

MINUTES
ABTO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 1-23
Friday 20 January 16:00 to 20:00

Attendees:

At NTC:

Chair: Malgorzata Grzyb (MG)
Mike Crossley (MC)
Steff Johnston (SJ)
Steven Wilkinson (SW)
Alex Wolfe (AW)

By Microsoft Teams:

Vice Chair: Kath Lovell (KL)
LTA Officiating Manager: Matthew Morrissey (MM)
Selena Coburn (SC)
Veronica Mwondela (VM)
Myooran Nathan (MN)

Apologies:

Honorary Treasurer: Darren Michaels (DM)

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

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

SJ is updating the Actions Log as discussed under item 5 to reflect actions pending from previous meetings and for new items to be addressed in 2023.

1. Welcome, apologies and member news

MG welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SJ noted apologies.

Former umpire David Evans sadly passed away before Christmas.

Graham Liddle will be retiring from officiating. MG sent an email to thank him and offered him Associate Membership.

2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Matters not on the agenda to be taken as AOB

No matters raised.

4. Ratification of co-option

Steff Johnston formally confirmed as co-opted member of committee to support with some of the meeting management tasks.

5. Actions from previous meetings

MG has requested for a review of actions to take place and to close as many as possible.

2019-1-1, 2019-3-1, 2022-3-4, 2022-3-5 and 2022-3-6: Selections Panel and MM were asked to meet to discuss these actions with a view to completing them by the next meeting.

2021-3-1 Investigate possibility of adding an ABTO Representative to the LTA IDEA Group: action re-assigned to MG. MG provided update as part of Chair's report. Action complete.

2020-1-4, 2020-5-5, 2022-3-1, 3-2 & 3-3, 2022-4-12, 2022-5-1: MM has not been able to review due to other commitments. All actions sitting with MM will be reviewed w/c 23rd January.

Agreed: Revise due date to 31 January 2023.

2022-3-18. Request for photos for inclusion in The Line and ABTO E-bulletin

Agreed: Amend due date to 11 February 2023.

6. LTA Officiating Update

The report was taken as read.

Conference venues and dates have been confirmed and a "save the date" email will be sent to all officials on 23rd Jan with details of how to book the following week. The sessions will not be hybrid and the request will be to attend the whole day and then select which sessions to join. The content is under discussion and credits will be issued for attendance. The LTA have tried to use non tennis venues.

AW raised a question whether Saturdays had been considered to avoid taking annual leave.

MM - issue is venue availability and competitions taking place at the weekend for officials. Attendance is high when conducting referee workshops during the week. Trying not to discount too many officials who are officiating at the weekend.

MG asked about grading appeals update.

MM - several discussions with the legal team and waiting for final comments before decisions are sent w/c 23rd Jan. Expected to be signed off on 23rd Jan. Officials will be allowed to appeal if they are not promoted or demoted. Appeal policy will be added to the grading structure moving forwards.

MM said officials no longer have to use the template and can submit in any format to Olly Scadgell. He will confirm receipt within 5 working days and a decision made within 14 days.

MN asked if 7 days was long enough if they have to justify appeal. MM said they can provide as much or as little as required.

MG asked if there was scope to extend appeal time. MM does not want it to go on for too long as it may affect Wimbledon selections.

KL said the template was used to help officials and guide them through the appeal. 7 days is tight if someone is on holiday.

Agreed: Appeal timeframe to be extended to 10 days

MG asked about diversity data relating to new officials (action 2022-5-1).

MM - information has been gathered from recent line umpire courses but not the recent referee course.

Plan is to concentrate on targeted recruitment this year. He will ask CD to gather the information. Action remains open.

7. Championships 2023 Update

The report provided by Adrian Wilson (AWil) was taken as read.

KL – raised the issue of white trousers for female officials especially as Wimbledon is moving away from white underwear for the players.

MM – white trousers is a problem in general. It has been raised with AWil and feedback given to the AELTC. Some adjustments to the uniform will be made. Unlikely to be a quick fix for this year. Will also look at how this can be amended for LTA events.

MM – application for Wimbledon will only state number of grass days required and move away from a strict number of days outside of grass season prior to selection.

MG – nice to hear that staggered start times proposed by the Committee will be considered to manage congestion in the changing rooms.

SW – need to ensure feedback and comments are made on improvements that have taken place and not just negative.

