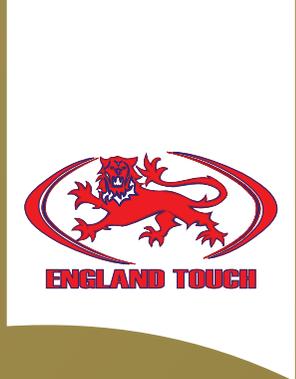


englandtouch.org.uk



England Touch Annual Report 2020

THIS IS TOUCH

A SPORT FOR
ALL

A SPORT FOR
ALL AGES

A SPORT FOR
ALL GENDERS

A SPORT FOR
ALL SEASONS



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

CONTENTS

Chair's Report	—	2	Governance and Administration	—	14
Mark Croston			Leading the organisation through the pandemic		
CEO Report	—	3	Developing our Policies		
Chris Simon			Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond		
Finance	—	5	Coming soon – Return to Play	—	17
Operations Report	—	7	An expanding regional structure of events and opportunities		
Return to Play			The National Touch Series		
Partnerships and collaboration			A new-look Nationals		
Commercial, sponsorships and funding			Autumn and Winter Touch events		
Events			2022 European Touch Championships		
Major Events			2022 Youth Touch World Cup		
Membership			A new membership platform		
High Performance					
Learning and Development			Appendix	—	18
Volunteering			Board of Directors		
			Executive Team		
			Growth and Development		
			Central Support Team		
			Central Governance and Finance		



CHAIR'S REPORT

MARK CROSTON

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the suffering of so many people during 2020. On behalf of England Touch, I would like to offer our condolences and best wishes to anyone who has lost anyone close to them, and to those who have struggled to meet the challenges of the most terrible year in living memory.

All sports, and of course Touch faced uncharted waters, yet as ever the Touch community, pulled together and supported each other and responded to our regular briefings around return play, with grace and understanding.

Chris in his CEO report will cover how we responded as a workforce and made the most of the break in the playing season, including how we stepped up with lots of online activity, which we will continue to embrace, regardless.

I have seen the huge contributions made by the Touch community and our workforce, which is almost entirely made up of volunteers and I would like to pay tribute to all of them. Like many volunteers around the country, they work so hard to support and manage our great sport. This work is indispensable and

will be even more so as we emerge from the current coronavirus crisis.

Volunteering in sport has never been as important and I truly value the friendships that I am developing and am grateful for the opportunity to serve the game as Chair.

Our sport is built on a unique set of core values: Inclusive, Transparent, United, Ambitious and Respect. It is what attracts so many young people to the game and keeps them involved throughout their lives.

As we all come under pressure during these difficult times, it is important that we do not forget those core values. They have been at the forefront during this pandemic, as evidenced by so many of our club volunteers helping the national effort and providing succour to those in need. Now, more than ever, we have to reinforce those values as we cope with the effects of coronavirus.

As Touch returns during such a challenging time, we are grateful for the physical and mental wellbeing it brings and the camaraderie it offers. We want to attract more people to play and watch our great sport. We have the Executive

Team, Board and Workforce capable of leading change and out of this current adversity we look forward to a very positive future. I am proud to be part of the team that will make this happen. Diversity and inclusion will be key during the next year and as a Board we will be intensifying our efforts to lead inclusively.

At the time of writing we have just heard the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown, and provided that this timetable remains on schedule then it looks like we will be able to be back playing before Easter – very exciting for all of us! Hopefully we can then have a programme of events which can then build into 2022 and the opportunities that will bring.

Thank you again for electing me to be your Chair, and I look forward to serving you in the season ahead.



““

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CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON

2020 has certainly thrown up a few challenges for my first full year in post. Three lockdowns and a ban on sport and recreation, combined with numerous cancelled events and a reduction in individual memberships, have contributed to a financial loss for the last 12 months.

On the flip side, the largely voluntary team and wider Touch community have rallied to ensure a safe return to play of the sport we love and a widening of the appeal of Touch to new clubs and communities.

Our financial loss could have been much worse if it were not for the support of Sport England, through a £28,000 grant as part of the Partner Sector Fund, and for the commitment of a number of our volunteers who helped provide such a wide and varied on-line learning programme within weeks of the first lockdown being announced. Not only did this provide invaluable content, engagement and interaction for our membership, but also much needed funds for the ETA to continue to operate and prepare ourselves for the resumption of Touch and the wider development of the game.

During 2020, we restructured the paid workforce, with the appointment of Sammie Phillips as our first employed National Development Officer and the departure of long-time servant of the sport, Gregg Cropper, who left the ETA in November 2020. We would like to thank Gregg for all that has done for the ETA over the years as a volunteer, consultant and employee, and wish him all the best with the next stage of his career.

There were also changes in the voluntary workforce with the departure of Geraint Thomason and Dave Christophi from the board, and Julia Kang, Mark Aldous, Nick Dobbin and Jon McNaught from the delivery team. On behalf of the ETA, I'd like to pass on our thanks to all of them for everything they did to help maintain, administer and grow the sport of Touch.

Back in January 2020, we were delighted to be joined by Tom Hewson-Haworth as Head of Participation and in June, at the last AGM, Jane Sabugueiro was elected to the board as our latest Non-Executive Director.

Planning and managing our Return to Play has taken a fair amount of time and effort over the

last 12 months and I'd like to thank everyone at the ETA and those in our clubs, leagues, university clubs and other playing environments for all their efforts to ensure that Touch could continue to be played throughout much of the year.

As we approach the exit from the latest (and hopefully final) lockdown, our collective efforts will be called to the fore once again as we update our plans, processes and practices to get everyone back playing from the end of March onwards. In anticipation of what you are about to take on for a second, third, or fourth time, many thanks for your continued perseverance, dedication and commitment to the sport. Your efforts don't go unnoticed and the whole of the Touch community is extremely grateful.

