



DRIVING TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

VOLLEYBALL VALUES



ACTIVE

Volleyball is an Active, exciting game played by all ages



INCLUSIVE

Volleyball is Inclusive in all opportunities that are offered



POSITIVE

The volleyball experience is Positive for all who take part in or contribute towards it



COMPETITIVE

Volleyball is Competitive in all its forms, sitting, beach, outdoor and indoor



INNOVATIVE

Volleyball initiatives and programmes are Innovative in their approach



SUPPORTIVE

Volleyball England is Supportive of all our staff and volunteers

Volleyball England is committed to leading the growth of, and excellence in, all disciplines of volleyball in England. Find out more at

www.volleyballengland.org

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Volleyball England Equality Statement:

Volleyball England supports the principle of equal opportunities for all participants, members, representatives and employees whilst working for, or on behalf of Volleyball England. It opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.



CHAIR'S REPORT

In his first year in the role, Adam Walker reflects on 12 months which has seen more progress than may meet the eye

▲ Adam hopes to see the volleyball community to work together.

My first year as Chair of Volleyball England has been both very rewarding and challenging in equal measure. With regards to the rewards, I have met and spoken to many incredibly dedicated volunteers who care a great deal about the sport and are fully committed to ensuring it develops and improves moving forwards.

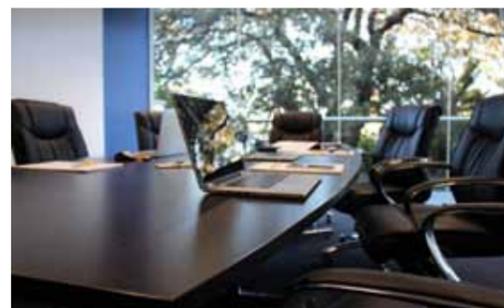
I have had the privilege to work with an equally committed and highly skilled board of trustees, all of whom have dedicated a significant amount of voluntary time to addressing the many pressing issues that the sport faces. Underpinning this, I have been hugely impressed by and am very grateful for the endeavours of the HUB team. They have never failed to go the extra mile.

“For us to succeed, the volleyball community must look to work together.”

At the same time, I have been given the chance to learn just how great the sport of volleyball is and how much potential it has. Through our three disciplines, we can truly provide a fantastic sporting opportunity for all ages and abilities and can contribute greatly to the nation's sporting landscape.

All of our clubs, volunteers and players should feel proud of their respective contributions to the sport and will be at the heart of driving the sport forward, as we all look to create a brighter future for volleyball.

► The board have had to commit time to policy and governance.



Challenges and change

The journey is underway but progress is gradual as we overcome the initial challenges facing the sport.

Many of you will know that our sport is in a period of significant transition. We have a new leadership team, new board and a significantly reduced staff team. While this new structure has performed admirably, we have struggled for the capacity needed to get everything done. This is frustrating to the team and, I'm sure, confusing to the membership.

Like all national governing bodies, our Sport England funding has been reduced significantly and our resources have been considerably less than we would have liked them to be. As a result, we have had to think carefully about our priorities when it comes to investing time and money. There are many things we would like to have done, but haven't had the money to do.

New governance legislation has required us to totally redefine and reshape the way we work. Although not obvious from the outside, this has necessitated the board committing much of its time to obligatory process rather than what we really want to focus on - the development of the sport for everyone. Again, this is frustrating to the board and, I'm sure, annoying to many sectors of the sport.

While we are far from overcoming all of the challenges we face, our sport is in a significantly more robust position than it was a year ago. I firmly believe that we have a solid base, built on sound business footings and strong values, upon which we can take the sport forward.

The implementing of the governance structure and development of how we manage our finances will mean we can make the most of the resources we have.

Although the next year will not be easy and we will still be under significant financial and capacity challenges, I am confident that we have all of the



ingredients to deliver a positive and meaningful impact at all levels of the game.

Despite much of the work happening behind the scenes, one of the important goals for the board has been engaging with the membership. Hopefully you have seen that as an organisation we are being transparent in what we do and are listening to your views. We're developing how we communicate and the Club Survey 2018, which asked clubs about their perception of Volleyball England, is part of the ongoing process to ensure the views of the membership inform decision making.

For us to succeed, the volleyball community must look to work together. While we will not always agree, we must ensure we are constructive and supportive. If we fail to do this, we will ultimately fail together.

On a personal note, I would like to conclude by thanking you all for entrusting me with this agenda. I feel very privileged to serve the sport and look forward to making lots of new friends and experiencing many fantastic sporting occasions. I fully appreciate that I have much to learn and I will, of course, make mistakes from time to time so please stick with me. 🍷



The directors are:
Adam Walker (Chair)
Keith Nicholls (Vice Chair)

Non-Executive Directors:
Freda Bussey
Vicky Widdup
Seyram Atubra
Simon Griffiths
Jefferson Williams
Steve Matthews

Independent Directors:
Lauri Chandler
Clare Francis
Ian Wall

▲ Adam believes volleyball can be a big part of the country's sporting landscape.

◀ The whole volleyball community working together is key to the success of the sport, says Adam.

▼ The board is giving the membership a voice in how it makes decisions.



CEO REPORT

Janet Inman reflects on a year which has seen the beginning of the evolution of Volleyball England

▲ Janet believes the key to Volleyball England's future is in its ability to adapt to change.

Another year has flown by and it has been a year of real change and challenge, as Volleyball England continues to adapt to a reduction in funding. It's been a productive twelve months though, as every hurdle we overcome is building a brighter future for the whole of volleyball.

There has been a focus on developing the structure and processes which will provide the solid foundations for Volleyball England to do what is really important – serve the membership to help people at all levels of the sport get the most from their volleyball experience.

“Volleyball England is committed to listening to members and making sure that their priorities are delivered.”

There has been a complete refresh of the governance structure which maps out exactly how Volleyball England operates as an organisation. It was particularly pleasing that Sport England held up some of our new policies as a model of best practice to other sports.

A new staffing structure has been developed to make

us more sustainable, flexible and effective as an organisation. The team at the HUB was reduced to cut costs, while volunteers continue to be engaged. Working groups have replaced the former commissions, with more working groups set up to deliver projects and get the benefit of volunteers' extensive experience to inform decision making. All the work being done has already had a positive impact on the volleyball community.

The financial processes have been restructured too. This is a huge step forward, as although we're operating with less money, better planning and insight will help these budgets stretch further and benefit the volleyball community. Financial Director Lauri Chandler explains this in more detail in her report on page eight.

During this time the sporting landscape has also changed significantly. Our main funder, Sport England is under considerable pressure to engage more people in physical activity, not necessarily sport. We, as do all NGBs, understand that we must be less dependent on central government funding and push forward with a commercial strategy to support our development and growth. While all this has been going on, the priority for the HUB team has been to continue to deliver

► From running clubs to helping deliver events, volunteers are the bedrock of the sport.



competitions, courses and to support as many of our clubs, athletes and volunteers as possible.

Our HUB team, even though it has reduced by half, has worked tirelessly to deliver what our members want. With a much-reduced capacity, we have had to say goodbye to some programmes but are developing other ways to ensure our clubs are supported.

We are working with Club Matters as an excellent resource for sport club development, including help with finances, club management and people, and marketing. This is a national programme run by Sport England which provides similar support to VolleyMark but requires less resources from us.

