



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting at 11am on 20th April 2024 at Kettering NVC and via Teams.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Clare Francis [CF]	Senior Independent Director
Freda Bussey [FB]	Elected Director
Jake Sheaf [JS]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Phil French [PF]	Independent 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
Kev Fletcher [KF]	Finance Manager
Mark Kontopoulos [MK]	BVF Chair (left at 12pm)
Janet Inman [JI]	Volleyball England Foundation Secretary
In attendance	
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Secretariat

EB/24-25/1 Welcome from the Chair and apologies

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Andres Hernandez, Brendan Fogarty, and Dave Reeve submitted apologies.

1.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

1.3 Previous minutes

Minutes of the 27 January 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

1.4 Matters arising

EB/24-25/28 DV and RH were yet to meet to discuss clinical governance within coach

education.

EB/24-25/35.1 GB suggested that nominations for the Peter Wardale award could be discussed by the Board at the October 2024 away days. The Exec team would think of the criteria for this award.

Actions:

EB/24-25/28 DV and RH were yet to meet to discuss clinical governance within coach education. Action DV RH

EB/24-25/35.1 The Peter Wardale award to be discussed by the Board at the October away days. The Exec team would think of the criteria for this award Action Exec and Board.

JS joined the meeting.

AW referenced AGM planning including:

- Following AW's and CFo's meeting with the three reps from the sport, those reps suggested they would present special resolutions at the 2024 AGM. AW and CFo asked for the proposed resolutions to be presented to AW and CFo before the AGM which had been agreed to but no follow up from the reps had taken place yet. The reps had also been invited to the Board meeting, but this hadn't been taken up. AW and CFo would continue to communicate with the group to enter into dialogue over any proposed special resolutions in a way that would be beneficial to the sport.
- AW and CFo had been asked by the reps why the resolutions previously not passed would not be put forward at this year's AGM. AW and CFo responded that although the changes to the articles were proposed with the best of intentions (such as modernisation and to reflect best practice), the Board would prefer to focus on other business at this year's AGM including Board member recruitment.
- AW reported that FB would be leaving the Board due to her term coming to an end. Also, DR would be standing down due to family commitments. DR offered to remain an advisor to the Board as and when needed.
- AW and CF had discussed succession planning in reference to the Chair and Vice Chair leaving at the same time in 2025. Because of this, CF had decided that she would leave the Board at the 2024 AGM. AW thanked FB, DR and CF for their support and contributions to the Board. In line with the Board Skills Matrix and emerging Diversity Inclusion Action Plan, skills such as legal & corporate governance, safeguarding, external sporting context and relationship management would be important considerations when appointing new Board Members. One independent and up to three elected Director's would be recruited. Recruitment adverts had been published.
- The Board discussed the need for diverse Board applicants. The Board, MK & JI were encouraged to activate their networks.

EB/24-25/2 Exec Report

The report was taken as read.

Board discussed:

- RH commented on the impressive range and the volume of the staff-led projects being undertaken. CFo responded that the organisation was trying to strike the right balance between good quality work, challenge and stretch. CFo added that staff satisfaction with work remained high, which was reassuring. GB added that staff get-togethers were encouraged and facilitated. Annual reviews had been completed and across the board are positive. GB stressed that the culture of support, celebration and flexibility was being facilitated and encouraged. AW congratulated the Exec team on the positive results in reference to staff satisfaction. RH added that the organisational focus should be recruitment of volunteers to alleviate the many pressures for staff. GB responded that the introduction of the new NVL standards would help with this as well to enforce tasks to be carried out by clubs.
- JS commented on the vast number of students being keen on being involved with VE. This could be an opportunity for VE to involve students in the capacity of temporary workforce. The board discussed student placements. JS could direct candidates to VE.

