



Minutes of Volleyball England Board Meeting at 5pm on 1 March 2023 via Teams.

Directors Present	Titles
Adam Walker [AW]	Independent Chair
Brendan Fogarty [BF]	Elected Director
Clare Francis [CF]	Independent Director
Jake Sheaf [JS]	Elected Director
Jess Plumridge [JP]	Elected Director
Richard Harrison [RH]	Independent Director
Simon Griffiths [SG]	Independent Director
Staff Present	
Charlie Ford [CFo]	Chief Executive Officer
Guin Batten [GB]	Deputy Chief Executive
Kevin Fletcher [KF]	Finance Manager
In attendance	
Simone Turner [ST]	Volleyball England Foundation
Agata Sromecka [AS]	Secretariat

EB/22-23/42 Welcome from the Chair and apologies

Apologies had been submitted by Andreas Hernandez, Dave Reeve and Freda Bussey.

42.1 Directors Conflict of Interest & Disclosures

JS had submitted an ongoing conflict of interest in connection his consultancy work with Volleyball England.

42.2 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all present.

42.3 Previous minutes

Minutes of the 28 January 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

42.4 Matters Arising/Actions List

EB/22-23/34.5 Once all board members have completed the skills matrix/evaluation form, AW and CF will arrange and conduct review conversations.

EB/22-23/43 2023-24 Budget – FSR recommendation

In Andreas Hernandez's absence, KF reported the following in relation to the 2023-24 budget:

- 2023-24 budget was a break-even budget.
- Staffing continues to be one of the major cost contributors. KF elaborated further on the headlines as presented in the paper in terms of NVL and membership.
- CF commented on the fact that it was a break-even budget. VE was in a stronger position and was confident that a break-even position was the right one. Also, fee increases in line with inflation had been factored into the budget.
- CF drew the Board members' attention to funding allocated to supporting the competitions management group and this was new. CF explained that the support would include competitions development, the use of technology in competitions and others. This was closely linked to the previous discussion at Board around the officiating crisis.
- KF explained the situation around partial VAT exemption. In the 2023-34 budget, a provision for partial VAT exemption had been included. This was the first time this had been included in the budget and would be included in the budget going forward.
- AW thanked the Exec team and FSR committee for their work on this.

EB/22-23/44 Game Plan Strategy – Proposed changes & 2023-28

CFo summarised the position as presented in the paper distributed as part of the Board pack:

- Extensive consultation had been conducted to reach the conclusions as presented in the paper.
- The proposed changes were not intended as an overhaul of the Strategy but were believed to be needed as a result of the findings of the club survey and the aforementioned consultation.
- RH commented on his understanding of the concept of Volleyball England and volleyball in England, and the importance of the idea of belonging, connection and collaboration in relation to them. RH also asked how Volleyball England was presenting itself to its membership and how the organisation was bringing all strands together to strengthen the connectivity with members. CFo responded that Volleyball England and volleyball in England should be understood as interwoven and connected rather than two separate strands. The work of the organisation was always for the benefit of the community and should be communicated as such. RH continued to suggest that the idea of belonging should be better articulated/made more explicit as a principle/outcome and thought should be given to how this could be measured. CFo responded that this could be factored into the Strategy dashboard.
- SG expressed his unease around introducing the proposed changes. SG believed that the organisation had not fully delivered on the existing strategy that had only been 2.5 years in out of 10. The focus could be on connecting to the stakeholders via actions rather than changing the wording of the strategy. CFo responded that the current strategy committed to being reviewed and changed to ensure continuous organisational improvement. The purpose was still central and relevant. CFo saw the proposed changes as making the strategy more relevant to the membership and the new wording was attempting to close the disconnect and bring everyone on the journey.
- PF resonated with SG's comments but also understood that the amendments reflected the fact that the organisation heard the members of the community who felt the disconnect.
- BF commented that it was important to respond to the feedback from every group of members from the volleyball community. However, it was also important to remember that the existing strategy was a well thought-out and robust document. CFo added it was important to take everyone on this journey, and everyone should see their role in this journey. SG reinforced his point around addressing issue through actions rather than changing words. Also, SG pointed to the removal of the word "customers", which had been borne out of the thinking around "the ease of buying from us". CFo answered that the reasons for the change were that the members did not see themselves as customers as evidenced by the insight. Also, the use of the word "people" was central to the people plan as used by NGBs.
- CF asked what the plan was around communicating the changes. CF commented that the community was not well versed in the strategy and the changes in the wording would not have a massive impact in the view of this. The fact that some members of the community felt disconnected would not be worsened by the slightly changed version of the Strategy. CF asked how the amendments would impact the community. The important issue was what changes should be made to decrease the disconnect.

