

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting at 9am on July 23rd, 2021, via Teams

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Clare Francis [CF]	Senior Independent Director (Vice Chair)
Freda Bussey [FB]	Elected Director (present for part of meeting)
Ian Wall [IW]	Independent Director
Seyram Atubra [SA]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Sue Storey [SS]	Chief Executive
Samantha Jamieson [SJ]	Deputy Chief Executive
Kevin Fletcher [KF]	Finance Consultant
Stewart Thorpe [ST]	Strategic Manager Digital & Communications
In attendance	
Jessica Plumridge [JP]	Observer
Phil French [PF]	Observer
Ronu Miah [RM]	Observer
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Minute taking

EB/21-22/23 Welcome by Chair

Chair welcomed all present to the meeting especially the candidates for Directors who were observing the meeting: Jess Plumridge, Ronu Miah and Phil French.

23.1 Apologies

Brendan Fogarty would join the meeting later. Richard Harrison, Simon Griffiths and Jefferson Williams had submitted apologies prior to the meeting.

23.2 Director Conflict of Interest Disclosures

The following Directors declared interest:

- IW declared a standing conflict of interest as a Volleyball Foundation Board Member.
- AW declared an interest in connection to the appointment of Oaks Consultancy and any discussions that might refer to it during the meeting
- It was also noted all directors had previously disclosed in the conflicts of interest register any interests relating to membership of clubs/county associations etc and these were noted.

23.3 Approval of the Agenda

Agenda was approved by all.

For the benefit of the meeting observers, AW reported that Board meetings comprise of two parts – standing agenda items and discussion items that usually required a decision.

23.4 Previous Minutes

23.4.1 Confirmation

The minutes of 24 April 2021 Board meeting were approved as true and accurate record of the meeting subject to correction of a typo on page 2 “anupdated”.

The minutes would be signed off by AW remotely.

Action:

23.4.1 Typo on page 2 of 24 April 2021 minutes to be corrected.

23.4.2 Matters Arising/Action List

Matters arising were discussed and the status is noted below. Those actions noted below were carried forward and will be noted in the actions for this meeting.

Actions	Who
EB/20-21/13 - SJ to discuss with Damian adding the “in progress” metric to the overview tab of the plan – this is ongoing and should be carried forward.	SJ
EB/21-22/22 AOB	SS
SMT to investigate other ways of obtaining staff feedback next time the survey would be planned for – SJ updated that the staff survey had not been conducted this year yet.	SJ
AGM would be considered further in terms of whether to change the Articles to allow running the AGM virtually in the future – CF explained that there had been no change in legislation regarding this but a consultation on this subject was expected in due course.	

EB/21-22/24 Executive Update

The Executive Report was taken as read.

SS highlighted the following:

- Item 4 - In terms of Sport England and funding arrangements, it had been decided that VE would attempt to submit a bid to Sport England under what was described as Track 1. This was an early submission of documents. A meeting with Sport England the following week would see SS, SJ and KF go through the requirements of the submission. Sport England would then work with VE over the coming weeks to clarify exactly what would be required further. Following development of this documentation, a Board meeting would be called to agree the submission for funding to Sport England. Board would be contacted and updated further when more information would be available.
- Item 8 had been moved to AOB and it had been updated since the Board had been circulated.

Board discussed:

- AW explained that the first submission to Sport England would be made on 6 August. SS added that Sport England would decide regarding funding allocation at its board meeting on 20 September.
- AW encouraged SS to have a discussion with Nigel Harrison regarding the submission. Nigel Harrison was the CEO of Yorkshire Active Partnership whose submission had been seen as exemplary.
- SJ referenced the BDO assurance review and the fact that all action points had now been completed both in finance and governance. SJ thanked all, especially CF and Pinsent Masons for the policy review and update, for their support in achieving this result. SS explained to the meeting observers what BDO review was.

EB/21-22/25 Implementation Plan & Management Reporting

SJ explained that this was the first time the new way of management reporting was brought and presented to the Board. The key take-out of the FSR review of this way of reporting was that there was a need for a better way of capturing progress of actions in relation to the Strategy implementation.