'Go Spike' as a programme is no longer running but clubs have continued to use the brand in a positive way to develop recreational sessions bringing new players to the sport. As an organisation, where we can, we will continue to promote these activities through the website and social media.

With all the changes over the past 12 months one thing has always been a constant, that is the role played by our volleyball volunteer workforce. To witness first hand just how amazing the volleyball family is when it comes together to deliver events

and volleyball in their local area has been humbling, but not surprising. Each volunteer supports the sport with such exuberance and friendliness – with commitment and passion like this we will succeed. This workforce is crucial to the future of our sport and we will work with our volleyball family to keep developing the game that we love, at all levels.

We know there will continue to be challenging times, but we must see this as an opportunity to grow and learn. Volleyball England is committed to listening to members and making sure that their priorities are delivered. Working together with the volleyball family, any gaps in funding can be appropriately filled through alternative sources and we can continue to deliver a brilliant volleyball experience.

It is the goal for volleyball to develop commercially and be more self-sustaining, but while we are so dependent on Sport England funding, we will be in a cycle of change, depending on their priorities and political direction of travel. We need to understand that to build a sustainable organisation we must take control of our own destiny, we need to keep evolving. Change in any organisation will always be met with challenge but as Charles Darwin rightly said: "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." 🍷

▲ The HUB staff have been working to support clubs and find more efficient ways to share knowledge and resources.



▲ Making changes will allow Volleyball England to have a bigger impact at all levels of the sport.





ON THE FINANCIAL FRONT

Independent Financial Director Lauri Chandler gives an insight into how the organisation’s finances are being brought under control.

▲ Lauri is an experienced Financial Director.

As has been well documented, Volleyball England has faced significant financial challenges in recent times. In the last 12 months, a team of people including myself, the senior management team, and HUB staff have been working to ensure our financial reporting, policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Key to that process is to improve the timeliness of our reporting and transparency of our numbers for our team and our members. This enables Volleyball England, as a whole organisation, to plan better and make financial decisions in real time, allowing projects to have greater impact on the volleyball community. On the following page you can see how Volleyball England has used its money in the past year.



▲ Sport England are volleyball’s main funder



▲ Financial engagement is key to being able to deliver the best volleyball programmes possible.

Following a period of significant reorganisation, we are now a streamlined operation. Based on the new operational cost model for Volleyball England, the budget was revisited for the forthcoming financial year. This was done in conjunction with our HUB team, and we are promoting financial engagement and accountability from within all areas of Volleyball England through the control and administration of our programmes.

As a result of the recent financial uncertainties, the support of our members, volunteers, and HUB team has been central to ensuring the delivery of the sport continues; for this we are all very grateful. We are now moving into a period when our staff and volunteers will understand and contribute to the control of our finances, therefore ensuring they feel empowered to deliver the best possible volleyball programmes.

“Our staff and volunteers will understand and contribute to the control of our finances therefore ensuring they feel empowered to deliver the best possible volleyball programmes.”



▲ New financial procedures have been put in place.

Volleyball England relies heavily on the funding from Sport England. The plan is to become more self-sustaining and less reliant on government funding. Work is already underway on accessing other revenue streams by developing new programmes that will attract commercial partners. Our improved financial records will be central to supporting the organisation in making the correct business decisions as to which programmes to invest in and develop.

I have only been a member of the Volleyball England team for a few months but I am impressed with the desire and commitment of both our employees and volunteers to move the organisation forward. It has taken an enormous amount of effort from the team to realign and retake control of the business. This pace and drive will continue to ensure we have a financially secure and robust organisation that can support the promotion, delivery and growth of volleyball across the country. 🇬🇧

MANAGING THE MONEY

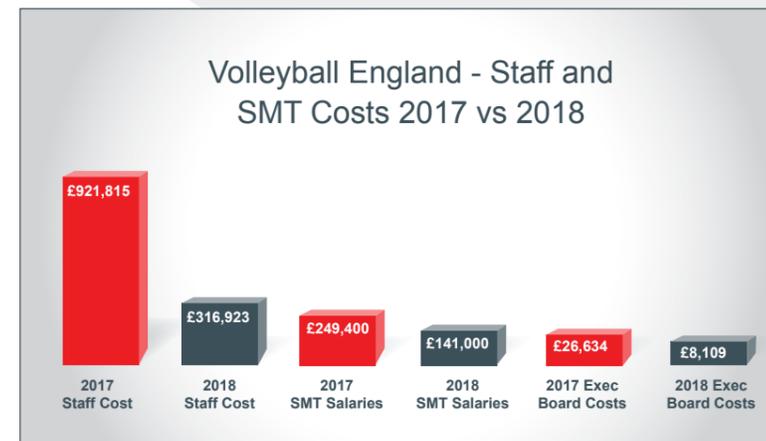
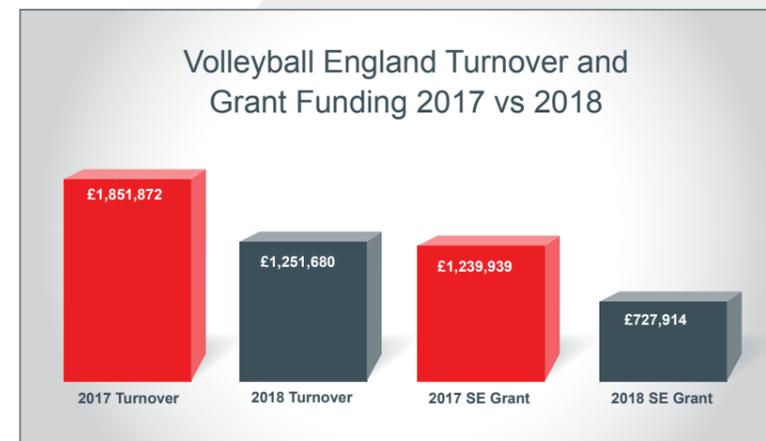
A look at how Volleyball England has managed its finances in the last 12 months

Where did the money come from?

Income	£89,156
Sport England	£727,914
Memberships	£66,872
Additional Grants	£21,254
Technical - Courses	£50,812
Talent - General	£40,267
Talent - CWG Men	£40,375
Children & Young People	£3,107
Investment Zones	£11,333
Competitions & Venues	£150,605
Events	£49,985
Total	£1,251,680

How was our money used?

Operating Costs	£239,293
Salaries	£471,923
Technical - Courses	£28,349
Talent - General	£100,450
Talent - CWG Men	£40,375
Children & Young People	£45,510
Investment Zones	£12,796
Competitions & Venues	£108,484
Events	£52,147
Total	£1,099,327



“I firmly believe that we have a solid base, built on sound business footings and strong values, upon which we can take the sport forward.”

Adam Walker, Chair of Volleyball England



COMMERCIAL REPORT

Commercial and Marketing Director Ian Wall explains why developing the sport's commerciality is an increasing priority.

▲ Ian is leading a working group to build volleyball's commerciality.

You may well be aware that Sport England requires all national governing bodies, such as Volleyball England, to become less reliant on government funding and be more independently sustainable. This will help the volleyball community take more control about how we develop our sport.

Since the last Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Marketing and Commercial (M&C) working group has been created and is working to develop the commerciality of the sport. From our meetings, it is clear that while Volleyball England has been operating in a period of recovery the budget to develop commerciality and marketing was limited. The two main issues which we have identified that the Marketing and Commercial group needs to address are the sport's profile in England and to raise the bar when it comes to income generation. They are two big projects but we've had some success as we make a start in tackling the challenge.

