



2013 AGM & OGM MINUTES

2013 Annual General Meeting of the England Touch Association

Venue: Gosford All Blacks RFC, Stratfield Brake, Freize Way, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 1UP

Date: Sunday 3rd November 2013, 11.00

Order of Business:

1 Opening Address and Welcome

GC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies received from:

Committee and post holders:

Mike Abromowitz (Finance, In2Touch); Carly Heselwood (Governance); Steve Cleary (Membership); Cari Thorpe (Medical); Tim Osborne (Head of Elite Coaching); Chris Simon (Partnerships, Nottingham, Perfect Motion).

Members:

Bath; Bristol Fijians; Lincoln; Mawsley; Wigan; Chippenham; Cambridge (League & Club); COYS; CSSC

No response:

Warwick; Wisborough; Halton; London Scorpions; BBR; Tumeke; Bristol (League); Medway; Norwich

3 Registration and accreditation of nominated delegates

Attendees (and voting rights conferred):

Committee and post holders:

Gregg Cropper **GC** (President, proxy Cari Thorpe (Head of Medical Services), proxy Steve Cleary (Membership & Affiliation Director), proxy Mawsley Touch)

Mike Roa **MR** (Vice President, Galaxy Touch)

Ben Powell **BP** (Technical Director, proxy Tim Osborne (Head of Elite Coaching))

Shelley Grace **SG** (Referee Director)



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Julie Walker **JW** (proxy Carly Heselwood (Governance Director), proxy Mike Abromowitz (Finance Director, In2Touch x 7), proxy Bristol Fijians)

Dave Cope **DC** (Hot Custard)

Julia Kang **JK** (Nottingham Hoods, Perfect Motion)

Other members / attendees

Cathryn Ogle (Manchester Chargers)

Morgan Ogle

Kevin Hill

Matthea Chow (Portsmouth Destroyers)

Paul Farrington **PF** (In2Touch TV: Reading, Oxford, Maidenhead)

Laura Mitchison (Thames Valley)

Rich King (Oxford)

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

Total votes = 28

4 Receive and consider the minutes of the previous AGM

The minutes from 2012 AGM were accepted by all present

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/svty7s5m3rt6lhs/2012%20AGM%20OGM%20Sun%204th%20Nov%20Minutes%20v7.pdf>

5 Receive and consider the minutes of any Special General Meetings held since the previous AGM

The minutes from the SGM held on 13/4/13 were accepted by all present

https://www.dropbox.com/s/nuli5r5ue8vkf6e/ETA%20SGM%20MINUTES%2013_4_13%20%281%29.doc

6 Directors Reports: Verbal summary. Written report has been published as below.

Verbal summaries of activities were given by those directors present and by GC on behalf of those absent, as below:

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Gregg Cropper, President

GC gave a high level summary of the work of the ETA during 2013 and emphasised the good work done in the previous year by the committee and volunteers and thanked those leaving for their contributions to help get the ETA to where it is currently. He gave a verbal overview of work done in different areas, details of which can be seen in the formal Annual Report for the ETA that he has compiled, hard copies of which have been sent to affiliated members, electronic copies can be accessed below:



Annual Report - Full
v1.5 inc pics.pdf

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/u4r13ks6m9c7jaq/Annual%20Report%20-%20Full%20v1.5%20inc%20pics.pdf>

GC emphasised that ETA needs to work quickly over the next few months to formulate and begin to implement a 2-3 year strategic plan for all aspects of our involvement in Touch in England. He will be discussing this with committee members and post holders as a matter of urgency as such a plan will ensure we are collectively working towards the right common goal/s for the future of Touch in England.

Mike Roa, Vice President

MR verbally acknowledged the good work done by the ETA committee and volunteers last year and also thanked those leaving for their efforts and welcomed the new people starting this year. He also mentioned the advantages of the new structure of the ETA committee and how post holders would be working towards having sub-committees / departments of people working with them to further progress their areas. He highlighted specifically the good work that has been achieved in Governance this year and the strong plans in place here for the future, specifically as we look towards increasing involvement of young people in our sport. The need for increased activity in actively seeking out sponsorship deals for ETA was covered as a priority for this year.