While 2020 presented such huge challenges and pretty much ruined the entire year for competition in Touch, we have taken the time to reflect on our strategy and plans and to look to the future as we emerge from the pandemic.

We are about to launch our Growing the Game Strategy – our plan to get 500,000 people participating in the sport of Touch by 2024. Focus on our core channels of clubs, universities



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CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON

and leagues, will be supplemented with new activity in schools, workplaces and parks as we seek to make Touch truly a sport for all, one that can be played by anyone, anytime and anywhere. An oval ball, an open space and a few friends are all you need.

We can't do this alone, and our strategy to grow the game will be reliant upon partnerships and collaborations across the sport and wider leisure and physical activity sector. We have announced exciting agreements with London Irish and the BHF in recent months and are expecting further developments over the coming weeks. I am also delighted to say that we have recently completed the submission of our full application for recognition with Sport England, something that will help us continue to raise the profile and public awareness of the sport.

Our second key area of focus has been on our membership, both how we evolve our offer to better engage and deliver valued products and services to our existing members, but also how we can expand this to a broader audience as we embark on growing this number to 50,000 by 2024.

Our approach has been about listening, evaluating, consulting and testing. Our members are our lifeblood, our core customers and we need to ensure the progress made last year in planning, continues as we implement in practice through this year and beyond.

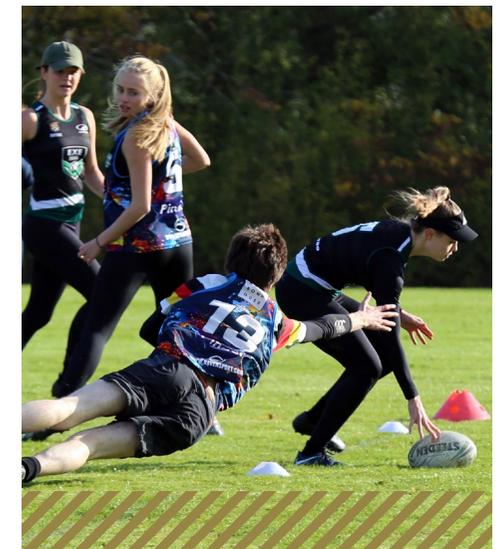
Lastly, we have been going through a bit of organisational change – the Board, the Executive, the wider Workforce and the role of our regions in helping the ETA to deliver its strategy for the future. We have reviewed and introduced a number of new policies and processes, including becoming an employer with a paid workforce and a new Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy, which is fundamental to ensuring we remain a sport that can be played by anyone regardless of age, background, gender, sex, or ability.

This is a journey that we have only just begun, one that will continue to throw significant challenges at us as we move from being not just an organisation representing its members, but one that administers, governs and develops the sport of Touch for all. We need to make sure we get the balance right. We must continue to listen,

consult and engage with those who have given so much for and to the sport of Touch already, and we must shape, evolve and develop our offer to enable us to welcome new players, referees, coaches, spectators, parents and more to become part of the Touch family in the future.

We have a lot to do, but we're excited by the prospect.

If you feel you can help us, we'd love to hear from you.



““

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FINANCE REPORT

Financial Summary

During 2020, we have reformatted the way we present our finances as we continue to evolve from an historic cash-accounting method to one based much more on profit and loss.

We have revised some of our accounting processes and procedures to ensure our reserves reflect a true picture and that we present annual figures that take into account any pre-payments or accruals for the following years.

As a result, the annual accounts reflect the following items:

- Restructuring costs of £10,000 are included in the P&L
- Volunteer rewards of £6,500 for kit vouchers and postage have been included in the P&L
- An increased provision for HP refunds to players for the cancelled Euros campaign is included in the balance sheet, some of which has had to be absorbed into the P&L
- A revised process for accounting for membership based on funds being released monthly to the P&L as opposed to when cash is received has moved £12,000 of membership funds to the balance sheet

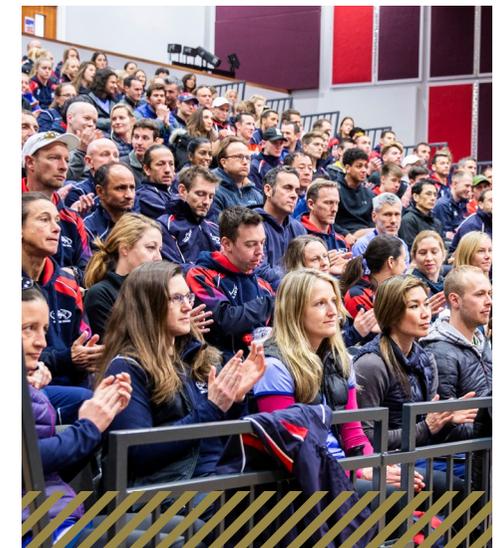
Despite these items, 2020 was still a challenging year and overall the ETA made a loss of £33,781. The figures presented need to be taken in context of what was an unprecedented year of trading, with initial forecasts for the year expecting a much worse position.

Income has been impacted significantly, with the entire summer season being lost and the cancellation of the domestic calendar and Euros. Despite this, membership held up at 60%, although as previously mentioned £12,000 of this income has been held on the balance sheet to reflect renewals that carryover into the new year.

Losses in events and membership were offset by increased revenue in online learning and development, as well as receiving £28,000 of funds from the Sport England Partner Sector Fund.

Cost wise, we received five months of furlough support grants from May to September and introduced tight controls throughout the year. This helped to offset some of the loss of income from a lack of trading.

As we look forward to an improved summer, we expect to re-establish much of our loss of membership income and start to generate income from events once again. A revised budget for the remainder of the year is currently being produced.