▼ Having the Super 8s Finals on BBC Sport was one of the highlights of the year.

“In spite of our almost zero-budget situation, we have been able to negotiate a deal with a sport marketing agency to help us attract commercial partners.”



Profile building

Volleyball England needs to raise the profile of volleyball, beach volleyball and sitting volleyball in England, so that it is no longer viewed as a minority sport.

We need to attract more people to participate in each of the disciplines and recognise Volleyball England as the driving force. To help in this regard we have had considerable success in the live streaming of major events, such as the NEVZA U19 Championships, National Cup Finals and latterly the the Super 8s Finals and the Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix Final, which were streamed live on the BBC Sport website in May.

We have been able to achieve this new direction of travel by working closely with University of Essex. A team of their students trained and practised in streaming volleyball, using the university's high-spec equipment, before delivering a quality production of the Super 8 Finals event. This has proved a mutually beneficial activity; while minimising Volleyball England financial exposure we have been able to provide future broadcasters with hands-on filming experience to develop not only their broadcast production skills but gain a knowledge of how to showcase sport.

When it comes to national coverage, we have also developed the opportunity to profile our sport on the BBC Sport Get Inspired website – a platform which drives people to get active and involved with all types of sport. This is very much a work in progress but will form part of a major push as we further roll out our club development programmes over the coming years. All of this has been achieved at minimal cost to Volleyball England, however thanks must go to the HUB staff at Loughborough for their considerable input.

Fundraising

With Sport England expecting national governing bodies to become more self-sustainable, in order for



us to maintain and improve the services Volleyball England provides to its membership additional sources of funding must be found. We're aiming to address this in the following ways:

- Maintaining and developing existing partnership agreements
- Seeking sponsorship for our key events and products
- Providing quality products and services to our membership

We have already secured a one-year sponsorship deal with a long-time supporter and developed the relationship between them and the new Marketing and Commercial working group. A number of other commission-based arrangements are currently in the process of being renewed and should show a small uplift in previous revenue levels.

Seeking sponsorship is perhaps the most difficult task that we as a business face. It is fair to say that due to the high level of funding in the past, building commerciality was not a priority. We are in effect starting from scratch.

In spite of our almost zero-budget situation, we have been able to negotiate a deal with a sport marketing agency to help us attract commercial partners. The agreement works on 'no win, no fee' type basis, where the agency will only take a share of any deals



▲ Volleyball England has many events that could attract sponsors.

◀ There is a lot of potential for commercial partnerships across all three disciplines of the sport.

▼ The aim is to build volleyball's commerciality, as other sports have successfully done.

they secure. Promisingly, the agency has a number of contacts who it is felt would have an interest in working in partnership with Volleyball England. Part of the agreement is that we are still able to approach and find sponsors ourselves, so this is still a priority for the group.

I commend the hard work carried out by the working group and the HUB staff in moving things forward and assure you that our best efforts, under the circumstances, are being deployed to bring about positive change. 🍀





WHAT IS THE CORE MARKET?

Core Market Office Samantha Jamieson reminds us of what it means to be part of volleyball's key demographic.

▲ Samantha is the HUB's Core Market Officer.

The volleyball core market is determined as those who engage with volleyball activity on a regular basis and are either known to Volleyball England or know of Volleyball England. In short, clubs, players, volunteers, coaches and officials are all a major part of our core market. In fact, if you are reading this report, you are most likely the backbone of our core market and we thank you for your support.

Of course, the volleyball family extends beyond these core groups and while we are committed to serving all who take part, we recognise that some groups are harder for us to reach and provide services to. For that reason, 2017/18 has been all about getting to know you, the core market, better and trying to understand how Volleyball England can provide a better service to you.



▲ Volleyball is a sport enjoyed by many different groups of people including officials, coaches and volunteers.

▼ Clubs and their volunteers are the foundation of the core market.

▲ The core market includes everyone who is involved in volleyball on a regular basis.

“To be masters of our own destiny, the whole volleyball community must work together to support the new ways of working”

From a new governance structure built around volunteer engagement, to a campaign-led approach to communications and the recently conducted Club Survey, Volleyball England is listening. Through the coming year Volleyball England will be focussed on responding to the feedback gathered from the Club Survey and doing what we can, with your help, to improve the services available to clubs.

Every activity we engage in must be sustainable. That means maintaining and improving services must be reflected in the cost of those services. Our approach to how we deliver our sport has had to change dramatically in order that we live within our means. I thank all of you for your understanding while we have made these changes; they have not been easy but they have been necessary and will help us to protect the future of our sport – and make it a brighter future too.

We've always had a strong calling from our core market to support school based volleyball, we must find new ways to fund this and any other activity that falls outside of our core services.

You'll see some examples of how we've responded to this challenge with your help in the following section.

To be masters of our own destiny, the whole volleyball community must work together to support the new ways of working and to ensure that we reflect the volleyball values in all that we do. Only by working together can we continue to create a strong and sustainable future for volleyball in England. I look forward to sharing the next stage of the journey with you. 🍷

CORE MARKET REPORT

Core Market Coordinator Rob Payne gives an update on volleyball programmes which serve the core market.



▲ Regular involvement with volleyball makes you part of the core market.

As Volleyball England strives to better connect with its core market, the membership figures continue to be healthy. Although resources have been reduced, supporting our clubs is always a top priority. We have developed new ways of supporting our members this year, and will continue to develop what we offer the membership in the next 12 months.

Feedback from the membership had underlined how important funding was to them. So we developed a service to assist the club network to gain access to grants and generate much needed funds with advice and guidance to the club network from the HUB staff.

“The Funding Support Guide was launched which takes clubs through the range of funding pots available for sport across the country.”



▲ Supporting clubs at every level is a top priority for Volleyball England.

► The Level 1 Coaching course has been revamped following feedback from the membership.

The *Funding Support Guide* was launched which takes clubs through the range of funding pots available for sport across the country. It is free to download and comes with two useful resources to help organise your grant application: a funding flowchart, which maps out each stage of applying for a grant, and a project delivery plan, which will help you plan your bid.

The HUB also offers a service where clubs can get their completed application checked before it is submitted for any advice which will improve their chances of being successful.

Data Protection was also high on the agenda for clubs this year, with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) coming into force in May. A GDPR section on the website was created, which included links to useful resources including template documents clubs could use to ensure their clubs operate to the new standards.

Coaching and refereeing

The most significant break-through in 2017-18 was the re-development of the level 1 coaching course. The qualification was revamped following feedback from the membership which said the course needed to be more accessible and focus on six a-side volleyball for adult players.

Guided by our partners, Cardiff Metropolitan University which applied the latest research in coach education, the new Volleyball England Level 1 Introduction to Coaching Volleyball Award provides coaches with the tools to enhance players' technical, tactical, physical and cognitive abilities. The course also promotes collaborative learning and helps coaches think about how to build effective relationships with their players.

Coaches gain an understanding of the principles of a game-based approach which develops players through sessions which replicate match situations. Learners also gain premium access to the Art of ▶





“We have developed new ways of supporting our members this year, and will continue to develop what we offer the membership in the next 12 months”

▲ There will be funding to support the growth of Sitting Volleyball.

Coaching Volleyball, a coaching resource which coaches can use at their clubs.

Additionally, it is now easier to host a course as it has been reduced to a two-day format and the minimum attendance for a course has been reduced from 12 to 10 coaches. The course fee is also great value for money at just £150 per person.

