

# MINUTES FIR AGM 2019

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 14:00 – 17:30**

**Online ZOOM meeting**

**Chair:** FIR Executive President Duncan Stahl

**Minutes:** FIR Vice-President Graham King

## **Final Agenda**

- 1) Welcome note members
- 2) Confirmation of minutes of AGM 12<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 (published on [www.racketlon.net](http://www.racketlon.net))
- 3) President Report, Duncan Stahl
- 4) Confirmation of final Financial and Auditor's Report 2020, Amke Fischer (Treasurer)
- 5) Discharge of Executive President and Council Members remaining in office:
  - Duncan Stahl (GBR)
  - Anna-Klara Ahlmer (SWE)
  - Dan Busby (GBR)
  - Amke Fischer (GER)
  - Kresten Hougaard (DEN)
  - Kirsten Kaptein (NED)
  - Graham King (SUI)
  - Poku Salo (FIN)
  - Marcel Weigl (AUT)Election of new Council Member:
  - Jean Michot (FRA)
- 6) New FIR members, Racketlon Norway
- 7) Finance preview, 2021 Budget and beyond, Duncan Stahl/Amke Fischer
- 8) Player nationality and the determination of a country's "Racketlon size", Graham King
- 9) Requests by FIR members:
  - Romania
    1. Proposed changes to the Statutes regarding General Meetings (GM) & the addition of "Principles" to Art 1. Title (see below)
  - Austria, Latvia, Romania
    2. Junior Development Programme, report by FIR
    3. Corona-Situation, report by FIR and member states (especially where FIR World Tour events should be held)
    4. Introduction of FIR Blitz tournaments, with vote (see details below)
    5. FIR current member status official papers status quo, report by FIR
- 10) Place and Date of next AGM
- 11) Any other business

**25 Countries present or delegated their voting power with a total of 60 votes:**

<b>Member Country</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Australia	Leigh Sands	1
Austria	Marcel Weigl	5
Canada	delegated to USA	1
Czech Republic	Milena Zeithamlova	3
Denmark	Morten Jakslund	3
Finland	Poku Salo	3
France	Jean Michot	6
Germany	Christian Börner	6
Great Britain	James Pope	6
Hong Kong	Chun Cheung	1
India	KK Cheema	2
Latvia	Uldis Dzirkalis	2
Netherlands	Guus van De Burgt	1
New Zealand	delegated to Australia	1
Romania	Radu Ionescu	1
Russia	Maxim Levitin	1
Sweden	Daniel Majetic	5
Switzerland	Karim Hanna	5
Thailand	Frank Kleiber	1
USA	Patrick Moran	1
Greece	delegated to Austria	1
Luxembourg	Jan Michalek	1
Malta	Duncan Stahl	1
Norway	Joel Durston	1
Spain	Niall McCracken	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>

**60 out of 73 possible votes were present at the AGM, which is 82 % of the total number of votes and more than 37 needed for quorum. The AGM was thus able to take final decisions on all points on the Agenda. For the normal majority (50%) a minimum of 31 votes were needed. For the qualified majority (66.67%) a minimum of 41 votes were needed.**

### **11 Countries not present with a total of 13 votes**

<b>Member Country</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Afghanistan	1
Belgium	3
Croatia	1
Estonia	1
Israel	1
Poland	1
Turkey	1
Hungary	1
Slovakia	1
South Africa	1
Singapore	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

### **Non-voting attendees**

1. Amke Fischer (GER, FIR Council)
2. Joachim Gersdorf (GER, Auditor)
3. Kirsten Kaptein (NED, FIR Council)
4. Graham King (SUI, FIR Council)
5. Roar Fundingsrud (NOR)
6. Tore Lund (NOR)

### **1) Welcome note, members (Duncan Stahl)**

FIR President Duncan Stahl opened the AGM at 14:00, took over as chair, welcomed all representatives, praising those from afar who had dialled in despite the time-zone differences. He presented briefly the agenda, requesting to cover point 9.3 Corona Situation Report earlier within point 7 Finance Preview, as it was budget-relevant. The AGM approved this change of order unanimously. He announced FIR Vice President Graham King as meeting secretary to take the minutes, who confirmed the attendees and declared that the 50% quorum necessary for the AGM to take decisions had been reached.

