Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting 19 June 2026 in person, at SportPark, Loughborough University.

Directors Present	Titles
Rowena Hackwood [RHa]	Chair of the Board
Andres Hernandez [AH]	Independent Director
Anton Kornilov [AK]	Elected Director
Brendan Fogarty [BF] online	Elected Director
Jess Keen [JK]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Elected Director
Tracy Newton [TN]	Elected Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CF]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
In attendance	
Agata Sromecka [Asr]	Secretariate

EB/26-27/7 Apologies
Apologies had been received from Alison Shipway (AS), Jake Sheaf (JS), Jill Osleger (JO) & Phil French (PF).

7.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures
There were none declared.

7.2 Approval of agenda
Agenda was approved by all.

7.3 Previous minutes

Minutes of 25 April 2026 Board meetings were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to correction of the typo.

AK raised the suggestion that minutes should be distributed as close to the relevant meeting as possible, rather than waiting until the next Board meeting, particularly given that actions were often expected to be completed within two to four weeks. It was noted that minutes would technically be in draft form until formally approved, but it was agreed that draft minutes and an action log with named owners could be circulated promptly after each meeting.

7.3 Matters Arising/Actions List

CF took the Board through the outstanding actions from the previous meeting:

- The action for GB to speak to JC regarding the streaming of junior games was noted as having been partially superseded: the inter-regionals had been streamed. The action was marked complete in respect of the inter-regionals.
- The action relating to Board work programme for upcoming meetings, assigned to CF and AS, remained outstanding. It was noted that this had been placed on hold pending the outcome of the strategy review, which would need to take priority.
- The action for Ollie Hudson (OH) to include venue availability as an answer option on member surveys was confirmed as complete.
- In terms of the safeguarding training three Board members had completed the training to date. Issues relating to Board member emails allowing access to the Learner Management System had now been resolved, the link and relevant information would be recirculated.
- An agreement to conclude the long-running dispute with Keith Nicholls was reached in April 2026 and ratified by the Board on 25 April 2026. A letter setting out the agreed position was sent to Sport England on 29 April 2026, as instructed by the Board and Keith Nicholls and into which Keith was copied. This decision was not, however, accurately reflected in the minutes of 25th April which were approved on 19 June 2026. This additional minute confirms that the Board discussion took place, the Sport England letter was issued, and, in accordance with the Board's decision and as set out in the Sport England letter, Keith Nicholls' full membership rights were reinstated with effect from the 25 April 2026 Board meeting.

7.4 Board Member Check In

RHa invited brief personal check-ins from those present. Members shared various personal and professional updates, including preparation for the AGM, family milestones, and general pressures at this time of year. The executive team was commended for its handling of AGM-related workload. The check-in was noted as informal and is not minuted in full.

EB/26-27/8 Exec Report

CF presented the Executive Report. The following was highlighted:

- CF reported on progress with IT infrastructure and the new managed services provider (1101). He noted that the LVA were considering aligning their IT infrastructure and this was progressing well. It was clarified that the contractual arrangement would need to sit with Volleyball England as the umbrella body rather than directly with the LVA.
- CF explained that the LVA alignment was intended to professionalise regional operations, including providing official email addresses in place of personal accounts. In-principle agreement from the LVA was awaited, with ratification expected at the LVA's forthcoming AGM. If agreed and implemented, this would provide a case study and opportunity for other Regions/Counties.
- GB advised that telephone numbers would be migrating to a new provider on 30 June. A notice would be issued to members warning of potential short-term disruption, expected to last hours rather than a full day.
- CF reported that the organisation would shortly be working with 1101 to explore AI integration and process automation, with a view to reducing administrative burden. He explained that Microsoft Dataverse would serve as a central data hub, with OH tasked with consolidating the organisation's various data silos into that platform.

