	3	7%		
Vote G Medical	YES	38	84%	YES	45
	No	5	11%		
	Abstain	2	4%		
Vote H Combined	YES	34	76%	YES	45
	No	9	20%		
	Abstain	2	4%		
Vote I One off levy	YES	27	60%	YES	45
	No	13	29%		
	Abstain	5	11%		

Post-meeting note: Working group now set up, with a short deadline and specific targets to ensure clarity in all sections of the proposals. The aim is to not re-open discussions, just to clarify some terms, iron out some issues and get some closure for us to be able to begin building the infrastructure behind it in an attempt to implement this early in the new year. We're looking to get fully worked through solutions to ensure we address the points raised.

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11 Constitution amendments

CH presented the proposed change to the definition of 'affiliated member', as detailed in 'tracked changes': <http://bit.ly/1wkaVqB>.

J. Would members be in favour of definition of member as per the document distributed?

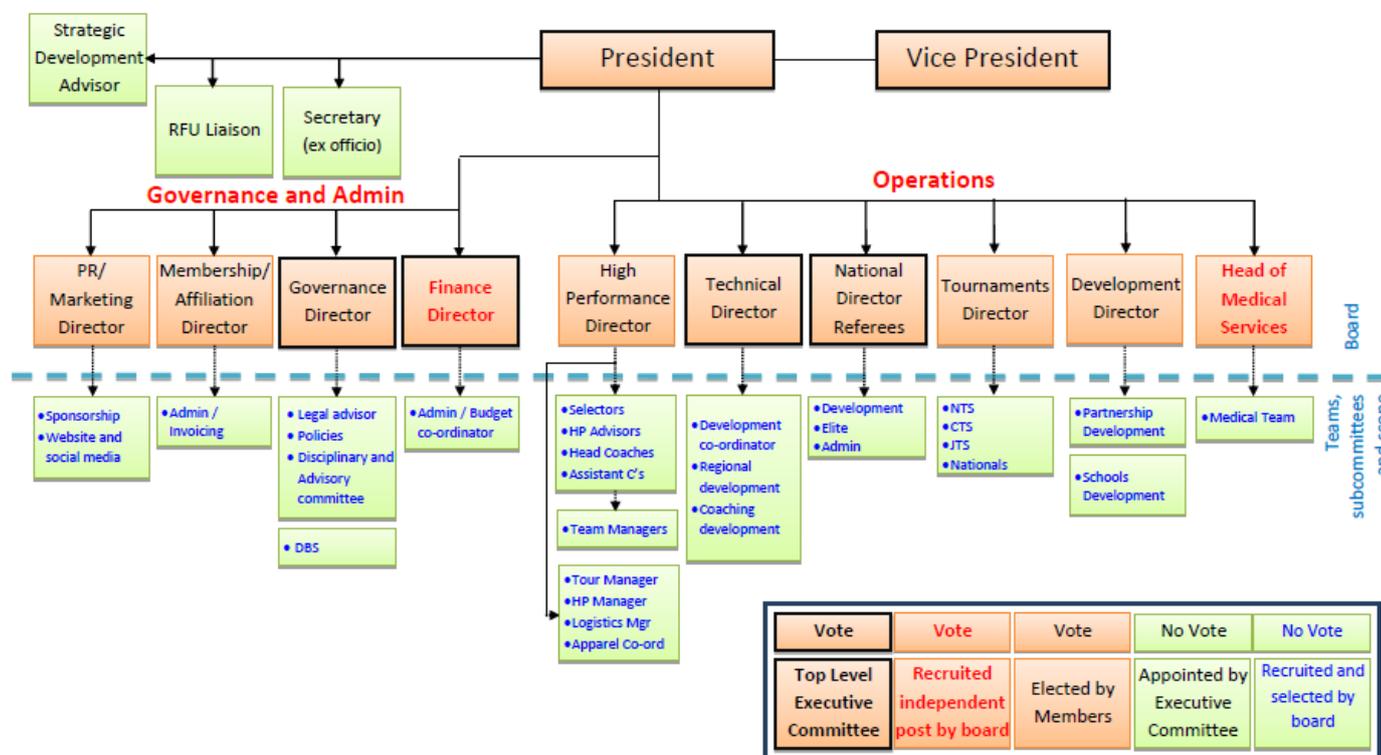
Members voted in favour of the change.

For: 32; Against: 1; Abstentions: 12.