Lastly, in terms of the nominations for the vacant positions on FIVB & CEV board and commissions, the below English candidates had been identified:

- Dr Dane Vishnubala – European Medical Commission Member
- Adam Walker – European Volleyball Commission

The Board were asked to discuss and formally approve the above before their candidature forms would be submitted. **Board approved.**

Additionally, CFo informed the Board about the candidates for the position of CEV President. Those were:

- Roko Sikiric (Croatia)
- Leo Wensel (Poland)
- Renato Arena (Italy)
- Eric Adler (Denmark)

Presidential candidate manifestos would be shared with the Board as and when received. MK reported on his conversations with the candidates.

2.1 Annual Governance Statement

CFo asked the Board for approval of the Statement.

Board approved the Statement. This would be published on the website.

2.2 Environmental sustainability plan

CFo explained that the plan was part of compliance with the Code for Sports Governance. A summary of actions taken and the plan to get the plan had been presented.

The Board approved the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

EB/24-25/3 Sub-Groups & Volleyball England Foundation Updates

3.1 FSR

KF reported:

- to the end of March (Q4) the revenue was down against the budget
- The revenue for the year was better than budgeted, and better than the previous year.
- The revenue generated by VE was larger than the funding received by Sport England.
- The auditors suggested attending the AGM in the light of them not being able to complete the audit ahead of the AGM. KF would discuss the date of the meeting with the auditors so that it would be sooner than suggested by the auditor.

CF reported:

- Sharing of tracking of ops planning and strategic dashboard with subgroups had been discussed.

3.2 VE Foundation

Jl reported the following:

- DR had left the Volleyball Foundation Board.
- There had been seven applications and four shortlisted candidates for Trustee vacancies. Jl was processing references. Once complete, an induction would be carried out and the candidates would be presented to the VE Board.
- The equipment had been recovered from Aston Villa and was stored at Sport Birmingham. This would be used to support community and faith groups.
- E-learning platform in relation to LGBTQ was being tested.

3.3 An Ace Service subgroup

SG had no additional update to their paper.

3.3 Volleyball for Life subgroup

RH updated the Board:

- The group had discussed their potential role in reviewing of the People Plan and its progress. RH had met with GB regarding this and discussed the potential for the group to review the progress against the principles.
- CFo thanked RH for his support of the Exec Team with the Transgender policy, People Plan and DIAP.
- Jl asked about the Siting Volleyball level 2 course content. RH responded that currently there was nobody identified to support with its writing.

3.4 Get Keep Grow subgroup.

JP highlighted:

- Member fees and categories had been looked at by the subgroup. The club affiliation fees had been increased inline with RPI and junior comp fees had been increased to £10.00 as this was a previously discounted membership fee and therefore doesn't need member approval.

EB/24-25/4 Safeguarding Publishing outcomes review

CFo updated the Board as follows:

- Following assessment of existing information from across the sector and advice

from CPSU, the recommendation was for the Board to adopt an approach similar to that of Table Tennis and Boxing who provide basic information on their website of those who are suspended from the sport but with no provision of reasons.

Board discussed:

- AW asked whether VE had a duty of care in relation to those that were suspended pending investigation and whether their names should be publicised on the website.
- GB and CFo commented that there were risks connected to publishing/not publishing of the name in this category:
 - Individuals continuing to be affected by the behavior of the individual in question.
 - Risk to the individual whose name is published.
 - Risk to VE as NGB of being accused of not taking the situation seriously/taking the situation too far negatively affecting the life of the individual under investigation.
- JI commented that it was a catch-22 situation and there should be a balanced approach to publishing safeguarding information.
- MK suggested a search function on the website available to clubs only. JI responded that a DBS check would flag that.
- CF suggested a password protected document on the website for club secretaries.
- AW suggested that a category for individuals suspended in an interim/ on a temporary basis would be created on the website. The nature of the suspension would not be published.
- AW suggested that the balance was needed when choosing the right approach.
- The Exec would put some suggestions together for Board to review and agree the final approach.
- CFo and Laura Allcoat had met with the Head of Safeguarding at Sport England and discussed challenges surrounding safeguarding.