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FINANCE REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20

<i>All figures in GBP £</i>	Financial Year 2019/20	Financial Year 2018/19
	Actual	Actual
Particulars		
High Performance	68,158	252,563
Events	12,180	108,714
Events – Major	–	–
Membership	19,117	50,832
Learning and Development	16,159	–
Other Income	28,219	21,471
Operating Revenue	143,833	433,580
Operating Expenses	(87,155)	(328,543)
Gross Profit / (Loss)	56,679	105,038
Particulars		
Salaries and Expenses	(39,539)	(53,007)
Volunteer Rewards and Recognition	(6,500)	(9,803)
Insurance	(6,807)	(9,803)
Professional Fees	(6,705)	(12,515)
IT and Software costs	(3,372)	–
Marketing and Promotion	(2,599)	–
Bank / Transaction Fees	(6,933)	(195)
General Expenses	(8,474)	(18,556)
Overhead Expenses	(90,460)	(111,962)
Net Income / (Loss)	(33,781)	(6,925)
Tax	–	–
Net Profit / (Loss)	(33,781)	(6,925)



OPERATIONS REPORT

Return to Play

The ETA has taken the lead role in engaging with clubs and leagues on the Return to Play framework, allowing for safe and risk-assessed Touch activities as and when appropriate during the year of the pandemic. This has enabled us to further develop relationships with our existing members and generate new club and league members in the process.

When we emerge from this latest lockdown, we will continue to take the lead in this area, both internally with our members, but also externally with other stakeholders, ensuring we maintain strong communications and a collaborative approach as we seek to recover and reinvent together.

Partnerships and collaboration

In 2020, we piloted a successful new partnership with the British Heart Foundation which raised in excess of £2,500 for the organisation through a collaborative online health and fitness programme. This not only helped maintain levels of physical activity during the second lockdown in November, but also provided much needed funds for the charity. We recently agreed a longer-term partnership with the BHF and will be working together to grow Touch in schools and workplaces in particular.

We are establishing a number of partnerships with the commercial league operators in Touch, to help grow participation and the profile and membership to the ETA.

- We will continue to work with the RFL (including the Rugby League World Cup 2021) and the RFU on the wider rugby offer and their Touch Rugby products of Play Touch Rugby League and O₂ Touch respectively.

- We will reach out to other sports' governing bodies to further collaborate and identify opportunities for joined up working. We will support this through further developing relationships with Sport England, The Sport and Recreation Alliance and UK Coaching. We are already working collaboratively with many organisations within the wider sports sector and very much support the new Sport England strategy, Uniting the Movement.
- We will continue to engage with British Universities and Colleges Sport to get Touch recognised as a competitive sport in their programme.
- We will continue to develop strategic relationships with professional rugby clubs in target city areas. We have a partnership signed with London Irish and are in conversations with a number of other clubs.
- We will explore broader strategic partnerships with other national organisations – we have recently signed the aforementioned two-year partnership with the British Heart Foundation and are in conversations with the British Armed Forces.



OPERATIONS REPORT

Commercial, sponsorships and funding

During 2020 we were awarded £28,000 of central funding from Sport England via the Partner Sector Fund. This has enabled the ETA to continue to operate effectively through the pandemic, taking the lead role on the Return to Play for Touch, continuing to develop our organisational strategy and working with a number of other bodies to evolve our Growing the Game Strategy for the sport.

Our clubs, leagues and regions are now supported by a Funding Manager, who has started working with them to identify funding opportunities where Touch can make a difference in the local communities in which we operate.

As we look forward into 2021 and beyond, we will maintain a core income stream focus from our courses, our membership and our events. This will be supplemented with wider opportunities available in the sport, including a review of our merchandising and kit offer and engagement with a number of interested third parties seeking partnership opportunities

with the ETA. We will also continue to prospect for funding opportunities from a range of other stakeholders that will help us in our ambition to grow the game.



“

We will ensure as many participation opportunities as we can – from community and social, to performance and elite. We will use our own event offer as a platform to drive membership, and ensure we engage our audiences in conversation and consultation at the same time.



OPERATIONS REPORT

Events

Looking back to the start of the 2019-20 year, we actually did get a bit of an event season – four University Touch National Series events and a Men's and Women's Emerging tournament were all held before lockdown set-in back in March '20.

London Scorpions won both the Men's and Women's tournaments, which were staged in west London. In all 16 teams from 15 clubs participated in the Men's tournament and 10 teams entered the Women's tournament.

March 2020 also saw the first ever Uni NTS single gender tournaments, hosted by the University of Exeter. With nine teams in the Men's tournament, and seven in the Women's tournament, the future looks bright for this new addition to the ETA's university offering.

With no events since then, the Touch community awaits the return of the ETA event calendar with eagerness. Indeed, during the few weeks in autumn 2020 when limited travel and competition was permitted, many clubs across the country collaborated with each other for small scale, local tournaments of up

to four teams. With continued uncertainty, our core plan for 2021 is to build from local to regional to national, as the Return to Play framework for recreational sport permits.

We will ensure as many participation opportunities as we can – from community and social, to performance and elite. We will use our own event offer as a platform to drive membership, and ensure we engage our audiences in conversation and consultation at the same time.

Major Events

It will not be a major surprise to learn that the major events which England had been due to host - namely the 2020 European Touch Championships and 2021 Youth Touch World Cup – have both been put back to 2022.

The financial impact was somewhat mitigated by the support of Sport England's Partner Support Fund, but participation increases in Touch Rugby similar to those experienced in 2018 were obviously delayed.

Our planning will continue for both events throughout 2021 as we look to continue England's outstanding reputation for staging significant sports events.



OPERATIONS REPORT

Membership

As with many other national governing bodies across the sporting sector, the last 12 months has had a significant impact on the ETA's membership numbers.

However while individual memberships have declined – unsurprising given that the main benefit is to be able to play in an ETA-organised event – club affiliations have increased as the ETA becomes more recognised for its Return to Play expertise and other support we have given clubs.