- As an example of early progress, CF noted that fixture generation had been completed in half a day, as opposed to four weeks previously, using AI, subject to quality checking. He added that all staff members had been asked to identify two administratively intensive tasks suitable for automation.
- Board members raised the question of data governance and the need for a policy setting parameters for staff use of AI tools, noting that well-intentioned but unguided use could lead to problems. CF acknowledged this and confirmed that a policy was in development, to be progressed in step with the wider AI and automation work. CF and GB noted that the organisation would likely move away from Copilot towards Power Apps and Power BI, using a more bespoke approach. RHa agreed that an AI usage policy should be developed and asked CF to give thought to the appropriate timeline, noting that there was no requirement to rush it ahead of the development programme.
- GB reported that recruitment to the vacant Project Lead – Membership role had concluded successfully. A candidate had been offered the role and had accepted. References were being sought. The successful candidate was currently employed by another national governing body based in the same building. They were expected to start on 21 July.
- CF reported that AS had come forward to lead on the review of the organisation's governance model, including the effectiveness of subgroups and working groups and the connectivity between them. RHa added that she and AS had agreed a division of responsibilities in RHa/Vice-Chair model, with RHa focusing on governance and member communications and AS leading on strategic matters, drawing on her professional expertise with NGBs. RHa explained that the review had arisen in part from discussions about how ambitions in areas such as beach volleyball could be translated into direct, measurable impact through subcommittees. AS intended to consider how strategic oversight, subgroup structure, specific activities and impact measurement could be better aligned.
- Board members expressed support for the review, with several noting that it came at the right time and that there was appetite to make better use of Board members' skills. It was noted that a similar review had been conducted a couple of years previously. The Board approved commencement of the review, to be led by AS.
- AK asked whether the risk mitigations for high-impact risks, several of which had remained at red for some time, were still appropriate and whether they needed to be reviewed. GB noted that risks were reviewed at FSR and reported to the Board. AH acknowledged that more strategic and sector-wide risks were difficult to mitigate fully.
- Discussion identified that the highest-ranking risks were largely inherent risks common to membership organisations and national governing bodies. It was suggested that rather than simply holding them red indefinitely, the Board should consider whether its strategic direction and resource allocation could reduce the likelihood of any of them, and whether subgroups should have their own risk registers feeding into a Board assurance framework.
- RHa noted that it would be good practice for the Board to receive a dedicated risk register review, separate from its embedding in the executive report, potentially twice a year. It was also suggested that this work could usefully connect with one of the proposed Elected Directors, who had specialist risk expertise. RHa proposed that the matter be picked up as part of the broader strategy and subgroup review work.

8.1 Policy updates

GB presented a summary of policy updates, noting that the paper had been prepared to make it easier for the Board to focus on the most significant matters rather than reviewing every change

in detail. The Board was invited to note the minor and administrative changes summarised in the paper.

- The substantive discussion concerned a suggestion from Brian Stalker regarding the relationship between the complaints policy, the discipline policy and the vexatious complaints policy, and whether greater independence should be introduced into the disciplinary committee.

- GB and CF explained the current structure: complaints were triaged by the DCEO and referred as appropriate; those reaching a sufficient threshold were considered by the disciplinary committee, which comprised two independent directors and the CEO, with provision to co-opt subject matter experts; and appeals were considered by different Board members. It was noted that the disciplinary committee's constitution previously included an independent panel from the volleyball community, and that there had been ongoing discussion about reintroducing some form of independence.
- Board members discussed the merits of member representation versus external independence in the committee. Reference was made to the Safeguarding Technical Advisory Group, which included an independent external member and functioned well. It was suggested that a similar approach could be pursued relatively quickly, without waiting for the full subgroup review.
- There was also discussion of the wider sector context. RHa noted that UK Sport was exploring a centralised complaints resolution service, reflecting the burden that complaints handling placed on volunteers and NGBs.
- The Board agreed to approve the policy changes as summarised in the paper. It was further agreed that the principle of member representation and/or external independence in the disciplinary committee should be considered as part of the subgroup review, while the quicker route of recruiting independent members from outside the volleyball community could be explored in parallel. CF noted that any recruitment criteria need to be specific and clearly defined.
- TN raised the importance of version control on policies, suggesting that each policy should include the author, date of last review and a summary of changes on the front page. CF and GB would ensure this was applied consistently. It was also reported that whenever a policy was updated, the previous version would be removed from all public-facing locations, including the website and any linked pages.

