

Executive Board Meeting Minutes held on 29th September 2018 at SportPark, Loughborough

Circulation: Board, Senior Management Team, Group Leads, Hub Staff

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Chair (Independent)
Clare Francis [CF]	Director (Independent)
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Director
Ian Wall [IW]	Director (Independent)
Freda Bussey [FB]	Director
Lauri Chandler [LC]	Director (Independent)
Seyram Atubra [SA]	Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Director
Staff Present	
Janet Inman [JI]	Chief Executive Officer
Stewart Dunne [SD]	Chief Operating Officer
Samantha Jamieson [SJ]	Core Market Officer
Observer	
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Secretariat

EB/18-19/24 Welcome by the Chair

AW extended his welcome to all Trustees, in particular RH for whom it was the first Board meeting. RH introduced himself and spoke about his background and links to volleyball. All other Trustees also introduced themselves and spoke briefly about their role on the VE Board.

24.1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been submitted by JW and SM.

24.2 Director Conflict of Interest

SJ declared she was a member of TASS management group. AW declared an ongoing interest in relation to securing additional funding by VE for the purpose of commissioning a consultancy service to build an attractive membership offer (previously documented).

24.3 Approval of agenda

The Board approved the agenda.

24.4 Previous Minutes

24.4.1 Confirmation

17.2 CF observed that FB was still noted as the lead for Core Market. JI explained that this note was valid pre-AGM. As ratified at the AGM, this no longer was relevant post-AGM and all

Director roles were non-portfolio holding roles. This would be implemented going forward.

- 24.4.1.1 Typos identified across the minutes **to be corrected by AS**
- 24.4.1.2 The minutes of 21 July 2018 Board Meeting were taken as a true and accurate record of that meeting and approved by the Board Members.
- 24.4.1.3 Matters arising/action list - Actions were resolved at the AGM following the Board Meeting.

24.5 Chair's report

24.5.1 2018 AGM Review

AW encouraged Board members to provide feedback on the AGM.

- Despite a disappointing number of club representatives present at the AGM, Board viewed this as a positive indication of clubs' confidence in the VE Board.
- JI informed that the meeting was streamed live by seven people. But has had over 150 views on You Tube.
- AW remarked that in his opinion the meeting was transparent with clear messaging and unified organisational stance on the direction of the sport from the Board. AW congratulated the Board and Staff on the tangible improvement achieved throughout the year culminating in a successful AGM.

24.5.2 Date for 2019 AGM – 27 July 2019

Board discussed the date and the logistics of the identified 2019 annual general meeting as well as means to encourage increased participation from stakeholders:

- length – an hour and a half for a Board meeting should be sufficient to cover the business of the meeting; the length of the AGM would be dictated by the agenda and level of participation
- a careful consideration needed to be given to a running order of the day to entice members to engage on the day
- annual accounts should be produced in time for the meeting – LC reported that annual accounts should be finalised no later than August 2019
- Board agreed that the provisionally identified date – 27 July 2019 – would stand as a date for 2019 AGM due to no clashes with any major volleyball events involving

potential member participants. SD would report to Board if such a clash was identified.

24.5.3 Make-up Board

AW reported that there were two vacancies on the Board. AW stated that the existing Board presented a well-balanced mix of skills, which posed a question whether there was a need for recruitment of additional Directors. JI advised that having considered the current skills matrix, there was no immediate need to recruit. Following a discussion, **Board agreed not to appoint any more Trustees but continuously review the make-up of the Board in case a need to recruit occurred.**

24.5.3.1 Vice Chair

Due to Keith Nicholls retiring as a Vice Chair of the VE Board, AW requested the Board to consider whether it required a Vice Chair to be elected from the existing Board Members.

JI informed that in line with the Articles of Association, a Vice Chair would step into the role of Chair in the absence of the latter but should Chair be absent for a prolonged period of time (more than one meeting) the Senior Independent Director would step into the Chair's role.

Following a discussion, **Board agreed to appoint a Vice Chair.**

Board agreed a change in the Framework allowing an Independent Director to be considered for the election as a Vice Chair.