### **2) Confirmation of minutes of the last AGM**

The minutes of the last AGM, held online on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020, published on [www.racketlon.net](http://www.racketlon.net), were unanimously approved by the AGM.

### **3) President's Report (Duncan Stahl)**

Duncan Stahl presented his President's Report, reminding the AGM that this report would be more backward-looking, as he would cover the Corona situation and its impact on the 2021 FIR World Tour under point 7. Finance Preview.

He stated that FIR activities are normally dominated by tournaments in the FIR World Tour, and that with no tournaments having been possible since the Luxembourg Open in February 2020 (except for the Elite-only Austrian Open in November), the main emphasis had been on preserving the thriving Racketlon community. He said it had been a difficult challenge to keep the Racketlon community together given the circumstances, but the high level of interest shown in the Austrian Open, both in livestream and various discussion groups, had confirmed that a high level of interest in Racketlon remains. The FIR social media campaign had been key in combating one of the biggest dangers of existing players drifting away from Racketlon and keeping the existing community engaged and interested in the sport.

In addition, FIR has also been aggressively promoting the sport by going out into the individual sports. As a result, he had been contacted via social media by a number of interested people around the world, such as:

- the players from Norway regarding setting up their new venue in Mysen
- Fabrice Mary, an ex-pro tennis player from Sweden, who wants to set up sports venues and introduce Racketlon
- Ibrahim Gul, an ex-pro Pakistani squash player, who was Head Coach in Singapore and wants to set up one of the largest centres in Asia
- Karim Darwish, an ex World #1 squash player who wants to include Racketlon in his various resorts in Egypt and throughout the Middle-East
- Ennio Ramirez, a Peruvian squash player and member of the Young Persons IOC Board in Peru, who is interested in introducing Racketlon in Lima and throughout South America on the back of the work done there for the recent Pan American Games which included the building of extensive racket sports facilities

Duncan expressed his conviction that this clearly demonstrates the power of social media for growing our sport, and presented a slide of social media statistics, showing a rising trend of publicity and awareness, up until the financially induced reduction in the marketing budget 5 or 6 months ago. His target is to maintain a yearly increase in social media awareness of at least 15%-20%. Duncan went on to reiterate his plans to engage famous professional players from the individual sports to serve as Racketlon Ambassadors, and cited the examples of his contact to Stefanos Tsitsipas, who has already promoted Racketlon on his social media pages, and Jo Wilfried Tsonga's good relations with Racketlon France, probably the most proactive country on social media. Plans are to engage further players such as Timo Boll and a number of squash players introduced via Nick Matthew. In addition, Michelle Li, a professional badminton player, is already serving as a Racketlon Ambassador for USA.

Duncan stated FIR will be encouraging national federations to grow Racketlon by organising more social media workshops, focussing initially on those countries with an active website and social media presence. He pointed out that for this to be successful, it would only be initiated once tournaments had started up again.

Duncan stated he is looking to professional organisations outside of the Racketlon players and FIR Council to help promote our activities, observing that while many players have their heart in the right place, they are not always that well-equipped to offer the best help in some specific areas.

Senior contacts at renowned organisations would be asked to serve as external consultants to the FIR Council.

Duncan reiterated the financial difficulties presented by the lack of tournaments, which normally account for ca. 65% of FIR's revenue. Although there are plans for tournaments later this year, FIR has initiated some fund-raising activities to ensure there is enough cash available for current needs.

- high quality sports shirts produced by Victor, sold to players at a modest profit, will be going on offer next month

- a request for donations will follow, awarding the "Racketlon Angels" (name to be confirmed) who contribute EUR 500, 1'000 or 3'000 various benefits, such as sports-shirt, free tournament entry, advertising of their company by FIR etc.

Duncan invited the AGM to suggest any other such new ideas.

Duncan reminded the AGM of the increased Player Licence fee, as determined by the last AGM, and stated that he will be encouraging players to buy their 2021 licence now, even without knowing when their next tournament will be, to boost the EUR 900 already collected this year.

