



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting at 6pm on 21 June 2024 at SportPark, Loughborough and via Teams.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Independent Director
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Clare Francis [CF]	Senior Independent Director
Freda Bussey [FB]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CFo]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
In attendance	
Mark Kontopoulos [MK] online	BVF Chair (left at 12pm)
Greg Brown [GB] online	Volleyball England Foundation Chair
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Secretariat

EB/24-25/15 Welcome from the Chair and apologies

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies had been submitted by Phil French, Simon Griffiths, Dave Reeve, and Jake Sheaf.

15.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

15.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

15.3 Previous minutes

15.3.1. 20 April 2024

The board agreed that the minutes of 20 April 2024 Board meeting were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

JP's initials to be amended.

15.3.2. 29 May 2024

Board agreed that the minutes of 29 May 2024 Board meeting were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

JP's initials to be amended.

10 June 2024

Board agreed that the minutes of 10 June 2024 Board meeting were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Missing bracket on page 2 to be amended.

15.3.3. January minutes correction

Minor adjustments would be made to the January minutes because of feedback received from a Volleyball England member. Those included:

- Greg Brown to be referred as GBr and Guin Batten as GB.
- FSR to be referred to in full rather than as an abbreviation.

15.4 AGM prep

This was discussed by the Board outside of the meeting.

15.5 Matters arising

Board discussed actions:

EB/23-24/34.1 CFo reported that there were no major updates, but more frequent communication was taking place between strategic managers.

EB/24-25/5 Commonwealth Games Legacy - the coaching course feedback– RH updated that there was feedback on those, 69 responses had been collected between July 2021 and April 2024 with a satisfaction score of 8.5 out of 10. FB reported that the change in the beach course should contribute to improving the feedback. MK referenced his own experience as a tutor and expressed his openness for discussing this further with anyone willing to give more detailed feedback. RH and Gillian Harrison would be monitoring further feedback.

EB/24-25/8.2 GB followed up re Northumbria Uni team ban appeal. The board discussed whether and what action Volleyball England should take. CFo and CF would pick this up and decide the best course of action.

CFo reported that all actions from May and June meeting had been completed.

Actions:

EB/24-25/8.2 CFo and GB would decide the best course of action re Northumbria Uni team ban appeal.

EB/24-25/16 Exec Report

The report was taken as read.

Board discussed:

- AH asked about the difference between Level 1 and Level 2 in the graph showing the number of safeguarding incidents by threshold. GB responded that it was related to the level of severity of the disclosure available on Globocol. Low level disclosure would be level 1 and level 2 would require intervention from an outside agency such as local authorities and/or the Police.
- BF enquired about the individual that had received a 5-year ban. CFo reported that the ban would end in June 2026, and this would be reviewed. CFo added that a risk assessment would also be carried out as part of the review. The review would be carried out regardless of whether the individual would wish to return to sport or not.
- CFo reported that as instructed by the Board at the April Board meeting, the parameters and considerations around publishing outcomes/interim measures in relation to safeguarding/disciplinary procedures had been investigated. CFo informed that if an outside agency was involved, we shouldn't be sharing specifics about the case. Aside from that, CFo believed that publishing a list of suspended individuals on the grounds of safeguarding was in the best interest of Volleyball and the wider public. CFo proposed publishing the list including 5 names as per the Executive Report. Board discussed:
 - AW asked what criteria had been used to decide on the names. CFo advised that individuals on the list were deemed to pose a significant risk to the volleyball community on safeguarding as well as disciplinary grounds. However, the appropriate processes might not have been concluded yet. The decision would have been arrived at following a risk assessment.
 - BF asked whether there was a risk around publishing a name of an individual who was on that list but had not been found guilty in the eyes of law.
 - AW pondered on the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" in the case of someone whose name would be published as suspended and who might be found innocent later. AW observed that putting more details regarding the reason for suspension could be a solution. CFo added that names that were included in the list were those whose cases had concluded as advised by the Police. Any additional names would need to be approved by the Board or Safeguarding Champion. CFo added that VolleyZone did not allow anyone under suspension to be registered with a club. AW expressed his concern in relation to the duty of care of the person under suspension. CFo reported that there was no evidence across NGBs that anyone found not guilty had faced negative impact.
 - BF asked if individuals were to take us to court, were we insured against legal action and whether we should take legal advice in relation to publishing the information.
 - CFo believed that the processes for establishing whether an individual should be placed on the list was thorough, proper and appropriate.
 - GB asked about the threshold. CF stated that this should be a committee rather than an individual. MK and GBr agreed that there should be a process and a defined threshold to ensure the sport would be protected.
 - RH mentioned the Whyte report which stated there should be consideration for the accused person and how they should be supported through the process.
 - AW summarised that the Board's priority was the safety of the sport. To decide regarding what individuals would be included on the list there would need to be overseen by a panel that was sufficiently trained. Liability insurance would also be explored. AW asked for the terminology to be clarified around a suspension and a ban. CFo would speak to Tracy from