Ben Powell, Technical Director

BP gave a verbal summary on Technical work for 2013:

2013: 1 x Community Course and 2 x L1 courses held. Additional courses that were planned had to be cancelled due to illness and technical issues with ownership of course content from TFA Australia / FIT. These technical matters are now resolved.

2014: 10 x Community Courses planned, based around RFU 'Touch Bases' but open to all.



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3 x L1

1 x L2. L2 presenter still needs to be from outside of Europe. This issue means that L2 courses are difficult both logistically and financially. It is high on the ETA priority list for this to be sorted.

'Behaviour & Disciplinary Policy': Implemented in NTS and mini Nationals in 2013 and to be used for all ETA-affiliated competitions for 2014. To be added to website for player reference and visibility.

Coaching progression: At Elite, NTS & CTS levels.

Elite- By 2015 it is the aim that every National Coach should be a non-player and be qualified to minimum of Level 1.

NTS- By 2014 it is the aim that every NTS club has at least 1 x L1 Coach.

CTS- By 2015 it is the aim that every CTS club has at least 1 x L1 Coach.

See plan:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v1rhh85nyf3sdjb/Levels%20of%20progression%20Coaching%20ETA.docx>

Nationals: Player survey indicated an 80% satisfaction rating for the 'overall experience of the day'. A number of triallists were successful in making National Squads. Most particularly at U18 level, this is really encouraging for the future of England Touch.

Written report: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/yppiz51gdl2wpr4/Development%20Report%20v2.docx>

Shelley Grace, Referee Director

SG gave a verbal summary on Referee Director work for this year:

A strong year for Referee and Referee development within England Touch, and the O2 Touch / Touch Base initiative is generating a lot of interest for refereeing development weekends.

16 Courses have been held during 2013, of which 3 were held at 'Touch Bases', but others had RFU / O2 Touch attendees. The 2014 target is to further increase the number of RFU / O2 Touch attendees and engage them more with refereeing.

Refereeing and Recruitment courses: run by EFT held during 2013 and England Touch now has 5 x L1 presenters and coaches; 2 x L2 presenters; 2 x referees working towards 'coaching accreditation' to qualify L2 referees (which is the best an NGB can do).

The 2014 aim is for the refereeing and referee development to engage more active referees, upskill those already participating and become more self-sufficient for qualifying and coaching referees.

The Referee Newsletter is now going to 400-500 addresses to help keep people up-to-date with what's happening.



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Written report: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/invzdvoqn0y760f/ETA%20-%20Referee%20Director%27s%20report%20-%20AGM%202013.docx>

Carly Heselwood, Governance: Presented by GC

Welcomed the new members of DBS team: Julia Kang (DBS Manager) and Kate Hyde (DBS Verifier). The DBS checks will be initially prioritised for Opens & U18s coaches and course presenters. Club contacts will receive an email on this process in the near future but it is expected that a small admin charge payment will be required from clubs that it is necessary to pass on from the body that is administering this on our behalf. This is summarised in the written report below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/gyo2xxodgipi9ja/DBS%20Annual%20Report%202013.docx>

Welcomed the new head of the 'Judiciary & Advisory' Committee: Mark Jones. Mark has a wealth of experience in Touch in both South Australia and in England.

ETA is now recognised as the Touch National Governing Body for England by the 'Sports & Recreation Alliance'.

Numerous trademarks for the ETA and ETA brand have been submitted.

New policies have been written, including 'Conflict of Interest' policy for all Executive Committee members; Parental Consent; Safeguarding. All ensuring we are on track to meet current SportEngland best practice guidance for sport NGBs.