In conclusion, Duncan summarised his targets for the coming year:

- 2 new member countries
- 2 new tournament venues
- 15%-20% more social media coverage and awareness
- Activate Racketlon Ambassadors, once tournaments start up again
- Line up a panel of external consultants to advise the FIR Council

#### **4) Confirmation of Financial and Auditor's Report (Amke Fischer, Treasurer)**

Amke presented the Financial report for 2020, commenting that three different budgets had been discussed throughout the year: Budget A – Business As Usual, Budget B – 50% of tournaments played, Budget C – no more tournaments after "lockdown". Budget C, with a total deficit of EUR13k was the final version and so was presented at this AGM.

Income Statement (PnL) 2020:

• Income	EUR	17'702	Budget	EUR	14'003
• Expenses	EUR	25'603	Budget	EUR	26'835
• Deficit	EUR	7'901	Budget	EUR	12'832

Balance Sheet 2020:

• Retained earnings	EUR	14'930
• Deficit	EUR	7'901
• Own Capital 31.12.2020	EUR	7'029

Amke indicated that the income was nearly EUR 4k over budget, largely as a result of increased revenue from player licences and the marketing contribution fund. The expenses were also ca. EUR 1k below budget, despite the high bank/FX-conversion charges thanks to the reduced marketing fees/expenses.

Marcel Weigl queried the cash balance at the end of 2021. Amke responded that this was ca EUR 7k.

Karim Hanna asked about the FX loss. Graham explained that although FIR has EUR & CHF PayPal accounts, and EUR & CHF bank accounts, PayPal allows transfers to bank accounts only via CHF. As FIR's PayPal revenue and creditor's expenses are almost always in EUR, two FX conversions (with PayPal's at a punitive rate) are unavoidable. Graham said he had unsuccessfully tried multiple avenues of avoiding these costs and welcomes any alternative ideas.

Amke invited Joachim Gersdorf, FIR Auditor, to comment on the 2021 financials. Joachim praised the FIR team for making all finance information permanently and readily available to him via the FIR DropBox, making it very easy for him to follow the income and expenses. He valued the collaborative approach of the FIR team in clarifying any Auditor questions. The Auditor's report was shown to the AGM prior to voting.

The AGM approved the 2020 financials and the 2020 Auditor's Report unanimously.

### **5) Discharge of Council Members (Graham King)**

Graham took over to explain that the entire FIR Council, including the Executive President, was elected until 2022 and so do not need to be voted in again. Instead, the AGM was invited to vote on giving them collectively a discharge for their duties during 2020. He read out the list of Council members:

- Anna-Klara Ahlmer (Sweden)
- Dan Busby (Great Britain)
- Amke Fischer (Germany)
- Kresten Hougaard (Denmark)
- Kirsten Kaptein (Netherlands)
- Graham King (Switzerland)
- Poku Salo (Finland)
- Duncan Stahl (Great Britain)
- Marcel Weigl (Austria)

The AGM unanimously gave the President and the entire Council a discharge of their duties.

Graham announced that the Council had chosen Jean Michot from Racketlon France to replace outgoing Council member Hans Van Daele, who resigned in 2019, saying that he is very instrumental in Racketlon France and had already had an active participation in FIR Council meetings this year. Jean then briefly introduced himself to the AGM.

Radu Ionescu inquired whether regulations do not mandate the publication of open Council positions for members to propose one of their players to take this post. Karim Hanna, a Swiss lawyer by profession, explained on behalf of Graham that the FIR statutes stipulate that the Council alone is responsible for replacing outgoing Council members, not an AGM.

Marcel pointed out a further vacant position within the Council to replace outgoing member Frank Kleiber and anyone interested should contact Duncan or Graham.

### **6) New FIR members (Duncan Stahl)**

Duncan introduced Norway as a new FIR member, saying he had been contacted by the Racket Center in Mysen, a very nice centre one hour outside of Oslo. He put them in touch with Joel Durston, a Racketlon player from GB who has been living in Oslo for a few years. He is delighted to

say that Racketlon Norway is now established at the centre in Mysen, with Joel Durston as President and that several Racketlon events were already held before it was closed due to Covid restrictions.

Marcel Weigl inquired as to the status of the official papers. Duncan responded that Racketlon Norway had been registered in Norway as a club, with intentions to register as an association later. Duncan said he was delighted to be bringing a FIR World Tour event to Mysen in 2022.