The FSR group was open to ideas and feedback regarding the reporting.

SS added that some of the actions would require context and narrative to inform the speed of its progress.

Board discussed:

- AW noted that this tool offered two functions- one as an internal performance management tool allowing SS and SJ to monitor and manage the activities of the hub team; the second one as a tool to inform the Board of areas needing their focus and attention. AH confirmed that this was the case and added that the group would redesign the RAG system and add more metrics to make the filtering information easier and quicker.

Action:

EB/21-22/25 – FSR to would redesign the RAG system and add more metrics to make the filtering information easier and quicker.

EB/21-22/26 Finance Update

KF reported on the key highlights in relation to the finance update:

- Last year's accounts had been audited and draft accounts were ready to be signed off. The management accounts for the last financial year had recorded ca £670k revenue and £38k profit.
- The management accounts for the first quarter of 2021/22 were divided according to the three strategy pillars for the very first time.
- As of 23 July 2021, the bank balance was very healthy, and the organisation's profit and loss report showed a strong financial position. The major saving in this quarter had been made on salaries. This would not carry over to the next quarter as those positions had been filled now.

AW thanked KF for the update.

Board discussed:

- IW enquired about the loss recorded in finance, governance and compliance. KF answered that Sport England did not fund the totality of this element of the budget and this needed to be covered by VE revenue.
- AH asked about the presentation of the draft accounts to the AGM. CF answered that indeed draft accounts would be presented at the meeting. The auditors would not be present at the

AGM and any potential questions would be forwarded to the auditors. KF stressed that it was important to highlight to the membership at the AGM that the accounts were ready for signing despite the accounts presented being in a draft format. This was a very positive change in comparison to previous years.

- SS added that in reference to salaries, one change had included covering a salary for an employee on a long-term sick leave which also meant incurring contractor fees.

EB/21-22/27 Volleyball England Foundation

AW reported for the benefit of the observers that the Volleyball England Foundation item was divided in two parts - one a report on foundation activity produced by Simone Turner and Janet Inman, and the secondary part would be referencing VE relationship with the foundation.

IW reported on the key highlights in relation to the report on the Volleyball Foundation:

- sitting volleyball campaigns were continuing, with two more applications for funding received and being considered
- work on the Sport England Return to play was ongoing
- a project with Aston Villa looked at generating volleyball activities
- financial situation of the foundation was positive with a good sum of funding available to support several programmes

Board discussed:

- AW thanked IW and SS for their work on the board of the Foundation
- AW congratulated Simone Turner and the Board for their achievements so far

EB/21-22/28 Sub-Group Reports

28.1 Finance Strategy & Risk

AH drew the Board's attention to the below:

- The organisation had been in a stronger position than ever in terms of our systems
- the risk register had been reviewed and amended:
 - the risk related to the COVID pandemic affecting our staff had been reduced
 - the risk related to safeguarding had also been reduced
 - a new risk related to the relationship with the Volleyball Foundation had been added

28.2 Disciplinary Committee

SS noted that the Executive Report contained a note about the two cases that the Committee had been involved in.

AW noted it was important for the Committee to consider lessons learnt from this process.

28.3 Nominations Committee

AW highlighted the below in connection to the most recent meeting of the Nominations Committee:

- salary increases had been discussed and there were actions stemming from that meeting
- the recruitment process for the Directors and Delivery Leads had been discussed and culminated in the selection of several quality candidates for the Board which, for the Executive Directors would be put to the members at the AGM as previously minuted.

Nominations Committee updates formally minuted

The following elements were agreed by the Board between meetings via email and noted here formally for the minutes.

Skills matrix – June 9th

- CF thanked all for completing the skills matrix. Nominations Committee had noted some potential updates to the skills matrix prior to use its next year and Nominations Committee will take these recommendations forward
- Nominations Committee has reviewed this, and the summary overview has been circulated to the Board by email for noting in accordance with VE's governance requirements
- Nominations Committee reporting to the board that from the skills matrix it had identified some core skills required in notifying new directors and this has been factored into the recruitment process paperwork.
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Re-election of directors June 9th - 2021

Having considered the skills matrix, Nominations Committee confirmed it is recommending to the Board the following:

- Re-appointment of Independent Directors (Adam Walker, Clare Francis and Andres Hernandez).
- Re-election of Elected Director (Simon Griffiths); and
- commencement of open recruitment process for vacant roles (up to 5 - 1 x independent and 4 x elected).