We expect individual memberships to increase once the ETA is able to organise events once again, and have broadened our messaging to highlight the additional benefits members can enjoy, such as those available through AON Plus.

With a lack of face-to-face engagement and opportunities to play competitively at local, regional and national levels, communication to members and the wider Touch community has never been more important. This has taken a more structured and focused approach in 2020, something which we intend to continue in 2021 and beyond. Members receive regular

newsletters and substantial and targeted social media activity. We have also recently updated the member toolkits.

We have just committed to a new upgraded membership platform for the ETA – one that will enable us to further strengthen our engagement with, understanding of, and support for, our member communities. At the same time, we are in the process of reviewing our membership offer and categories so that we can appeal to a much broader range of participants in the sport.

With our leading role around Return to Play planning, we have also developed very positive and strong communications with our club, university and league members during the pandemic, something which we intend to extend into other areas of engagement. We are in the process of extending this into schools as Touch continues to grow as a sport in both primary and secondary education.



OPERATIONS REPORT

High Performance

Casting our minds back to the end of 2019, we selected training squads for the 2020 European Touch Championships and Junior Touch Championships and held early sessions, before both events succumbed to the inevitable. Our HP programme was severely impacted by the pandemic, with most activity moving on-line.

Our priority is to get this programme back running in 2021, but at the same time continue to develop our strategy for the future.

During the last two years we have introduced an online learning platform, Hive Learning, and developed an individual and independently managed athlete assessment programme for everyone involved in High Performance.

We recently ran a wellness weekend for our HP athletes which included psychological support and advice for players and those parents of junior athletes, nutrition advice, conditioning advice and other relevant sessions.



*“
During the last two years we have introduced an online learning platform, Hive Learning, and developed an individual and independently managed athlete assessment programme for everyone involved in High Performance.”*

OPERATIONS REPORT

Learning and Development

During 2020, as with many other organisations, there was an emergence of virtual learning. The ETA grasped the opportunity, with record numbers of participants learning through attending online courses focusing on refereeing, coaching and wider continuing development.

We have also taken the opportunity to provide wider online engagement through the provision of a range of fitness and other activities. We will continue to maintain and develop a strong on-line offer to our members and the broader touch community and ensure that operating virtually remains part of our offer for the future.

As we look forward, we will continue to evolve and enhance our offer, both virtually and face-to-face when permitted. Our focus will be on player, referee and coach development and consideration will be given for practical assessments of both referees and coaches as restrictions are lifted and opportunities to participate increase.

In 2020 we delivered 19 coaching courses, with 192 attendees – 17 of these courses were online. We have five courses planned for the first quarter of 2021.

In 2020 the ETA ran 13 refereeing courses with 138 attendees gaining a preliminary qualification (although this is subject to practical assessment).

In 2020 we also introduced a new suite of continuing development courses aimed at a range of different Touch participants. This included a number of modules focused on the development of our coaches during a time when in-person practical opportunities to deliver were restricted. In total we delivered 15 courses, with over 300 attendees.

In 2020 we were also planning to deliver our second Coaching Conference following the success of the first one which took place with 69 attendees at Twickenham in 2019. This has now been delayed until the autumn of 2021.



OPERATIONS REPORT

Volunteering

Volunteering has continued throughout 2020 even though much ETA activity has paused. There are now over 100 ETA volunteers.

The Rewards and Recognition of those who volunteer in Touch was officially launched last year. This covered both those who perform specific volunteer roles for England Touch in an official capacity, as well as those who volunteer at a more local level for their club and/or region, with benefits including vouchers for kit and recognition through the Volunteers in Touch 2020.

The ETA is absolutely reliant on our volunteers to deliver key tasks for the majority of our organisation to operate. In doing so, our volunteers maintain the highest levels of professionalism, dedicating hours of time for our sport and organisation to function. However, as the sport grows so does the roles and responsibilities for our volunteers. It is therefore important for us to ensure the wellbeing of our volunteers, which has led

the ETA to review its roles to ensure the expectations are deliverable on a volunteer basis. Going forward, the ETA will be looking to recruit more volunteers to plug the gaps and ensure equity of responsibility – it is an extremely exciting time to join the ETA!

Consultation of volunteers in 2019 led to a number of recommendations for actions which were presented in a Workforce Strategy in 2020. As the organisation has evolved in the past year the Strategy is being reviewed again to reflect the organisational changes. However, the findings from the initial consultation period have been discussed and are being actioned.



*“
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GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During the last 12 months, the ETA has used this period to further develop the organisation's strategy, structure and governance as we continue to work towards the Tier 3 Code of Sports Governance and in preparation for our recently submitted Sport England full recognition application.

We have improved governance around both the Board and Executive with more regular meetings, set agendas, record taking and decision-making.

A skills gap analysis for the Board was produced prior to last year's AGM and this has been continued into 2021. During the year, the Board also established a number of working groups, each chaired by a NED and managed by a member of the Executive Committee. The groups cover a number of development and operational areas for the organisation; importantly one was set-up to oversee the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, as we seek to make Touch truly a **Sport for All**.

Leading the organisation through the pandemic

The other significant area of governance during 2020 was the ETA's planning and ongoing role around the Return to Play of Touch in England. Working with both the Rugby Football League (RFL) and Rugby Football Union (RFU) and adhering to guidance set out by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Sport England, we developed our own Return to Play plan to ensure a safe return of Touch in line with ongoing government advice.

We set-up specific communication channels through email and WhatsApp and required all clubs to complete a self-declaration form as well as detailed risk assessment, before returning to play.

Our Return to Play communication and documentation has regularly been updated and maintained with the latest advice and guidance accessible from the home page of the ETA website.

Our guidance and advice has been extremely well received by club and league members within the ETA, as well as a number of RFU Touch Clubs. All have stated that they have seen the ETA as the leaders in providing good governance and advice around the Return to Play of Touch..