At Jean Michot's request, Joel explained that he knows of a great network around Oslo, especially in squash and tennis, that there is a high potential for growth and that he looks forward to seeing the venue once it has re-opened.

Karim Hanna pointed out that, although not a problem this time, the correct procedure is for the FIR Council to approve new members and then to notify all other members. Only if there are any objections placed within 30 days, is an AGM required to vote on accepting the country as a new FIR member. Graham replied that this procedure will be followed in future.

## **7) Finance Preview, Budget (Duncan Stahl)**

### Corona Report (member request 9.3)

As announced at the beginning of the AGM, Duncan began with the Corona Report, as it is budget-relevant. He commented that all 2021 tournaments up until the Swiss Open in June had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions. He listed the remaining already-planned and published tournaments, pointing out the huge uncertainty around the planned 2021 World Championships in Austria. He added that due to the nature of the complex governmental funding, a downgrading or downscaling is not an option, and that the FIR Council had agreed to make a Go/NoGo decision by April 20th, 4 months ahead of the tournament. Marcel Weigl elaborated that if the tournament cannot go ahead with the projected 500 players in both open and age categories, then the only option is to reschedule to August 2022, instead holding a SWT event this year, possibly again for Elite players only. Duncan added that in this case of the world championships not happening as planned in Austria this year, there are multiple options in discussion to hold a reduced World Championships consisting of singles only at other locations later in the year.

Duncan presented a summary compiled from Tournament Director status reports, showing the estimated probability of their tournament going ahead and asked the AGM for their thoughts on the fairness of holding tournaments when not all players can participate, given the issues around international travel, vaccination programmes, vaccine passports, player inability or unwillingness to travel etc. James Pope said he agreed to holding tournaments, even though he was not expecting to be able to get vaccinated and participate before the end of the year. Joel Durston agreed tournaments should go ahead as soon as is safe. Jean Michot also agreed on holding tournaments, but was concerned of the financial risks. Duncan responded that the risk lies largely with the Tournament Director who should make sure they have a flexible contract in place with the tournament venue, and that players should ensure cancellation options on any flight/hotel reservations Guus van de Burgt also agreed, but commented that maybe the World Championship status or the awarding ranking points should be considered for review. Duncan stated that he fully understands, but feels it is nevertheless important to proceed. Karim Hanna pointed out that there could be an option to freeze ranking points for players from specified individual countries who were unable play at tournaments.

Duncan summarised his and the AGM's belief that whereas there are negative elements in holding tournaments which not all players can attend, the importance of holding them far outweighs the disadvantages to players who cannot join in.



## Budget

Duncan presented the 2021 budget, produced on a best-possible basis and approved by a majority decision at the last Council meeting under the assumption that 6 of the 9 tournaments already scheduled for this year will take place. He noted the high degree of uncertainty, but added that some flexibility is implicit in that reduced income from less tournaments has as a direct consequence less marketing and travel costs. He added that the Council reviews the finances regularly and are committed to calling an EGM for a member decision on a revised budget, should it become clear that a significant reduction in the number of planned tournaments is inevitable.

Radu Ionescu shared at length his thoughts on the budget, citing his extensive knowledge and experience in business, working with budgets and employing staff:

- he felt that mid-March is too late to present a budget for the year
- he felt that with a budget of ca. 40k for a typical year, and 17.7k for 2020, a budget of 29k for 2021 clearly cannot stand
- he felt the structure of the budget was inadequate and that the income should not only come from FIR members, players and tournaments
- he said FIR members contribute EUR 6'130 towards the budget, if everyone pays. He felt it does not feel right that FIR should depend on FIR membership fees, when other international associations do not charge their members this year
- he said he was amazed that there was no budget for income from sponsorship, and cannot understand that FIR should not be doing everything possible to achieve this and believed that income from sponsors in 2021 is realistic
- he felt that a yearly salary of EUR 12k to employ the President for 2 days a week (equivalent to ca. EUR 50 per day), which makes up the majority of the budget, was excessive and should be completely struck off the budget, as FIR cannot spend money it does not have
- he said he was shocked to learn that there was still EUR 7'000 cash in the bank at the end of 2020 and that to try to analyse a budget without this knowledge is unbelievable and unacceptable
- he then formulated his two proposals to the AGM:

Proposal 1) that the EUR 7k in the bank at the beginning of the year should be put aside as a provision, in case of any emergency, and should not be available to spend

Proposal 2) that given there are no tournaments and so nothing to coordinate, the budget for the President's salary and the marketing costs should be reduced to zero and should only be reintroduced once the World Tour has started again.