EB/26-27/9 Subgroup reports including Safeguarding.

Volleyball for Life

- The report was taken as read and Coaching paper would be discussed later in the meeting.
- AK welcomed the model piloted during the summer of assigning national team coaches to support the beach team from May to September and asked whether this should be extended to the junior team in the future. CF agreed this was worth considering.

Get Keep Grow

- JP provided a brief update on club affiliation numbers: 56 affiliations had been received, with 44 approved, 12 senior club applications, nine university applications and 14 student affiliations. JP reported that Laura was satisfied with progress at this stage of the cycle, noting that the university and student numbers were as expected given how recently the process had opened. RHa reported that there were opportunities for the volleyball

community to feel more valued and engaged, and that the strategy reset would create opportunities for broader membership engagement. She noted that feedback had been received regarding regional engagement and indicated she would be speaking to members over the coming period to better understand what was and was not working, without pre-empting conclusions.

- JP noted that the organisation put significant effort into regional engagement but did not always see a corresponding uptake, and that it was worth understanding whether low engagement reflected a lack of genuine demand or a mismatch with what was being offered.
- Rha noted that facilities had not received as much strategic focus as the Board would have liked, despite progress on some discrete projects. She sought approval to develop terms of reference for a facilities working group, to be brought to the next Board meeting. The Board agreed.
- RHa also raised a concern regarding new school build specifications. Sport England was anticipated to lose its status as a statutory consultee on planning and in relation to school facility design, which she described as a significant retrograde step. She noted that current contractor guidance was resulting in like-for-like replacement of undersised sports halls rather than following Sport England's community facility standards, and that volleyball-specific requirements were being overlooked. A meeting had been held with the Chief Operating Officer from one of the relevant trusts to discuss specifications and intended to continue pursuing the matter. The facilities working group would be well placed to coordinate this kind of advocacy work moving forward.

Finance, Strategy & Risk (FSR):

- CF reported that the insurance tender deadline had been extended. The insurance year ran from 1 August, and there remained sufficient time. Initial indications from the tender process were favorable and FSR would shortly receive a summary of tenders received along with recommendations.

An Ace Service

- JK noted that reduced availability had made it difficult to convene regular meetings during the quarter but noted that three major events had been delivered: the Cup Finals, the Inter-Regionals and the Super League Final. Standards of event delivery, player experience and spectator experience were described as continuing to improve, with attendance increasing. The team's efforts were commended by the Board.
- RHa asked specifically about the officiating experience at the Inter-Regionals, which had been held at a new venue. AH noted that the format at the new venue, with courts spread across the site rather than grouped together, had reduced contact between officials compared to previous years, but that the event had run smoothly and professionally overall.
- CF noted the commercial opportunity presented by the event's growth, in particular the on-site merchandise operation, and suggested the organisation should consider how to maximise revenue from future events in this way.

Safeguarding

- TN reported that the safeguarding paper had been prepared for the first time as a standalone Board paper.
- TN noted that a recurring theme over three successive Inter-Regionals had been spectator behaviour, which warranted explicit mention. Second, the figure for the number of individuals who completed safeguarding training is now at 578, reflecting the most up-to-

date data.

EB/26-27/10 Coaching courses

RH introduced a paper on coaching qualifications and workforce governance, which had been prepared partly in response to questions raised at the "Connect With Your Board" sessions and partly to provide context for the strategy discussions later in the agenda. He explained that the paper set out the regulatory environment in which the organisation operated, the rationale for the current approach to coach awards, and the constraints under which the coaching and education team worked.