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GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Developing our Policies

During the last year of operating in the context of the pandemic, we have taken the opportunity to review our most significant policies as part of the application for Sport England recognition. The following policies have all recently been reviewed and updated by the organisation and were approved at the Board meeting in January 2021. All are now available on the ETA website and will be cascaded throughout the organisation and wider Touch communities:

- Anti-Doping Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints, Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Safety Management Plan

Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond

As we move into a new season, we will continue to progress the governance of Touch in England across the following areas:

- Further development of our Board of Directors, their roles, responsibilities and input they can provide into the governance, growth and development of Touch in England.
- Further improvement in the diversity of our Board of Directors, Executive Committee and wider Touch community and embed our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and way of working into everything we do.
- Continuation and development of the Reward, Remunerations and Appointments Committee and introduction of a similar committee for Finance and Risk Management.
- Review the new Code of Sports Governance and continue to work towards Tier Three, reviewing and refining existing policies, as well as addressing any gaps in our provision.



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During the last year of operating in the context of the pandemic, we have taken the opportunity to review our most significant policies as part of the application for Sport England recognition.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Continue to evolve and enhance our AGM and process of recruitment, election and appointment of Directors.
- Further development of our communications channels to ensure transparency of the ETA.
- Expansion of the Executive Committee to reflect other areas of the organisation. The Executive has traditionally consisted of the CEO/COO, Finance, Governance and High Performance Directors. We are in the process of updating this team to reflect other growing areas of the organisation, namely: Participation, Workforce, Marketing & Communications, Commercial & Funding and Operations.
- Continue to explore ways of ensuring strong representation of, and communication and engagement with all participants and stakeholders in the sport of Touch:
 - Players
 - Referees / officials
 - Coaches
 - Spectators and families
 - Employees
- Venues
- Suppliers
- Club, league and other administrators and volunteers.
- Other NGBs and stakeholders across the sports sector
- Ensure good governance exists and can be extended through all playing environments for the sport, namely:
 - Existing and core member channels of clubs, leagues and universities
 - England regions, national teams, events and training
 - New and developing channels of schools, workplaces and parks/open spaces
- Continue to provide good governance at all levels and areas of the sport
 - from local, to regional, to national
 - from giving the sport a try, to playing socially, developing one's skills and excelling on the elite stage
 - from participation to performance and everywhere in between.





COMING SOON RETURN TO PLAY

Return to Play

- An expanding regional structure of events and opportunities
- The National Touch Series
- A new-look Nationals
- Autumn and Winter Touch events
- 2022 European Touch Championships
- 2022 Youth Touch World Cup
- A new membership platform



2022 European Touch Championships



Autumn and Winter Touch events



New-look Nationals



2022 Youth Touch World Cup



National Touch Series

APPENDIX 1

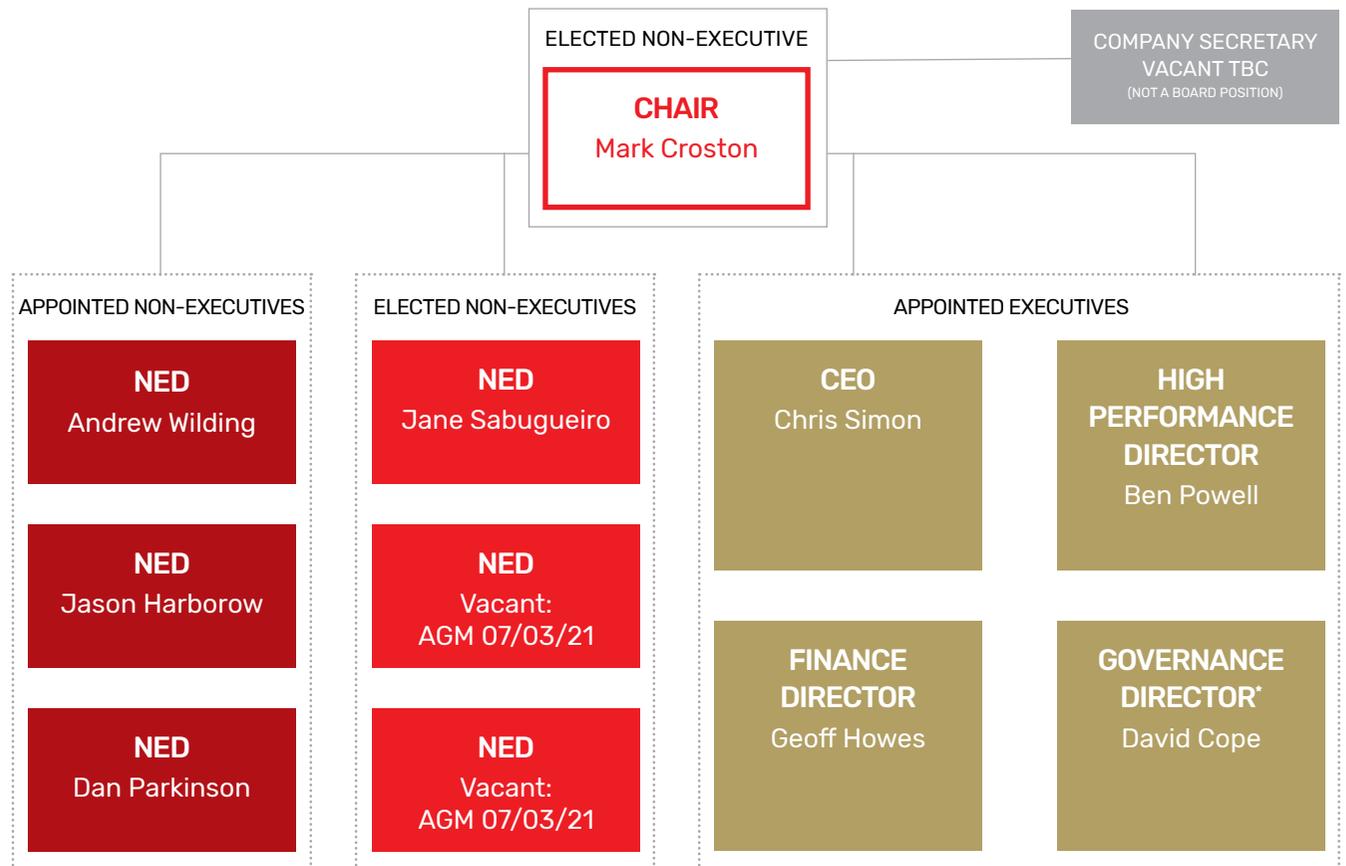
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Updated 10.02.2021