The Senior Independent Director with links to volleyball, CF was put forward for this position. CF stepped out of the room for the Board to discuss her candidacy. **Board unanimously agreed the candidacy of CF for the position of a new VE Vice Chair.** CF returned to the room and AW informed her that the Board unanimously agreed to put forward CF for the position of VE Vice Chair. **Formal appointment would be held at the November Board.** Also, **the appointment would be communicated to the membership after the November Board meeting.**

24.5.3.2 Diversity Board Lead

AW informed that Diversity Board Lead could be appointed from the existing Board Directors considering existing Board skills matrix. JI reported that Claire Harvey was a useful resource with an appropriate background to call upon if needed. **Following a discussion, Board identified RH as a candidate for this position and unanimously elected RH as VE Diversity Board Lead.**

24.5.3.3 Safeguarding Board Lead

Following a discussion, due to her extensive experience and knowledge of the area, Board identified FB as a candidate for this position and unanimously elected FB for the position of VE Safeguarding Board Lead.

24.5.4 Working Group Leads

24.5.4.1 Sitting Volleyball Lead

The Board unanimously ratified Claire Harvey as the Sitting Volleyball Lead.

25.5.5 Review of the Vision, Mission and Values of the Organisation

Currently VE Mission and Vision were:

“Mission

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

In advance of the scoping meetings with Sport England and submission of VE bid for funding, Board were asked to consider VE Vision, Mission and Value of the organisation. JI asked each of the working sub-groups to provide priority areas to be worked on in the next 12 months.

Result of the discussion were as captured below:

Priority areas of improvement:

- understanding VE membership was crucial to introducing and implementing valid improvements and products
- club development and grassroots in particular were identified as key areas of improvement according to the recent club survey
- competitions were the second biggest income generator after SE funding – how could they be reinvented and stimulated further income?

- learning from HEVO should be appropriately captured and embedded across other programmes
- Following the junior volleyball development conference of last weekend we are supporting regions in delivering Volleyball Futures, which could impact numbers of people playing volleyball in the talent ID pathway?
- using insight to reinvent the sport was crucial – as indicated in the survey, grassroots was an area that according to stakeholders required improvement
- connectivity across sport needed addressing
- it was important to address the lack of overall understanding what long-term success of VE and the sport meant
- mission should be clarified and it should reflect the whole of the sport and its stakeholders
- providing advice and guidance on sustainability held a big appeal for the membership
- understanding the make-up of the membership was crucial to understanding its needs
- it was crucial to understand where we were already making an impact and what would happen if the NGB ceased to exist. Need to identify absolute priorities of improvement that would be income generators
- what was VE – hub vs membership? Direction and drive for the sport had come from the hub in the past, the new regime wants the organisation to be involved going forward based considering the threat of decreasing government financial support.
- Membership should be driving the direction for the sport but VE had duty of care to put in place obligatory rules and procedures to ensure the well-being and future sustainability of the sport.
- The NGB should be an agent of change using insight to monitor health and direction of the sport but at the same time target priority areas and provide advice and guidance to help the sport to sustain itself.
- Consideration of resource to achieve this should go hand in hand with assessing where the biggest impact was possible to be achieved and directing resources towards those areas.
- VE needs to clearly communicate what it could and what it could not do.
- some stakeholders indicated they required more strategic direction from the hub
- VE needs to understand about being a business with social purpose

The Board discussed where they would like to see, aspirations for the long-term future of the sport:

- to see volleyball on the curriculum of every school
- each club referees and coaches qualified to an agreed standard
- every club should be compliant with governance
- minimum one high performance club within every county to be accessible to the members
- being commercially viable
- senior national teams entering biggest championships
- 90% of clubs to attain Clubmark
- fit for purpose website
- becoming innovative, entrepreneurial, engaged, self-sufficient sport
- increased membership engagement – sport being relevant
- fully sequential talent pathway – opportunity to access and progress in sport created
- engaged and trained workforce
- sustaining what we already achieved and encouraging organic growth
- opportunity for juniors to play with adults – this would depend on the quality infrastructure and coaching

What should be our strategic priorities?:

- use paid workforce to stimulate activity
- membership contributing financially to the existence of the
- NGB (e.g. to ensure robust governance, safeguarding etc.)
- establishing competition pathway
- education of coaches and referees
- what would discretionary projects and programmes look like

What is VE's social purpose?

