



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting at 6pm on 21 July 2023 at the Link Hotel, Ashby Road, Loughborough, LE11 4EX.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Clare Francis [CF]	Senior Independent Director
Freda Bussey [FB]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected 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 Officer
Kevin Fletcher [KF]	Finance Consultant
In attendance	
Greg Scott [GS]	External Consultant
Gordon Valentine [GV]	Safeguarding Consultant
Janet Inman [JI]	Volleyball England Foundation
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Secretariat

EB/23-24/10 Welcome from the Chair and apologies

Andreas Hernandez, Jake Sheaf, Dave Reeve, Phil French, and Simone Turner had submitted apologies.

10.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

There were none submitted.

10.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

10.3 Previous minutes

Minutes of the 22 April 2023, 10 July 2023 and 20 July 2023 Board meetings were approved as a true and accurate record of the meetings subject to changes below:

22 April 2023

“1.3 Lastly, AW and CF would review the Hall of Fame criteria and report back to the Board with their recommendation.” – CF to be changed to CFo

10 July 2023

In the published version of the minutes at the bottom of EB/23-24/8 AGM Special Resolutions – Board Consideration, “CFo reported the below independent legal advice:” to be replaced with: “CFo updated the attendees on the independent legal advice”.

The announcement as a result of the Board’s decision to withdraw special resolutions to be added to the minutes.

10.4 AGM

The Board discussed AGM proceedings.

The Board discussed:

- The Volleyball community’s awareness of who the Board were and the importance of its existence in terms of the sports governance.
- JP suggested that Board members could re-introduce themselves to the volleyball community.
- SG commented that the Board could be clearer about the decisions it takes and offer comms around them as well as reason for them. JI agreed and added that the communication coming from VE to the community should be simple and easily understood by everyone.
- Board discussed platforms for more effective communication with the community.

10.5 Matters arising

Nothing discussed.

EB/23-24/11 Board, Sub & Working-Groups Effectiveness

GS joined the meeting and updated the Board as follows on the process and findings of the Board. Sub-group and working group evaluation:

- The research ask was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Board (which is a requirement of the Articles of Association and Code for Sports Governance), in addition VE asked GS as part of the review to evaluate the sub-groups and working groups effectiveness.
- The work had been conducted during May 2023. A questionnaire for Board members and non-Board members was used as well as semi structured interviews. Semi structured interviews were used in the case of sub-groups and working groups.
- The questionnaire was based on the governance excellence model.
- The Board overall was deemed to be effective. Non-Board members’ opinions very closely reflected Board members’ feedback in terms of strengths and development areas.
- 14 red areas, 9 amber and 7 green areas had been identified and they were presented in the priority order.
- Board effectiveness was scored 7.5 out of 10. GS stressed that this was a great score.
- Further, some areas of improvement had been identified as part of the interviews as well as interviews with the sub and working groups.

GS asked the Board whether the presentation was an accurate reflection of the Board effectiveness:

- Board discussed and agreed with the score but reflected that there were some areas that Board should be proud of as well as areas for improvement.

GS then asked whether the Board had a desire to address the 23 red and amber areas:

- Board confirmed that they would address areas of concern to improve its effectiveness.
- AW added that it was important to commit to continuing improving relationships with the working groups. GS reflected that those opinions despite being challenging should serve as a conduit to positive changes and improvements for the Board. Feedback should be heard, discussed, and actioned, and communicated if applicable.

GS proceeded to discuss the overall comments:

- Board could consider clearer communication with the sub and working groups and the way in which work was cascaded and what the remit of working groups and sub-groups was.

GS finally reflected about the next steps based on the findings:

- What would good look like and how would you know the Board addressed the issues?
 - JI suggested a regular review of roles and responsibilities. CF agreed that this might be a good time to undertake this.
 - SG commented that recalibrating relationships would be necessary.
 - AW confirmed the Board's commitment to changing how the groups were engaged with one another. FB felt it was important to reestablish closer relationship with sub-groups and working groups so that they felt their voice was being heard.
 - CFo reported that the Exec team was working on a framework that would detail clear 'ways of working' which could be a starting point to bring about a consistent approach on how sub and working groups could/should operating.

GS reinforced that the voice of the groups should be heard, and the discussion should happen as a closely managed opportunity to bring everyone together. GS stated that it was important to know before going into that meeting what good could look like. GS thanked everyone for their engagement and despite the differences, the passion for improving the sport was undeniable among the people who had taken part in the process. GS offered to connect with anyone who had questions about the process. AW thanked GS for his work on the project.

The Board discussed further:

- RH provided historical context of the relationship between the Board and the groups.
- AW commented that the report contained good feedback that would be actioned going forward.
- JI commented that roles and responsibilities had not been clear for a while. AW responded that the principle of work of the groups was correct but it wasn't working as effectively as it should in practice. CF agreed that the communication between sub and working groups was not effective.
- AW summarised that the report highlighted the areas to be addressed but it was important to also reflect on the positives.
- SG added that the expectations of the working groups should be recalibrated.
- GB reflected on the need to review the elements of the framework.