The England Touch Association has used the lockdown periods to restructure and re-align the organisational structure to make the Association more robust and resilient as we take the next steps forward in our development.

While it is acknowledged that some of the agility and speed of decisions may not be the same as in previous years, the approach which is being taken will give more members of the management team ownership of their various areas and accountability to the rest of the organisation and our individual members and affiliated clubs alike.

Over the next few pages we outline the organisational structure for the next period. Not all roles are filled – we are ready to welcome new volunteers with the appropriate skillsets – but as time goes on the ETA will have a workforce we can all be proud of, as we return to action and provide the entire sport across the country with the support it needs to grow and thrive in all areas.

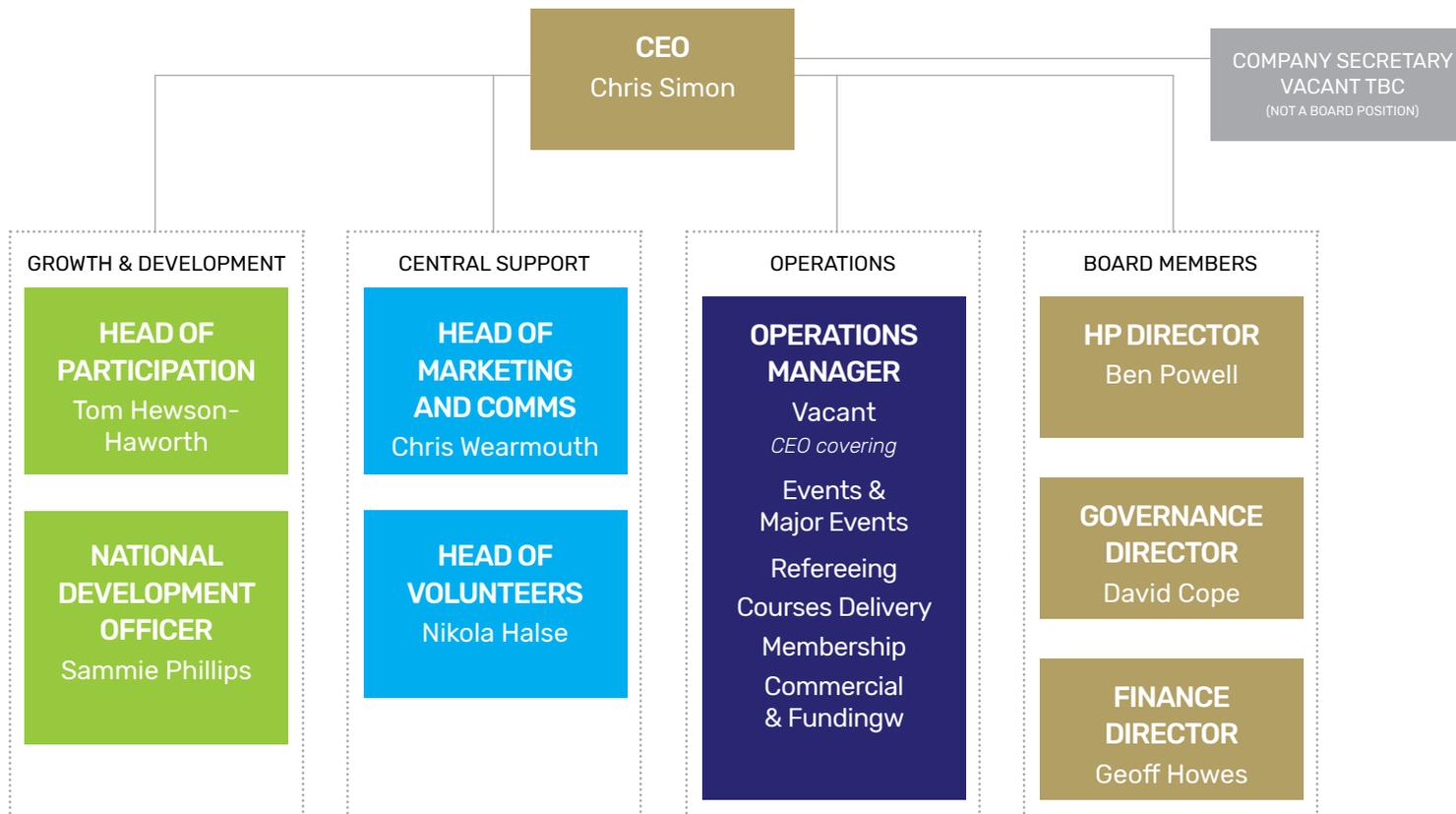


*Note: Governance Director to move to Executive at 2021 AGM



APPENDIX 1 EXECUTIVE TEAM

Updated 10.02.2021



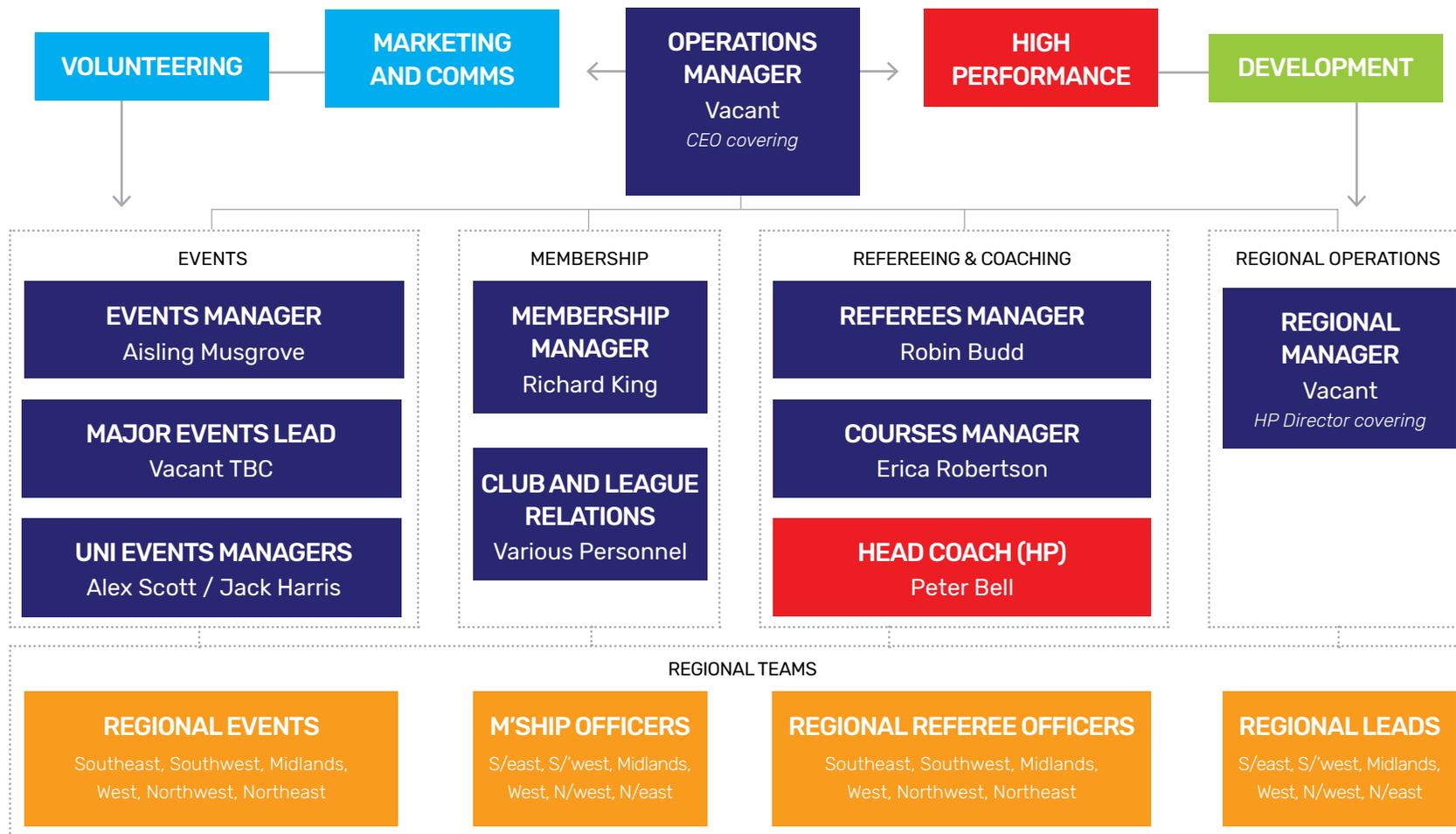
APPENDIX 1 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Updated 10.02.2021



APPENDIX 1 OPERATIONS TEAM

Updated 10.02.2021





APPENDIX 1 CENTRAL SUPPORT TEAM

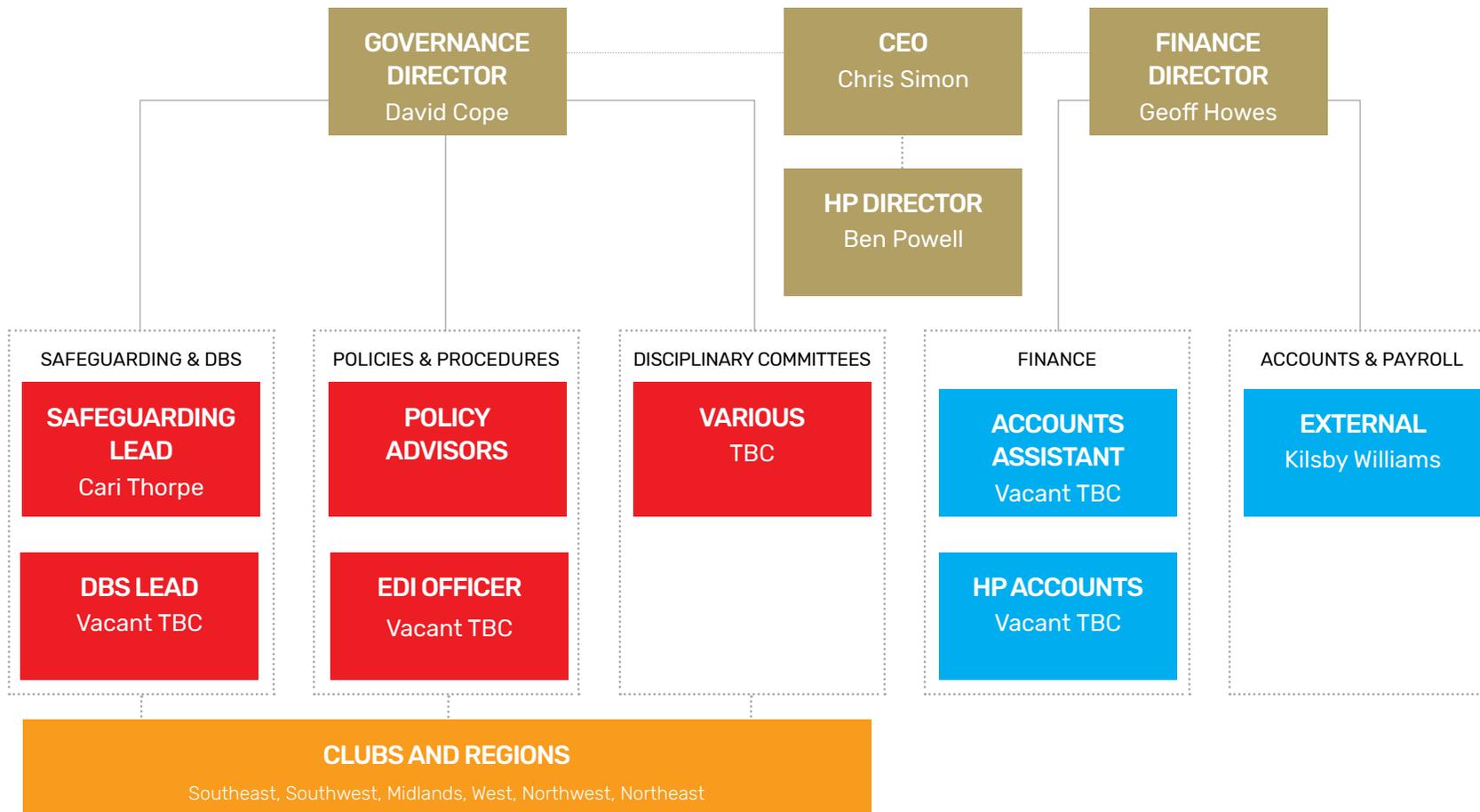
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APPENDIX 1 CENTRAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