- generate income to reinvest in the organisation's social purpose
- world class governance
- sustain sport by strengthening
 - volunteering
 - income generation
 - increased use of insight
 - strengthening the sport's profile
- development engine and agent of change – long-term planning of engagement with wider membership
- acting as advocates of change

What should be our mission?

- **world class governance, building a sustainable sport infrastructure (including upskilling volunteering workforce that would drive the sport going forward) and being advocates of change targeted at volleyball community**

SMT would take the discussed points to the meeting with Sport England and feedback to the Board.

It was suggested that an open letter was put on the website communicating the shift in the strategic course of VE with the focus on the new direction rather than reduction of funding to achieve the strategic objectives.

Further, JI asked what within subgroups needed addressing and what strategic priority areas for development for 12 months were. Board discussed the following:

- Level 2 and Level 3 Coaching courses
- tracking process for athletes
- membership portal
- competition portal
- insight development
- a fully automated and effective tool to communicate with membership
- more efficient back office.

24.5.6 Ratification of Regional Chairs

The list of Regional Chairs had been submitted as part of the Board Pack.

Following a discussion, **Board ratified the list of Regional Chairs** and committed to its ongoing review. **JI would consider and review regional constitutions to ensure that the associations are governed appropriately. JI**

Board also agreed it was important to actively engage with the Regional Chairs going forward.

Re-energisation of volunteer workforce was identified by the Board as of paramount importance not only in the regions but also nationally. Also, JI confirmed that a clear volunteer succession pathway needed to be identified and communicated externally.

EB/18-19/25 Executive Report

25.1 Update on SMT meeting with Sport England

SMT met with Sport England and discussed the funding for 2019-21. As a sport, volleyball was seen by SE as having little impact on SE

target numbers of encouraging inactive people and therefore the level of funding, as for all NGBs would be reduced in Years 3 and 4 of this current cycle.

Going forward, the focus would be to make Volleyball England a long-term sustainable organization, less dependent on grant funding from government. The application need to be as concise as possible.

Sport England committed to help cover back office cost to support and maintain the NGB. SE stated that NGBs were no longer the main conduit to drive mass participation in sport. Therefore, the focus for VE for the 2019-21 should be around business development, to generate income to support the development of the sport. Sport England would support this development through the work being done currently with Sport Collective and other opportunities to look at how we encouraged fundraising, with reduction of dependency on paid staff and development of dedicated and educated volunteer workforce to undertake tasks currently done by paid staff.

SE were more likely to fund specific projects that looked at people transitioning between stages of their lives. HEVO could be a good fit for some additional project funding.

Board briefly discussed the impact of the reduced level of funding and how/where improvements could be made. Further scoping discussion with SE would take place on 2 October with submission ready by 29 October with final decision pre-Christmas. The submission template was expected to be ready on 2 October.

Jl asked the Board, within their sub-groups, to consider 4-5 things to achieve a strategic shift in 12-month period to start generating income and ultimately become self-sustaining.

25.2 Strategic update / review / monitoring & KPI's

25.2.1 Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham leaflet had been produced – (30 copies) free of charge. Booklet had been sent to recently elected Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Board members. The booklet listed the requirements of Beach Volleyball and the anticipated profit that it could generate during the Games. The final decision whether Beach Volleyball would be included in the Games would be communicated by the end of January 2019. SMT were optimistic about the decision.

25.2.2 VE Code of Governance

Jl reported VE were fully compliant. Phil Smith from Sport England would send an email congratulating the Board and SMT on the work executed and now VE was being used as a model of good practice for other organisations. We will be, from October, receiving SE funding 3 months in advance.