- BF added that VE could work on widening awareness of the strategy and the changes.
- CFo added that the work on alignment between the strategy and the work on the ground had started and this would be important going forward. The changes in wording linked to the actions that sat underneath success statements, strategy dashboard and ops plan.
- RH commented that clarification was needed in relation to subgroups in line with the new implementation plan. CFo commented that the strategic managers alongside subgroup chairs would be driving the success of the strategy and it was all about collaboration. RH added that he still needed clarity on how the operational and subgroup work would connect.
- CF asked whether changes in the language of the strategy would have any impact on the individual players. CFo answered that the changes would drive how the environment for play was shaping. CFo stated that the words drove the work of the organisation and who played what role in the success of the sport.
- CFo asked that if the concern was just words, then what harm was there in changing the strategy. CF responded that the changes could detract from the actual changes/improvements to connect better to the community. SG added that the 12 statements would not change the work so why would we want to change the front vision.
- RH added it was important to remember that the community were actual people uninterested in reading strategies but instead wanted to feel connected to the sport community/organisation. People should feel like they had a stake in the organisation and belonged. It was important to include this in the strategy to improve it for the membership.
- AW asked whether there was a happy medium and instead of implementing the proposed changes, to make people better connected we could use the term “belonging” as a strapline.
- SG added that the belonging could be an outcome that was expected to be achieved by means of the work of the organisation.
- CFo answered that should the changes be declined, the belonging remained important for the work of the organisation.
- JP asked whether the changes were to be implemented for the benefit of the membership or the hub team. CFo responded that it was for the benefit of both.
- RH liked the idea of belonging, but this was not the entirety of the VE’s purpose. This included other strategic ambitions. CFo added that belonging for him could be interpreted more broadly and this should not be limited to the membership only.
- **The Board approved all proposed changes. 2.3 was approved subject to RH’s comment. There will be a comms plan in relation to the approved changes.**
- CFo asked the Board whether there were any omissions/gaps in the dashboard and whether the measurements were relevant. RH pointed out that the facilities and national teams plan as strategic proposals were aspirational rather than realistic. CFo responded on the national teams plan, those had been started already for beach, but indoor was aspirational with the changes in appointment lending itself to work on this. CF commented that beach volleyball specific facilities should be included in the dashboard. CFo would expand targets to indoor and beach. Board would provide further feedback by the end of the week in terms of the dashboard.
- AW thanked all for their contributions and CFo for the work on this proposal.

Action:

EB/22-23/44 Game Plan Strategy – Proposed changes & 2023-28

- Comms plan to be created for launching the changes.
- Board would feedback by the end of the week in terms of the dashboard.

EB/22-23/45 AOB

- Board agreed that Laura would write to the Board with a request for nominations for the Peter Wardale award, following which the Board would feedback and agree the final nomination at the Board meeting. Hall of Fame would also be discussed.
- Board approved FSR having the delegated authority over the work on the tender for the ball supplier/sponsor.
- GB asked Board members to confirm whether they needed accommodation for the Cup Final.

EB/22-23/46 Meeting finalisation

46.1 Review of Actions

Actions were agreed.

46.2 Meeting Close

Meeting closed at 18.35

Actions	Who
EB/22-23/34.5 Once all board members have completed the skills matrix/evaluation form, AW and CF will arrange and conduct review conversations.	AW CF
EB/22-23/44 Game Plan Strategy – Proposed changes & 2023-28 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Comms plan to be created for launching the changes in the Strategy.Board would feedback by the end of the week in terms of the dashboard.	CFo Board
EB/22-23/45 AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none">Board agreed that Laura would write to the Board with a request for nominations for the Peter Wardale award, following which the Board would feed back and agree the final nomination at the Board meeting. Hall of Fame would also be discussed.Board members to confirm whether they needed accommodation for the Cup Final.	Laura/Board Board

