



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting 8 February 2025 at SportPark and via Teams, Loughborough.

Directors Present	Titles
Alison Shipway [AS]	Vice Chair
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Independent Director
Jess Keen [JK]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Jill Osleger [JO]	Independent Director
Phil French [PF]	Independent Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Elected Director
Jake Sheaf [JS]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CF]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
In attendance	
Mark Kontopoulos [MK]	BVF Chair
Greg Brown [GBr]	VE Foundation Chair
Agata Sromecka	Minute taking

EB/24-25/40 Apologies

AS welcomed everyone to the meeting. AS explained that she was standing in for AW who could not join the meeting on this occasion. Apologies had been received from Adam Walker and Tracy Newton.

40.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

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

40.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

AS reinforced that the new paper format made it clear the purpose of each agenda item.

40.3 Previous meetings

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

40.4 Matters Arising/Actions List

It was updated as part of the table at the end of the minutes.

40.5 Board Member Check In

AS had suggested this new element of the Board meeting to check on the attendees' wellbeing. Attendees took turns to reflect. AS thanked all for sharing.

EB/24-25/41 Exec Report

Board discussed:

- SG enquired about how much time staff spent on dealing with complaints. GB responded that it depended on the nature of a complaint, and it varied. GB stated that there have been 20 complaints this year. RH enquired about the nature of complaints. GB responded that they varied in nature. CF responded that the only identifiable trend was player behavior. RH stated that this could potentially be controlled better to impact how the sport was perceived. CF confirmed that there is a clear code of conduct and there was an expectation for the volleyball community to follow it. CF confirmed that most complaints related to the breach of the thus code. AH asked whether there had been complaints about referees. GB responded that the Officials Working Group would have handled this. CF then added that Volleyball England would only be involved in a complaint once it had been through the appropriate channels, but it would not have reached a conclusion. However, work is underway to streamline certain processes such as complaints and safeguarding.
- AS asked for an update on the high-performance centre. JS informed the Board that the facility build was due to be completed in June. The bubble would go in in Sept/October and the sand would arrive in the next two to three weeks. Approval on the additional business case for the High Performance Programme is expected imminently but looking very positive. The advert for the Head Coach would be published by the end of March. 20 top beach athletes had been contacted to invite them to the programme.
- CF updated that the three events under the NEVZA banner that would be taking place in Bridlington for June/July had been confirmed. Also, an application had been put forward for a Beach Pro-Tour Futures event in Bournemouth but if the resource was not in place by the end of February, we can withdraw our application without penalty.
- The proposed Queen and King of the Court event was being discussed with the venue providers. UK Sport would not support this event. There were other avenues such as GLA that would be explored.
- The Kukri sponsorship deal had been confirmed and would be announced shortly. CF would be meeting with their team in relation to kit/apparel design.
- In relation to succession planning, the Nominations Committee are meeting soon to discuss AW and SG's departures and recruitment of a new Elected Director and Chair. JK was suggested as a Chair successor for the An Ace Service Sub Group. SG supported a phased transition of JK into this role. AS encouraged all to consider the skills matrix. AS offered her help with this as the Vice Chair. RH confirmed that AS's contributions would be welcome. AS reinforced the need to recognise AW's service and contribution to the sport as a long-standing chair. CF expressed his desire to revisit and refresh the skills matrix alongside the Board performance meetings. This would feed into the recruitment process.

41.1 Proposed Framework Document changes

Board discussed:

- AS reported on the proposed changes to the Framework Document.

- RH stated that wording was important when considering the understanding of the proposed changes and care should be given to ensuring precision of terms used. 4.1.2 to be amended (present vs recommended).
- JK asked about 9.2 and people being nominated by two affiliated clubs as opposed to one. CF confirmed that this was one of the recommendations made by the group of members that submitted the Special Resolution and is common practice.
- Recommended changes were approved by the Board. Comms related to the changes would be arranged.

EB/24-25/42 Sub group reports

Volleyball for life - RH reported:

- People plan had been launched.
- The 2025/26 Operations Plan is full aligned with the People Plan.
- CF reported that Sport England was expected to provide feedback on DIAP within the following two weeks.

Get Keep Grow - JP reported:

- The club satisfaction rating had improved from last year (6.5 to 7).
- There were more responses to the club survey (232 this year vs 188 last year).
- There had been 46 nominations for the annual rewards and there were 7 judges, three sponsors, in terms of projects.
- Membership fees increases have been discussed and recommended for approval in the 2025/26 budget.

Ace service - SG reported:

- The NVL teams' self-assessment was ongoing and closing on the following Friday. This information would be used to decide which teams would be included in the league going forward.
- A further meeting would take place to discuss Super League entry fees in particular.

FSR - AH and KF reported:

- The audit was finished later than planned mainly due to issues with auditors. The auditors had committed to keeping the 2025 audit cost static as a gesture of good will given the time delays this year.