Sitting Volleyball

A comprehensive review of sitting volleyball was led by Ken Edwards and supported by a dedicated working group. The recommendations led to a board approval of £14,000 funding to be aligned towards the development of sitting volleyball clubs and the running of the Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix.

► The HEVO programme trains officers to put on fun, recreational volleyball sessions for fellow students.

Safeguarding

Volleyball England is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all young people to participate in volleyball. We all have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young people and protect them from poor practice, abuse and bullying. Volleyball England continue to ensure that measures are taken across the club network to adhere to these standards. The past year has seen:

- Volleyball England has again been awarded a green rating for safeguarding by the CPSU of the NSPCC, highlighting us as a model of best practice.



- 112 new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks completed. A significant increase from previous years.
- 18 clubs benefitted from specialised safeguarding support when a formal investigation was required.

Looking forward, a commitment has been made to providing more of a support network for Club Welfare Officers. Their invaluable role to providing a safe and welcoming environment, implementing policies and procedures, and acting upon concerns, requires training and support. A forum will be created for the Club Welfare Officer community to share best practice, gain advice, and share new legislation.

HEVO Programme

Now into its seventh year, the Higher Education Volleyball Officer (HEVO) programme continues to thrive and drive up volleyball participation. The scheme sees student officers putting on recreational volleyball sessions for fellow students at their universities.

In 2017-18, 75 HEVOs were appointed within 60 universities across the country. This resulted in over



6000 students playing volleyball in the sessions throughout the year.

In January, a HEVO participant survey was produced to gain further insight on the impact of the programme. From the 900 respondents, 25% of students had never played volleyball before university with 31% saying that it was 'highly likely' they would play volleyball after leaving university. This really demonstrates the impact of the programme on growing the sport.

With the continued focus on the Core Market, the next step for the HEVO programme is to transition the HEVOs into the volleyball community. The 2018-19 programme will introduce a fund and training programme for HEVOs who are leaving university to establish new volleyball activity in the community.

The design of the programme has been underpinned by research from the 400 HEVOs from the last seven years. The study found that 90% of HEVOs are still involved as players, 47% are still active as coaches and 30% volunteer in volleyball. Leaving university can be a big transition for students. Despite having the desire to set up a club, many factors can affect their time and confidence to do so. Therefore, the role of Volleyball England and other local partners is to break down barriers and provide the support to help them develop new clubs and become part of the local volleyball community.

Schools Volleyball

The key focus in 2017-18 within schools' volleyball was to:

- Identify a working group lead to drive school volleyball development
- Establish partnerships with delivery agencies
- Deliver a pilot workshop to identify how the schools' resources could be developed

Nick Shaffery has taken responsibility for the development of resources and workshop delivery. His wealth of experience in the education sector will be invaluable to making the offer fit for purpose.

Progress is already being made as we're working with partners including the Premier League Primary Stars programme, which was created by the football



Premier League. It has 97 professional football clubs across the country that have a cohort of skilled community coaches. They are trained in PE curriculum delivery and are tasked to offer multi-sports to 15,000 primary schools across the country. Following a successful VolleySport workshop with 12 clubs and 24 coaches, the focus for 2018-19 will be to reflect upon the feedback from the pilot, scale the training programme to maximise engaged clubs, then aim to reach further delivery agencies across the country.

▲ The aim is to develop volleyball in schools.

Linked to the primary school's project is an FIVB development programme, in which Volleyball England have been awarded 500 junior volleyballs. The plan is to distribute the balls to the primary schools which engaged in the Primary Stars programme to sustain their activity beyond the project and encourage them to have an ongoing commitment to volleyball. 🏐

▼ The guide takes clubs through making funding applications.



“Looking forward, a commitment has been made to providing more of a support network for Club Welfare Officers.”



TECHNICAL AND TALENT REPORT

Volunteers and staff are working together to support talented athletes, reports Technical and Talent Coordinator Gillian Harrison.

▲ Javier and Joaquin Bello took gold at the Youth Commonwealth Games – an incredible achievement.

There have been so many impressive highlights and achievements from across all disciplines and age groups of the national squads. All of which gives me great hope for our athletes in the forthcoming year. However, I'm also well aware that we cannot ignore the impact that changes in the business and a reduction in funding for the talent pathway have had, in particular making it challenging to plan a stable programme for the squads. Difficult decisions were made in consultation with the volunteer working groups, which undoubtedly impacted on all volleyball activity.

► Jake Sheaf and Chris Gregory made it to the semi-finals as beach volleyball made its debut at the Commonwealth Games.

With the backdrop of this circumstance, I'm humbled to see the continued achievements of the national squads which stand as testament to the resilience, determination and drive of those who are part of and support the Volleyball England Talent Pathway.



The hard work of this year will help us make more progress in the next 12 months.

Beach Volleyball

Senior beach volleyball: It was a historic year, with beach volleyball making its debut at The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia. Athletes Jake Sheaf, Chris Gregory, Jess Grimson and Vicky Palmer became the first men and women to represent England at a Commonwealth Games.

Jess and Vicky took a break from their jobs to become full time athletes and focus on the Games. Their coach, Alex Chevau, gave up much of his time voluntarily to help guide the pair. Speaking shortly after Team England announced their selection Jess said: "We have worked so hard, had many knock backs but to come out the other side and forever be the first English beach volleyball team to ever compete at a Commonwealth Games is history and something we will keep with us forever."

Grimson and Palmer were agonisingly close to competing in a medal match, eventually losing 2-1 in the quarter finals to higher ranked Vanuatu.

Jake and Chris received a boost to their preparations when Volleyball England gained a Sport England grant of £40,000. Prior to the Games, Chris was reflective: "To qualify has not only been the result of one qualification season. It's been years and years of work. One of the most exciting parts of it all is to be a part of a wider team at the Commonwealths."

Led by experienced coach Kirk Pitman, wins over Cyprus, Mozambique and Scotland took the pair to the semi-final. Defeat against home team and favourites Australia, saw the pair into the bronze medal match, where they lost out to New Zealand to finish fourth – the highest ever placing of an English team in a major games.

Junior beach volleyball: The junior athletes made their own beach volleyball history. Javier and Joaquin



Bello claimed gold at the inaugural beach volleyball competition at the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games. Led by coach Aden Tutton, the pair didn't lose a single set in their five matches in the tournament and clinched the gold with a 21-16, 21-13 win over Cyprus.

Also doing England proud at the Commonwealth Youth Games were the girls' pair of Yasmin Kaashoek and Ellie Austin. Coached by Matt Rhymer, the pair eventually finished a highly credible fifth, having been placed with a tough draw which saw them play both Australia and New Zealand – the eventual gold and silver medallists.

England entered men's and women's teams into each CEV age group championship with some exceptional performances from Javier Bello, Joaquin Bello, Holly Bentley, Ellie Austin, Anaya Evans, Yasmin Kaashoek, Issa Batrane and Rob Poole.

Javier and Joaquin Bello's fifth place finish at the 2018 CEV Youth Continental Cup Final, earned them a thoroughly deserved ticket to the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires.

Volleyball National Squads

A significant reduction in funding for the cadet and junior squads meant fewer training camps initially and a rise in athlete contributions to make the weekend camps at the National Volleyball Centre viable. While the senior men's and women's teams have both developed self-financing models of operation with

some small contributions from Volleyball England.

The commitment and resourcefulness of the volunteers, coaches and managers of the national squads has shone through and been crucial in revitalising the programme and will help to drive it forward.