Amke stated that Proposal 1 is not necessary, as the 7k cash in the bank remains on the balance sheet and so is included in neither the PnL statement nor the budget. As FIR presented a break-even budget, there are no plans to touch the cash reserves. Any proposal to exclude it from the budget is therefore irrelevant.

Duncan stated that he felt that, while agreeing with Radu on the long-term goal to diversify FIR's income including attracting sponsorship, any monetary income from sponsorship within the next 12 months is completely unrealistic due to the continued worldwide uncertainty caused by covid; as the budget is intended to be a realistic representation of financial development over the next 12 months, it is therefore not appropriate to include it in the 2021 budget. He denied that there is less work for him to do just because there are no tournaments, and in fact has been working far harder and many more hours than in "normal years". He added that it is commonly accepted that in order to succeed and grow, it is vital for sporting organisations to have paid employees, and that FIR had had a President for 3 years who worked on a voluntary basis doing what he could in his spare time, and it had become clear that this did not work.



Graham fully agreed with Amke that the money in the bank account is already a provision and is not included in the budget, making Radu's proposal not to touch it irrelevant. He added the budget put forward may be optimistic, but breaks even and so there is enough money available to pay for Duncan's salary without causing a loss for FIR, so there is no need to strike his salary from the budget. He reminded the AGM that any significant changes to the expected tournaments will trigger an EGM anyway, and that that would be the correct time to have further discussions on this topic. He felt no need to make changes to a budget which breaks even just in case future events might make it not achievable, especially when it has already been agreed to react quickly and make the necessary changes if they should happen.

Marcel added he was personally against this budget because he does not feel it is realistic, but agreed with Duncan that it is not possible to run an organisation without a salary, and that given his experience as FIR President, he is sure Duncan works more than his allotted two days a week, even in the current situation. He requested two amendments: that the reserves should not be touched, and that the Council should clearly state on which positions in the expenses would be cut if we cannot come up with income. He felt we should not take any loans.

Joel Durston agreed via Zoom chat that the budgeted fee for a paid employee is very reasonable.

Guus Van de Burgt pointed out that marketing expenses are covered by MCF, being roughly equal, so any reduction in this revenue automatically leads to equivalently reduced costs. He added that contrary to Radu's claim, FIR is doing something to generate other revenue and services (as outlined by the planned fundraising efforts in the president's report). He added that any necessary reduction in Duncan's salary should be linked to a reduction in his tasks, but that this should be analysed separately, as it is too time-consuming to do in an AGM.

Jean Michot added that he feels Duncan clearly deserves credits for the job he has done so far.

Frank Kleiber added his belief that voluntary work in FIR will not produce the results Duncan is achieving, and that if FIR wants growth, then it has to be paid for reasonably.

Karim Hanna added his opinion that if no one works for FIR, it will fail. He also asked about an attempt to reduce the Tournament Software charges, given there are no tournaments. Graham explained that much of the software is still used, such as keeping the historical tournament result and player rankings online for player query or FIR's marketing research, and the use of the player DB for various administrative or technical purposes. Nevertheless, he did, at Marcel Weigl's suggestion, approach the supplier earlier this year and managed to get a 25% reduction on the World Ranking costs, given they were frozen most of the year.

The AGM voted to approve the budget (38 votes for, 10 against, 11 absent votes not cast),

### **8) Player nationality and member "Racketlon Size" (Graham King)**

Graham summarised the status quo, that a player specifies a country of nationality and of residence (one of which needs to be a FIR member) for their account with tournament software, and chooses a nationality each time they purchase their player licence for the year. The FIR statutes stipulate that a country's Racketlon size, and hence their voting power and membership fees, is determined by the number of players on the FIR World Ranking "from that country", without specifying how this is determined.