MC – asked how many members provided feedback sent to AWil – how many contributed to that opinion. Good to understand how AELTC would like to receive feedback rather than just through Adrian.

MG – several comments were passed on from other officials. Anecdotal feedback not based on a survey. Are the AELTC planning to issue a survey, more structured feedback?

MM – no plans at the moment but will raise with AWil.

ACTION 2023-1-1: MM will speak to AWil regarding a survey and how feedback is to be collated moving forwards.

MM

KL – there is nothing in AWil's report regarding Covid and the plan should infections increase as last year.

MM – policy to be agreed and will be issued with selections to avoid mixed messaging as last year.

8. Structure

MG thanked everyone for the 1-2-1s and discussions regarding the structure. The structure has been built taking into account people's experience and interests, and with a view to filling gaps. The bulk of the work continues to be through the panels.

Panel and Working groups – MG clarified the role of panel and group administrators (PA and GA) is facilitation and being main point of contact. Emphasised the importance of supporting each other and sharing workload.

T&D – interim admins – VM and MN to kick things off and then look at having a new member in 6-12 months.

Working groups – these remain the same as last year with 2 additions.

The new referee group aims to address referee underrepresentation on committee. Looking to get external referees to join group to provide input. Survey was sent to referees in December to gather feedback and will follow up with a focus group on 23 January to deep dive into the survey results, which will help prioritise actions. Part of the strategy is to support referees.

Strategy analysis group is also new. Objective is to analyse and predict number of officials needed in particular roles and areas. This is important with the possibility of not needing line umpires in the future, and with events under-resourced. We need to understand where the gaps are.

ACTION 2023-1-2: DM and SW to have a call with MM to see which issues need to be addressed. It is a complete blank sheet at the moment so need to decide the best approach.

DM/SW/MM

MG - Membership lists – in the absence of an Honorary Secretary, DM will take this responsibility, ensuring the membership lists are managed.

MG asked for the panels to get together as soon as possible after the committee meeting to review actions and priorities for this year. Panels and Officers to review Terms of Reference and make any updates as required by mid-March.

ACTION: 2023-1-3: Panels and Officers to review Terms of Reference and send updates to KL by end Feb

PAs and Officers

ACTION: 2023-1-4: KL to collate all ToRs by mid-March

KL

KL asked if it was an issue not having a 4th officer as part of constitution to take on some of the other tasks.

SW raised the possibility of holding an EGM to vote for an Honorary Secretary. Is it possible to open for further voting prior to usual timeframe. Need to ensure we encourage as many people as possible to come forward.

MC asked if someone else could step up into the role without voting and then replace that committee member.

MG confirmed that key tasks are covered and is it therefore an issue? It is a costly exercise to run an election process.

MN said that a full election process would be required with manifestos.

MC commented that as part of the strategy document there needs to be a commitment to line umpires for Wimbledon in the future as this will make a difference to the number of members.

KL – Australia looking to recruit line umpires in the hope they will come back next year.

MM – said he is not aware of this however Wimbledon will likely take longer to make a decision about not having line umpires.

9. ABTO Chair's Report

The report was taken as read. MG had no further updates.

MG – start looking at strategy for the next 3 years. All panels and groups will be contributing to the strategy and need to think about what happens beyond this year. It needs to be achievable.

SW asked MM about the LTA strategy.

MM – in the process of reviewing next 5 years – part of his personal objectives is to draw up joint officiating strategy with ABTO.

SW – commented the strategy worked well when connected to LTA strategy.

MM – need to think about timeline and what is realistic. How can we combine into fewer strands of strategy and not separate out too much and make it too daunting?

AW – strategy is good to have in the conference.

MM – said it will be more efficient to have online workshops to avoid additional travel.

ACTION 2023-1-5: Contact list review – confirm if any details are incorrect by 23rd Jan. ALL

ACTION 2023-1-6: Photos of award winners for profiles to be sent to MG ALL

MM left the meeting at 17:50

10. Finance Update

Report was taken as read.

ACTION 2023-1-7: Groups and panels to inform DM of any budget requests by 15 February. PAs / GAs

ACTION: 2023-1-8: MG will inform DM who attended in person for reimbursement of travel expenses. DM will then confirm information required. MG / DM

SW asked about options around holding online elections.

MG said it would be looked at prior to the next AGM elections as it would be good to have an alternative to UK Engage.