Written report:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/u0g7wlwim8ljnj3/Governance%20Director%20Report%20-%20Nov%202013.doc>

7 Financial Report

A summary will be provided post-meeting

8 Budgets for 2014

Budgets for 2014 are still being discussed. Anyone requiring further information on these can contact abro@englandtouch.org.uk. This was informally discussed during AOB in OGM and is minuted there.

9 Election of Officers of the Executive Committee: 10 mins

- President - Standing: Gregg Cropper
- Vice President - Standing: Mike Roa
- Finance Director - Standing: Mike Abromowitz



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- Governance Director - Standing: Carly Heselwood
- Technical Director - Standing: Ben Powell
- Referee Director - Standing: Shelley Grace

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 of those voting:

For: 28; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

10 Appointment of non-executive posts:

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

- PR&Marketing - Vacant. Candidates to be discussed further post-meeting.
- Elite Coaching Director - Tim Osborne
- Development - Dave Cope
- Tournaments Director - Kevin Hill
- Head of Medical Services - Cari Thorpe
- Membership / Affiliation - Steve Cleary
- Secretary - Julie Walker

GC formally thanked previous committee members for their hard work and welcomed the new committee members to the team.

Post-meeting note: Phil Shore has been appointed as the new PR & Marketing Director

11 Insurance provision and proposal. Please see additional information provided.

The requirement for a possible increase in affiliation costs was discussed, which may be required to meet the cost of insurance provision (part of which is currently being funded by the ETA). Further information had been given on this pre-meeting and can be accessed via the links below. **It was emphasised that we will be looking for alternative insurance suppliers and every effort possible will be made to try NOT to have to implement this increase.**

The following votes were recorded:

The support of the ETA executive board and members is sought for the following proposals:

Would members be in favour of increasing affiliation costs for 2014 season to £18 for a team / peak league? **YES / NO**

For: 28; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

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Would members be in favour of increasing affiliation costs for 2014 season to £112.50 for a club? **YES/NO**

For: 28; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Would members be in favour of increasing affiliation costs for 2014 season to £85 for a one-off event? **YES/NO**

For: 28; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Motion carried.



Insurance - FAQs
2013.pdf



England Touch
Insurance Statement

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/k49z2bg36fjsrju/Insurance%20-%20FAQs%20v1.pdf>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v1csig1l3323dg5/ETA%20Insurance%20statement%20to%20members%202013.pdf>

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

GC summarised the changes made to the ETA structure implemented at the SGM in April. The new structure map can be accessed below.

In summary the ETA committee now consists of a mixture of 6 elected post holders:

President; Vice President; Finance Director; Governance Director; Technical Director; Referee Director

And 6 appointed positions:

Head of Elite Coaching; Development Director; Head of Medical Services; Membership & Affiliation Director; Tournaments (Events) Director; PR & Marketing Director.

All of which have a conferred voting right.

Further formal positions can be appointed as detailed or as required, and each position may have a sub-committee working underneath them.



\$ Structure Map
v11.pdf

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<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4wjkwv7d3ux968/%24%20Structure%20Map%20v11.pdf>

13 ETA Conflict of Interest declaration

All ETA committee members were reminded that they need to complete the below 'Conflict of Interest' declaration and return it to carly@englandtouch.or.uk or jules@englandtouch.org.uk in order for us to be compliant with current governance good practice



ETA Conflict of
Interest Policy v1.doc

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5f4gzvatkm51gbu/ETA%20Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Policy%20v1.docx>

14 Closure of meeting:

Meeting closed at approx 12.20



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OGM

Order of Business: *Approx start 13.10*

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 2012 AGM were accepted by all present

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/svty7s5m3rt6lhs/2012%20AGM%20OGM%20Sun%204th%20Nov%20Minutes%20v7.pdf>

5 Reports and Updates*- All non-exec Committee members: Verbal summary. Written reports to be circulated post meeting. *30 mins*

**Many of these summaries were given in the AGM time slot, however they are minuted here.*

- PR / Marketing

GC gave a brief update on the PR & Marketing position, which is currently vacant. He emphasised that priorities for 2014 and beyond are to increase the profile of Touch and to look for sponsorship for the Elite squads.