He explained that in most cases, the player nationality is used, but in cases where the player's nationality is not a FIR member, or when the player chooses a different country for the player licence, then it has been left to him to use his best judgement to assign the players appropriately. For most countries this has no great impact, but in some cases can lead to differences in their Racketlon size. Graham argued that the rules should not allow such an arbitrary decision, and that the FIR Council had modified the Ranking Regulations to define a Ranking Nationality based on nationality alone, or (if the country of nationality is not a FIR member), then their residence. He added that a country has the right to request that a player assigned to them because of residence should not be counted towards their Racketlon size if the player does not participate in their Racketlon activities.

Karim Hanna stated that whereas he agrees with the above, he does not agree to players being assigned to a country without their permission, and that this is normally not allowed in any other such similar organisations. Graham responded that this ruling had been in place since even before he joined FIR i.e. for at least the past 10 years, and that the main difficulty faced is the enormous diversity amongst FIR members, ranging from country members with only one player, to those with hundreds and very well-established infrastructures. Nevertheless, he felt it could be analysed within the Council with possible introduction of a revised system for a few agreed, established FIR members, and later rolled out to other countries. He invited Karim to participate as a guest in the Council meeting to discuss it.

Graham added that this change, although already published in the revised Ranking Regulations on racketlon.net, will become effective only from 2022.

## **9) Member Requests**

### **9.1 Amendment to Statutes (Romania)**

Graham explained that Radu had agreed with him ahead of the AGM that Graham should present his amendment four proposals to change the statutes. As all four changes were independent of each other, Graham proposed to take each individually. He added that a 2/3 majority is required to approve any changes to the statutes.

Karim Hanna inquired whether these requests had been submitted in accordance with the statutes i.e. 30 days prior to the AGM. Duncan confirmed this was not the case, upon which Karim pointed out that formally, the AGM may discuss the points, and even take a vote on them, but that if any member were to challenge the decision [during the notice period following distribution of the minutes], then the statutes could not be changed. It was agreed to proceed on this basis.

a) Art. 1: change name of title from "NAME, SEAT, PURPOSE AND LANGUAGE" to „NAME, SEAT, PURPOSE, **PRINCIPLES** AND LANGUAGE”.

Graham explained that the motivation for this request was the multiple references to the "FIR Principles" throughout the statutes, with no clear indication as to where these are defined. Graham stated that Radu's request to rename the title closes this gap, and that he could see no adverse consequences to making this change.

The AGM approved the change to the statutes unanimously.

b) Art 7.1: Add "The GM can be held physically or online”.

Graham explained that the option of holding virtual FIR general meetings had already been introduced with Karim Hanna's support at the last AGM and was now comprehensively documented in Art 7.4. As Radu had since withdrawn his proposal, no further discussion was necessary.

c) Art. 7.1.2: Add “When GM is held online, member countries are not allowed to pass their votes to another FIR member”.

Graham explained that the reason behind allowing FIR members to delegate their votes to another member was to ensure that their voice can still be heard, even if they cannot attend the General Meeting, whether due to extreme time-zone differences, clashes with other duties, or any other such reason. He added that for this particular AGM, Canada had allocated their vote to USA, New Zealand to Australia and Greece to Austria.

Radu argued that members need to be kept involved and to be made to care about FIR, and that once per year, they need to make the effort to attend the AGM. He added, if they are not present, this shows that the status of their involvement, and that although it might help achieve quorum, we lose their involvement and in the end members.

Jean Michot disagreed, adding that a GM which required e.g. New Zealand, although they cannot take part, should allow them to cast their vote via another member.

Duncan agreed with Radu’s sentiment to keep members active, but didn’t think that taking away their vote is the right way to achieve this, adding that since FIR started online meetings, it has never been even close to relying on delegated votes to reach quorum. Further, New Zealand, who delegated their vote to Australia for this AGM is very well engaged with considerable Racketlon activity, so it may not be assumed that their non-attendance is a sign of inactivity. The same also applies to Canada.

Frank Kleiber said he sees no reason to punish a country just because they cannot participate in a GM, as there could be hundreds of valid reasons why a country member cannot attend an AGM, and that FIR should respect this.