Senior squads: A big success for the senior men has been securing a new home for the team at the Ruth Gorse Academy in Leeds. Head Coach Simon Loftus agreed a deal for reduced hall hire rates. Additionally, we have long-standing partnerships with The University of Northumbria and The Boswells School, and they stepped forward when we really needed help to provide venues for the senior and junior programmes.

On the court, the past year was bookended with international competition against Scotland. In May 2017, both the men' and women's teams faced our neighbours in a two match series. The England men recorded a 2-0 victory, while the women were edged out 15-11 in a golden set.

In May 2018, England and Scotland celebrated 50 years since the first ever meeting between the men's sides in 1968. Hosted at Sports Central, home of Team Northumbria and supported by the Ruth Nicholls Foundation, England secured a convincing 3-0 win. Just a year short of their own 50th anniversary, England and Scotland women ►

▲ England men won the golden anniversary match against neighbours Scotland.

▼ Jess Grimson and Vicky Palmer turned full-time athletes and with help from coach Alex Chevau, reached the Commonwealth Games.





▲ Ellie Austin represented England at the Youth Commonwealth Games.

▼ It was fantastic to welcome volleyball superstar Giba to the England trials.

“Volleyball England has also supported individual athletes by helping them gain access to over £55,000 in grants from funding partners.”



went head to head at the event with England securing a redemptive 3-1 victory.

Between the international fixtures against Scotland, the England senior men's team achieved a silver medal in the Novotel Cup.

Cadet and junior squads: New partnerships were also developed to support the national squads, such as the alliance with The United Kingdom Armed Forces (UKAF) which sees their representative men's and women's teams playing the England junior men and cadet girls. UKAF have also offered access to top class facilities for the England squads.

A new competitive opportunity for a combined junior/cadet women's team also emerged with entry into the Crown Services tournament. There is potential for this to expand into further opportunities for England to play against the international services teams.

Competitively, the England cadet and junior athletes have gained some brilliant tournament experience both at home and abroad, which will aid their development.

At the NEVZA Under 19 Championships, England men achieved a brilliant bronze and added highlight

saw middle blocker, Joe Palombo named in the Super 7 all-star team. The women fell agonisingly short of a top three placing after losing 3-2 to Norway in the bronze medal match.

After an absence of five years, the junior men returned to the Cornacchia World Cup in Italy: a tournament that attracts top European and American club sides, and junior international teams. England finished in a credible 14th out of 32 teams.

At cadet level, England boys finished in fourth place in the NEVZA U17 Championships in Ikast, Denmark in October 2017, while the cadet girls finished in sixth place with wins over Greenland and Faroe Islands.

One of the highlights of the year was seeing 120 promising young volleyball players looking to join the national squads at the open trials for the cadets and juniors, at the National Volleyball Centre. While coaches evaluated their potential, it was an extra delight to welcome Brazilian superstar Giba, Olympic champion and all-time volleyball legend, to join the coaching team for the day to inspire the trialists.

There was progress in finding more support for the national squads. The HUB organised a process of appointing Team Managers to all national teams. There have been lots of skilled volunteers stepping forward, who will be a real asset in helping with the organisation of squads.

Over the past year, there have been several changes to the volunteer staff across all the squads. With some coaches stepping down and others into new roles. The current coaching staff are displayed on the website.

Headed up by the Talent Working Group Lead Alex Bialokoz, the support structure for the national squads is being developed. With budgets established for the forthcoming year, this will all help our athletes to continue to improve.

Talented athletes and funding

The University of Nottingham joined the network of Senior Volleyball Academies with a mission to nurture home grown athletes. It's position in the top one per cent of all universities worldwide widens our academic proposition for volleyball athletes in higher education.

Volleyball England has also supported individual athletes this year by helping them gain access to over £55,000 in grants from funding partners. The ground-breaking Backing the Best (BTB) programme, managed by SportsAid, continues



▲ The Invictus Games volleyball programme is preparing the next set of heroes to represent their country at the Games.

to make a huge difference supporting athletes experiencing financial hardship with help totalling £25,000. Seventeen volleyball and beach volleyball athletes and six sitting volleyball athletes were put forward by Volleyball England and accepted by SportsAid; each with a chance to gain up to £2000.

Volleyball remains one of only 30 sports to have Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) funded athletes. TASS helps volleyball athletes in higher education to reach both their sporting and academic potential with support including coaching, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition, a medical scheme and an athlete personal financial award of £500.

Sixty-six junior volleyball athletes were enrolled in The Sporting Excellence Award (SEA) alongside their chosen academic subjects where they gain knowledge and understanding of what it takes to be an elite level athlete.

Sitting Volleyball

Ashcombe Volleyball Centre in Dorking, Surrey was the training venue for sitting volleyball throughout the year. The women's squad of 14 athletes continued to train regularly under the guidance of head coach Ian Legrand, with teams entering the Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix and cup competitions. We are building the programme towards entering international competition against strong European teams.

The Development Squad has also been training alongside the women at Ashcombe. Coach Richard Osborne, fresh from coaching Georgia to victory at the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, also heads the United Kingdom Invictus Games volleyball programme. The Invictus Games raises the profile of sitting volleyball and enables Richard to identify athletes with the potential to transition into the Development Squad.



Volleyball Futures

The Volleyball Futures programme continues to be developed with the aim to provide support and expertise to establish the best environment to develop talented young volleyball players.

This year saw the programme begin to widen from a talent identification programme based on physical testing to a more holistic approach. The next phase is to create an athlete development model, provide coaching education on developing talented young athletes and supporting this with appropriate competitions.

A framework has been shared with the regional working group and the coaches at the Inter Regional Championships to encourage engagement and participation in developing and implementing the programme.

Conferences

Volleyball England continued to support the development of those in the sport with conferences for coaches, referees and tutors.

The officials conference was organised by the officials working group and its lead Steve Evans. It saw an excellent attendance of 72 referees. The conference included technical updates from international referee Nick Heckford and the launch of the Volleyball England Officials Academy – an online resource for referees to develop their knowledge.

Technical Lead Carol Gordon was at the coaching conference which brought together coaches from all levels. There were 31 attendees to benefit from expert seminars. Meanwhile, the tutor conference saw 15 tutors attend in order that they could deliver the new level one coaching award. 🍷

▲ There was one of the best atmospheres of the tournament as England women came agonisingly close to the bronze at the NEVZA U19 championships.



▲ The junior men took a historic bronze at the NEVZA U19 championships.



COMPETITIONS REPORT

Volleyball England is finding new ways of delivering competitions explains Competitions and Events Coordinator Jonathan Moore.

► There was a record number of players in this year's VEBT.

Competitions remain a top priority for Volleyball England, as we continue to strive to organise the best events for the membership. However, with less money and resource from the HUB available, Volleyball England has had to adapt. There have been some tough decisions made about some competitions which are no longer part of the calendar and we're focusing on how to maximise our resources as we continue to provide quality events.

That's why we should view the 2017-18 volleyball season as having been a success. We changed the delivery model of some of our events to drive them forward and the last 12 months has seen a packed competition schedule, with lots of people enjoying

“The National Cup 2017-18 saw a bumper year for entries, with teams in the Women’s Cup the highest in over a decade”



▲ Volunteers play a vital role in delivering competitions.

the sport. At the heart of this has been the incredible community of volunteers. They have stepped forward to take on more roles as new ways were found of staging some events. We would like to thank all of them – without them the competitions calendar wouldn't be as successful. We must be proud of the way that we have maintained a professional approach to the delivery of Volleyball England competitions in the face of a reduced resource.