- RH outlined the tension between the national workforce governance framework led by UKactive, CIMSPA and Sport England, which set standards for regulated qualifications, and the expectations of some members who believed the organisation could write its own qualifications independently, as had been the case historically. He emphasised that the current approach, in which the organisation aligned its technical modules to the First for Sport qualification framework, was the result of many years of development and enabled coaches to obtain a nationally recognised, regulated qualification. Technical modules in sitting, beach and indoor volleyball could be added to the First for Sport foundation as additional learning.
- RH noted that the coaching and education team comprised two members of staff who had transformed the coach awards since 2018, developed new training for additional roles and built the learner management system. He was clear that, given these resource constraints, it would not be possible to create a full suite of qualifications across all three disciplines at multiple levels in the short term without a significant increase in resource.
- RH observed that self-directed learning remained low: very few coaches were coming forward to pursue development independently, and demand for regional coaching conferences had also been limited. He invited the Board to endorse the current approach as the basis for future strategy, and to consider through the strategy development process whether additional resources should be allocated to coaching.
- TN who had been part of the first Level 2 cohort endorsed the coaching model, observing that the improvement in coaches' conduct and behaviour since the introduction of the new award was clearly visible. She raised two concerns. First, the pressure on tutors and assessors, noting that late submissions from one cohort could create a backlog that ran into the next. Second, the position of coaches who held older qualifications that predated the inclusion of first aid and safeguarding modules. Some of those individuals might consider themselves qualified without being current yet were unwilling or unable to complete the updated components.
- RH confirmed that revalidation was already built into the system: a Level 2 coach who did not maintain a current safeguarding certificate could not register, and their qualification would not be considered valid for insurance purposes. GB noted that Gillian Harrison was finalising deployment standards that would make these requirements clearer. He also confirmed that tutors no longer marked the First for Sport assessments; that had been separated out, reducing the burden on the tutor team.
- AK noted that the e-learning component was substantial and that the commitment required was probably where most drop-off occurred.
- CF suggested that the continual professional development element deserved as much attention as initial qualification, drawing a parallel with boxing, where Level 2 coaches were required to complete a two-hour online refresher every three years or could not be licensed for the following season. He proposed that a CPD points system or similar

mechanism could help to encourage ongoing investment by coaches in their own development.

- RH noted that the LMS would support CPD delivery but that a clear framework was needed. He also reflected that the coaching culture had historically been certificate-focused, and that changing the mindset so that coaches saw themselves as responsible for developing people, not simply delivering a sport, remained a significant challenge.
- RH reported that the organisation had lost three Level 2 tutors in the preceding three years and now had only six tutors to deliver all Level 2 courses. Two promotions were in progress and there was a reasonable body of Level 1 assistant coach tutors, but most were not yet ready to progress to Level 2 tutoring, which required an assessor qualification. CF and RH noted that an assessor course could be run relatively quickly: when the UK Coaching Certificate was first introduced, all tutors had been put through the tutoring and assessor courses, with costs met by the association. RH suggested that a similar investment in tutor upskilling should be considered as part of the new strategy.
- RHa asked whether there was unmet demand for coaching qualifications or whether supply and demand were broadly in balance. RH explained that the organisation's primary focus was on feeding the National Volleyball League, which had 84 clubs. He noted that the organisation was demand-led rather than supply-led, and that clubs should be encouraged to do their own workforce planning to identify how many coaches and welfare officers they needed. However, he acknowledged that the picture was wider than the NVL. AH noted that London alone had approximately 120 teams, many of which did not have qualified coaches.
- GB noted that insurance cover for coaching activity was predicated on the individual being 'suitably qualified', which the Level 2 award represented as the gold standard. A PE teacher qualification or significant sector experience might also satisfy an insurer, but the Level 2 remained the clearest demonstration of competence.
- Discussion turned to how the organisation communicated with potential coaches. It was noted that membership was club-based and that individuals with coaching potential such as parents of junior members were largely invisible to the organisation. A suggestion was made that regional contacts could be asked to gather lists of potential future coaches for direct communication, rather than relying on messages being mediated through clubs.
- JK questioned whether learner numbers were at the right level to sustain the sport. RH noted that workforce planning data from clubs would help to model the pipeline more accurately.
- RHa asked whether the Level 2 award was benchmarked against equivalent qualifications in other sports on cost. At £502, the volleyball award appeared to sit at the higher end when compared with sports such as cricket and hockey. RH explained that the cost reflected the length and depth of the programme, the inclusion of all three disciplines in a single award, and the logistical costs of running central residential courses including venue hire which were more economical at a single site than across multiple regions.
- RH raised the possibility of a regionalised approach to coach education where a free or low-cost venue might be identified and where there were local tutors. CF raised the possibility of piloting a regional approach. This approach would feed into place-based approach promoted by Sport England.
- Discussion followed on the distinction between good coaches and good coach educators, with several members noting that the two skills did not necessarily coincide. It was agreed that identifying coaches who had both the technical knowledge and the aptitude for education and facilitation was important, and that giving such individuals a formal role as coach educators could also enhance their contribution within their own clubs.