The AGM rejected the proposal to change to the statutes (42 votes against, 1 vote for, 17 votes not cast).

d) Art. 7.6: Change the 30 day term for member proposals and nominations for the GM to 10 days

Graham read out that article 7.6 of the statutes, interpreting it to mean that FIR members must submit their requests at any time throughout the year, but before they had received the AGM agenda.

Marcel Weigl considered the statutes to be wrong, as this would imply that all member proposals for this AGM would be invalid, even though they complied on this point with the AGM invitation.

Duncan agreed that the AGM invitation turned out to be inadvertently in contravention to this article of the statutes. Marcel explained that RFA sends out an initial agenda 20 days in advance of the AGM, and later a final agenda once the member proposals are known, in the same way as Duncan had for this AGM, which he feels is correct. Graham added that this article of the statutes has also not changed since he joined FIR over 10 years ago, and that the same procedure is followed now, as it was then when Marcel was President i.e. an initial agenda slightly more than 20 days ahead of the AGM, with a final agenda later when all the member proposals are known.

Graham then handed over to Karim to offer his expert opinion. Karim pointed out that just because it has always been done this way does not make it right, nor must it dictate the way it should be done in the future. He added that the provisions are very clear, that all requests must be submitted 30 days in advance of the AGM so that a final agenda can be issued to all members at least 20 days (statutory Swiss law and so cannot be changed) prior to the AGM, to give the members time to prepare; this agenda may no longer be changed, other than for cosmetic reasons. This applies to all organisations he knows of.

Radu asked if the correct interpretation is a Gentleman's agreement that FIR members must receive the AGM invitation 40 days in advance. Karim corrected this, stating that it is the date which needs to be communicated in advance, and that the final agenda must follow no later than 20 days prior to the AGM date. Karim's recommendation to FIR is to communicate the AGM date 60 days in advance. Even better, though not mandatory, would be for an AGM to set the date of the following AGM as recommended (but not mandated) in the statutes.

Radu then agreed to withdraw his proposal. Graham agreed that the statutes have no need for change on this point, and that FIR would in future execute them better than it had done for the past 20 years.

#### 9.2 Request for FIR to report on the Junior Development Programme (Austria, Latvia, Romania)

Duncan reported that following the launch of FIR's cooperation with ERU on the Junior Development Programme, he had requested all FIR members to name an individual who would be the best point of contact for junior development. Duncan listed the members who responded; AUS, AUT, CAN, FIN, FRA, GER, GBR, IND, LUX, MLT, NED, SUI. He will issue a reminder to the remainder. He has been in contact with others to find out how FIR can best introduce Racketlon into schools and clubs, by developing a form of Racketlon which is easier to develop and to promote, as detailed in the last AGM. He reported there are several Racketlon players in the UK who are also physical education teachers and Head of Sports, including Izzy Bramhall, who works with hundreds of different schools. Duncan reported they have agreed to talk amongst themselves and report back to FIR on the best approach to take within their syllabus, planning to run trials with PE classes and after-school clubs in 4-5 schools in the coming Summer term and give feedback on the most effective approach to take. Duncan will seek to understand, country by country, the most effective means of introducing Youth Racketlon there. Plans will then be developed together with ERU on how to address the programme most effectively with schools for the next academic year. Marcel said he would be pleased to continue to collaborate with FIR on this.

Jean Michot observed that Racketlon France organises holiday camps for juniors in 3 cities (30 children per camp) thanks to some players who are also sports teachers.

#### 9.3 Request for FIR to report on the Corona Situation (Austria, Latvia, Romania)

This request was handled under point 7.

