

**Volleyball England AGM 2024**  
**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2024 at 11.30am**

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Independent Director
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Clare Francis [CF]	Senior Independent Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CFo]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
In attendance	
James Murphy [JM]	
Brian Stalker [BS]	
Lenny Barry [LB]	
Simon Cowie [SC]	
Janet Inman [JI]	
Donald Deans [DD]	
Keith Nicholls [KN]	
Bartek Luszcz [BL]	
Bryan Youlden [BY]	
Paul Kaerger [PK]	
Jess Keen [JK]	
Alison Shipway [AS]	
Klaudia French [KF]	
Robert Blaszcak [RB]	
Nick Shaffrey [NS]	
Agata Sromecka [ASR]	Secretariat

**1. Chair's welcome (Adam Walker)**

AW welcomed all to Volleyball England's 2024 Annual General Meeting. AW thanked all for travelling to participate in the meeting as well as joining virtually.

AW then proceeded to congratulate the candidates for the roles of Volleyball England Foundation Trustees.

AW extended his gratitude to the British Volleyball Foundation and Volleyball England Foundation for collaborative work as well as to the Hub team for their unwavering efforts to improve the sport.

AW discussed the running order of the meeting and explained that there would be different speakers delivering different agenda items. Also, the meeting would be Live Streamed on YouTube.

Finally, AW reported that there were three Trustees leaving the Board at the AGM and those were Dave Reeve, Freda Bussey and Clare Francis. AW spoke briefly of their contribution to the sport and the Board and thanked them for their work on the Board.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

AW informed that the apologies had been received from Jake Sheaf, Dave Reeve, Freda Bussey, Phil French and Richard Callicott.

AW wished Richard a speedy recovery from an illness, which was the reason for his absence.

## **3. Acceptance of 2023 AGM Minutes**

The minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting were taken as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

### **3a. Matters arising**

- KN asked about the progress of the Volleyball England Board's investigation into the alleged breach in the voting process, which had been discussed at 2023 AGM. KN further asked for the comments made by AW in relation to this to be retracted in the absence of investigation. AW responded that the investigation was ongoing, and it had not concluded.
- JM asked for the name of the investigators. AW explained that a disciplinary committee and Board were involved. Sport England were aware of the investigation as well. JM then asked why the Board had not spoken to individuals linked to the alleged breach. AW responded that some conversations had taken place but in the light of new evidence, the investigation continued. AW also confirmed that no party was being held guilty of any wrongdoing pending investigation. AW confirmed that the Board were dealing with this matter in the quickest way possible.
- KN asked whether the investigation was going to consider the matter being investigated in the whole context rather than being one-sided. AW confirmed that the investigation was holistic and would be objective.
- JM asked whether the findings of the independent Board evaluation in 2023 would be published. AW explained that such a review was a requirement of the compliance to the Code for Sports Governance. AW added that the report containing the findings was a Board improvement document that was for internal use only and would not be published. The recommendations from the report had been used to continue to improve effectiveness of the Volleyball England Board. The

review of those would be commissioned in the future. AW confirmed that Volleyball England was fully compliant with the Code for Sports Governance. JM questioned the Board's commitment to the principle of transparency against the decision not to publish the findings of the review. In response to this, AW stated that Board were entitled to review and consider certain matters in a confidential manner.

- JM then asked what the full compliance to the Code for Sports Governance meant and whether Volleyball England was compliant with the recommended approaches as opposed to required approaches. AW reported that the Code was a collection of stringent requirements, compliance to which represented best practice for the National Governing Body of a sport which Volleyball England had attained. JM then asked about some specifics of the requirements of the Code and stated the importance of clarity of communication with the membership around these. JM then proceeded to state that the Code did not measure the performance of the Board and asked how the external Board evaluation measured that and thus contributing to the compliance to the Code. AW explained that Volleyball England were in receipt of the funding from Sport England and that was on condition of meeting of performance indicators as well as meeting the Code's requirements which the external evaluation was one of. Volleyball England continued to invest in the sport based on the performance of the organisation.

#### **4. Annual Report**

CFo thanked everyone across the volleyball community that have contributed to the growth of the sport.

CFo drew the attention of the attendees to the following in relation to the Annual Report as evidence of the volleyball progress:

- Digital transformation to integrate systems into VolleyZone
- Growth of partnerships including with Mikasa balls
- Development of VolleyStore to boost income generation
- Work towards improving international relations
- Metrics indicating improved satisfaction across sport
- Communities of practice being live and serving as the sport improvement tool
- Better planning and monitoring of progress as well as the hub team's buy in into new ways of working
- Increase of the Superleague product value
- Insight showing a year-on-year increase in membership
- Rise in media platform engagement including Instagram, TikTok and Facebook
- 94% completion rate of tasks from the operational plan
- Compliance with CPSU safeguarding standards

CFo then proceeded to elaborate on the future plans which included:

- digital enhancement which meant continued development of VolleyZone
- workforce and membership development including the launch of the People Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan,
- FIVB Empowerment supported projects, accelerator programmes for under-represented groups, club welfare officer conference, Club MarComms toolkit and continued development of Communities of Practice.