42.1 Volleyball England Foundation

GBr reported:

- The Foundation continued to support sitting volleyball.
- The Christmas auction had been successful and raised funds for the Foundation.
- The Hall of fame dinner (scheduled for November) planning was going well.

EB/24-25/43 Q3 Finances

- KF reported on the Q3 finances and summarised that the organisation was ahead of budget for the quarter and cumulatively for the 2024/25 year

EB/24-25/44 2025-26 Operational Plan & Budget proposal

GB and CF reported:

- This was the third time that the team had gone through the planning/budgeting process.

- The strategic managers were engaging well within their teams, and in most cases, were working very closely with the subgroups.
- GB noted that underneath the implementation plan, there were a few smaller focused plans which acted as road maps informing the annual or the yearly operational plans. This then drills down into the staff work programs. The critical tasks and deliverables had also been populated by the strategic managers. GB elaborated on the details included in the spreadsheet.
- In the 2023/24 year, the completion rate of tasks in the Operational Plan has been 86%. The 2024/25 year is currently showing a 74% completion rate with two months to go.
- All metrics would be up to date and reported to the Board in April and also updated in the strategic dashboard.

Board discussed:

- RH commented that DIAP included a significant number of objectives to complete in five years, which could prove a challenge. RH recommended that it should be closely monitored and pondered what completion rate would be satisfactory.
- CF believed that on a yearly basis, 70 to 85% completion rate would be more than satisfactory. The previously mentioned 11 strategies were key to that.
- SG observed that the resource and capacity were crucial to drive a surplus and deliver this ambitious plan considering the budgetary projections.
- AS expressed affinity for the process used to set the plan and how it linked to the strategy. AS reflected that for her it was important to know where we were positioned in terms of the plan, and where we would like to be in the future. Also, the language used in the plan was important to understand that positioning. GB confirmed that some of this was already happening and would be taken to the team. AS then commented that an energy plan was important to ensure that people felt that they could deliver the plan. GB responded that a staff survey was conducted every six months, and this would measure staff satisfaction and feelings also around this work. CF invited the Board members to come to the office to speak about the plan. CF reassured the Board that there was a good feeling amongst staff around this work but also more generally.
- JK asked whether the organisation was ensuring that stakeholder survey feedback was being translated into operational goals to ensure we would deliver on behalf of members as well. CF responded that this was the case, and the Executive team was working with data to inform the goals. KF added that the placement students showed great morale and were greatly influenced and supported by the Hub staff and within the culture of the organisation.
- RH asked whether a question about the feeling of belonging in the sport had ever been asked as part of the stakeholder survey. And if negative, would we facilitate a comment for the reason? CF stated that this could be actioned.

In relation to the 2025/26 budget, CF reported:

- This had been a challenging year from a budgeting perspective because of the government mandated increases. CF then moved to present the draft budget predicated on investing reserves that had been committed to be used this year, and that had not been used due to a better than forecasted performance. The budget was presented to FSR on Thursday and gained approval. The budget was predicated on a number of considerations. Firstly, the membership fees would be increased where possible in line with inflation. Further, competition entry fees would be increased by 5% across the

board, except for Super League which is being discussed further. Additionally, membership fields that were previously £0 would now be costed at £5. In reality, there are no zero cost memberships and continuing to swallow those costs wasn't an option. All existing consultancy contracts would be reviewed and, mostly, reduced. In relation to international transfer certificates, a decision has been made given recent identified issues to take responsibility for the end-to-end process. Finally, a re-tender process for IT services would be undertaken to reduce this cost.

MK left the meeting as he had to travel to his teams game.

Board discussed:

- The Super League entry fee.
- CF recommended that between this and the next Board meeting, the Ace Service would be approached to consider the proposal. This was agreed.
- KF reminded all about VE's reserves and reported that with the intended use of the proportion of the reserves, there would still be a surplus in relation to the minimum required in the reserves policy.

Subject to the agreed conversation with the Ace Service around the Super League, the budget was approved.

EB/24-25/45 Environmental Sustainability Plan

CF reported:

- VE had been working with Greenly on our environmental sustainability plan.
- A decision had been made not to look at offsetting measures until 2027-28 and the reduction strategies would be implemented first.
- The plans would fall into four areas as follows:
 - Being travel conscious. This would relate to vehicle use, such as carpooling, etc. as well as a reduction of air travel for national teams. Travel was the sport's biggest emitter.
 - Procurement. Ensuring that who we currently or would work with in the future align with our Environmental Sustainability goals.
 - Reduction of our digital carbon footprint, which would start internally and progress onto external education sessions with regions, counties, clubs, etc,
 - Yearly greenhouse gas emission reporting with a view to reducing those emissions as much as possible, to get to a point by 2028-29, the reductions strategies had been exhausted, and there could then be a need to look at offsetting measures.