The Board approved the Nominations Committee recommendations by email.

Proposal of directors to the AGM - June 30th, 2021

Following a recruitment process for vacant roles, Nominations Committee recommended the following additions to the Board for approval and presentation at the AGM.

- Phil French - recommend Phil for appointment to the Board as an Independent Director. The Board is asked to approve the recommendation and appoint Phil in accordance with Article 31.5
- Alastair Marks, Jess Plumridge, Ronu Miah and Jake Sheaf - recommended to the Board as Elected Directors to be put forward for election at the upcoming AGM. The Board is asked to approve the recommendation and to make a recommendation to the Affiliated Clubs at the AGM for appointment of each candidate as an Elected Director in accordance with Article 31.6.

The Board approved the Nominations Committee recommendations by email.

EB/21-22/29 Registration Fees 2021/22

As a reminder, SJ explained that the membership fees had been frozen in April 2021. Decision regarding the player registration fees had been moved to a Board meeting later in a year. The recommendation from the SMT was for those fees to be also frozen.

Board discussed and agreed the recommendation to freeze the player registration fees.

AW thanked SS and SJ for the paper.

EB/21-22/30 Digital Business Case – Website & CRM

ST highlighted the following in relation to the paper around digital transformation submitted as part of the Board pack:

- the business case for the new website:
 - the existing website was now 10 years old; the only major change had happened in 2017 and that had been the addition of the new homepage
 - mobile compatibility was one of the biggest problems in terms of the website navigation and being user friendly; also, the design needed a refresh
 - in May 2021 a cybersecurity attack had been sustained and that had revealed the website's vulnerabilities
 - the new strategy offered the opportunity to create a business case for digital transformation as means of provision of a better service by Volleyball England
 - the main reasons for the need of a new website were:
 - security – during the cyber-attack, the attacker had likely gained access to the personal information of a vast number of current or former customers. The website provider Fluid could not provide a satisfactory answer as to how the website had been infiltrated despite locking it down. This could be overcome by creating a new website. There had been a significant trauma from this event as a result of which personal details of over 30,000 had been shared or potentially accessed. Further, there had been a risk of being fined by the Information Commissioner's Office
 - improved perception and refreshed design – ahead of Commonwealth Games 2022 first impressions would be important as spectators would want to find out more about beach volleyball and getting involved in volleyball. Also, improved visuals and functionality were important from the perspective of enticing potential new sponsors who would be looking to associate their brands with disciplines.
 - the user experience was limited and cumbersome currently and it was important to make the website mobile friendly, intuitive and quicker due to how users use the internet and access information nowadays
 - the website update would take up to 6 months but there was a chance for speeding up that process if certain things were in place. The anticipated cost was £35,000.
 - In terms of return on investment, some costs could be recouped by designing a better display of information, which then would save time that staff members spend on answering queries. Also, the commerciality and improved website image could affect what brands would want to associate themselves with VE.

Board discussed:

- FB confirmed that from perspective of a user she had had an unsatisfactory experience with player and member registrations on VolleyZone
- CF commented that the website would not fix VolleyZone (that's more part of the CRM business case). Further, CF asked about the API integration with 4Global. ST answered that integration with a new competitions management system was being considered. James Murphy also advised that it would be easier to integrate website with a new CRM. CF also asked whether there would be other systems that we would want to integrate. If so, this might necessitate serious consideration of what the API/single sign-on would look like, in which case the cost of the website would increase. ST responded that this was the original consideration, but the projected cost had been too high. SS confirmed and reported that we could potentially strive for a website that was a single sign-on ready, which could then be progressed in the future.