- HP

Tim Osborne has taken over as 'Head of Elite Coaching' with a team of coaching staff and admin support staff working with him.

Summary:

Expressions of Interest for playing at 2015 WC have gone out, player responses are requested to enable the HP team in planning for the campaign (team entries and logistics of the campaign). Euros planning is well underway, and the move of the Nationals tournament to September has given much more preparation time for this.

Calendar is being set by HP for activities for the next 18 months leading to WC 2015

All squad training camp dates prior to Euros have been released. Final squads will be announced by early June.

S&C programs are being rolled out to all squads.

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All squad head coaching positions are confirmed, with some additional assistant coach positions currently being finalised.

- Development

DC gave an update on some of the development work that had taken place in the past few months of 2013, stating that there has been lots of progress already this year with many new clubs and teams being formed, some from the O2 Touch initiative. Lots of clubs have been in contact to express how keen they are to be involved with Development initiatives in their areas and delivering this is a good challenge for us to have for 2014. DC stressed the importance of engaging clubs more for ways forward and what they would like from the ETA re development and also stressed that one of his first priorities is to increase the network of clubs / teams / people engaging with the ETA for development and progression.

Written report: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jicisu330jmylc19/Technical%20Report.doc>

- Events (to include proposed 2014 calendar, NTS format and venue selection)

No formal update was provided on Events for year 2012-2013. GC reported that 2013 was a very successful year for the ETA with a strong CTS a real highlight. The NTS was stronger than ever and 2 successful Nationals competitions were delivered.

GC formally welcomed new Events Director Kevin Hill to his position.

- Medical

CT provided a written report:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5x6accsqjuoj8wl/Medical%20report%202013.docx>

Summary: 8-strong team led by Cari Thorpe. 2013 activities have centered around providing medical support for HN events along with production of new prehab & plyo videos and research with Chester University.

- Membership

SC provided a written report: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/crvl7c05do30szc/Membership.docx>

Summary: Affiliation numbers have continued to increase through 2013, with 23 clubs, 26 leagues and 9 one-off events affiliated this year, plus the additional RFU / O2 Touch Bases.

A new software system is to be used to streamline membership effort for 2014 onwards.

- Partnership Update

GC gave an update on behalf of CS regarding the RFU partnership, summarised below:

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- Partnership signed in April, this includes a flat fee for affiliation to ETA for all RFU / O2 Touch bases, and provision of kit for the Elite squads.
- Currently there are 67 'Club entities' affiliated through this method, this will be reviewed in April 2014 to audit the number of 'members' this fee affiliates. RFU report that 125 additional teams are projected to be formed between Nov 2013 and Feb 2014.
- Since the partnership came into force 53 people from the RFU have undertaken ETA qualification courses (L1 Refereeing and Community / L1 Coaching). For 2014 the figures projected are 150-170 for EACH of refereeing and Coaching.
- Several examples of ETA / RFU working together were highlighted:
 - o Nationals venue in Droitwich which also hosts one of the most successful examples of the RFU / O2 Touch initiative to date.
 - o Corporate Touch event at Twickenham which saw CS and MO captain Ben Creese assist teams during the day and help refereeing.
- RFU are keen to help ETA with venues to keep costs down for us, this was noted and will be considered for future nationals, training sessions etc.
- RFU are planning a 'big festival' in 2014, details of which are still TBC but ETA should look to be involved.
- Monthly conference calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings are being planned for future.

In addition to the above PF also made some comments on this. He highlighted the funding available for becoming an 'RFU Touch Base' being £5000 over 3 years (split, £2K, £2K, £1K) if targets are met and that this was a good opportunity for Touch clubs to make good contacts with their local rugby clubs to benefit both themselves and assist those clubs with providing Touch knowledge as they are starting out to help them learn the sport properly and deliver it well.

PF also commented that we should be enquiring as to whether we can access RFU Coaching courses and networks as part of this partnership agreement, especially in terms of learning from them in our elite coaching and refereeing training.

