



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting 30 November 2024, online via Teams.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Alison Shipway [AS]	Elected Director
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Independent Director
Jess Keen [JK]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Phil French [PF]	Independent Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Tracy Newton [TN]	Elected Director
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CF]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
In attendance	
Mark Kontopoulos [MK]	British Volleyball Federation Chair
Greg Brown [GB]	Volleyball England Foundation
Siraz Natha [SN]	Sporting Equals – training provider

EB/24-25/34 Apologies

AW welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies had been received from Brendan Fogarty, Jill Osleger and Jake Sheaf.

34.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

There were no new declarations in addition to the one that had been already submitted.

34.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

34.3 Previous meetings

The minutes of 26th October 2024 Board meeting were taken as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

34.4 Safeguarding

TN updated that the working group has been renamed as the ‘Safeguarding Technical Advisor Group’(STAG). This was a deliberate move to make the most of the group’s time and efforts, rather than bringing them together to oversee purely case management. Further, smaller groups would be created that would focus on specific areas such as education and training and community engagement. Following the first meeting of the STAG, the members were enthusiastic about the changes, the work and the idea of having safeguarding as the golden thread through the organisation. CF and TN were meeting the following week to consider the development plan.

34.5 Matters arising

CF updated that he had followed up with participants from the AGM that had asked questions, and which had been discussed at the previous meeting.

In addition, AH was going to discuss risk as part of today’s meeting, and the Safeguarding Action Plan will be presented at the February 2025 meeting.

Lastly, the Heritage Project core group had already put some nominees forward for the Peter Wardale award.

EB/24-25/35 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Board Training

SN joined the meeting. SN introduced himself to the attendees.

SN training including the following:

- Gauging where participants felt they were in terms of their knowledge
- Understanding of diversity, inclusion, equality and equity
- Understanding of bias and unconscious bias, and how those presented themselves in volleyball
- Recap on the Equality Act 2010
- What constituted harassment and bullying
- Discussion was had on:
 - what Volleyball England did well in relation to diversity and inclusion
 - how spending more time/resources on diversity and inclusion would help Volleyball England be more successful
- Benefits of an inclusive culture and diverse workforce
- What next? What good Diversity and Inclusion could look like
 - JK felt that the Board’s diversity was good, but EDI was not currently part of Board onboarding
 - RH felt that the Board was representative of sport participation but not wider diversity characteristics
 - TN observed that the Board had been subjected to negative treatment from some membership members. Cascading of this training in the sport was important.
 - AS commented on the importance of knowing the diversity of the sport as well as the organisation and Board from an internal point of view.

- What next? Continuing your Diversity/Inclusion journey
 - CF confirmed that the DIAP was being finalised and would be shared when ready.
 - RH thanked SN, recognised the value of the training for his role on the Board.
 - AW thanked SN for the training.
 - SN highlighted everyone's responsibility in fostering the culture of EDI.
- Board discussed the content of the training. CF and GB would reflect and provide feedback to Sporting Equals.

EB/24-25/36 Exec Report

The report was taken as read.

- TN asked about the absence of safeguarding data for October. This would be double checked.
- Recruitment for the replacement of Kerrie Stevens (Project Lead – Talent) was underway with the aim of making an appointment before the Christmas break.
- SG asked whether the capacity within the organisation was sufficient. CF and GB reported that this was an ongoing consideration and creating capacity as well as introducing efficiencies were being looked at also from the budgetary perspective. RH and SG discussed this in the context of operationalising strategic priorities of sub-groups and the Hub staff being continually at the maximum capacity. A call with SG outside of the meeting to discuss this further would be organised.
- CF reported that in relation to the lease for the SportPark office, following lengthy negotiations a draft lease agreement would be received shortly.
- CF reported that following the submission by a group of members to amend the Articles of Association at the 2024 AGM, a commitment had been made by AW, on behalf of the Board, to review the framework document and make logical changes in line with the clarity that the members were seeking.

The proposed changes reflected the content of the special resolutions that the Board believed would add value and clarity to the recruitment process for Elected Directors. The Board confirmed that they were clear on the significance of the framework in the governance of the organisation. The Board discussed and agreed that AS would work with CF to draft proposed changes for discussion and approval at February's Board meeting.

EB/24-25/37 Volleyball England Risk Register

AH briefed the Board on:

- The principles – what the risk register was, its contents, why it was important
- What the risk assessment meant – likelihood vs impact matrix
- What risk scoring and prioritisation meant
- The difference between the inherent vs residual risks
- What risk control and risk movement were.

Discussion:

- AW asked how we could future-gaze risk and how far in advance, and what needed to happen for the risk to be escalated to the Board. AH answered that the trigger was the risk scoring. Finance, Strategy & Risk (FSR) sub committee monitored and reported the most

severe risks to the Board.