- JP asked whether putting a design of a single sign on website up for a tender could be considered. ST responded that this was the intention and SJ confirmed that this would be the process we would need to follow regardless. JP agreed that the business case presented an opportunity for growth and return on investment.
- RM enquired whether there was any way VE could benchmark the costs against other similarly sized organisations. SS confirmed that the costs presented in this business case were significantly smaller than those of organisations in the sector of a comparable size.
- ST highlighted the following in relation to the CRM
 - the cost of implementing a new CRM system was between £80 and £200k
 - the operating costs were between £30k and £95k
 - as an overview, ST reminded the Board that the VolleyZone's development had started with our partner 4Global in November 2018, the expectation was for the VolleyZone to be completed by March 2019. This had not happened. This year the decision had been taken to change the course of action.
 - VolleyZone 2 had been intended as a registration platform for local county and regional association among other features.
 - VolleyZone 2 could significantly impact the delivery of the Game Plan, help improve customer service, provide VE with a greater understanding of the people that are playing volleyball
 - The biggest benefits of VolleyZone 2 would be:
 - a better user experience for customers - 2021 club survey advisor had ranked VolleyZone second from last of all VE products and services
 - a better and more efficient experience for staff using it
 - being able to roll out functionalities to the community, so they would also use this system
 - it would take close to two years to complete
 - return on investment included saving made on staff time, increased commerciality
 - the first option would be for the CRM to be potentially implemented in readiness for Commonwealth Games 2022, second - to postpone the development to ensure thorough testing and the last one would be to revert to 4Global to attempt to make the partnership work.

Board discussed:

- AW thanked ST for the presentation. AW passed on Simon Griffith's view. Simon, as Chair of An Ace Service Sub-group, thought that, although both very important, development of the CRM should be prioritised over the website. Also, Simon felt that the reputational damage of spending two years on getting the CRM right could be potentially detrimental to the sport.
- AW wanted the Board to be mindful of the significant cost of those projects and the impact of this spending on all other programmes.
- KF reported that the funding for those projects was possible through using underspends from previous financial years
- PF thanked ST for a clear and succinct report. PF echoed Board's comments around the digital transformation being critical to the organisation's reputation and avoiding the risk of impeding the sport's development and growth. PF also noted that digital transformation as important for strategy working groups whose work was reliant on data and insight. Finally, PF enquired whether Sport England was expecting organisation they funded to be increasingly digitalised.
- AW answered that the digital transformation and sophistication were very firmly on Sport England's agenda. SS agreed and added that Sport England had invested into appointing an agency to help governing bodies improve their digital footprint. SS also noted that in previous years, digital transformation had not been a priority. However, the financial situation of the organisation had improved and now VE was able to undertake this process especially in the light of how user unfriendly the website and

CRM were. SS also thanked ST for his hard work on this.

- SA asked whether we had a good understanding of what was needed in terms of the system that would also align with our strategic direction. ST agreed that it was important to create a new system that would be fit for purpose and futureproofed, but we might not have the complete understanding of what the next CRM system should be. ST believed that the development should take as much time as was needed to build a good product. Bringing in more resource was also a potential option. SA stressed that for the success of this project, it was vital for VE to understand parameters of the relationship with our customers.
- AH commented that we needed both the website and the CRM to be developed but he thought that the cyber vulnerability of the website could steer us towards putting our energies into the website first.
- IW noted that although the funds were available for the digital transformation, we needed to proceed with caution due to the extent of the cost of this undertaking.
- AW summarised that there was a consensus among the Board that both projects were incredibly important. Not addressing issues connected to the website and VolleyZone could bring about a reputational damage to the sport. AW suggested that ST reverts to Board with a detailed project plan as soon as he would be able. **Board agreed that ST would work with Simon Griffiths as the subgroup lead, and other Board members, on the project plan.**
- BF added that these projects should not be rushed due to Commonwealth Games 2022.

EB/21-22/31 Annual General Meeting – Preparation/Ratification

CF reported that the AGM would be taking place the following day at Sport Park Loughborough. Enough appointment forms had been received to make the meeting quorate.

