



## Irish Squash Federation CLG Minutes of 20th Annual General Meeting

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025 at 12.30pm

**Venue:** Irish Sport HQ, NSC, Dublin 15

**Chairperson:** Rosie Barry (RB)

**Attendees:** **Board Members**

Rosie Barry, President (RB), John Dineen, Vice President (JD), Kevin Ahern, Honorary Treasurer (KA), Christine Mooney, Honorary Secretary (CM), Rose Hynes (RH), Susan Kelly (SK).

**Members**

Eddie Murphy, Paul Bree, Cathy Slade, Gerry Callanan, Donal Kelly, Justin O'Doherty, Geoff Wales, Steven Kelly, Rory Gillen, Abhishek Thapar, Marrison Mullen, Anuroop Balakrishnan, , Martin Purcell, Lorcan Walsh, Philip Ring.

**Staff**

Scott Graham, CEO (SG), Paul Nugent, CEO (PN), Tiernan Harris (TH).

**Present**

Shanti Soiralava

**Apologies:** Lee Healy (LH), Anne Costello (AC), Noel Storey (NS)

### 1. Attendance and Apologies

The notice of the meeting was read by CM which was circulated in accordance with the Memo & Articles. It was agreed that there was a quorum so the meeting could proceed.

RB made a short welcome address

### 2. Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Irish Squash Federation CLG.

Minutes of the meeting were taken as read and approved.

### 3. To Consider for adoption the Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

KA gave an overview of the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

The main points he mentioned were:

Income

- Squash Ireland receives 12 different types of grants from Sport Ireland, this reflects the high regard the organisation is held in by Sport Ireland.
- Covid Grants were no longer received in 2024.
- Non grant income increased by 18% in 2024.
- The goal is to match expenditure with income.

### Expenditure

- Staff salaries were up 56% reflecting increased staff numbers, which are largely funded by specific grant income.
- High Performance spending was up reflecting the organisation's support of our top class players.
- Development spending increased by 7% primarily relating to Sport Northern Ireland spending, Coaching qualification training and teacher training.
- Legal and Professional fees increased as did marketing and communications.

### Balance Sheet

- There is €414k in cash on the balance sheet, three quarters of which is restricted funds.
- Reserves are €208k which is a strong figure.

### Future Outlook

- There is always a risk when being largely funded by government grants, this is mitigated by our strong relationship with Sport Ireland and Sport NI
- High Performance funding has been prioritised for 2025 and we expect to receive increased HP funding from Sport Ireland in the future.
- We must be conscious that our costs are our investment in the future as we build a strong organisation to support our players from grass roots to elite athletes.

Finally OSK gave an unqualified audit report.

KA opened the discussion to questions from the members present.

Geoff Wales (GW) queried why €1,427 of expenses in the 2023 accounts appear to have been amalgamated with staff salaries. He stated that this reflected a lack of transparency. The response was that with total expenses of €930k, this level of detail was not to hand. Expenses typically related to hotels, travel and subsistence. The Board undertook to raise the query with the auditors and revert to GW.

Donal Kelly (DK) queried who prepared the financial statements. The response was that the financial statements are prepared by the Finance Officer and the auditors OSK. In the last 2 years we have changed our auditors, started using SAGE accounting package to monitor our finances and employed a finance professional in order to improve our financial monitoring and reporting.

GW queried why General Office Expenses in the 2023 accounts changed from €1,409 to €4,523 in the 2024 financial statements. He again reiterated that there is a lack of transparency. The response was that the total expenses for 2023 did not change but that some expenses had been recategorized to help with transparency. The Board undertook to raise the query with the auditors and revert to GW.

Gerry Callanan (GC) queried the masters income and expenses where a loss of €7k is shown. He questioned whether sponsorship relating to Masters tournaments was included in the Masters income or the Sponsorship and Funding line item. The response was that we believe that the Masters sponsorship is included in the Masters Income. However, the Board undertook to clarify and revert to GC.

GC queries a line item in the notes handed out at the meeting where venue hire for Fitzwilliam was listed. Fitzwilliam do not charge venue hire. The Board agreed to look into this and revert.

Rory Gillen (RG) raised the issue of the Irish Open and stated that all of the related income and expenditure should go through the Squash Ireland accounts. The Board accepted that this is a good point and we are having early discussions with Dara O'Flynn in FLTC about next years tournament and will take this suggestion on board.

GW commented on the explanatory document circulated at the meeting and advised that it would have been better if this had been circulated in advance to give members more time to go through it. The Board agreed with this point and will aim to get more transparency to the members earlier next year.

KA proposed the adoption of the financial statements to the meeting and JD seconded this motion. There were 19 votes in favour and the financial statements were adopted by the meeting.