As the competitions have evolved, Volleyball England engaged with the volleyball community to ensure their views are what drives decisions about competitions. It is not possible to deliver everything that is wanted but feedback is invaluable as the Competitions Working Group, lead by James Murphy, aim to deliver the best competitions for the current landscape.

Engaging with the volleyball community and welcoming the commitment of more volunteers is vital so that our competitions remain firm fixtures in the calendar and gain fresh impetus over the next 12 months.



Beach volleyball

A new-look, much-expanded Volleyball England Beach Tour (VEBT) took centre stage during the summer of 2017. With a new delivery model, a total of 58 star-rated tournaments were delivered in partnership with 10 different beach tour event organisers. This meant that HUB staff were not required at the events.

The HUB supported organisers, promoted events and administered the results and rankings. Events were given a star rating (from one star for the smallest tournaments up to five for the showcase events). It was well received with a record breaking number of players on the VEBT, with over 900 players picking up ranking points during the season.

The 2018 British Universities and College Sport Beach Volleyball Championships saw 123 teams enter the pairs (60 women's teams and 63 men's), which represented a 53% increase in entries for the women's competition. The event was delivered using 25 beach volleyball courts on Sandbanks Beach, in what was a great advert for the sport.

International volleyball

Volleyball England continued its delivery of North European Volleyball Zonal Association (NEVZA) junior competitions for the fifth year in a row. Having previously delivered the U17 competition for three



◀ The National Volleyball Centre hosted NEVZA championships for a fifth consecutive year.

▼ There was a great atmosphere for the Shield Finals.



▲ Hosting an international competition gives players, officials and volunteers invaluable experience.

years, the National Volleyball Centre staged the U19 competition for the second year running in October 2017.

The competition gives the England squads a fantastic opportunity to play in front of a home crowd, improve their skills and compete at a higher standard of volleyball. Hosting international tournaments also provides valuable experience of staging top-class events, which is an excellent environment to develop referees, national technical officials and volunteers.

The England teams both put in an excellent performance, with the men matching their best ever finish as they took bronze, while the women were narrowly beaten into fourth place by Norway. It was a weekend of progress by the teams on the court, but also a fruitful one off it, with 20 national technical officials and 70 volunteers helping to deliver another international event of which Volleyball England can be proud.

Senior volleyball

The National Cup 2017-18 saw a bumper year for entries, with teams in the Women's Cup the highest in over a decade and over 30% higher than the previous year.

A new schedule for National Cup Finals weekend was trialled following feedback from Volleyball England membership, which suggested that the Cup Finals days were too long, with matches usually starting late and spectators having to watch long warm-ups.

Listening to the points raised, a two-court set-up was adopted. The new format saw Saturday start with the men's and women's Shield Finals played simultaneously, followed by the showpiece of the men's and women's National Cup Finals which were played on one court. As well as ensuring the prestige of having the whole focus of the arena on each Cup Final, it gave the teams access to a warm-up court shortening the time between the two finals. On the Sunday, the Under 16 and Under 18 finals were played in parallel over the two courts.

Working with the University of Essex, Volleyball England live streamed the Cup Finals on Facebook and gained over 25,000 views. Live streaming the Cup Finals was a dress rehearsal for the Super 8s Finals, which saw the live stream broadcast on the BBC Sport website. It was a fantastic platform to showcase volleyball and it did not disappoint.

The Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix Final was a thrilling battle that went the distance as Sheffield edged past reigning champions East London Lynx to ►



▲ Team Northumbria men were Super 8s and National Cup champions.



▲ Team Northumbria women had great battles against Team Durham in the National Cup and Super 8s Finals.

take the title. While the women's Super 8s Final saw Team Northumbria and Team Durham play out a classic, which Durham won in the golden set after a superb comeback from Northumbria. Both finals were a repeat of the National Cup Finals, but while Team Durham gained revenge on Team Northumbria, there wasn't to be any retribution in the men's final as Team Northumbria added the league title to their National Cup by defeating IBB Polonia London.

The Super 8s Finals were a brilliant showpiece. However, the event itself runs at a loss that could not be sustained. Super 8s clubs were asked if they would be able to host the event but none of clubs had the resources to be able to. A decision was made by the board, based on the recommendation of the Competitions Working Group which consulted with the members, to "mothball" the Super 8 Playoffs until they were sustainable again.

Following a consultation process with clubs in the top two divisions and a poll on the new format, it was decided the Super 8s will be replaced in 2018-19 by the Super League, which will see 10 teams compete in a split-league system.

“The National Volleyball League remained in a strong position with 137 teams entered into the competition”

► Richmond reached all of the U16 and U18 National Finals.

All teams will play each other once, before the division splits into two halves. Teams in the top half will then play each other twice to decide who finishes in positions one to five, while the bottom half will do the same for bottom five in the standings.

The benefit of the split system is that there will be lots of competitive matches. It will be exciting as teams aiming for the title will have more matches against their closest rivals, while the teams in the bottom five will be fighting for survival against teams they are better matched against. Having more teams at the top level also gives more players the chance to face the best sides, so it should help to improve the overall standard of volleyball in this country.

The National Volleyball League remained in a strong position with 137 teams entered into the competition. This saw 1941 players registered, which is consistent with previous seasons.

The Student Cup continued to be a benchmark competition for university volleyball. This year saw

the delivery of the event led by volunteers. They ran the initial rounds of the competitions, before the final, where HUB staff supported the delivery of the event at the impressive University of East Anglia, Sportspark. The competition has an enduring popularity with the students.

Junior volleyball

The season began with the 2017 School Games in Loughborough and the event marked the 11th time that volleyball had been involved in the Games. Throughout these years, volleyball had been a fantastic ambassador for the competition, and in turn the School Games had provided an excellent platform for players, officials and volunteers alike to develop, be successful and showcase their talents.

Volleyball was required to reapply for its position as part of the 2018 School Games. After much consideration, Volleyball England and the Home Nation volleyball associations were unable to align the performance rationale of the competition with the objectives set out by the Youth Sport Trust. When combined with looking to find the best ways to develop young talent, balancing busy schedules and a reduction in funding, the potential cost of participation made reapplying unsustainable.



Therefore the decision was made to withdraw from the application process for the School Games.

There was good news in the junior national championships, as the U16 and U18 competitions saw increases in the number of teams. As Volleyball England looks to create a more joined up approach with the junior competitions, the entry fees were aligned across all junior national championships. Further changes for 2018-19, will also see the U15 National Championships follow the same competition format as the U16 and U18 competitions.

The Regional Working Group's decision in July 2017 to change the age groups for the girl's competitions at Inter Regionals from U14 and U16 to bring it in line with the boy's competition to U15 and U17 competitions, came into play for the Inter Regional Championships 2018. Entries for the boy's competitions were the highest they have been in seven years and every region was represented during the weekend.

There were more links created between the Volleyball England Talent Pathway and the Regions too through athlete testing, as there was an event for regional coaches and team managers with an interest in talent development to learn about the opportunities for their emerging athletes within the Volleyball England Talent Pathway. A Senior Academies Fair was also hosted at the event, which gave all athletes information about how volleyball could be part of their journey into higher education, which added value to the occasion.

Sitting Volleyball

With HUB staff having more limited time to attend and put on competitions, this year saw the Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix and Cup competitions change to being run by volunteers and the players, in a move which reduced some of the costs to Volleyball England.