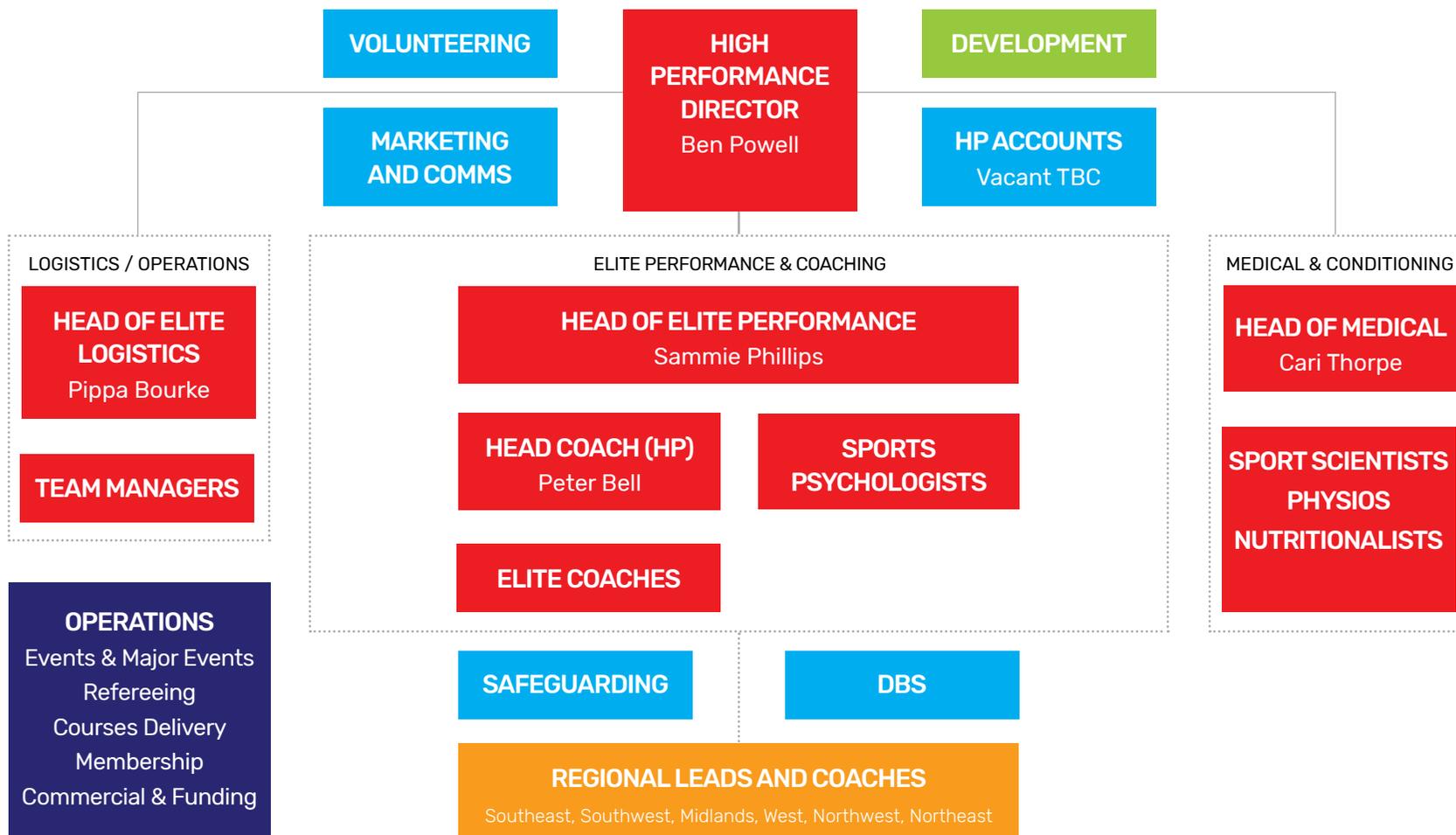
Updated 10.02.2021





APPENDIX 1 HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM

Updated 10.02.2021



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