This will be investigated further: **Action CS to enquire. BP and SG to be consulted regarding involvement of elite coaches and referees with this and their possible involvement at a face-to-face meeting to discuss further.**

Written report:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6tmvfseviqb05w6/RFU%20%26%20ETA%20Partnership%20Report%20for%20the%20AGM.docx>

6 General business: *30 mins*

The following items were items submitted for discussion:

- NTS / CTS changes for 2014

The changes to the NTS & CTS series were discussed, as summarised in the document below.

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Changes to the
Touch Series v2014.1

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6348ub3i3xxifbb/Changes%20to%20the%20Touch%20Series%20v2014.1.docx>

The competitions will be held on the same date and at the same venue for 2014. Applications to host these events were opened a number of weeks ago and information sent to eligible parties. These applications were discussed among members of the ETA Executive Committee and the dates and venues selected to host are as below:

April 12th 2014	Round 1	Nottingham
May 24th/25 th 2014	Round 2 & 3 (Double Header)	Manchester
June 21st 2014	Round 4	Oxford
July 12 th 2014	FINAL	ETA Venue TBC

Post-meeting note:

The selection of dates and host venues have since been ratified by the new ETA Events Director and any queries on this process should be directed to him: events@englandtouch.org.uk. The criteria to host and closing date for applications were set out in the 'Nomination to Host' document and decisions made based on this.

As previously communicated the newly combined competition will have the following benefits;

- *Free up 4 weekends in the already busy Touch calendar*
- *Bring together the 2 events, allowing economies of scale*
- *Aid in the logistics for teams to travel*
- *Allow pooling of referee resources from within the UK and Europe*
- *Provide a platform for which the CTS teams can watch the country's premier clubs and pick up tips*
- *Give Regional and National coaches an opportunity to see new and emerging talent*

Several teams applied to host tournaments for the 2014 season with 5 placing a 1st choice nomination for round 4. The hosting decisions were considered on a range of factors by the Executive Board and Tournament Director including previous events, timing of application and development opportunities.

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We have three great venues confirmed for 2014 which are located across different regions in England. Further opportunities for other clubs to host are being investigated by ETA, with the High Performance team looking to supplement their preparation for the Euros through single gender competitions being added to the calendar.

The probability of some rule changes to NTS / CTS series were also discussed, particularly regarding:

- Points awarded to CTS teams for attendance at events / whether a minimum number of events had to be attended to be eligible for finals
- Player eligibility for NTS / CTS / switching between the 2 events when playing for the same club

As time was limited these issues will be discussed off line and communicated at the earliest opportunity. Anyone wishing to input on these should contact Kevin on events@englandtouch.org.uk

It was discussed that Touch is a fast-expanding sport and that we aim to accommodate all teams looking to enter tournaments at many levels. With the reservation of 6 spots in CTS for teams from last year this only leaves 6 places open to other teams to enter, and options to enable participation should be discussed.

Post-meeting note: to assist in the above the possibility of having other ETA-affiliated events in 2014 is to be discussed, with a potential longer-term aim of providing another level of regional or national events for teams to enter. Further communication in due course.

- From Lincolnshire Touch:

- organising reffing courses to allow either practical assessment on day or via video
- organising fasttracking key persons in regions to aid development and also take pressure off current assessors
 - As a response to the above the possibility of introducing an ETA 'Community Refereeing' course is to be examined, this could be a basic course using L1 theory and some limited practical assessment that would certify referees to officiate at local league / O2 Touch level. This would increase the number of qualified & assessed referees for grass roots games. **Action SG to investigate**
- a contact tree for each region to help new players find and contact new clubs
 - The 'Where to Play' section of the ETA website is to be updated to assist with this:
Action : GC / PR & Marketing
- restructure of points system of cts/nts so you must as a team compete in 3 of the 4 tournaments minimum and actually get points for attending to encourage greater attendance
 - See discussion point above.