- In terms of competition and events, NVL 5yr Plan progression, Super League Live, Junior Super Series, Youth NEVZA Beach tournament, Golden League were either looked at or already actioned.
- Sport England 24-28 funding submission would be made with an expectation of a higher award.
- Income generation plans included VolleyStore expansion, partner/sponsor growth, event commercialisation and Community Volleyball pilot.
- In relation to facilities, the indoor beach facility at BCU project was live.
- The plans for the Heritage Project were coming together to ensure that the history of the sport was kept alive.

## **5. Finance update**

KF highlighted the following in relation to the year-end management accounts:

- the year-end accounts were being audited
- in the last two years, the auditors had not questioned any transactions
- the total revenue was over £1.6m and KF explained movements within individual budget areas including funding from Sport England and UKSport, talent, membership, competitions/events, DISE, courses, and VolleyStore.
- the financial situation was similar to last year's.
- Looking forward to this year, the plan was to grow income in order to be sustainable, reserves to be invested back in sport and increased funding from FIV.

Attendees discussed:

- NS asked a question about expenditure in junior competition and talent. KF explained that this detail was available, and only a summary was being shown to the AGM attendees.
- AW thanked KF for the presentation.

## **6. Confirm Jill Osleger's appointment as an Independent Director (Adam)**

AW confirmed the appointment of Jill Osleger as an Independent Director.

## **7. Confirmation of eligibility to vote, voting process and results (Clare Francis)**

CF informed the attendees that tellers would need to be appointed to help with counting votes.

CF read out the following ahead of the voting:

“By the stated closing time for the receipt of proxy and voting forms, at 5pm on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, a total of 57 appointments had been received and validated.”

CF confirmed there were 56 votes in the room with one nominated proxy. 57 votes included 7 votes that had been submitted by clubs to appointed representatives, 23 votes submitted by clubs to nominated others and 27 proxy votes given to the chair.

The chair has been instructed to vote as follows:

- 11 have set out their votes

- 16 instructions to vote at their discretion

The following Ordinary Resolutions, needing a simple majority decision to be passed were voted on:

#### **Resolution Group 1 - Appointment of auditors - PASSED**

To re-appoint Duncan and Toplis as auditor of the Company to hold office from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next general meeting of the Company at which management accounts are laid and to authorise the directors to fix their remuneration

#### **Resolution Group 2 – Election of Directors – ALL PASSED**

To elect **Alison Shipway** in accordance with the Company’s Articles of Association as an **Elected Director**.

To elect **Tracy Newton** in accordance with the Company’s Articles of Association as an **Elected Director**.

To elect **Jessica Keen** in accordance with the Company’s Articles of Association as an **Elected Director**.

#### **Resolution Group 3 – Election of Delivery Leads - PASSED**

To elect **Simon Cowie** in accordance with the Company's Framework Document as the **Competitions Delivery Lead**.

To elect **Adam Barr** in accordance with the Company's Framework Document as the **Clubs & Networks Delivery Lead**.

To elect **Stephen McKeown** in accordance with the Company's Framework Document as the **Coaching Delivery Lead**.

The following Special Resolutions, needing 75% of the vote to be passed, were voted on as follows:

#### **Resolution Group 4 – (Special Resolutions) Amendments to Articles – NOT PASSED**

THAT, the Company’s articles of association be amended to delete Article 31.6 and by adopting new Article 31.6 as detailed in the final voting form notice (Board Recommendation: Against).

THAT, the Company’s articles of association be amended to delete Article 32.5, the reordering of Articles 32.6 & 32.7 and replacing Article 32.1 as detailed in the final voting form notice (Board Recommendation: Against).

JM referenced explanatory note available on the website that elaborated on why Board did not approve of the resolutions to clarify whether they were against the law. AW advised that legal advice had been taken to arrive at the conclusion in that note.

The Talent Delivery Lead role remained vacant. CFo encouraged all to get in touch if interested in the role.

AW reinforced the Board’s commitment to a consultative approach regarding changes to Articles of Association.

## **8. Questions from the floor**

Questions had been received in advance of the AGM and responses had been posted on the website. Additional questions were as follows:

- KN expressed concerns in relation to the framework document and asked for action on this. AW responded that the Board were happy to engage in a dialogue with KN regarding this.
- KF asked about teams wanting to register with a national league and being denied the registration. SF responded that the reason behind this was that the limited number of teams in the league would be worked with to improve the quality of the NVL and improve standards rather than growing it in size. AW stated that Volleyball England would work with those teams to find the best solution and support their growth.
- JM stated that in his opinion Volleyball England had sacrificed the growth for the improvement. He then asked whether the Game Plan would be updated to this effect. AW reinforced that Volleyball England would continue to support the membership to play the sport and find solutions. It was important that the quality of sport continued to improve but not at the cost of opportunities for players to play competitively.
- KN offered his help in terms of the use of the equipment improving the game designed by him. CFo responded that no offer of help aimed at improving the sport would be declined by him or his team.

## **9. Concluding remarks**

AW thanked all for attending the meeting.