Actions:

EB/24-25/4 Safeguarding Publishing outcomes review

The Exec would put some suggestions together of what information and what wording would be used when publishing information about safeguarding investigations for Board to review and agree the final approach

EB/24-25/5 Commonwealth Games Legacy

Board discussed:

- CF asked about the workforce development in reference to the diversity and long-term involvement of that cohort. JS responded that the targeted cohort had been identified based on the stakeholders VE was working with including community team at Moseley and teachers. JS confirmed that the workforce development funding could be pushed out to the clubs in West Midlands. However, the offer of the courses extended to the Birmingham City Volleyball Club had been declined and might have to be addressed.
- MK reinforced that the feedback on courses was important to improve the quality of the product and boost intake of participants.
- AW suggested that the coaching course feedback should be collected with MK

feeding into this. JS would also follow up with the aforementioned Chair of the club. RH would help with this work.

- Final approval has been granted for an indoor beach facility at Birmingham City University. The 4-court facility will also act as a high-performance hub for Beach Volleyball where talent pathway athletes and coaches can train all-year round.
- Following the activator's departure (Rafael) from the role, support in activating the Moseley courts could be facilitated in a number of ways, JS would be meeting with Moseley Rugby Club shortly to discuss the options.
- CFo asked to be involved in the meeting with Moseley Rugby Club
- JI asked what clubs in Birmingham could take in new players. JS responded that a discussion could be had with Sport Birmingham to help with establishing this.

Actions:

EB/24-25/5 Commonwealth Games Legacy

The coaching course feedback should be collected with MK feeding into this. JS would also follow up with the Chair of the Birmingham City Volleyball Club. RH would help with this work.

CFo and JS to meet with Moseley Rugby Club to discuss and confirm 2024 activation options.

EB/24-25/6 NVL 5-year Plan

SG presented on the NVL 5-year plan:

- Small advisory group had met three times and came up with three priorities for 2024-30:
 - Reducing calendar congestion
 - Delivering a consistent league structure that would remain in place for 5 years.
 - Driving up standards throughout the league and working with regions and counties to help those on the periphery of the league.
- Potential future league structure was presented.
- In terms of standards, areas being explored were:
 - New teams into the NVL
 - Existing Teams
 - Graded by league.
 - Phased implementation.
 - Reward and recognise the best clubs
 - Support / penalize those that would not meet the standards.
- A group was being put together to create criteria for letting teams in and demoting them based on their performance. They would need to be published within the next month.

Board discussed:

- The board commented that this was going in the right direction.
- JP asked about NVL2 and whether triangulars could be played if possible.
- RH commented that sustainability should be considered when constructing the structure of the league.

- AW thanked SG for his work on this.

EB/24-25/7 Volleyball England Policy review

GB updated the Board on the review of policies and procedures:

- One of the challenges was a version control but this would be addressed going forward.
- 18 policies and procedures were up for a review this year.
- GB suggested that a Board member could be assigned to reviewing of the policies and procedures. CF agreed that she would review them, and staff would execute the changes.

CFo updated that the staff handbook was being reviewed and staff were being consulted on HR policies including the TOIL policies. Staff Handbook should be ready by July.

Action:

EB/24-25/7 Volleyball England Policy review

CF would review the policies and procedures and staff would execute the changes.

EB/24-25/8 Meeting Finalisation

AW commended the agenda items which were interesting to hear updates on.

8.1 Review of Actions

Actions were reviewed and agreed.

8.2 AOB

Jl had referenced the Sitting Volleyball meeting the night before and asked whether there could be a Board sponsor for this group.

Jl asked about funding, and whether sponsorship would be considered from zero alcohol manufacturers. CFo answered that this question could be taken up by the commercial and income generation group.

CF asked on the update on the complaint re behaviour at the Northumbria University student cup. GB responded that this had been triaged back to the club. The outcome would be communicated back to VE. GB would follow this up.