As in previous years, the National Volleyball Centre remained the host venue, but new for this year, volunteers were trained in how to set up the events and the HUB continued to manage the competition results.

The format was again popular with eight teams entering all Grand Prixes through the season and there continued to be fresh interest in the sport as new teams entered the Cup and Shield competitions.

The tables were turned this year with Sheffield winning the league and cup double, including winning an epic five-set Grand Prix final against East London Lynx which was live on the BBC Sport. It was a brilliant advert for the sport and hopefully the coverage will help to encourage more new players for next season.

In the Cup Final, Sheffield again produced their best under pressure with a deciding set win against South Hants. After a few years away, Loughborough entered a team on the cup weekend and ended up taking the shield title, coming from behind to beat Lincoln Imps. 🍀

▲ The Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix final was a titanic clash that was live on the BBC.



REGIONAL REPORTS

We head around the country to hear what's been happening in the nine volleyball regions in the past year



A MESSAGE FROM REGIONAL LEAD: Bryan Youlden

The relationship between the grass roots and the Volleyball England HUB is entering a new era. The relationship between the players and volunteers needs to improve and the Regional sub group will play a big part in re-establishing that link.

Over the past year communication has been improved significantly, although there is more

◀ **The regions and local association deliver many people's volleyball experience.**

work to do. Barriers have also been broken down between the sub groups, and the regions have a central position to play in developing and implementing the future direction of the sport.

This culminated in the Inter Regional Junior Championships, where for the first time in many years all regions were represented. The young players are the future of the sport and the regions recognise this. It is early days, but the signs are good for better co-operation but this will require improved trust on both sides in the future.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

Two senior leagues – Gt. Manchester Volleyball League and Merseyside Volleyball League



competing in National Volleyball League; 4 men's and 6 women's.

80 JUNIOR

girls competing at U14s Girls Grand Prix – held at various venues with 15 teams entered.

NORTH WEST

Chair: Phil Chanin Web: www.volleyballnorthwest.co.uk

Proudest achievement: For the first time in a number of years, the North West entered boy's teams in the Inter Regional competitions and had full squads in both boys and girls for the U15s and U17s competitions.

The ethos of the boys squad was to be representative of the whole region, with the final selection including players from nine different clubs/schools from across the North West and both squads developed quickly into strong competitive units.

The North West boys teams, by publicising their selection to all schools represented, created strong interest across the region among local schools. With good coverage through social media, both boys' teams created interest in their progress. As chair, I'd like to thank coaches – Pete Guernari, Lois Best, Mel Fawcett, Aaron McLoughlin and team managers – Jane Ashbrook and Ann Hamilton, without whom we would not have achieved so much.

Short-term and long-term ambitions: The formation of the North West Boys Programme has provided clubs and schools with a structured

approach to develop junior boys sessions. The North West Volleyball Association will roll out a programme of junior U14 boys grand prix matches, across the region, in order to build up the number of clubs/schools providing competitive boys matches at U14s level. The grand prix sessions will be expected to stimulate more schools and clubs to enter, will feed into Inter Regional training and into the Volleyball England Talent Pathway.

The North West Volleyball Association will look to hold a coach development session to align junior coaches with regards to good practice and to involve them in developing the North West boys programme.

Biggest challenge: To grow the boys structure from its first year and to make this sustainable. This is to be achieved by working with schools and clubs to develop a structured approach to playing junior matches across the region.

This season has seen the collapse of the Lancashire League so the North West Volleyball Association has to reach out to volleyball within Lancashire and Cumbria.



YEAR IN NUMBERS

Northern Counties
23 TEAMS

14 TEAMS
TEES VALLEY



Men's Division 1 Winners
NEWBURN VC ACKLAM



Men's Division 2 Winners
LONGBENTON VC MARSKE



Women's Winners
NEWBURN VC

NORTH EAST

Chair: Keith Sowden Web: www.ncva.org.uk

Proudest achievement: We have been really trying to develop the sport at junior level across the region, with the boys achieving third place in the Under 18 National Cup.

Unfortunately, we only managed to send one team to the Inter Regionals this year, despite holding training sessions for all age groups in both genders. This team was a mix of ages but thoroughly enjoyed the experience and managed to finish 5th in the U17 boys competition.

We have established a Junior Sub-Committee and so hope to build on this next season.

National League – it's been a very successful season for our North East teams. At Super 8s level, total domination by Team Northumbria men and women, and Team Durham women.

In Division 1, Team Durham men won promotion and in Division 2, Sunderland men also won promotion.

Several players from our region represented England at junior and senior level, which is encouraging for the area. We were also very pleased to see the England vs. Scotland 50th Anniversary take place at Northumbria University.

Short-term and long-term ambitions: After 25 years, the organisation of the regions longest running beach tournament Tynemouth, has been handed over from Sue Sowden to Marden VC. This will allow Sue to build the development of the South Shields Beach event, now in its 2nd year. Marden VC also organise a beach league throughout the summer.

Biggest challenge: The North East continues to function despite a lack of new volunteers for regional positions. This is one of our biggest challenges moving forward.

Another is a lack of officials for both national (we now have 9 teams in the National League) and local leagues.



YEAR IN NUMBERS



National Volleyball League (NVL) teams (five men's and five women's)

24

senior teams at regional level.



(two of each gender)

YORKSHIRE

Chair: Tim Godson
Web: www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/regional_associations/yorkshire

Proudest achievements:

- The junior programme going from strength to strength with teams competing in most age groups
- Supporting teams to train new referees and coaches
- Running a Level 1 Coaching Course
- Having a newly-formed team in the regional league and seeing a club rejoin
- A growing beach programme in Yorkshire with a newly set up club and high calibre events

Short-term and long-term ambitions: To grow the junior programme with support from clubs and coaches.

Biggest challenge: To continue to grow junior volleyball in the region and to get juniors playing



▲ **Volunteers at local and regional level organise many competitions.**

more competitive volleyball – that is the future of volleyball in Yorkshire



YEAR IN NUMBERS

12

National Volleyball League teams (six men's and six women's)



5

regional leagues (three men's, two women's)



25

MEN'S TEAMS



18

WOMEN'S TEAMS

60+

junior club members competing in a regular monthly junior series.

WEST MIDLANDS



Chair: Aneel Khanna Web: www.wmva.org.uk

Proudest achievement: The Inter Regionals competition this year saw the U17 boys win a title that has been overdue. The strength of the four squads that entered the boys and girls competitions is testament to the support and junior development plans the region has in place.

Short-term and long-term ambitions: Our short term goals for this year were to ensure that competitions ran well, juniors were supported, and their development was supported. The number of registered referees and coaches continued to grow, supported where required by mentoring to ensure suitable development.

Longer term, we would like to see how the introduction of volleyball into schools can be



supported by Volleyball England, for teachers to be able to deliver the core skills, and a development work programme for primary school based activity.

Biggest challenge: Junior development is key to the future of our sport in the region and it is felt that working groups must include as many interested parties as possible to ensure that we are not left 'surprised' by decisions taken that affect how plans are implemented locally.

Increasing club membership is a challenge given the change in focus forced upon us since the Volleyball Relationship Manager role was lost; as a region we do not have the workforce in clubs and on the ground to ensure that we can grow significantly club participation, increase volunteer membership, and support clubs as we would like to.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

5

county associations providing volleyball

OVER 72 TEAMS IN THE REGION

1

sitting volleyball club in the Grand Prix – Essex Pirates.