BF left the meeting.

- AH noted that parallel issues existed in referee education: coaches and referees both faced a gap between initial qualification and continuing development.
- RHa summarised the Board's conclusions. There was strong support for the professionalism brought to coach education, the current qualification model and the emphasis on the relational aspects of coaching. The Board wished to see greater focus on tutor development, a clearer understanding of the pipeline of future coaches, whether through club workforce planning, talent zones or regional engagement, and a pilot of regional delivery, potentially in London. The Board endorsed the current approach as the basis for the strategy development process, within which decisions on additional resource for coaching would be made. RH was thanked RH for his contribution to the Board.

EB/26-27/11 Strategy Rewrite & Refresh

CF presented the case for sunsetting the Game Plan strategy at the end of March 2027 and commencing a nine-month process to define what came next.

- CF noted that Game Plan had been written in 2020, that the organisation and World had changed beyond recognition since then, and that the strategic progress barometer, domestic and international insight indicated the sport was at a potential breakthrough moment.
- Following the departures of RH, BF and JS the following day, AH would be the only Board member would remain who had been present when Game Plan was written, which represented a natural point of transition.
- He proposed that the new strategy should reflect a more bottom-up approach than Game Plan and should include a connected view from grassroots to performance, new ambition statements, and a clearer definition of success over a five-to-ten-year horizon.

- RHa invited the Board to recognise what had been achieved under Game Plan while also being honest about areas where the organisation had either not delivered as anticipated or had pivoted to different priorities. Beach volleyball was cited as an area that had grown faster than the strategy had anticipated. Sitting volleyball, while hosting interesting initiatives, still had relatively small player numbers. She stated that this was a great opportunity for a consultative approach and connecting to the community.
- Discussion focused on how to conduct meaningful consultation without the process becoming unfocused or unmanageable. Suggestions included: holding structured focus groups with targeted questions; using a consultant; tasking club committees to hold conversations with their members using defined questions and feeding results into working groups; using digital methods to gather volume responses; and gathering informal feedback at events by putting up flip chart paper in accessible locations, which had been found effective in other sporting contexts. The use of AI tools was also suggested.
- JK offered to support the process but cautioned that the timeline was ambitious. JK noted the potential of benchmarking against other countries. GB offered help from OH whose expertise aligned to this area.
- CF articulated a key principle for the new strategy: that the measure of success for a national governing body should be the demonstrable difference it made to clubs, taking a club from one point to another over the strategy period, and being able to show specifically how it had done so. He expressed the view that no NGB strategy he was aware of focused primarily on club improvement in this way. Board members responded strongly to this framing, noting that this was what clubs wanted to hear from the NGB and that it

would address much of the disconnect that generated criticism.