The following items would be considered:

- the appointment of the auditors
- the approval of the appointment as Elected Directors of Jake Sheaf, Ronu Miah, Alistair Marks and Jess Plumridge.
- The approval of the re-appointment as an Elected Director of Simon Griffiths.
- The approval of the re-appointment of James Murphy (Competitions Delivery Lead) and Carol Gordon (Technical Delivery Lead).
- The AGM would be informed of the Board's decision to appoint Phil French as an Independent Director in accordance with Article 31.5 (this does not require a resolution at the AGM)

EB/21-22/32 High Performing Board & Governance Structure

Following a conversation with AW and CF, SS suggested that it would be useful for the Board to have a facilitated session around high performing Boards. A few dates in August and October had been identified for a face-to-face session and **SS would circulate those to the Board.** Board agreed.

Action:

EB/21-22/32 SS to circulate potential dates of the facilitate Board session.

EB/21-22/33 Volleyball England Foundation – relationship

AW summarised the paper regarding the approach to the relationship with the Volleyball England Foundation going forward. The paper presented two different models, the independent model and the collaborative model, with a recommendation of the latter.

Board discussed and agreed for **SS, SJ, AW, CF and AM to engage in a dialogue with the Foundation's and act according with the collaborative approach.**

Action:

EB/21-22/33 - SS, SJ, AW, CF and AM to engage in a dialogue with the Foundation's and act according with the collaborative approach.

EB/21-22/34 AOB

34.1 Isle of Man Volleyball

SJ explained that it was Board's decision to determine which region Isle of Man Volleyball should belong to. **Board agreed that Isle of Man Volleyball should be treated as part of Northwest region.**

34.2 SJ confirmed that Oaks had been appointed as VE business development contractor.

34.3 Governing body endorsement.

SJ reported that VE had been working with the Home Office to apply for governing body endorsement. This meant that VE had become a governing body that had the ability to endorse clubs to take applications from volleyball players from around the world. Further, the intention was that volleyball players and coaches would apply to come and play for their clubs as full-time professional athletes. VE had worked with the Home Office on the criteria which had now been agreed. The next part of the process is for VE as the governing body to verify any application that would be made, which carried risk of sanctions or penalties if VE weren't to perform that duty appropriately. The board were asked for approval to go forward with this process.

Board discussed:

- SA asked whether clubs would act as sponsors. SJ confirmed that is correct and currently no intention for Volleyball England to be the sponsor (noting the increased risks that this would bring).

Board agreed the recommendation.

34.4 Next year's AGM

SJ asked the Board to reconsider the date of the next year' AGM due to Commonwealth Games 2022. SS added that the AGM needed to take place between 15 May and 15 August and the Commonwealth Games would start on the 28 July. Board agreed to explore alternative dates.

34.4 SJ and SS to explore alternative dates of AGM 2022.

Action:

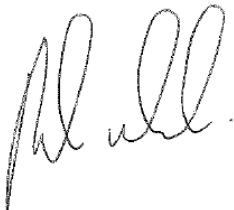
34.4 SJ and SS to explore alternative dates of AGM 2022.

34.5 Departing Directors

On behalf of the Board, AW thanked three Directors (IW; SA and JW) who were retiring from the Board for their company, input, help and support.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Actions	Who
EB/20-21/13 - SJ to discuss with Damian adding the “in progress” metric to the overview tab of the plan – this is ongoing and should be carried forward.	SJ
23.4.1 Typo on page 2 of 24 April 2021 minutes to be corrected.	SJ
EB/21-22/25 – FSR to redesign the RAG system and add more metrics to make the filtering information easier and quicker.	FSR
EB/21-22/30 Board agreed that ST would work with Simon Griffiths as the subgroup lead, and other Board members, on the project plan regarding digital transformation.	ST and SG
EB/21-22/32 SS to circulate potential dates of the facilitate Board session.	SS
EB/21-22/33 - SS, SJ, AW, CF and AM to engage in a dialogue with the Foundation’s and act according with the collaborative approach.	SS, SJ, AW, CF and AM
34.4 SJ and SS to explore alternative dates of AGM 2022.	SS and SJ



Adam Walker, Independent Chair