8

Eastern Region series tournament events (hosted by Norfolk County Volleyball)

EASTERN



Secretary: Frances Balaam

Web: www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/regional_associations/eastern

Proudest achievements: This year has seen an emphasis on developing junior volleyball. At the Inter Regional Championships, the Eastern Region had four teams take part. The region was able to support the development of the junior players by funding the training sessions in the run up to the competition.

There has also been an increase in junior participation. Suffolk Volleyball have created a monthly junior tournament to develop youth volleyball. There have been four competitions already and although the age group was classified as Under 18, there were players as young as 12 competing.

Short-term and long-term ambitions: As a representative, the Eastern Region is still being

developed. Previously, there was no organised committee. We're developing who we are and how we work. Our short-term goal is to build the committee and develop our strategy of what we want to achieve. We want to be able to bring together all the great work that is happening in each county under the umbrella of the Eastern Region.

Developing junior volleyball is on the agenda too. There has been a lot of progress this year and it has been great to see so many young people enjoying the sport. We want to continue to develop that.

Biggest challenge: The biggest challenge is people's time. We need to find more people to volunteer to be part of the Eastern Region Association to be able to develop in the way we want to and have a bigger impact on the sport in our area.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

6

junior events across the county

8

universities registered with Volleyball England

29 REGISTERED CLUBS

50 REGISTERED COACHES

55 REGISTERED REFEREES

EAST MIDLANDS



Chair: Steve Jones Web: www.eastmidlandsvb.com

Proudest achievements:

- Expanding BUCS competitive programme, with notable promotions this season
- Continued work with the university sector with a sub group meeting occasionally to discuss more workforce development, competitions review and BUCS tier 4/5 player development
- HEVO representation at all East Midlands universities
- Needs-led approach to workforce development across the counties, culminating in a number of



Level 1 and 2 Coaching courses, and Grade 4 Referee courses.

Short-term and long-term ambitions:

Continuing to support junior development in the hope we will have full representation at East Midlands Grand Prix events in the future.

Biggest challenges:

- Due to workforce demands, Committee representatives have met less in this season, although leagues and associated activities have continued to run
- Diminishing number of teams competing at County level with no great increase in regional applications for EM leagues
- Diminishing membership to Volleyball England, reflecting a worrying trend for this region: coaches 50 (down 11), Referees 55 (down 14), Clubs 29 (down 5)

◀ The number of registered coaches have declined in some regions.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

126

teams competing in 16 different leagues across the region of which 42 are women's teams.



9

MEN'S TEAMS



13

WOMEN'S TEAMS

The region has 22 teams (13 women and 9 men) competing in National League.

2

referee courses and a Level 1 coaching course held.

6

Berkshire have this year introduced a junior league with six teams and there are other embryonic Grand Prix type competitions for junior teams.

SOUTH EAST



Chair: John Biddiscombe

Web: www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/regional_associations/south_east

Proudest achievement:

The South East monthly junior training sessions have been very popular and we have tried to move these sessions to different locations around the region. The coaching of the regional squads is carried out with great enthusiasm and professionalism by a blend of up and coming young coaches working with older and wiser heads. Our junior squads fared well at the Inter Regional Championships: U15 Girls = 4th; U17 Girls = 2nd; U15 Boys = 2nd; U17 Boys = 4th

Luke Honeybun was voted MVP in the U15 boys competition.

Several of the National Volleyball League teams in the area have talented junior players competing alongside adults.

A couple of our county associations have developed their own App (SVApp – available for Android and iPhone) for keeping track of results and league tables. Berkshire have an integrated system for submitting scores on-line to produce near real time results on the website.

Short-term and long-term ambitions:

We are looking to increase competitive opportunities for youngsters who are just starting out in the sport so over time they can feed in into the U15 and U17 squads. There are areas where there is some great junior development taking place, so as a regional association we need to enable tying these together where there is a need.

Initially this will most likely be on a county by county basis but in the longer term bringing these together across the region maybe as a play-off.

We look to share best practice between the county associations, not as a way to mandate a region wide way of operating. Rather, if one county encountered a particular situation and resolved it, it is quite likely that others may well be encountering similar issues.

We aim to coordinate the staging of courses both within our region and with neighbouring regions.

Biggest challenge: The county associations run successful and popular competitions which serve the needs of our volleyballers, so as a regional association we need to find a way to engage with the adults playing in those leagues.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

League Entries up again
82 TEAMS
 across 10 Divisions

1300+
 registered players

596 MATCHES

10 CLUBS
 providing 15 NVL Teams

32
 BUCS and AoC clubs -
 224 matches

87
 Registered referees,
 78 active

20
 Recreational groups
 reporting 8000+
 participants

LONDON

Chair: Charlie Orton Web: www.londonvolleyball.org.uk

Proudest achievement:

- Strong support for the development of Volleyball 2.0 by IBB Polonia London. This is moving volleyball to the next stage of development, with professional presentation, marketing and publicity
- An official London Facebook page and group for discussion
- Professionally run coaching skills and playing skills courses
- Supporting major events in London - All Nations, London School Games, and London Youth Games
- Improving volleyball facilities in London. Identifying potential venues and working with the owners and managers to make them available for volleyball
- Having a volleyball presence in both Crystal Palace and the Copper Box Arena. To move forward, we need to be working with the main arenas in London. Just having regular sessions in the halls, makes the management aware of volleyball
- Encouraging volunteers to develop their own scheme with support from the region
- Developing and supporting the entrepreneurial

skills within the region while keeping them in contact with the Region

Short-term and long-term ambitions:

- Short term:
- To continue the support for Volleyball 2.0
 - Getting all London League teams to use registered coaches
 - Develop a new website
 - Developing on-line database for all Executives to use
- Long Term:
- Developing Semi-professional volleyball in London.
 - Drawing the recreational groups and players in London into the Association in a way that is suitable for them

Biggest challenge:

- Being the leading region of Volleyball England and bringing the rest of Volleyball England with us.
- Finding a replacement for Chairman Charlie Orton as he retires



YEAR IN NUMBERS

7
 local associations working
 with the SWVA

69
AFFILIATED CLUBS

105
REGISTERED COACHES

114
REGISTERED REFEREES

19
 teams in the South West
 regional league

SOUTH WEST

Secretary: Ron Richards Web: www.swva.org.uk

Proudest achievement:

- A healthy and active junior programme with competitions ranging from U12s to U15s, as well as strong showing at the Inter Regional Championships
- A flourishing mentoring scheme with the senior referee team helping to improve quality of our referees
- 130 teams welcomed to the Whitefield Tournament
- Strong competition structure and growth in the Bristol area
- South West Championships sold out in a few weeks



◀ The regions and local associations are at the heart of the grassroots of the sport.

▼ Some regions have seen a fall in the number of registered referees.



- weekends for regional fixtures
- We are not confident of being able to qualify a sufficient number of Level 2 coaches to meet the needs of the NVL regulations



THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our incredible volunteers, partners and sponsors. Your support, guidance, advice and funding is so invaluable and appreciated. Long may your commitment to volleyball continue.



Volleyball England is committed to leading the growth of, and excellence in, all disciplines of volleyball in England. Find out more at

www.volleyballengland.org



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Volleyball England Equality Statement:

Volleyball England supports the principle of equal opportunities for all participants, members, representatives and employees whilst working for, or on behalf of Volleyball England. It opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.