11. Break

The meeting was paused at 17:51 and resumed at 18:06.

12. Grading Panel Update

The report was taken as read.

MN leading in DM's absence. Regarding review of 2022 grading decisions, Grading Panel has provided comments to MM, MM has responded with some decisions, amended and reasons given for those not changed. Process is working well. Officials will be notified w/c 23rd January regarding any changes.

MG – line umpire assessment analysis to be kept on the radar for this group.

MC – members not always aware of implication of line umpire assessments at a tournament.

AW – clarification required around 4s and when they do or don't count. Consideration for extreme marks to give a better average. This was something KL had proposed previously, can this be looked at again at some point?

VM asked about referee and chair umpire grading structures.

KL confirmed the chair structure is working but not so well with the referee structure.

SW – what about court supervising? KL has submitted forms to try and address it but is currently only based on number of days worked.

MG – more referee evaluations need to take place – part of T&D actions from 2021.

AW – chair assessment is discussed on the day whereas line assessments are later and therefore difficult to remember what happened.

MC – Chair Umpire should share feedback to person on the lines on the day if possible.

MN – comments welcome on referee grading approach even if not a referee.

KL – Chief umpire’s role is to help team with technique and provide feedback.

MG – Grading Panel asked to meet to agree priorities.

13. Selections Panel Update

Report taken as read.

Timetable for selection process is working with a few lapses. MM is providing panel with selections. Dates for next selections as per MM’s report.

Selections Panel was asked to arrange meeting with MM to complete outstanding actions 2019-1-1, 2019-3-1, 2022-3-4, 2022-3-5 and 2022-3-6.

MG said the selection process is data heavy and would be good to find efficiencies and consider if process improvements can be made.

14. Training and Development Panel Update

The report was taken as read.

MN – some mentors have come forward. More needed, especially from a referee perspective

MN – CPD needs attention. Will ask committee members to help write tests and review. Maybe ask people outside of the committee to get involved. Ask for people to provide scenarios to use as tests. CD would like them by mid Feb, which is not achievable, maybe by mid-March. Not sure of the urgency maybe due to license expiries.

ACTION 2023-1-9: start a log to record certain situations / scenarios – gather from larger tournaments to help build tests.

T&D Panel

ACTION 2023-1-10: SC to post on social media to gather scenarios to feed into tests. Areas to be considered for tests.

SC

KL – Rob Wilkinson has been approached to mentor 2 people and he asked if that was OK.

ACTION 2023-1-11: response to be sent to RW

MN

MC asked if development group can have mentorship from both schemes?

MN – does not see this as an issue but can be reviewed where there is a priority issue if someone else requires a mentor. They do not ask if they are in the development group.

MN said it was difficult to follow the action log.

ACTION 2023-12: SJ to review format of action log and for ways to make it easier to review and manage.

SJ

T&D Panel was asked to complete outstanding actions by next meeting: 2021-5-3, 2021-5-8, 2021-5-9, 2022-5-3, 2022-5-6, 2-22-5-7, 2022-5-8.

ACTION: 2023-1-13: MN to speak to Chris Mann regarding how many evaluations happened last year. SC to join meeting with CM.

MN

15. Working Group Updates

- i) Culture Working Group – Report taken as read, no other updates provided.
- ii) Digital Working Group – MG thanked SC for the report. Posts most popular when they involve other people, reach over 3,000 around Christmas time and around the ticket ballot time. Images and videos do better. Better to post to avoid page lapsing.
- KL said that we need to be aware of which page to post depending on content, ABTO closed group vs public page.
- SC - cannot share out of the group as it is private so needs to go onto public page first and then share into private group.
- KL – Referee hints and tips on SC page is good to share with wider group.
- SC – will work on a series of hints and tips and then share on a weekly basis.
- ACTION 2023-1-14: All to email SC any content for posting.** **ALL**
- MN – anything that promotes tennis can be posted but stay away from player related items.
- iii) Fees and Expenses Working Group - The report was taken as read.
- VM – waiting for announcement to all members. DM is no longer part of this group. Activity will not be as intense as past few months but will keep an eye on inflation.
- KL – MM made updates based on feedback from ABTO.
- KL – new fees and expenses to be published w/c 23rd January.
- KL – Development group were made aware of new fees and expenses policy prior to issue, and discussed outside of that group
- MN – there may be a reason why information is shared with the development group and therefore it may be justified.
- ACTION 2023-1-15: MG to speak to MM regarding the development group knowing this information in advance and the fact they discussed it outside of the group.** **MG**
- MG – Graham Silvester sent a document regarding referee fees, which MG had forwarded to F&E Group and MM. Group to review and feedback and discuss with MM. Group could not find email so MG will resend it. MG needs to respond to Graham asap.
- MC – has a fee for Manager at non pro events been discussed?
- KL – money not available but maybe a “thanks” to be given.
- F&E Group was asked to complete outstanding actions 2022-2-19 and 2022-3-17 by next meeting.
- iv) Governance Working Group
- Report was taken as read.
- MG – annual deletion process for personal data beyond expiry date will need to be completed. MG and MN are in the process of updating the policy and will circulate asap.