- AK noted it was important that the next beach season operated under the new strategy rather than the tail end of Game Plan. CF acknowledged this and noted that beach volleyball was already further ahead in its consultation than other areas.
- GB noted that several substantial pieces of work already in place: DIAP, the People Plan and the five-year vision for the National Volleyball League did not need to be discarded and could pivot as the new strategy took shape. The Board was not starting from a blank sheet; the new strategy should build on existing foundations.
- RH noted that the strategy also needed to encompass an ambition beyond the immediate membership base: the organisation had obligations and aspirations in relation to performance, international governance and the growth of sport that could not be subordinated entirely to club needs.
- TN observed that Board and hub staff have the capacity to cover all regions when consultative work starts.
- CF described the proposed structure: a strategy development task and finish group including delegated authority groups, the player community, and partner organisations (including the VEF and BVF in a consultative capacity).
- RHa asked that CF, GB JK and AS meet to sketch out the process, so that Board members could contribute and participate at the appropriate points without needing to be involved in every stage. The Board approved commencement of the strategy development process.

EB/26-27/12 Meeting Finalisation

12.1 Review of Actions

Actions were noted.

12.2 AOB

- JP raised the question of women's health and women's continued participation in sport through different life stages, noting she had received considerable feedback on the topic. It was agreed this should be picked up formally. RHa suggested that this could be a relevant area for the Foundation fundraising activity. The matter was agreed as an item for a future agenda.
- CF provided an update on the Birmingham facilities position. He reported that Erdington Rugby Club was likely to take forward the second beach volleyball facility that had been planned for Birmingham. The National Performance Centre element had been proposed to Loughborough University.
- The Chair expressed the Board's appreciation to RH, JS and BF on their departure from the Board following a significant period of service. She noted that they would all remain connected to the organisation through other roles and thanked them personally for the welcome they had extended to her as incoming Chair. CF added his thanks. A presentation was made on behalf of the organisation.

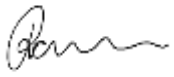
12.3 Meeting Close

Meeting closed at 8pm.

Actions

EB/26-27/7.3	Minutes to be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting.	CF
EB/26-27/7.4	GB to resend the link to safeguarding training to those that notify her.	GB

EB/26-27/8 Exec Report	AI policy to be developed.	CF GB
EB/26-27/9	Terms of reference for a facilities working group to be brought to next Board meeting for approval.	CF
EB/26-27/11	CF, GB and AS meet to sketch out the strategy writing process, so that Board members could contribute and participate at the appropriate points without needing to be involved in every stage. The Board approved commencement of the strategy development process.	CF, GB and AS



Board Meeting – Report Summary

The following paper provides summary information from the 19th June 2026 board pack which should be read in conjunction with the above-board meeting minutes:

EB/26-27/8 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

1. **Staff Updates**

Since the last Board meeting in April, we have welcomed Calum Travers, Broadcast & Design Project Lead and Josie Rixon, Talent Project Lead to the team.

In addition, Hema Choudhary Membership & Inclusion Project Lead has now left the organisation to take up a role at Badminton England and we are currently in the shortlisting stage of the recruitment process to identify her successor.

Finally, Student Project Officer recruitment for the 2026/27 year is now complete with the below appointments:

- Adam Sfendla – Data and Insight
- Haneul Park (Sky) - Digital and Communications
- Gaspar Santoro Mattos - Talent
- Emily Brewin – Workforce (coaching and officials)
- Ruby Farrell – Volunteer Development
- Olivia Hampton-Riddington – Club Development
- Annabel Kiew Yi Xin – Events and Competitions

- Joshua King – Events & Competitions

All new Student Project Officers will be onboarded during July and early August 2026.

2. Managed Services Provider (MSP) Transition

Over recent months, the team has been working closely with our new IT managed services provider, 1101, to transition services from our previous provider, AirIT.