12 Update on current structure of ETA executive, elected post-holders and sub-committees

GC gave an update on the current ETA structure, which is summarised in the diagram below:

<http://bit.ly/1uuu31O>



13 ETA Conflict of Interest declaration

All new committee members were requested to complete a Col declaration and return it to secretary@englandtouch.org.uk in compliance with current governance good practice. A template can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1u9FfgG>

14 Closure of meeting

Meeting closed at approximately 13.50.

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OGM

Order of Business: **Approx start 14.15**

1 Introduction by the Chairman / President

GC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies

As per AGM.

3 Registration and accreditation of nominated delegates

As per AGM.

4 Minutes of previous meeting / matters arising

The minutes from 2013 OGM were accepted by all present.

<http://bit.ly/1p12sFW>

5 Reports and Updates

All non-executive committee members gave a verbal summary of their activities over 2014. Many of these can be found in the Annual Report:

<http://bit.ly/1zC9rX3>

5.1 PR / Marketing

In the absence of ex / newly appointed post holder, GC gave a quick update. Social media has increased but is still predominantly done by GC. The new role will need to manage and update ETA's accounts on Facebook / Twitter / Pinterest / Instagram with pictures and news. Similarly, updates for the England Touch website need to be done regularly. GC has already requested updates on certain sections from the relevant Board members. KH is working on a new 'Where to play' section for the website.

Current sponsors and partners remain in place with Steeden, SportTape, 2XU and XBlades. New ideas for TWC sponsorship include a bank, insurance firm, Women in Sport and raising profile through the #RoadToOz campaign, which will be launched in the new year. GC encouraged all to seek sponsorship avenues where they can, especially those that can support ETA with a cash injection. There is the possibility of ETA selling off-field kit to generate more revenue.

A new role for Sponsorship/Partnership has been created to progress this workstream and currently being advertised: <http://bit.ly/1Dg5uN3>

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5.2 Tim Osborne, High Performance

TO updated on the achievements of the HP team. All goals set for 2014 were met and exceeded. The selection and pathway to elite touch were expanded, which meant more players able to be exposed to elite coaching. ETA was able to invest in coaches to attend upskilling coaching sessions. Euros was hugely successful with England being crowned overall European Champions by winning the Open, Senior and Masters divisions. HP team was in surplus financially.

Looking forward to 2015 England will be sending 112 players to TWC, representing the third biggest nation in attendance. The support team for the players are being finalised. ETA is now working with other European teams to raise the overall standard of touch in Europe. Another area of focus for next year will be on grassroots touch and getting more touch players involved.

TO officially thanked Ben Smith for his invaluable inputs as advisor to both him and BP on shaping elite touch in England.

5.3 Cari Thorpe, Medical

There have been various changes in staff this year, but the team has built and now includes Sports Science members from Chester University. Focus has been to minimise injury for touch players, with papers being published to share the findings. The team was able to use statistics collected to change team performance during the Euros.

5.4 Membership

GC gave a short brief in absence of the outgoing Membership Director. Affiliation membership continued to grow in 2014 with the addition of O2 Touch bases. Attitudes towards affiliation have changed positively. All NTS and CTS clubs must affiliate. An extensive FAQs section on the website has assisted in the understanding of the benefits of membership, this is constantly being reviewed and added to.

5.5 Ben Powell, Development

Lots of development work has taken place throughout 2014. ETA was able to host Pete Walters for a week to deliver a number of coaching sessions around the country alongside BP. Around 500 players benefitted from Pete's touch knowledge. More direct structure is required at regional levels. Introduction of Regional Development Officer roles to act as liaison officers between clubs and ETA. 20 applications received. The selected members will help BP deliver events across the regions. The positions are voluntary but can be incentivised by the RFU partnership.

There will be coaching courses delivered at universities next year, with a one-day university national tournament being delivered in March. National selectors will be involved to help with coaching and also talent spotting.

Nationals will potentially be expanded into a bigger event next year. There will be open trials again for those unable to compete for their regional teams. A 'development regions tier' is being considered, so places like Bournemouth who has an active base can be included. Regional leads and coaches will be appointed and in place for a whole 12 months rather than for the short period leading up to Nationals. BP wants to raise the profile of Touch Nationals so it becomes the focus of the year.

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BP explained the coaching framework in place. It is envisaged that all national coaches will be qualified after TWC. At Euros this year all team managers were non-playing personnel, and 3 of the top 5 ranked coaches were from England including Ben Smith who was named Coach of the Tournament. In 2015 ETA will work to upskill coaches so that this can be passed on.