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- help for teams with player sharing maybe create a page specifically for asking for others to help teams out at tournaments to help players gain experience

- This was discussed and it was recommended that clubs / players use posts on the 'England Touch' or 'Touch-all' Facebook pages to coordinate this, as has happened at times during recent years

- From COYS Touch

'Although we are not attending we would like to know if CRB checks (as part of club affiliation) will be discussed, as this is something that has been concerning us as a club.

We have a few members that are under 18, and are committed to safeguarding all of our members, I have chased previously how we can get CRB checked on our coaching/committee staff, and have been told it is being set up and we would receive information in due course.

It has now been a good two months and I have received no further information.

Therefore we would like that it is highlighted as a concern of ours as an affiliated club. Especially as we are looking to expand and grow'

- This item was discussed previously and the procedure for DBS checking is now in place. This club has been contacted and all other affiliated clubs are in the process of being contacted to discuss their requirements for DBS checking.

7 AOB 5 mins

A: Informal budget discussion

The budget proposals for 2014 have been submitted by each department, they include:

Purchase of new membership software for £60 to assist admin.

Referees currently covered by money in from events and money out in expenses in the main.

Medical costs currently covered by player payments. It was noted that the current level of medical staffing is not feasible for players to fund for WC and therefore the medical team would need to be self funded in part or find sponsorship.

PR & Marketing: Money to produce videos of Touch events to use for marketing purposes.



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HP: vast majority is players 'paying to play'. RFU provide subsidised kit under our partnership agreement. There is a need to find some additional funding / sponsorship for Elite teams. The benefit of previous 'Coach upskilling' sessions by eg Pete Walters and John Singh was highlighted and provision for this is requested for 2014 and beyond.

Development: DC proposed an 'Incentives scheme' which would be envisioned to encourage engagement of Elite players to 'pay back' through development of the sport by offering them some sort of incentive: 'earn some sponsorship or subsidy to assist in National representation'.

This proposal is in a very early stage and it is acknowledged that it would require coordination of an ETA-driven income source to provide it.

B: U18s Referees at Euros 2014

SG provided an update on opportunities for young referees to be involved at officiating in the U18s games at Euros 2014. It is hoped to form a 'referee academy' to encourage young referees (proposed ages 14-18) into a more formalised program of development. PF commented on a similar scheme run by the RFU with their young mentors program.

Action SG to speak to RFU at a partnership meeting to discuss.

C: Schools Touch

PF highlighted the successful delivery of Touch into a number of schools currently in the 'In2Touch TV' area, along with the example that the AQA now has a Touch module as part of its GCSE PE examination. The success of the Buckingham & Berks year 7 & 8 School Games was noted as another good example of the potential popularity of Touch as a game in schools.

PF noted that he is currently working on a school-age appropriate template and policies that are needed to deliver Touch. ETA acknowledged that we require more expertise in this area and should look to engage more with eg the number of school teachers we have that currently play Touch as a good place to start.

PF highlighted that there are a number of funding sources accessible for people who'd like to develop Touch programs, these include:

Youth Sport Trust.

Primary schools: Each primary school has an annual spend of £9000 to allocate to sports delivery for its pupils and has to document where this money goes.

Sportivate: Funding for clubs for after-school programs, now extended to 11-25 yrs age range. Clubs can apply independently for this, and it can eg be used to fund taster sessions for Universities.

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D: Structure of AGM

PF raised a question regarding the structure of the AGM and how we plan to attract new involvement and retain knowledge from those in the sport that are not as actively involved any more. After some discussion it was decided that the AGM format should be revisited for future years, although there is always the formal part of the meeting that must be carried out there were discussions around how best to engage members to attend and have their say, with examples such as making the AGM part of a bigger event or hosting it at an inspiring venue all discussed.

The retention of knowledge was seen to be a vital part of us being able to continue the growth of our sport, discussions will be had as to the best way that we can work to achieve this, whether it's from informal input from knowledgeable ex-players and committee members or something more formalised. This will be investigated further.

Meeting Closed.