**4. To appoint OSK as registered Auditor.**

CM explained that the annual cost of the audit is €3,840 plus VAT, totaling €4,735. A tender process was undertaken 2 years ago and a fixed rate was agreed for 3 years.

A vote was taken with 21 in favour. The appointment of OSK was approved.

**5. To consider for adoption the Annual Report of Squash Ireland for 2024/25.**

The Annual Report had been circulated before the meeting and the Board invited questions.

GC queried the increase in participation numbers for Masters tournaments. JD confirmed that there had been increased numbers and agreed to give GC a breakdown.

A query was raised in relation to numbers of members. Total members 3,369. Social 1,300 and full members 1,200. Tiernan Harris (TH) explained that the difference was made up of Juniors, students and others, mainly overseas players who join to play in tournaments but are not based in Ireland.

Donal Kelly (DK) queried the Mount Pleasant numbers, the report showed 212 but the actual number is closer to 110. JD agreed that DK had told him this before but he forgot to tell TH. DK queried whether there are similar issues with other clubs. JD advised that the numbers come from clubs during the club survey and are generally in line from one year to the next. Large changes are queried with the clubs. The club survey for 2025 has gone to the clubs and Squash Ireland will pay particular attention to multi racquet clubs to ensure that the numbers are as accurate as possible. DK also said that the statement that the club is full is not true.

Rory Gillen talked about player grants and advised that in his opinion they are very low. He stated that players need to go to tournaments and that Squash Ireland should fund this. He suggested using the approx. €200k in reserves to fund player grants.

SG responded and agreed that player grants are insufficient but that we are working to improving what is available. He sighted the following:

Sport Northern Ireland has given €9k to Hannah Craig and £2.5k to others. Squash Ireland has been approved as a High Performance Development Sport by Sport Ireland which has given us access to additional HP funding. Higher levels of HP funding require the athletes to have Olympic and World medal potential. We have received €50k in Sport Ireland HP funding in early 2025 plus Sport NI Medals & More funding which has enabled us to provide coaching, junior programmes and additional player support. We are reasonably confident that we will receive additional HP funding in 2025. In Northern Ireland Hannah Craig has been given access to the Sport NI Institute and we are trying to get access to the Sport Ireland Institute for our ROI players. This access provides assistance with strength and conditioning, nutritional support and training. We are working on a Sponsorship strategy and hoping to increase the amount of donor support we receive.

The Board agreed to consider the level of reserves and review whether to reduce the level to support HP players. Reserves are required to be held to fund unforeseen expenses and typically should fund at least 6 months operation in the event of an emergency. Some of the reserves relate to restricted funds. The Board agreed to review this.

Martin Purcell (MP) queried the numbers of players in the annual report. He questioned are we getting everything we are owed? People may be playing that are not paid up members. Some league players may not be fully paid up. JD responded that this is difficult to confirm because we are dependent on clubs to report the player numbers accurately. We have introduced a system where a player must be a member to enter a tournament and this has improved player numbers.

MP also raised the issue of improving club facilities and getting more courts built. His club Kilworth applied for Capital Grants and he thinks we could do more to help and encourage clubs to get capital grants. SG responded that when the Capital Grant Scheme opens up, which is expected in 2026 we will help clubs. We ran webinars last time. There is strong competition for these funds and the last scheme was well oversubscribed with only 3 or 4 squash clubs being successful. We will start contacting clubs in the near future so that they are ready with applications when the Scheme opens up. MP agreed to share their experience and documentation templates. SG advised that we have had help from 2into3 in the past and will use them again to support clubs.

Abhishek Thapar (AT) commented that the social media presence of Squash Ireland has improved, he complimented Squash Ireland on this.

The annual report was approved by a majority of the members present.

**6. To ratify the co-option of officers to the Board:**

- Kevin Ahern, Honorary Treasurer – approved
- Susan Kelly, Independent Board Member – approved
- Rose Hynes, Ordinary Board Member – approved

**7. CEO Report**

SG presented the CEO report.

Scott joined Squash Ireland in August 2023 and there has been a lot of change since then. The Constitution was rewritten, the Board was enhanced with the addition of Independent Directors, the organisation went from previously having one staff member to now having a strong team. The relationships with our funders have improved and we have been nominated for NGB of the year for the last 2 years in a row. Recently there have been positive meetings with the Minister for Sport which we hope will result in more favourable outcomes for capital grant funding.

SG then outlined progress under the 6 Pillars of the Squash Ireland strategic plan, fleshing out the bullet points in his presentation.

In summary, we are not perfect and a lot more needs to be improved upon, in particular:

- Facilities – making progress on developing a national centre and improving club facilities.
- Junior Development - getting development officers working closely with clubs to improve junior sections, to improve coaching and to ensure that safeguarding is in place. Starting a junior programme can be daunting and the aim is to have a person there to help support clubs looking to set up or grow Junior programmes.
- Schools – developing coaching programmes and competition structures. Good progress has been made in Northern Ireland and we are hoping to take this nationwide.
- Performance – supporting players that are committed to squash and developing the next generation.