5.6 Kevin Hill, Events

KH gave an update of the NTS/CTS season this year which has been largely successful. The combined format seemed to work well, with lots of CTS players improving and the CTS tournament being more popular than ever. Manchester double-header was expanded to cater for more CTS teams, yet there was more demand. The two-day format suited the CTS draw better.

Next year NTS/CTS will be extended to a three-tier series. Due to TWC and Nationals timings, there will only be four rounds of NTS (Tiers 1 and 2) including Finals. Venues confirmed to be Nottingham, Thames Valley, and Manchester respectively. NTS finals will be played over two days, with 40 minute games. CTS venues are yet to be confirmed. KH asked for suggestions for new names to the NTS/CTS three-tier series.

There were some discussions with regards to non-ETA affiliated clubs in NTS/CTS in future. The current top 16 teams remain in NTS Tier 1 for 2015. KH confirmed player transfer rules will be released early next year to aid clubs with selection.

5.7 Gary Lambert, RFU Partnership

GL gave a presentation to the group on the RFU partnership and the strategy that he has worked on with GC and BP. Slides can be found here:

<http://bit.ly/1BnFMle>

5.8 Matt Thomas, Schools Development

MT will be working with a panel of secondary school teachers to roll out a touch programme for schools. Looking to try and run a National Schools event in 2015. There are now junior referees and junior coaches within ETA, and seeking to grow these.

6 General business:

The following items are items submitted for discussion:

6.1 Governance Director – Carly Heselwood

1. Voluntary Code of Good Governance to the ETA structure.

In order to sign-up to the Code we need to undertake the following steps:

- Discuss the Code at a Board meeting and achieve Board approval
- Include the Code as an objective in our Strategic Plan
- Select an individual in your organisation to take responsibility for the Code

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- Confirm our commitment to working on implementing the Principles

CT gave a presentation on the Voluntary Code of Conduct to all present. The code will be included in the ETA strategic plan, with CT being the lead. Slides can be found here:

<http://bit.ly/1IypJU>

6.2 Technical Director – Ben Powell

1. *Safeguarding- With the growing number of U18s participating in our sport, would it be possible for a safeguarding officer to be appointed to oversee appropriate safeguarding training for those working with U18s?*

Agreed that this will be a good practice. BP volunteered to be the Safeguarding Officer. All clubs with U18s will be asked to complete a two-hour online course, with a certificate issued at the end that they can submit to ETA. Individuals are encouraged to renew their certificate every three years.

2. *Nationals- I would like to discuss whether we (the ETA) can raise the profile of the Touch Nationals*

Covered earlier.

6.3 ETA Disclosure Manager – Julia Kang

1. *As Disclosure Manager, I would like to address that all clubs registered with the ETA provide a named person who either holds a current DBS form with a registered number, or intends to go through the online DBS system. This can be done at the AGM if correct documentation is brought. Please contact Julia@englandtouch.org.uk.*

Every affiliated club or league will be required to submit one representative who is DBS checked or willing to go through the process.

6.4 Events Director – Kevin Hill

1. *Split of NTS / CTS for 2015 and associated issues*
2. *NTS / CTS tournaments beyond 2015*

Covered earlier.

6.5 Wigan – Steve Melling

1. *NTS Venues*

Raised concerns about the safety of parking at an event last season.

6.6 Lincolnshire – Mike Beard – Not in attendance for this section

1. *Cts series*
2. *Hosting an event cts*

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- 3. Lincoln to be recognised as an official elite training facility, and signs for clubs to show community clubs*

6.7 Thames Valley & In2Touch - Maidenhead, Oxford, Reading - Sammie Phillips – Not in attendance

- 1. Joined up thinking re tournament dates (ETA, RFU, clubs)*
- 2. Promotion and support of Touch World Cup by RFU*
- 3. Links and contacts to all clubs playing touch*

6.8 Halton – Piula Tuiono – Not in attendance

- 1. Promotion process from CTS to NTS 2*
- 2. How many CTS tournaments will be played next year and the bidding to host process would be the same as the NTS*

Covered earlier

6.9 The Exiles – Nick Gray – Not in attendance

- 1. Coaching videos - getting access to Australia Touch's coaching video library and setting up something similar*

6.10 Schools Development – Matt Thomas

- 1. Youth/Schools Education Action Plan/ Review- Expectations and roles assigned to each member of the education panel*
- 2. The contacts of teachers/ coaches in AUS and NZ to share ideas of good practice and past resources*

Covered earlier.

7 AOB

None.

Closure of meeting

Meeting closed at approximately 15.30. Attendees were taken on a tour of Twickenham Stadium.