25.2.3 JI reported no staffing changes.

25.2.4 In relation to ClubMark, SJ attended a workshop with Sport England on September 27 to assess options and create guidance for our clubs. Addressing the issue was pushed back again by SE, but funds were available to sustain until 2021. Beyond that, there was no plan or certainty as to ClubMark. ClubMatters was still in existence. However, unless a volleyball club belonged to a CSP providing it, there was no other way to provide accreditation to such a club. There was still lack of communication about the ClubMatters and ClubMark.

25.2.5 Three existing safeguarding cases were being monitored.

EB/18-19/26 Sub Groups – are they fit for purpose

Board would look at the sub groups' structure at its next meeting. JI would circulate appropriate ToRs to the Board. SD to put all documents in the Dropbox. JI/SD

EB/18-19/27 Sub-Group Reports

27.1 Finance Strategy and Risk

27.1.1 Financial Position & Management accounts

LC reported:

- At least August accounts should have been made available. However, considering the overall financial situation, LC noted progress;
- VE was ahead of the budget and in surplus (cash);
- in the medium term a two-month accounts submission cycle had been proposed by Emma and SD, which had been approved by LC;
- funding would be received from SE in advance for the first time as VE had not been claiming SE funding as quickly as expected;
- **no formal financial calendar was available for the Board – to be produced for the next Board by SD;**
- 30 financial SOPS needed to have been documented for audit purpose, but only one had been completed so far
- SD informed that late expense submission made it difficult to close accounts on time. JI observed that volunteers needed to be educated in terms of expense submission and made aware how that affected the overall finance picture.
- LC observed that despite the progress, there was still a lot of work to be done.
- JI reported that budget forecasting was required for 2019/21 and beyond.
- Also, with the reduced SE funding, SMT and Board should consider the long term financial position

- JI spoke of the cost of services and means to reduce them. Great Plains financial system had been one of the most expensive services in use. SD informed that VE contract finishes in March 2019, which would be a great opportunity for changing providers to a cheaper one. LC informed that Evo system was worth considering due to the ease of use and price. SD reported that hopefully the new membership portal would allow quicker accounts consolidation.
- In terms of areas of focus for the next 12 months, the following was identified:
 - all 30 financial SOPs to be produced – currently only one ready, a number of policies were in preparation

27.1.2 Risk register reviewed by Sub Group
No issues were reported.

27.1.3 Moore Stephens Update
No update

27.2 Commercial & Marketing

27.2.1 Sustainability project update (inc' Membership Portal progress).

27.2.1.1 JI reported that SD had been working on the Sustainability Plan, which would link into the Business Plan (including development of the Membership Portal and the website). SD would meet with Phil Bywater, a web developer, in a fortnight. He agreed to develop a VE website free of charge. **SD would feed back to the Comms group with some examples of designs** (smaller more linear website, VE having complete control over it, futureproofed). The website was planned to be launched alongside the Membership Portal and Commercial Strategy on 1 April 2019.

27.2.1.2 In terms of the product development, SD spoke of a system for automated communication with members and a system allowing an automatic affiliation and membership renewal (annual or calendared).

SD asked the Board to consider VE's brands that could be monetised including kit and competitions that presented value for money. The following was identified:

- seeking smaller sponsorship but for individual elements of the VE brands

- seeking sponsorship from local sources

27.2.2 VEBT Update

SD would meet Jake Sheaf on 15 October in London and feedback to Board.