the case management group regarding this.

- CFo thanked JP for her contribution to work on environmental sustainability plans.
- CFo reported on the Indoor Beach Volleyball Facility & High-Performance Centre. The development of a 4-court indoor beach facility in Birmingham had been officially signed off and all funds were in place to commence with the final planning and procurement phase. The hope was that building would commence in the Autumn at latest with the facility being officially opened before the end of 2024. Most of the funds had come from BCU and Sport England alongside a small contribution from Volleyball England. An additional business case was being put forward to BCU in relation to the development of a High-Performance Beach Programme. CFo thanked Jake Sheaf for his work on this. AW asked what the name of the venue would be. CFo responded that this was up for a discussion.

EB/24-25/17 Sub-Groups & Volleyball England Foundation Updates

17.1 Volleyball England Foundation

GBr reported:

- 4 new Trustees had been recruited. They would be attending the AGM the following day.

17.2 Volleyball for Life (VfL) subgroup

RH reported the following in addition to the report:

- The Respect campaign had been rejuvenated at the start of the beach season. RH had joined the presentation and spoken to beach referees and beach players about the event rules and responsibilities and talked through the Respect presentation ahead of the season.
- RH was working with Rob Payne to have something similar for indoor volleyball. Board discussed the relationship between referees and coaches, CFo had some ideas re a coaching working group and officials working group to work better together.

17.3 Get Keep Grow (GKG) subgroup.

JP reported:

- 62 clubs had completed affiliation.
- 26 clubs were in the process of completing affiliation.
- 4925 students had been engaged so far in volleyball activity at their university.

17.4 An Ace Service subgroup.

GB reported:

- The Group had been working well with the Vison group on the five-year plan for the NVL.
- AH asked about international transfers. GB responded that a review would be undertaken, including investigating the cost effect of this and formalising the transfers. CFo added that no

charges on international transfer would be introduced for the 2024-25 season but checks would be carried out. However, a fine would be applied in case of irregularities. A mid-year review in 24-25 season would take place to see whether there are any irregularities.

- The board discussed international transfers, trust put into clubs and players when completing registration, and the extent of club's responsibility to investigate player's history should they come from a different country. CFo responded that the amnesty route would be applied in relation to player's identities. Also, additional checks would be carried out on visas to ensure that players were on international sports visas. CF observed that the clubs needed to be better informed on their responsibilities in terms of visa checks. CFo responded that the process was in place but needed to be communicated. AW summarised that clubs needed comms to be help with checks. This would be carried out by the sub-group. The Board agreed that more time would be had to devise any further plans related to this.

17.5 Finance Strategy and Risk group (FSR)

The Finance Strategy and Risk group would meet the following month.

Member satisfaction risk had been elevated.

EB/24-25/18 Volleyball England policy review

GB reported the most significant changes to the policies as per the paper circulated as part of the Board pack.

All changes were agreed by the Board. GB would amend them and would publish them.

EB/24-25/19 Sitting Volleyball – Development plans.

LA joined the meeting.

LA reported on the development plans for sitting volleyball.