#### 9.4 Request to introduce FIR Blitz Tournaments (Austria, Latvia, Romania)

Duncan pointed out that some of the details behind the proposal can be seen in the AGM invitation and that FIR had been thinking for quite some time on how to put on tournaments during Corona restrictions more easily and flexibly. He stated that FIR basically fully supports the proposed principle of being able to announce tournaments later, define a later cut-off for player registration and generally relax some of the other conditions. He felt the best way forward is for the AGM to vote on the principle, but leave the World Tour Committee to work out the details (a meeting is already planned for next Thursday), and so preferred not to discuss in too much detail at the AGM. Duncan added that he would be happy to invite anyone else to the meeting if they felt they could contribute towards it. Jean Michot asked for which kind of players such tournaments were intended. Duncan confirmed the intention is to be open to international Racketlon players as well as domestic players, but that this and various other details, such as the tournament category and ranking points had yet to be worked out. Jean felt this is a good idea, observing that each player would have to be flexible with expenses, but he was unsure how easily this will be possible for players travelling from far away. Duncan agreed, but added it is no different to normal tournaments recently, which have also been cancelled regularly over the past year and a half. Milena Zeithamlova requested by Zoom chat that international events should be announced no later than 3 weeks prior to the tournament, with entry deadline Monday before tournament weekend. Jean added that the earlier a tournament is

announced, the better, though Duncan countered that the principle of this proposal is to allow tournaments to be organised more flexibly.

The AGM unanimously approved the proposal that the World Tour Committee should develop the idea further.

Radu Ionescu asked Duncan if he is a Tournament Director, which Duncan confirmed. Radu then challenged him as to why he sits on the World Tour Committee. Duncan responded that he sits on the WTC, but that the other members have the final say in everything. Radu observed that this seems not to be statutory. Duncan responded that the WTC present their findings to the Council, who has the final vote on things. Radu asked Duncan to check the statutes to see that his statement was irrelevant. Graham asked Radu to name the statute section, so that the AGM could see more clearly what he is referring to. Radu said he would have to look it up and supply it later. Graham confirmed that the none of the WTC members (himself, Kirsten Kaptein and Dan Busby) are Tournament Directors, and never have been as far as he knew, that Duncan sits in on the meetings, as he has the complete up to date knowledge which the WTC needs for their discussions, and that the WTC decides little on its own, but usually makes a recommendation to the FIR Council. Duncan confirmed that he does not have a vote within the WTC, but more acts as a consultant to the WTC. Radu then agreed that this is then fine.

#### 9.5 Request to FIR to report on the status of the official papers of current FIR members (Austria, Latvia, Romania)

Duncan opened with his feeling that the best way to present this was to build on the work Marcel performed as FIR President when he compiled details of the status of all existing members in 2015 for an application to SportAccord for recognition, when nearly all members had appropriate paperwork. Duncan stated he totally shares the desire to have all member paperwork in good order, as this, as enabling members to apply for funding and sponsorship and other advantages etc. more easily puts FIR in a much stronger position to grow the sport. He then summarised the status of the new members added since 2015:

- Afghanistan: has appropriate paperwork
- India: correctly set up, with the main association, RISA being registered with the Sports Ministry
- Luxembourg: is in the process of being set up as a Racketlon club
- Malta: is an affiliated Racketlon club
- Norway: is a new member in the process of being formed as a Racketlon club
- Spain: properly set up
- Thailand: will require quite some work to set up an association or club, with Frank Kleiber, the President, being pessimistic that this can be achieved easily or quickly, given the bureaucracy in Thailand

Duncan asked for Marcel's support in providing the information of the completed and ongoing registrations from his work in 2015. Marcel agreed to supply this.

Marcel concluded by stressing the importance of FIR and its members achieving recognition for themselves and our sport, and cited RFA as one of the best examples during this Corona crisis, as their Elite players are allowed to play because RFA is now officially recognised, whereas most of the rest of the world are not able to.

## **10) Next AGM**

Duncan Stahl announced the date of the next FIR AGM is planned be held remotely roughly a year from now, with a possible EGM being called mid-2021 if needed to discuss a revised budget. Graham confirmed that he and Duncan had already agreed on a Q1 2021 AGM, preferably earlier in the year than this AGM, given that any complications caused by the Corona pandemic will be significantly reduced, if not resolved by then. He commented that this AGM was only held towards the end of Q1 in order to have as much certainty as possible about the FIR World Tour in the light of the current Covid restrictions. He added that Final confirmation will follow at a later date, giving at least 60 days notice as discussed in point 9.1.4 above

## **11) Any other business**

None.

Duncan then thanked the participants for staying throughout the entire 3 ½ hours and closed the AGM at 17:27.

*Minutes taken by Graham King and confirmed by Duncan Stahl*

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Duncan Stahl  
(President)

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Graham King  
(Vice-President)