NORTH EAST SCOTTISH TOUCH ASSOCIATION touch.scot/nesta

General Meeting

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday, 8 October 2026

Present: 10 committee members

Name	Position
Iain McKenzie (IM)	President
Scott Griffiths (SG)	Secretary
Nick Wood (NW)	Treasurer
Kenneth Black (KB)	Leopards Club Rep.
Calum Davies (CD)	Hoodlums Club Rep.

Name	Position
Fayona Gordon (FG)	Ordinary Member
Kirsty Wheeler (KW)	Guerillas Club Rep.
Steph Coull (SC)	Ordinary Member
Andrew Gordon (AG)	Non constituted Club Rep.
Matthew Sharkey (MS)	Referee Coordinator

Apologies: Robin Williamson and Craig McCoy

1. President General Update

- STA transferred £1,239 to NESTA, net of deductions for referee badges and new touch balls
- The cost to run the NESTA Weebly based website is circa. £100 a year. The NESTA site has been redeveloped and is now part of the STA website (https://touch.scot/nesta/). The Weebly website will be shut down (saving of £100 per annum)
  - The new website is to be reviewed by the committee prior it be released to the public.
- Regional governance and safeguarding policies have been updated and review by members of the committee.
- The Constitution has been updated. However, following comments received through the NESTA Facebook account, it was agreed that the Constitution would not be considered at this meeting. Its review and proposed approval will instead form the sole agenda item at a rescheduled Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
  - Primary reason for the lack of communication with regards to the EGM outside of the committee was due to access to the NESTA Facebook account only made 2 days prior to this meeting.
- Members of the current NESTA committee are now in control of the NESTA Facebook account.
- NESTA Instagram account to be started in due course, which will enhance NESTA communication to the wider public further.
- Concerns were raised following discussions with the STA regarding the availability and clarity of national child protection policies, supporting procedures and guidance for regional committees.
- PVG checks still not complete for all coaches and committee members. However, the majority of the committee now have their PVGs in place or are in progress. FG stated that Viv (STA) has acknowledged the PVGs being processed. AG confirmed that Ruaridh Gordon has his PVG now in place.

2. Club Representative Feedback

Firebirds (AG)

- No feedback

Guerillas (KW)

- No specific feedback, however, KW stated that Dyce RFC have stated that NESTA can use their pitch for training etc (3G astroturf) and they are keen to learn touch. All agreed that this was a good opportunity.

Hoodlums (CD)

- Stated that there are current limited options to train and play with the current changes in place with separating youth and adults. The training/playing opportunities should not just be limited to youth (in reference to Monday night youth training)
- There should be more structured touch training on offer in the region

Leopards (KB)

- For the Guardian Consent forms; do these need to be filled out before each session? IM stated that once year should be sufficient (October to October suggested). However, IM also noted that Viv (STA) will need to confirm.
- With regards to the Guardian Consent forms, KW will discuss with IM outside of this meeting.
- It was suggested that SportMember could be used to record which participants have completed the required consent arrangements or not (with regards to Guardian Consent forms)

3. General Discussion on Youth Training with Adults

- The following discussion continued from the points raised on Guardian Consent forms and youth in general
- FG stated that for youth to train with adults it was not just their age that should be considered but also their maturity. At some rugby union clubs, some coaches want no over 18s (adults) playing against under 18s (youths).
- At a younger age (in relation to touch, between 12 and 18), players can develop very quickly physically (with reference to height and build etc), this needs to be reviewed.
- NW asked what guidance will be available for clubs under NESTA governance? Do clubs decide or is it regionally controlled? It is generally understood that governance should come from the STA, however this does not appear to be the case currently.
- IM and SG stated that they had asked the previous committee whether youths could join in the Summer League
- A decision on whether under-18s could participate in the Summer League was delayed. Under-18s subsequently participated, although it was not clear to those present whether a specific risk assessment or suitability assessment had been undertaken.
- It was agreed that policies need to be established for organised, controlled and refereed touch games, however training was considered potentially lower risk than competitive games, subject to the activity and appropriate risk assessment.

ACTIONS

- How often should the Guardian Consent form be signed (IM to task this action) – **Post-meeting update (IM 26/10/26): NESTA's intended approach is for parental/guardian consent to cover a period of up to 12 months, provided there are no material changes requiring renewed consent or assessment. This remains subject to any applicable STA requirements. Consent and the relevant participation arrangements will be completed before under-18s take part in mixed-age indoor training.**

4. Social Touch

- During the 2026 NESTA AGM, it was discussed that Social Touch (referring specially to Touch played in Duthie Park, Aberdeen) should have nothing to do with NESTA
  - It was noted that STA had expressed a general view that “Touch is Touch”. However, NESTA wish to maintain a distinction between independently organised Social Touch and activities formally organised or delivered by NESTA or STA. The committee's understanding was that the informal Social Touch sessions operated independently of NESTA and STA.
- KW stated that Edinburgh have ‘Social’ touch (in the form of ‘Into Touch’) and players are not registered with STA.
- It was agreed that the new NESTA website will contain references to Social Touch, however that it is a separate entity from NESTA and that you play at your own risk It is not part of local pathways or a recruitment opportunity for teams.
- It was agreed that regular Social Touch participants would be encouraged to join the Social Touch group on SportMember and provide emergency contact details. This would help organisers access relevant information in an emergency while retaining the informal nature of the sessions.
- SG asked do people need to pay for the STA insurance if they play Social Touch. It was generally agreed that the STA insurance payment is not required as the events are outside of STA jurisdiction.
- For an Intercompany tournament (for this discussion it has fallen under Social Touch), if the event is not managed by NESTA, the STA cannot advertise the event. SG asked whether the STA advertising the event would reach new players?
  - It was noted that insurance for players etc. may be an issue if the STA were not involved.