The findings and recommendations would be brought to the October Board meeting.

Action:

EB/23-24/11 Board, Sub & Working Groups Effectiveness - The findings and recommendations would be brought to the October Board meeting.

EB/23-24/12 Exec update

CFo highlighted the following:

- CFo and GB sought Board's feedback on fortnightly updates. Board confirmed they found them helpful and asked for them to be continued.
- CFo sought the Board's approval to put forward his candidacy for the role of the General secretary of NEVZA. This would be a great opportunity to raise VE's international standing and profile. Board and CFo discussed the level of time commitment this role would entail. CFo responded that the initial term was for 2 years. JI suggested CFo speaks with previous VE members who had served on the committee. CFo reassured the Board that there should be minimal impact on his Executive capacity especially with GB growing into her role. Board supported this.
- CFo thanked the Board for their support and engagement since CFo had joined the organisation. Likewise, AW thanked CFo and GB, as well as the Hub team, for their commitment.

- CF asked for the comms around CWG legacy to be released to the community more frequently. This would reinforce the Games' impact and continue to try to take the community on the journey about it.
- FB commented that the AGM ideally should not be held at the same time as the major comps. CF commented that they alternated bi-annually. AW and CF commented that the future date of the AGM should receive further consideration. Board discussed the timing of the presentation of accounts to the membership in view of this. AGM could also double up with another event such as awards. This would be discussed further.

EB/23-24/13 Sub Groups & Volleyball England Foundation

RH agreed a structure for Volleyball for Life reporting with Gillian Harrison. RH thought it was helpful for the membership to know of the progress of the work of the group.

JP reported that Volley2's framework would be refined, simplified, and made easier to digest going forward. CFo reported that it would be helpful to make Volley2's more marketable and attractive to non-volleyball people.

FSR agreed that following a thorough tendering process, Kettering Leisure Village would remain as the National Volleyball Centre for a further 2 years. In addition, following a tender process, Howdens had been chosen as VE's insurance broker for the next 3-years.

In terms of the Volleyball England Foundation, JI reported that Simone Turner would step down as the Foundation Chair due to positive changes in her personal situation. The Board placed on record their thanks to Simone for her hard work and commitment.

JI added that Sport England had agreed to fund year 2 of the LGBTQ+ project. The board congratulated JI on obtaining the funding.

EB/23-24/14 Safeguarding & Disciplinary review

GV presented the findings of the review into:

- the Complaints Procedure
- the Disciplinary Policy
- the Code of Conduct
- the Disciplinary Committee Terms of Reference.

As part of that paper, a host of recommendations had been put forward to address inconsistencies and to modernise the documents.

The Board discussed and recognised the importance of reviewing and addressing inconsistencies. The Board therefore agreed that work would be undertaken to review and update the papers in due course. Sport England would be approached to support this work.

CF commented that it might be helpful to approach other organisations to see what they were already doing in this area before work would be carried out on the documents.

The Board thanked GV for his work on this and reinforced their commitment to this piece of work.

Action:

EB/23-24/14 Safeguarding & Disciplinary review - The Board agreed that work would be undertaken to review and update the identified papers:

- **the Complaints Procedure**
- **the Disciplinary Policy**
- **the Code of Conduct**
- **the Disciplinary Committee Terms of Reference.**

EB/23-24/15 Diversity & Inclusion Action Planning (DIAP)

RH advised:

- The requirement for the DIAP was detailed within the updated iteration of the Code for Sports Governance.
- VE had been working with AKD Solutions to complete this work.
- The DIAP would need to reflect the diversity, inclusion, and equality across the whole of the organisation's workforce, paid and unpaid.
- RH suggested that a number of Board members could become part of the advisory panel to help progress work on DIAP. Sub group leads would be asked to discuss DIAP as part of their work and would meet with other leads to feed back in separate meetings.

CFo advised that this would come back to the Board in draft form in October.

Action:

EB/23-24/15 Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan – to be presented to the Board during the October board meeting.

EB/23-24/16 Meeting Finalisation

16.1 Review of Actions

Actions were reviewed and agreed.

16.2 AOB

There was no AOB.

16.3 Meeting close

Meeting closed at 20.15pm

Actions	Who
EB/23-24/11 Board, Sub & Working Groups Effectiveness - The findings and recommendations would be brought to the October Board meeting.	CFo
EB/23-24/14 Safeguarding & Disciplinary review - The Board agreed that work would be undertaken to review and update the identified papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Complaints Procedure• the Disciplinary Policy• the Code of Conduct• the Disciplinary Committee Terms of Reference.	CFo
EB/23-24/15 Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan – to be presented to the Board during the October board meeting.	RH/CFo

