



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting 18 July 2025 at SportPark and via Teams, Loughborough.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Senior Independent Director
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Jess Keen [JK]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP] online	Elected Director
Jill Osleger [JO]	Independent Director
Philip French [PF] online	Independent Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Elected Director
Tracy Newton [TN]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CF]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
Oliver Hudson [OH]	Data & Insight Project Lead
Agata Sromecka [ASr]	Secretariate

CF thanked AW, as outgoing Chair, and SG as an Elected Director, for eight years' service on the Board.

EB/25-26/7 Apologies

AW welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Alison Shipway and Jake Sheaf.

7.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

There were no declarations that had been submitted.

7.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

7.3 Previous meetings

The minutes of the 20th April 2025 Board meeting were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

7.4 Matters Arising/Actions List

There were no matters arising.

7.5 Board Member Check In

Board discussed preparations ahead of the AGM taking place the following day.

EB/25-26/8 Exec Report

This was taken as read.

Board discussed:

- GB reported on the Players Community Group. Terms of reference were being set up. The Board were asked to consider how the Players Community Group could integrate into the current governance structure.
- CF informed that the Nominations Committee would reassemble after the AGM to continue with the Chair recruitment process.
- CF updated on the work around the indoor beach volleyball facility. Volleyball England were working with Sport England (SE) on securing funds to procure additional sand that was needed.
- SE had invited Volleyball England to apply for additional talent funding for beach volleyball. The application would be put forward on the 8th August.
- The Finance Strategy & Risk subcommittee had not met before the Board meeting but would be meeting on 11th August.
- AH asked about Queen & King of the Court event. CF reported that the discussions were ongoing, but an event before the end of the year was still being explored.

EB/25-26/9 Subgroup reports

Volleyball for life

- Junior player development clinic had been postponed as the venue could not be secured.

Get Keep Grow

- Laura Allcoat was back in post on a phased return after maternity leave.
- Option for over-60 players to get a discounted membership had been discussed and agreed. This presented minimal cost to Volleyball England. Refunds would need be issued to those players that had paid full price already.

An Ace Service

- No further comments outside of that in the Board paper.

AW thanked all for their work on the sub-groups.

EB/25-26/10 Transgender policy

RH reported:

- Justification for changes to the policy was outlined in the supporting document, including differentiation between male and female competition based on physiology and net height.
- Minor amendments were proposed, including reference to the UK Supreme Court ruling and the addition of an annual or regular review clause.
- The timing of the review had coincided with the ruling but was not directly prompted by it.
- Discussions had been held with the ED&I Management Team to agree on the final wording of the amendments.
- Changes primarily focused on the relocation of the review statement and clarity in

referencing the UK Supreme Court decision.

- Language in the policy had been updated to specify "female competitions" following internal discussion.
- Participation guidance had been clarified to address previous ambiguity. Reference had been made to fairness and biological sex.
- A balanced team line-up had been defined for mixed competitions (e.g., three male and three female players, or two male and four female players), allowing regional flexibility in application.
- The revised policy wording was agreed to be more precise, with regional bodies granted discretion on interpretation and implementation.

Board discussed:

- TN raised a concern regarding the appropriateness of using the term "whistleblower" in the policy context, given its legal definition and protection under employment law.
- CF noted that the existing whistleblower policy applied broadly to the community and not solely the workplace.
- Board requested clarification on whether the term "whistleblower" should be replaced with a more suitable alternative such as "complainant" or "concern raiser."
- Further review of the terminology was agreed before final approval of that section.
- The frequency and tone of feedback on the policy were discussed, with most recent responses originating from within the community rather than external parties. The volume of concerns had reduced since the policy's initial release.
- Complexity of the topic was acknowledged, particularly in supporting members to interpret and apply the policy correctly.
- It was confirmed that the expectation was for players to register and participate in the competition for which they would be eligible, and this had been clearly stated.
- Discussion followed on whether more support should be provided to help regions and members interpret the policy.
- It was reiterated that the UK Supreme Court ruling had made the legal position clear despite ongoing sensitivities surrounding transgender inclusion.

Policy changes were provisionally approved except for the terminology regarding whistleblowing, which would be revisited.

EB/25-26/11 NVL review

Oliver Hudson (OH) joined the meeting to brief the Board on the NVL review:

- The purpose of the evaluation was to annually assess club standards via self-reporting in four areas: People, Performance, Match Day Experience, and Governance/Sustainability.
- The aim is to ensure consistent standards and development across all teams, regardless of league or location.
- All clubs completed the evaluation (100% response rate). Highest score recorded was 24.62, lowest 8.89.
- A trend of declining scores from Super League to Division Three was observed, particularly in Match Day Experience and additional personnel support.
- Clearer communication and support were highlighted as necessary for lower-division teams, especially where clubs lacked resources.
- The "People" section identified gaps in match administration and availability of assistant coaches or team managers at lower levels.

- Performance scores correlated with league position; teams performing better competitively also had more structured support (e.g., S&C sessions, development and succession plans, performance analysis).
- Most Division 3 teams had fewer or none of these support systems in place.
- Concerns were raised about the duplication of effort in data collection, where information (e.g., team placement) was already available to the organisation.
- Suggestions were made to optimise survey design for future iterations.
- Match Day Experience scores highlighted a lack of fan engagement and event production in lower leagues.
- Few teams sold tickets or had a consistent spectator presence.
- Differences were seen in promotional activities and online engagement, with only a small number of teams meeting all criteria.
- The importance of tailoring expectations and support to club size and resources was stressed, especially for lower-tier or secondary teams.
- Additional investigation was proposed to understand the capacity of clubs across divisions and support more equitable development.
- Overall, the board noted the progress made and committed to refining language, supporting lower divisions, and confirming accuracy in definitions and expectations across policies.
- OH left the meeting.