5. Finance

- NW stated that there was no current update due to trying to gain access to the bank accounts still following the handover from the previous committee.

6. Documents

- New NESTA documents to be released following a review include the following:
  - NESTA Financial Procedures (including Expenses Policy)
  - NESTA Website Governance Statements
  - NESTA Constitution (to be formally review during EGM)
  - NESTA Governance and Policy Framework
- These documents have been reviewed by NW and SG (IM author), however it was recommended that other members of the committee also review the documents and feedback comments to IM.
- It was discussed that NESTA Policies can cover regional level activities, however it is possible that the STA may ask for them to be removed and instead STA policies followed for all regions.
- IM put forward the starting age of youth players to be reduced from 12 to 11. FG stated that she believed this was too young for a youth player to be involved. IM commented that the decision to include 11-year-olds should be based on individuals and not a blanket rule.
- The question put forward to the committee was should the inclusion of 11-year-olds be on case-by-case basis? One comment was that it is ultimately the coach taking a session would need to sign off on a player joining in. FG stated that if it is a case-by-case basis (for 11-year-olds to join in) we would open ourselves up to parent criticism as parents may question why one 11-year-old was included but theirs. FG opinion was to keep to an age and have no exceptions.

- SC stated that it is difficult to only keep to 12-year-olds as the minimum age as some 11 years will be excluded but are likely able to take part. It was agreed by the members of the committee that most youths' maturity increases when they join an Academy (S1 and upwards).
- NW and FG stated that in rugby union there is no hard and fast rule on who should be included and who shouldn't from a youth perspective. The decision to include a youth player is based on age, height and weight etc. Youth players will be held back a year if it is felt by the coaching team that they are not ready.
- IM stated that the youngest youth players (12-year-olds) would probably be ok to join in training and social touch, however not the summer league.

ACTIONS

- The committee need to decide whether the minimum age will be reduced to 11 (each player assessed on a player-by-player basis) or whether it is kept at 12 with no exceptions. – **Post-meeting update (IM 26/10/26): NESTA's intended approach is that young people of secondary-school age (S1 or equivalent) may be considered for suitable adult or mixed-age Touch activity. This is not automatic permission to participate. Each decision must take account of the young person's agreement, parental/guardian consent, an assessment of individual suitability by the Coach/Session Lead, and the required safeguarding arrangements. The approach is intended to provide a clearer progression pathway from introductory youth activity into further Touch opportunities.**

7. Communications and SportMember

- The discussion started by IM stating that people can only invite players/members to an event in their team.
  - As an example, a Guerillas event can only be seen by Guerillas club members, players from other teams will not see the invite.
- Where a club wishes to invite players from the wider regional membership, the invitation should be coordinated through NESTA. The club may remain responsible for organising and delivering the activity, with the appropriate regional participation arrangements applying.
- There is a policy covering the governance of events; however, it was confirmed during the meeting that no one had a chance to read it. KW stated that in principle she agrees with what has been discussed; the content of this has been shared to each team rep.
- KB asked that if a Wednesday evening Leopards training event does not have enough numbers to proceed, who should the Leopards contact to expand the training to other club players? IM stated that the NESTA committee should be contacted so that the event can be changed to a NESTA regional event.

8. Youth Development

- Good attendance at the Youth training sessions held on a Monday night at the Aberdeenshire RFC Woodside pitches. Average numbers are between 11 and 12.
- New youth players have joined and have continued to turn up at sessions
- Calum, Sarah and other Academy coaches from the STA Academy suggested that the basics are taught in these training sessions; rather than working on Academy-level skills such as 'moves' & set plays.
- The plan is to stop these sessions in a couple of weeks' time as the nights draw in.
- Looking to do a taster session for youth players prior to the STA Academy trials later in the year. Wanderers' pitches is the planned location (as per last year); however, Woodside pitches would be the alternative location.
- Discussed indoor training (commencing on the 29th of October) and that it would likely be a split between youths and adults.
- The idea was put forward about having 2-3 sessions for beginners and then 2-3 sessions for more advanced training. FG stated that we shouldn't always focus on youth and think about adults too with regards to the indoor training programme.
- It was agreed that no admin charge would be applied in SportMember when booking a session, therefore the cost for an adult with be £6 (£5.59 net) and the cost for youth players £3 (£2.62 net).
- The EOI for the STA Youth Academy 2026/2027 season has been shared.

9. Referee Courses

- MS stated that a Level 1 Referee Training course could be pushed in November instead of October.
- Referee coaching can take place in the winter indoor sessions for those who are interested
- IM stated that he is happy for MS to propose some referee training course dates.
- It was proposed during the meeting to aim for a Level 1 Referee Training course in October/November 2026 and then a further one in February 2027.
- A coaching course is to be proposed by Monica, and it has been indicated that some of the youth player parents are interested in participating.

End of meeting