- TN asked about risk treatment and the risk appetite of the Board. AH responded that this was not being tracked at the minute. Target risk would be considered in due course.
- AW asked whether the sub-groups should feed into risk identification. AH responded that the risk identification would undergo a review.
- AH reinforced that the strategy was the main driver when identifying the risks.
- AS commented that the focus should also be on the risk appetite.

EB/24-25/38 Regional Support Services

SG reported the following:

- SG had attended the AGM of the West Midlands Volleyball Association. The association was struggling for resources, and this had made SG consider whether there was merit in trying to establish shared support services by Volleyball England and that could be provided to regions and counties without putting further pressure on the hub team. This would help with capturing various data in regions and counties.

Board discussed:

- TN flagged safeguarding as golden thread and wondered how this could be introduced in counties and regions, but striking the balance not to make it a burden.
- SG commented that regions and counties struggled to find volunteer resource, not to mention the right skill within it.
- JP agreed this was a good idea and could introduce consistency across regions and counties
- Get Keep Grow could pick this up. CF and GB to attend the next Get Keep Grow.

EB/24-25/39 Meeting finalisation

39.1 Review of Actions

Actions have been noted.

39.2 AOB

There was no other business.

AS will chair the meeting.

39.3 Meeting Close

Actions	Who
EB/24-25/35 CF and GB would reflect and provide feedback to Sporting Equals.	CF & GB
EB/24-25/36 Safeguarding data for October to be checked	GB
A call with SG be organised to discuss the An Ace Service Subgroup and	GB

collaborative planning of 2025-26 priorities.	
AS would work with CF to draft proposed changes for discussion and approval at Februarys Board meeting.	CF AS
EB/24-25/39.2 AS to chair the February Board meeting.	AS

Al will.

Board Meeting –Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 30th November 2024 board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above-board meeting minutes:

EB/24-25/36 Executive Report

1. Staffing

Since the last board meeting, we can report the following updates:

- Kerrie Stevens (Project Lead – Talent) will be leaving the organisation in December.. Recruitment for her replacement is underway, with the aim of making an appointment before the Christmas break.
- Supported by FIVB Empowerment funding, we have advertised for a Beach Performance Coach role. A significant part of this role involves assuming head coach responsibilities for the Bello brothers as they continue their progression toward LA 2026 qualification.

The post-holder will be employed by Volleyball England but line-managed by the British Volleyball Federation (BVF). The role attracted 18 applications, and at the time of writing this report, no final decision has been made. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

2. Clinical Governance Plans

Dr. Dane Vishnubala has now been in post as Volleyball England’s Chief Medical Officer for 12 months. Since his presentation at the December 2023 Board meeting, the following progress has been made against identified priorities:

- **Camp/Event Cover:** Full coverage is now in place for all Volleyball England events, forming an integral part of our operating procedures.
- **Medical Note System:** A simple but effective system for capturing, storing, and managing medical data for players and staff. Medi-Notes usage has been provisionally agreed as VIK and will be revisited ahead of the 2025/26 financial year.
- **Screening Standardisation:** Interim arrangements are in place for England athletes/workforce, with long-term goals deferred to 2024/25.
- **Equipment:** Required injury management equipment has been purchased through the Steroplast partnership and is stored in Kettering.
- **Policies & Procedures:** A full draft SEM policy (e.g., concussion), roles, responsibilities, and plans has been completed. Implementation is underway.
- **Education:** A tiered education approach has been piloted, including an online session delivered to the coaches group and shared with the wider Volleyball community.
- **Operating Procedures:** Drafts are complete and under review, with an implementation plan in development.
- **Emergency Action Plan:** A “Significant Event Analysis” form has been created, and a review group is now operational.

- **Mental Health Strategy:** A policy has been written, and further work is underway on referral pathways for flagged individuals.
- **Research:** An injury prevalence study has been completed, with initial learnings being disseminated.
- **First Aid Course:** Content has been drafted, with delivery planned through the Learner Management System (LMS) in 2025/26.

The following priorities have been agreed upon for the next phase:

1. Introduction of mandatory player screening for all England pathway athletes.
2. Development of player support programs, including strength & conditioning, nutrition, psychology, and well-being.
3. Expansion of the SEM network to ensure broader geographical coverage or a more focused group of SEM practitioners.
4. Launch of Volleyball England first aid course options.
5. Continued development of tiered education programs, accessible via the LMS.
6. Ongoing review of the Emergency Action Plan.
7. Finalisation and implementation of policies and procedures, including mental health initiatives.
8. Further research initiatives.