MG – annual declaration of conflict of interest to be issued, signed, and returned.

ACTION 2023-1-16: GWG group to circulate Data Deletion forms and Conflict of Interest declarations.

GWG

SW – asked that procedure for uncontested elections to be considered.

KL – some chiefs and managers are sending emails to all officials displaying their email addresses.

VM - LTA are data controllers so should educate officials.

v) Reward and Recognition Group

Report was taken as read.

KL - 3 award winners have been presented with their salvers and photos have been issued to MG.

KL - Long service certificates have not been emailed yet.

MG – LTA Meritorious award – ABTO has submitted a nomination.

ACTION 2023-1-17: R&R group to check status of long service certificates.

R&R

R&R Group was asked to complete actions 2021-2-30 and 2022-4-21 by next meeting.

vi) Welfare Working Group (WWG) – The report was taken as read.

MN – awaiting MM comments on paper issued last year. Would like all committee members to become mental health first aiders. Would the LTA be able to source training as they are generally expensive?

SC – a wellbeing / employee assistance programme provided by LTA was made available to coaches. Could this be extended to officials?

ACTION 2023-1-18: WWG to investigate the assistance programme raised by SC.

WWG

The Welfare Group was asked to complete actions 2022-3-9 and 2022-3-10 by next meeting.

Proposals submitted by AW as per the report provided.

1. Family days – opportunity for family activities during tournaments

VM – make sure it doesn't become London centric.

MN – further discussions need to take place as part of group.

SW – how would this work, mingling of families, food, activities.

AW – involve non committee members, happy to contact LTA.

SC – important not to exclude off-court officials.

MG – geography and role of official needs to be considered so that event can be inclusive.

MN left the meeting at 20:08

2. Employers supporting officiating – for example, half days for officiating, career fairs.

SW – issue a survey to gauge opinion and approach.

SJ / MC / VM – what is in it for companies, changing policies to accommodate it.

VM - too big to try and change it and maybe needs to be part of a national campaign across other areas not just tennis and officiating

MG – challenges – maybe speak to the LTA People team to see what already exists.

SW – needs to be discussed further and come back with some recommendations.

ACTION 2023-1-19: Welfare Group to investigate above proposals in more detail and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

WWG

16. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA)

VM asked for this to be included as a topic. Report provided by VM taken as read.

VM – what is being done to promote inclusivity? Disappointing the LTA has not moved this forward.

VM – roles are offered without it being advertised or known how to get involved. How are opportunities offered. Challenge the LTA when making statements. Where is the impact? Support them to identify barriers. Why are things not changing? Remove barriers.

VM – could this be a standing item on the agenda? Reference to the 3 points in the report

MG – happy to be on agenda, but with specific objective, action, and discussion points. Something we need to put in our culture rather than constitution.

KL – first point is measurable, profile of membership and officials.

ACTION 2023-1-20: VM to put together actions for this initiative.

VM

ACTION 2023-1-21: MG to follow up on who can be added to the LTA IDEA group.

MG

The issue of the length of the meetings was raised by VM and requested an Impact assessment.

ACTION 2023-1-22: VM to put forward an idea of how to change the meetings. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss as a committee.

VM

SW left the meeting at 20:34

AW left the meeting at 20:35

17. AOB

No AOB items raised.

18. Close of Meeting

MG apologised for the overrunning of the meeting and thanked everyone for the meeting and inputs.

MG encouraged all Committee Members to try to close actions and include updates as part of papers so that we can spend less time in meetings on actions and focus on key items.

SJ to look at dates for next meeting based on current calendar and send out options.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 20:40.

Date of next meeting tbc.