27.3 Core Market

27.3.1 Club Survey

SG and SA presented results of the Club Survey. The key messages were:

- response rate was overall positive
- the majority of respondents agreed that the level of support from the NGB had been sustained
- very low score on creating exciting opportunities for people to enjoy volleyball – this could be a major area of improvement
- at times results were contradictory, which might be due to how responses were grouped – presentation of responses should be reviewed
- website still to be improved, although the results were better than expected
- results pointed to the need for the NGB to issue advice and guidance on ways to obtain funds
- overall stakeholder satisfaction was relatively low;

Board discussed impact of the findings and possible key learnings:

- products and services should be developed based on the results of the club survey and engagement with the membership
- direct engagement with a customer was highly valued
- ways of maintaining great customer service should be considered
- there should be explicit communication about what services VE could offer and which would be signposted; alongside it, managing expectations of the customer base was of paramount importance
- to understand how wider engagement with clubs and club members could be achieved?
- engagement with grassroots volleyball could be a source of income generation; it would be important to understand grassroots clubs' needs
- clear communication should come from VE in terms of its role as a governing body; VE value proposition should be formulated and communicated
- survey results with commentary should be published

AW thanked SG and SA for their support with this piece of work.

27.3.2 Membership & Affiliations Update

Board discussed the following:

- were reasons explored as to why clubs did not register by the deadline date?
- could more be done to improve number of clubs registering
- what is the plan to maximise the budgetary impact of Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE)
- AW observed that budget implications of NVL team entries, Diploma in Sporting Excellence registrations and club affiliations and registrations should be investigated and understood
- clubs needed to see value for the money spent on their membership fee and this value should be communicated better
- more disciplined and progressive approach to the club registration fine administration system and clear communication of this approach
- connectivity and communication between Board working sub-groups should improve

AW to send his questions to SJ

SMT team would take the points raised and report back to Board.

27.4 Technical & Talent

27.4.1 National Squad recruitment

Jl reported that following an interview process, an offer of appointment for the position of the Senior Women's Coach was made and awaiting a response. Alongside the offer, VE's current funding position was explained to avoid confusion going forward should VE were unable to fund this position at any point in the future.

27.4.2 Volleyball Futures Launch

EB/18-19/28 Any Other Business

- AW commended the Board for a stimulating and helpful discussion during the meeting and thanked everyone for their contributions.
- LC informed that her club had received a grant from SE from a Small Grants pot (up to £10k).
- **Board discussed creating a grants workshop video/service as part of product development. To be followed up.**

- It was suggested that results of the survey should be investigated by a cross-functional working group. Go to Meeting would be organised for Core Market and Insight. **SJ would follow up.**
- There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

ACTIONS:

Actions	Responsible	Date	Completed
24.2.2 Typos identified across the minutes to be corrected by AS			
24.5.2 Board agreed that the provisionally identified date – 27 July 2019 – would stand as a date for 2019 AGM due to no clashes with any major volleyball events involving potential member participants. SD would report to Board if such a clash was identified.			
24.5.3.1 Board agreed a change in the framework allowing an Independent Director to be considered for the election as a Vice Chair. Formal appointment of CF as Vice Chair would be held at the November Board. Also, the appointment would be communicated to the membership after the November Board meeting. JI			
25.5.5 Review of the Vision, Mission and Values of the Organisation SMT would take the discussed points in relation to VE Mission to the meeting with Sport England and feedback to the Board. SMT			
24.5.6 Ratification of Regional Chairs JI would consider and review regional constitutions to ensure that the associations were governed appropriately. JI			
25.2.1 SMT to feedback to Board about the final decision whether Beach Volleyball would be included in the Games (the end of January 2019)			
EB/18-19/26 Board would look at the sub groups' structure at its next meeting. JI would circulate appropriate ToRs to the Board. SD to put all documents in the Dropbox. JI/SD			
27.1 Finance Strategy and Risk Finance calendar to be produced for the next Board as a matter of urgency;			

<p>27.2.1.1 SD would meet with Phil Bywater, a web developer, in a fortnight to discuss VE website. SD would feed back to the Comms group with some examples of designs</p>			
<p>27.2.2 VEBT Update - SD would meet Jake Sheaf (?) on 15 October in London and feedback to Board. 27.3.1 Club Survey - AW to send his questions to SJ. SMT team would take the points raised and report back to the Board.</p>			
<p>EB/18-19/28 Any Other Business It was suggested that results of the survey should be investigated by a cross-functional working group. Go to Meeting would be organised for Core Market and Insight. SJ would follow up.</p>			