EB/25-26/13 Meeting review

13.1 Review of Actions

Actions were noted.

6.2 AOB

No AOB was discussed

6.3 Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Actions

EB/25-26/10	Clarification was needed on the term “whistleblower” in the Transgender policy.	CF/GB
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Alison Shipway – Acting Chair

Board Meeting – Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 18th July 2025 board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above-board meeting minutes:

EB/25-26/8 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Staff Updates

Since the last Board meeting, we can report the following staffing updates:

- Issy Breeden has left the organisation to take up a role at British Cycling. Following a recruitment process, we have appointed Jordan Goldsborough to the Project Lead – Talent role. He will start in post at the end of July.
- In line with the 2025/26 Budget and Operational Plan, we have recruited Lauren Goh (former Student Project Officer) to the part-time role of Project Lead – Competitions. Lauren's role will primarily focus on the centralised processing of International Transfer Certificates and player immigration status changes, which have been implemented ahead of the 2025/26 season.
- All 2024/25 Student Project Officers – Shiloh Chung, Hannah Ring, Lauren Goh, and Isabel Baker – have now completed their year-long placements and have left the organisation. Without exception, they served the sport with excellence and have been provided with glowing references, which we hope will support their future employment.
- In line with the above, our full list of 2025/26 Student Work Placements has now been confirmed as follows:
 - Lestyn Rusinow – Competitions
 - Kiera Delahay – Competitions
 - Imogen Foulds – Data & Insight
 - Emmanouil Zarkos – Workforce
 - Millie McLeod – Marketing & Communications
 - Oliver Shipway – Talent
 - Roisin Griffin – Clubs & Membership

All will begin their posts in July or early August.

2. Player Community Group

The Player Community Group has been established via an expression of interest process, that was launched at the Autumn Player Seminar. The Kick Off meeting was held on the 16th June where the players shared their player journey and motivations for being on the group.

The current members are:

Irtiza Ahmad – Indoor U18 Player

Ella Watson – Beach Player

Veva Lopes – Indoor Player

Jana Flaherty – Indoor Player

Amelia Turner – Indoor Player

Zakk Hadgett – Indoor Player and England Team Captain

Purpose and terms of reference

The working version purpose of the Player Community Group is ..

to drive player voice across volleyball in England from grassroots to professional level to improve the game.

And draft objectives

- *To collect insight from current players to allow the Player Community Group to represent the voices of all players. (with support from the Hub Team using tools like the Player Survey etc...)*
- *To bring together small groups of players around areas of interest (Club Coach Standards and Player Relationships, Access to Talent Pathways, Player Engagement) to drive change and improvement.*
- *To provide day to day player voice across the Hub staff and formal volunteer groups.*
- *To play a central role in improving VE's presence in the daily lives of volleyball players.*

One question for the Board to consider is how the Player Community Group will integrate into the current governance structure.

Recommendations:

Formal Opportunities:

- Annual Presentation: The Player Community Group could present to the Board annually, possibly during the Board away weekend.
- Sub Group Participation: A player representative could sit on one or all of the Sub Groups.

- **Board Representation:** Co-opt a player representative to sit on the Board.

Informal Opportunities:

- Engage in less structured opportunities related to emerging topics that align with the Player Community Group's areas of interest, where a Board member might attend their sessions.

Personal Development: There will likely be a need to support the personal development of the members to help them build their skills and foster long-term commitment as the Player Community Group evolves.

Administrative Support: The Group will need administrative support from the Hub for meetings, player communications, and access to tools like the Player Survey, etc..

Next Steps

The Player Community Group will meet on the 15th July to establish their terms of reference.

3. Talent Ways of Working

The below outlines recent updates to the ways of working within the Volleyball England Talent Team. These changes aim to improve clarity, communication, and collaboration across our performance pathways for both Indoor and Beach volleyball.

Summary of Changes

- **Clearer Role Definitions & Accountability** - We have clarified and documented the responsibilities of key roles across the Talent Team, including Strategic Leads, Performance Directors (Indoor and Beach), the Talent Project Lead, and the Coach Developer. This improves operational efficiency and ensures all stakeholders know their point of contact.
- **Streamlined Communication Protocols** - Internal and external communications have been structured around clear principles (Clarity, Respect, Consistency, Confidentiality, and Responsiveness). A defined escalation pathway has been introduced to manage issues efficiently and transparently.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Framework** - We have outlined specific communication expectations and channels for working with coaches, team managers, players, parents, and SEM (Support, Education, Medical) teams. This is intended to ensure consistent and professional engagement throughout the pathway.
- **Talent Performance Group (TPG)** - A formal Talent Performance Group has been established to oversee and align strategic planning, delivery, and evaluation of our talent systems. This group meets bi-monthly and reports into the Senior Leadership Group. It ensures cross-discipline insight sharing and continuous improvement.
- **Document & Data Management** - All communications and records are now required to be stored securely on central platforms (e.g., SharePoint, Google Drive), with specific oversight of medical data in line with GDPR and safeguarding guidelines.

Rationale

These changes address previous challenges around communication inconsistency, unclear responsibilities, and fragmented delivery across the performance environment. By implementing these structured processes and governance mechanisms, we aim to enhance athlete support, improve staff coordination, and better align with Volleyball England's strategic objectives.

Next Steps

- Full rollout and induction for all staff and stakeholders by end of 2025
- Initial review of implementation effectiveness by the VfL Sub-Group in October 2025
- Ongoing feedback loops via TPG and stakeholder surveys