The transition was successfully completed on 1 June, with no interruption to service. 1101 is now delivering:

- Remote helpdesk support to the Hub team during office hours
- Continuous cyber threat monitoring
- Managed Windows and security updates

We are currently progressing the migration of our telephony platform from Webex to 3CX. BT has confirmed that the number porting date is 30 June. During this process, there may be a temporary outage of up to four hours. Communications are being prepared to inform members in advance and manage expectations during this period.

In the coming weeks, we will also undertake our annual UK Government Cyber Essentials certification, ensuring that we continue to meet recognised standards for protection against common cyber threats.

Looking ahead, our medium-term objective is to further modernise our IT environment, particularly by leveraging emerging AI capabilities within the Microsoft 365 architecture. This will focus on:

- Reducing manual administrative processes
- Improving operational efficiency
- Maximising the value of our data to generate meaningful insights that support better decision-making

3. Sitting Volleyball Progress – *(FOR INFORMATION)*

Sitting Volleyball continues to make significant progress across competition, workforce development, and strategic partnerships. Over the past period, we have strengthened our integration within the higher education system, expanded competitive opportunities domestically and internationally, and supported emerging local delivery.

Momentum is building through key collaborations including BUCS, Invictus Games, and national home nation partners alongside continued growth in communications reach and engagement. This update outlines the key achievements, ongoing activity, and next steps as we continue to develop a sustainable and visible sitting volleyball pathway.

BUCS Integration

- The final BUCS Proof of Concept paper was submitted last week. It will be circulated to BUCS groups through June, ahead of their competitions meeting in July. Subject to approval, this will hopefully lead into a probationary year featuring three pilot events across the country.

- The first event has been confirmed at the University of Staffordshire on Wednesday 14th October. Initial discussions are also underway with Loughborough University to host an additional event. The University of East London (UEL) has expressed strong interest to host again in March 2027.

HEVO Engagement

- In preparation for next season's Grand Prix series, we are exploring the opportunity to enter a representative HEVO team. This would broaden competitive access and strengthen links across the HIE network.

Competitions

- The Sitting Grand Prix Final opened the Cup Finals weekend, with Sitting Bucks securing their fifth title.

- At the Aker BP Sit Cup in Stavanger, Norway, two English teams reached the final, with Panthers defeating Nottingham Casualties to take the title.

- Sitting Bucks also competed in the PVE Gold EuroLeague in Bosnia and Herzegovina in April, facing some of Europe's top club teams.

- Planning for the 2026–27 club season is underway. We have had the first regulation discussion with the lead official on what possible changes we would like to see for the new season. They lead officials support the running of the events so they are integral to the planning process.

- Ongoing engagement with Martyn Salt (Sports Director, Invictus Games) continues. We are supporting with equipment provision and officiating, while also exploring the long-term legacy opportunities and visibility that the Games will generate for sitting volleyball.

Development

Key emerging activity includes:

- Nuneaton VC: Continuing to develop sitting volleyball sessions and their offer as a club, working with Think Active to increase engagement with local community and disability groups.

- Grimsby: A player-led initiative (supported by the Foundation) is exploring opportunities to establish activity in the area, with funding options currently being investigated.

- Telford: Discussions with Energize STW are supporting Telford VC to re develop local activity.

- Oxford: Engagement has begun with Active Oxfordshire to explore introductory “have-a-go” sessions. We will be reaching out to clubs in the local area to see if they would like to engage.

- Help for Heroes: Plans are progressing to establish a northern training base (potentially in Manchester), with the aim of developing a community club offer.

- The coaching offer was a key topic at the latest Sitting Volleyball Joint Working Group (SVJWG) meeting. The next stage would be how to implement it within the community.

- The most recent SVJWG (May) saw increased engagement from Volleyball Wales and Scottish Volleyball, strengthening cross-nation collaboration.

Communications

- Sitting volleyball continues to receive strong and well-received coverage across all channels, including features on new club activity and both domestic and international competition.

- The third edition of *Sit & Spike* was released at the beginning of the month and received positive feedback. Distribution remains at 193 recipients, with additional promotion via Facebook expected to further expand reach and engagement.