SG concluded that for him personally this has been a really enjoyable year, it has been great to dive into the world of squash. He thanked everyone.

**8. To transact any other business of which proper notice has been given to the Secretary.**

Motion 1: The Motion proposes that Squash Ireland commit to immediately implementing a rebate scheme where 40% of affiliation fees collected by Squash Ireland is returned to the provinces.

Paul Bree presented the motion and made the following points:

- The rebate was last paid in 2024
- Squash players are encouraged and retained by clubs and not by squash Ireland.
- Clubs drive membership and the rebate provide provinces with a small basic income to help them breath more life into quiet clubs.
- The rebate is a basic platform for the province to work with and work from, it helps increase affiliation of players.

Kevin Ahern responded on behalf of the Board with the following points:

- The proposal makes a huge amount of sense. Board is agreeable to provide funding to the provinces on an equitable basis.
- We disagree only in terms of the detail. Does 40% make sense for one province & not another.
- In principal the Board agrees but not all provinces are in the same position.
- Total affiliation fees are about €68k, the rebate would be €27k which is not an insignificant figure.
- The Board is suggesting that we have the discussion at the IPF and agree to fund the provinces.
- The Board recommends declining the motion.

Eddie Murphy made the following points:

- In the past Munster received this funding and could not have survived without it.
- Leinster never collected the funding and for Connacht the amount was very small.
- Looking at the way the Board is working he urged members not to vote in favour of the motion. Connacht and Muster could discuss funding requirements separately. Leinster do not need this rebate.

Rosie Barry made the following points:

- Squash Ireland is strategically stronger if we have 4 strong Provincial Associations.
- Want them to have appropriate funding.
- Connacht may require more funding than other provinces.
- Consultation should be done through IPF.
- An alternative proposal would be that each provincial association gets core grant funding that they can rely on every year. This could support Junior coaching. This would align with our strategic plan.
- Providing funding for the provincial associations would make us stronger from a Governance point of view. In the KOSI governance report done 2 years ago the point was raised that Squash Ireland needs stronger oversight of the provincial associations. They need to have appropriate governance in place, with appropriate roles filled and Squash Ireland needs confidence from a financial perspective over banking and accounts.
- Squash Ireland is giving a commitment is to ensure that the provinces are suitably funded.
- An IPF meeting will be arranged before the start of the next season

A vote was taken. 6 members voted in favour and 12 against. The motion was defeated.

Clarification was sought on whether the Board could vote. It was confirmed that the board are members and entitled to vote.

Motion 2: That within three months of this AGM, the auditors will submit an addendum to the accounts, which details the total amount of expenses incurred and payments made to each member of the Board for the calendar year 2024.

Geoff Wales presented the motion. He made the following points:

- He wants more transparency from the Board in relation to expenses.
- Lee Healy a board member is receiving expenses for refereeing duties.

- He wants to know what Board members are doing and not doing.

Kevin Ahern responded on behalf of the Board with the following points:

- The Annual report sets out the total amount of expenses received by all Board members relating to both their work on the Board and any other work they do on behalf of Squash Ireland.
- There is transparency, the information has been provided in the annual report.
- To detail individual payments is not standard and not appropriate.
- The concept of transparency is reasonable but putting an addendum to the accounts would not be practicable.
- The Board recommends that the motion is rejected.

There was a long discussion and the following points were made.

- It is agreed that transparency is a good thing and the Board is committed to giving as much information to the members as is practicable.
- Disclosure is appropriate on an aggregate basis giving information on an individual basis is inappropriate.
- DK raised that for the world championships a staff member was sent and a coach was not sent. SG advised that the staff member was funded from a specific Sport Ireland Special Project Grant as Sport Ireland wish to support NGB personnel attending international meetings and that two coaches were in attendance at the World Championships.
- The Board is supposed to be strategic yet some members are still performing operational roles. SG advised that it takes time to make the Board totally strategic and that operational roles will be phased out. RB advised that last year we struggled to get sufficient board members elected to form a quorum and therefore could not have an exclusively strategic board.

Following the discussion GW withdrew the motion. He made the point that at the deadline for submitting motions that all the financial information was not available. The Board undertook to improve the provision of information for subsequent AGM's.

Justin O'Doherty from Old Belvedere Rugby raised the issue of the club being demolished to make room for padel courts. He thanked Rosie for her support during the process for attending meetings and for her input. He said the club appreciated Rosie's support and thanked her again.

Rosie Barry thanked everyone for their time and attendance at the AGM. She advised that members are welcome to get in contact with the team with any queries and that we need to hear from members if they want to raise anything.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded.

Christine Mooney  
Hon Secretary