- Shared vision had been developed to progress the discipline including four areas: competitions, workforce/club development, competitions and stakeholders and partnerships.
- Sitting volleyball joint working group alongside British Volleyball Federation and Volleyball England Foundation had been pivotal in the work being carried out
- Following initial meetings, a secondary session had been facilitated with a smaller and more focused group to discuss priorities and the direction of the discipline. Individuals who were willing to help were also identified with leads in specific areas. Those individuals would be harnessed over the next 12 months.
- Monthly meetings were being held with the group, British Volleyball Federation and Volleyball England Foundation to ensure this was collaborative effort.
- LA then presented 2024-25 goals that have been split into 6 months and 12 months plans as well as beyond that.
- Partnerships included with regions and counties, active partnerships and Activity Alliance.

- The group would also look at how to re-establish and create new clubs within local areas including exploring opportunities outside a traditional volleyball club.
- Golden Euro League would be live streamed, and some media coverage had been organised to put the sitting volleyball on the map.
- The long-term goal was supporting new and developing clubs with resources alongside building a stakeholder network, which would allow engagement with various organisation and widen opportunities to play sitting volleyball.
- The Higher Education Volleyball Officers could be tapped into in terms of delivering sitting volleyball at universities. This would be looked into.

Board discussed:

- MK reported that some other efforts had been made in terms of this work such as sitting volleyball presence at the City of London Summer of Sport, and a sitting volleyball presentation at charity and corporate events in London post Paralympics at Tower Hill and Canary Wharf. UKSport and Sport England had been invited to those events. The work to reinvigorate the discipline was ongoing. BVF were awaiting final investment figure until 2028 that would impact on the investment in the discipline.
- GBr reinforce the importance of collaboration of the three organisation.
- RH added that the first sitting volleyball coaching course would be starting in September.
- AH asked whether there was a need for education around refereeing sitting volleyball. CFo reported that two referees were currently taking international courses.
- Board thanked LA.

EB/24-25/20 Meeting finalisation

20.1 Review of actions

Actions were agreed and would be acted on.

20.2 AOB

CFo added that a positive meeting re bringing the Queen and King of the court to England had been had in London. CFo reflected that there was a great sense of collaboration to make the tournament happen.

AW reflected on FB, DR and CF leaving the Board at 2024 AGM. AW spoke of the leaving Directors contribution to the work of the Board and thanked them for their service.

20.3 Meeting close

The meeting finished at 7.

Actions	Who
EB/24-25/15.3 Amendments to the minutes to be made.	CFo and GB
EB/24-25/8.2 CFo and GB would decide the best course of action re Northumbria Uni team ban appeal.	CFo and GB
EB/24-25/18 GB would amend and publish the policies as approved by the Board.	GB

ML

Board Meeting –Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 21st June 2024 board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above board meeting minutes:

EB/24-25/13 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

1. Staff

Since the last board meeting, we have seen the below staffing changes:

- Zainab Bohri has joined the organisation as our new Finance Assistant and therefore the short-term support provided by Toby Fletcher has now ended.
- Molly Walker will leave Volleyball England at the end of June having secured a marketing role in healthcare. We have decided not to recruit to a replacement position as we have a Volleyball for Life student placement starting later in the summer who will be able to pick up Molly's responsibilities.
- Hema Choudhary has accepted a secondment opportunity to provide interim strategic management of the Get.Keep.Grow department.
- Recruitment is ongoing in relation to the 'National Coach Developer' role and Get.Keep.Grow Project Lead role.
- We have now secured a further three student placements for the 2024/25 year. Hannah Ring will join the Volleyball for Life department providing coach development/ talent support and Lauren Goh, Shiloh Chuang will join the An Ace Service department to support competitions and events. One final student placement position remains vacant within the Get.Keep.Grow department.

2. Environmental Sustainability Plan – Update

Following a recent meeting with Jess Plumridge to go through specific details in relation to the tenders that we have received, we have formally partnered with Greenly. They will now begin work on Volleyball England's carbon impact assessment by collecting relevant data from across the work of the Hub Team/organisation.