CFo reported that VE was engaging in the heritage project. FB was attending as well.

8.3 Meeting close

Meeting closed at 12.45pm

Actions	Who
EB/24-25/28 DV and RH are yet to meet to discuss clinical governance within coach education	Action DV and RH
EB/24-25/35.1 All Board would discuss the Peter Wardale memorial award at the October away days.	Action All

<p>EB/24-25/35.1 The Peter Wardale award to be discussed by the Board at the October away days. The Exec team would think of the criteria for this award Action Exec and Board.</p>	All
<p>EB/24-25/2.1 Annual Governance Statement to be published on the website.</p>	The Exec
<p>EB/24-25/5 Commonwealth Games Legacy The coaching course feedback should be collected with MK feeding into this. JS would also follow up with the aforementioned Chair of the club. RH would help with this work.</p> <p>CFo and JS to meet with Moseley Rugby Club to discuss and confirm 2024 activation options</p>	RH CFo JS
<p>EB/24-25/4 Safeguarding Publishing outcomes review The Exec would put some suggestions together of what information and what wording would be used when publishing information about safeguarding investigations for Board to review and agree the final approach</p>	The Exec
<p>EB/24-25/7 Volleyball England Policy review CF would review the policies and procedures and staff would execute the changes.</p>	CF
<p>EB/24-25/8.2 AOB GB would follow up on the outcome of the complaint.</p>	GB



Board Meeting – 20th April 2024 Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 20th April 2024 board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above board meeting minutes:

EB/24-25/2 – Executive Report

Volleyball England Staff

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

- After 13 years' service to Volleyball England, Bertrand Olie will leave the organisation on the 17th May 2024. Role descriptions for a new Volleyball for Life Project Lead are being created and will be released shortly. We will also be looking at how the DiSE programme and its responsibilities continue to be covered, this could include Bertrand joining the existing DiSE tutor network on a contractor basis.
- Adam Freundlich will leave Volleyball England on the 10th May 2024 after securing a new role within the energy sector. We are currently recruiting a new 'Finance Assistant' who will work with Kevin Fletcher to ensure continuity of service.
- John Worrall has now fully transitioned over to his new 'Project Lead – Sitting Volleyball' role within the Get Keep Grow (GKG) department.
- We have appointed the first of our new crop of student placements for the 2024/25 year. Further appointments within our Comps and Talent teams will be confirmed shortly.

Despite positive initial conversations with Sport England, we have now been told that there are no additional funds available to support Volleyball England with Safeguarding support, we are following up accordingly but also looking at alternative self-funded options.

Code for Sports Governance

We have now completed and submitted all of the required elements inline with our 2023/24 Governance Action Plan (GAP).

Heritage Project

Volleyball England's vision is to be '*an organisation that creates a deep-rooted sense of belonging for everyone within our community*' and therefore to achieve this, we need to ensure that we can connect the present and future of the sport to the past.

We are now embarking on a deep dive project into the sports history to ensure that facts/figures and most importantly stories are immortalised, easily accessible and known across the Volleyball community.

Ultimately, our hope is that the project will culminate in the creation of a digital/physical archive being established and heritage assets (videos etc) being used across the Volleyball community to help cultivate the desired sense of belonging.

An initial meeting is taking place during Cup Final weekend in Kettering.

In addition to the above and in preparation for the initial meeting, we have undertaken the below:

- Setting up a Volleyball England Heritage Facebook page –An opportunity for anyone to engage/re-engage with the sport, sharing photos/videos and memories.
- Meetings with Loughborough University in terms of potential research opportunities.
- Conversations with the National Lottery in terms of their Heritage funding opportunities.
- Continued support for Barbara Totterdell in relation to the completion and publication of her book.

UKBT License Extension

A 3-year license extension has been agreed with UKBT for the running of a domestic beach tour of events and activities.