

MINUTES
ABTO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 2-24
Monday 25 March 17:30 to 20:00

Attendees:

By Zoom:

Chair: Malgorzata Grzyb (MG)
Selena Coburn (SC)
Mike Crossley (MCR)
Steff Johnston (SJ)
LTA Officiating Manager: Matthew Morrissey (MM)
Veronica Mwondela (VM)
Myoran Nathan (MN)
Steven Wilkinson (SW)
Andy Wynne (AWY)

Apologies:

Vice Chair: Kath Lovell (KL)
Honorary Treasurer: Darren Michaels (DM)
Alex Wolfe (AW)

N.B. The minutes record the order in which the items were discussed.

All members must check the minutes for actions assigned to them.

Actions log will be updated accordingly.

It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded to help with accurate minute taking. The minutes will remain as the official record of the meeting and the recording will be deleted once the minutes are confirmed.

The recording started at this point.

1. Welcome, apologies and member news.

MG welcomed everyone to the meeting, confirmed we are quorate and explained the objective of the meeting.

SJ noted apologies and schedule for late arrivals. Invitation extended to Andy Wynne who will join the meeting and provide an update relating to the Championships at 7pm.

2. Declaration of interest

No declarations of interest were noted.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda.

DM requested for budget submissions to be made by 31st March 2024.

4. Panel and Group updates

Selections

MCr covered selections. Concerns raised regarding selections and data coming through late with little notice and with a tight window. An extension was requested but not approved. There is a recognition of the LTA workload but need to consider workload for ABTO and difficulty in doing this within the timeframe. Difficulty in getting time with MM to discuss matters in general.

MG suggested that panel should get together with MM to discuss a timetable for selection reviews in the future, so the panel has a better indication of what to expect and when. Suggest this is sooner than date indicated in report.

MG – suggested that 'incumbent' panel members share with newer members how analysis is carried out.

F&E

VM thanked MCr for coordinating the responses to MM on the draft changes to the F&E structures. The proposal did not change significantly based on the responses, however some of the proposals have been accepted.

SW – have we seen any of the data based on the expense submissions.

MCr – we have asked for a deeper dive on the data which MM based his decisions on.

MG – one question was how many people exceeded the £75 hotel allowance.

VM – have tried to have a meeting with MM but has not been available. Difficult to answer questions just via email. Process for next year will start again in September.

MG – review takes place annually. Can the process start earlier?

VM – opportunity to ask more questions, review data sooner. Do not want to have conversations close to April.

SC – is there any consideration for locations? Hotel costs vary depending on area.

MG – Rates for non-professional events are not increasing. The thinking is clubs would do away with umpires however no investigation has taken place. MM is happy for ABTO to do this.

MCr – what is the situation now? This may have been the case previously, but has it changed?

VM – it would be perceived as ABTO doing this and not the LTA so would not be taken seriously.

MG – cost does not need to be the club only cost, can it be subsidised by the LTA?

SC – as a referee, not seen anything from LTA in how to request umpires. Request made previously but was told none available.

SJ – late selections mean higher hotel costs due to late bookings.

MN joined at 18.01.

Grading

MN will lead.

Finalised referee and court supervisor review of grading decisions following data issues discovered by the Panel. Submitted comments to MM which were considered by MM. Some promotions waived due to lack of evaluations. Details of circumstances – no level of detail provided so MM has agreed more detail will be provided next time.

ACTION 2024-2-1 : Arrange a call with MM to agree a way forward.

MN - concern around the quality of data. MM is looking to improve how the data is pulled.

MM shared outcome of appeals process by email with the panel. Meeting needed to discuss regarding one learning around referee work cards. Surprised there were not more, ABTO need to have more input. Summary of reviews in report and findings where warning letters not issued where grade change has been requested.

SC – should be referee’s responsibility to complete work cards.

MG – should be easier with new system.

SW – some reasons for not completing days seem strange.

MN – structure seems to have been disregarded in some cases.

MG – grading requirements will need to be reassessed if line umpire opportunities will be reduced.

T&D

MN – not huge numbers requesting mentors currently. There has been a lot of contact from court supervisors in the early stages of court supervising with a level of uncertainty. Keep encouraging people to join.

SC – could be a gap in confidence and because course is online rather than in person. Module is OK for tests.

MN – maybe a good suggestion for a webinar, a recorded session for court supervisors to access.

SW – online course is good as a conversion but challenging if you have never officiated. Kent is running their own course. Could we collaborate with them?

MCr – what type of support is being requested?

MN – generally it is recently qualified and would like support.

MG – the programme works, receiving good feedback from mentees.

MN – is there an opportunity for new court supervisors to shadow others (at their own expense).

SC – someone turned up without uniform and should not have been there.

MG – trainee umpires are selected and paid for by LTA, could the same not be the case for trainee court supervisors?

MG – confirm Conversation dates – have they been confirmed so can put into Easter bulletin.

SW – Conversation dates confirmed as 17th April and 1st May.

MG – send through dates and sentences on the subject and content.

MG – on referee evaluations, MM asked for this to be coordinated with rest of group.

Forward Strategy

MG – survey issued to line umpires. Ed Mills will join group. Results of survey will be shared on 5th April. Will give us a foundation to help form what officiating will look like for our members and future opportunities.