Board discussed:

- RH asked whether we would be looking to change the structure of the competitions travel wise to lower our carbon footprint, are we going to look at changing in terms of travel distances. Also, was there a data retention policy.
- CF confirmed that all data would be reviewed in light of this.
- AS noted that the Board development in this area might be needed.
- CF asked for feedback about the plan to be discussed at April Board meeting.

EB/24-25/46 Meeting finalisation

46.1 Review of Actions

Actions have been noted.

46.2 AOB

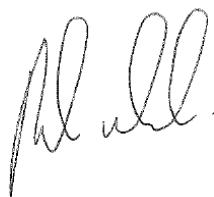
- CF updated on the national volleyball centre and the considerations that were being made around it. The Exec would work with FSR on the options analysis and ultimately decision making.

46.2.1 BVF Policy review (VE Board Members Only)

46.3 Meeting Close

Actions

41.1	4.1.2 to be amended (present vs recommended) in the framework document. Comms re the changes to be arranged.	CF/GB
44	An Ace Service Subgroup to discuss the Super League entry fees for the 2025/26 season.	An Ace Service Subgroup
45	Environmental sustainability plan to be discussed at April Board	All



Board Meeting –Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 8th February board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above-board meeting minutes:

EB/24-25/41 Exec Report

Staffing

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

- Isabel Breeden was appointed and has started in post as our new Talent Project Lead. With a background and education in Strength & Conditioning, she has worked across multiple sports including Rugby, Squash, Snowsports and was most recently a Performance Delivery Advisor at UKSport.
- Following a detailed recruitment process that received interest from international and domestic coaches, Luis Bello has been appointed as our Beach Performance Coach. Funded through FIVB Empowerment Funding, Luis will provide direct coaching support for Javier & Joaquin Bello as well as supporting our wider beach performance aims and programmes.

International Events 2025/26

Our Game Plan Strategic target is to deliver at least 2 international events in England. During the 2024-25 year, we have delivered/supported:

- Youth NEVZA Beach Championships – Bridlington South Beach
- Golden Sitting League event – University of Nottingham
- UK Volleyball Coaching Symposium – National Volleyball Centre
- Queen & King of the Court Showcase – Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf
- Five Nations Championships – National Volleyball Centre

Following Octobers Board away weekend where we discussed our approach to delivering major events moving forward, we have now refined our approach.

The below tiered approach to event delivery maximises the efficiency of our staff, time, and resources by aligning our level of involvement with the strategic importance and scope of each event. By clearly defining Hosted, Co-Hosted, and Supported events, we ensure focused investment where it matters most, while fostering development, collaboration, and long-term achievement across all levels of our Game Plan Strategy.

- **Hosted Events**

Definition: Events that are fully conceptualised, organised, and delivered by Volleyball England. We have full ownership and control over all aspects of the event.

Responsibilities:

- Strategic Leadership: Setting the vision, goals, and outcomes for the event.
- Planning & Logistics: Managing the venue, scheduling, equipment, staffing, and compliance.
- Financial Management: Budget creation, funding acquisition, and overall financial responsibility.
- Marketing & Promotion: End-to-end ownership of all branding, communications, and audience engagement strategies.
- Operational Delivery: Overseeing all event-day operations, including participant experience, volunteer coordination, and contingency plans

Example: NEVZA Youth & Senior Championships

- **Co-Hosted Events**

Definition: Events that are planned and executed collaboratively with a partner organisation or stakeholder. Responsibilities and ownership are shared between the parties involved based on the level of input and operational accountability.

Responsibilities:

- Shared Leadership: Collaborating on the vision, goals, and outcomes.
- Division of Roles: Agreeing on clear responsibilities (e.g., partner may manage logistics while Volleyball England oversees finances or marketing).
- Resource Sharing: Pooling financial, human, and material resources.
- Joint Marketing: Coordinating branding and communications to represent all parties equally.
- Decision-Making: Establishing joint governance structures for decisions and problem-solving.

Example: Queen & King of the Court, Battersea Games.

- **Supported Events**

Definition: Events delivered by another organisation, where Volleyball England provides assistance or resources but does not take a leadership or ownership role.

Responsibilities:

- Resource Provision: Offering specific support, such as funding, equipment, facilities, or expertise.
- Advisory Role: Providing guidance on planning, logistics, or governance, as requested.
- Brand Alignment: Ensuring the event aligns with your organisation's values and goals.
- Limited Oversight: Monitoring the use of provided resources to ensure compliance and quality.

Example: Golden Sitting Volleyball League

The below provides a summary table of responsibilities:

Area	Hosted	Co-Hosted	Supported
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Strategic Leadership	Fully owned	Shared	Advisory role
Financial Management	Fully owned	Shared	Minimal involvement
Planning & Logistics	Fully owned	Shared	Support as required
Operational Delivery	Fully owned	Shared	Limited involvement
Marketing/Branding	Fully owned	Shared	Support as required