Welfare

MN – identified mental health online training, getting view from group. Estimated at £140 per person. It consists of 10 hours online training and must be completed within 1 year and in the own person's time. Depending on numbers, a discount is available. Request LTA to fund around 10 people. Try and get going before grass court season and then assign named point of contact POC at major events.

MN – waiting for MM to respond to items sent about a year ago.

MN – aim to have the committee attend training. Await comments from SW and AW on moving forwards before speaking to MM.

5. Chair's update

MG – reminder to add to member retention ideas, or volunteer to bring to life ideas raised at the last meeting. Creating a video for upcoming referee courses. KL and DM attending a couple of courses and can speak to attendees. Other courses will be non-MC tutors. Would be good to have video or slides to talk to.

SW – no one came forward to support with script. Happy to do the technology side.

MG – there is a lot of detail in the link sent previously.

SW – good to have someone else's input. Some key points, what should be on screen, spoken, voice over etc.

MN and MG volunteered to help.

ACTION 2024-2-2: MG to put detail in a Word document.

Data Deletion Declarations and Conflict of Interest – Conflict of Interest forms now overdue.
Remember to submit Data Deletion forms before end of March.

MG – Anything else to go into bulletin, add interesting content.

MN – draft something around mentors.

MN – expressions of interest for mental health training.

MG – how do we manage a lot of responses.

MN – depending on response we can manage approach and ask further questions.

SW – get some testimonials for video. Adds personal touch from members.

MCr – bulletin – clarification around survey and what it meant.

MG – bulletin goes to everyone and not just line umpires.

MM joined call at 19:00

AWY joined call at 19:01

MG welcomed MM and AWY. Congratulated AWY on his appointment and introduced MG members to AWY. Thank you for the report and explained process.

6. Actions from previous meeting

This was not discussed at the meeting.

7. Championships update

Report was taken as read.

AYW explained that things will remain the same in general in 2024. Moving to ELC has not been confirmed, moving forwards in the normal fashion. Will be a different landscape if and when it happens. Look to improve space for officials. In the middle of finalising job descriptions for office roles.

Received a lot of information from the management team.

All-officials meeting will be on day one and not a video. Report time will likely be the same for everyone. Testing underway and review of timings will take place.

VM – review official opportunities – why overseas when we have people in UK who could carry out role.

AWY – operating on a flatline budget. Try to make appropriate savings. Approach needs to be objective.

VM – how can we get to hear about opportunities (e.g. technical advisers (TA)) to ensure we cover inclusion and diversity. Concerned that perception will be that opportunities are not available to everyone.

AWY – wanted to offer role to British TAs, rather than overseas. Each technical adviser will have a biography with their photo to detail experience.

MM – explained why roles were not detailed in Wimbledon application. Overseas applications do detail different roles.

SW – Will Jane Harvey be doing umpiring evaluations?

AWY – still to be decided. As many evaluations will be carried out as possible

MG thanked and confirmed appreciation for the update.

AWY left the meeting at 19:32

8. LTA Officiating update

MM confirmed there is only one active official who is going to be a technical advisor.

Apologies for not supplying a report. Very busy and apologised for late evening emails. Work ongoing with Wimbledon.

Referee workshops completed and were well attended. Workshop rated highly and will continue in the future.

June selections should be finalised on 26th March. Selections have changed based on wheelchair events changing. Found out very late.

July / August should be with panel next week.

Referee and court supervisors confirmed next week.

Testing Hub today by renewing license. Encountered issues. Plan for this to be resolved in the next 2 days and will go live on 27 Mar. If not, it will be 2 Apr. Feedback form once logged in to log any bugs or issues.

Due to selections, system will be accessed a lot more so better for it to go live next week.

New F&E live from 1st April.

Live ELC survey, within 12 hours received 100 responses. This morning, there were 180 responses. Link only sent to 280 officials. Initial results as expected, if WTA and Wimbledon go to ELC, 45% officials would not take part in other tournaments but would consider other options.

MM to speak to MG about how results will be shared.

ACTION 2024-2-3: MM to arrange a call with Jenny McAneny-Vincent and MG to discuss strategy, possibly w/c 15th April.

Referee evaluations – want to get these moving as soon as possible.

MG – F&E – thanks for increase in fees. Does MM know the total value of increase?

MM – not off the top of my head, can provide a figure after the meeting. **ACTION**

MG – F&E group to have a call around September, ideas for discussion.

MM – wants to align it with LTA financial year. Would like to propose Jan'25 and review meeting held early September.

MG – selections – how close are we to having timetable to help panel plan?

MM - depends on events and tournaments, enough information not always available so cannot make the selections earlier. Difficult balance and to provide a timetable. We should try and work with selection panel but cannot guarantee. Is at mercy of other people.

VM – have overseas been notified of pre-Wimbledon events?

MM – In some cases yes but not in all cases

MCr – we will try and work with your dates for a meeting.

MM – coordinate date across the panels rather than send several emails with the same dates.

9. AOB

Any questions regarding finance to go to DM. Request for budgets to be sent to DM by end of March.

MM – increase amount of budget for Mental Health training and to take into account election year.

MM – request for at least one meeting to be during the working day and minimise evening calls.

MG – when scheduling panel/group meetings, may not always be possible for everyone to be available so try and ensure majority and not wait for everyone to be available.

10. Close of meeting

Next meeting will be 20th May.

Meeting closed at 20:09