



BRITISH FENCING

Minutes of the Board meeting held at Sport England, London, on Thursday 5th May 2011 at 17.00
Approved by the Board on Monday 13th June 2011

Present		
David Teasdale	Director and Chair	DT
Ismay Cowen	Director	IC
David King	Director	DK
Murray Morrison	Director	MM
Libby Payne	Director	LP
Penny Spink MBE	Director	PS
Mike Thornton	Director (part/via conference call)	MT

Also in attendance (non-voting)		
Piers Martin	Chief Executive (CEO)	PM
Ray Stafford	England Representative	RS
Ben Campion	Development Manager (part)	BC
Alex Newton	Performance Manager (part)	AN

Apologies for absence		
Andrew Brannon	Director	AB
Keith Smith	Director	KS
Chris Hyde	Scotland Representative	CH
Jack Magill	Northern Ireland Representative	JM
Bob Turner	Wales Representative	BT
Alex O'Connell	Athletes Representative	AO

Ref	Minute	Action
38.	<u>Chair's Welcome</u>	
38.1	The Chair welcomed the Board to Sport England and noted apologies as above.	
39.	<u>Minutes of the last meeting</u>	
39.1	The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 30 th March 2011.	
39.2	The Board asked when marketing for the European Championships 2011 would be starting and if materials such as posters could be given to competition organisers and clubs advertising the event. PM explained that the website was now live and agreed to take these points back to the Event Director.	PM
40.	<u>Introduction of the Performance Manager</u>	
40.1	The Chair introduced Alex Newton (AN) as the new Performance Manager. AN gave a brief summary of her experience at UK Sport, the English Institute of Sport, Sport England and also with Boxing	
40.2	Dealing with Directors' questions, AN explained that the focus was very much on winning medals at the Olympic Games, but she would be working with the Development Manager and Academy Manager to create a High Performance System.	
40.3	She added that her priorities were getting the Pre-Olympic Training Centre established and getting to grips with the budget.	
40.4	The Chair welcomed AN on behalf of the Board and reiterated the importance of focusing on winning gold at the Olympic Games.	
41.	<u>Chair's Report</u>	

	<u>Strategy</u>	
41.1	The Chair reported to the Board that since the last Board meeting he had further meetings with the CEO, Directors and stakeholders and had considered the BF Strategy.	
41.2	He stated that he felt that there were three clear priorities, which he had called: - GREEN - GROW - GOLD	
41.3	He then went on to explain that this “3G Strategy” would focus the organisation and went into more detail on each priority:	
41.4	GREEN: This priority focuses on the organisation reaching Green on the Audit from Sport England and UK Sport.	
41.5	Currently British Fencing was on Red and whilst Sport England and UK Sport could not remove this status formally, till the next annual review, it was evident that all the work which had been done was very much positive and had been recognised by them.	
41.6	Moore Stephens had been in to meet with the Chair and CEO; we had passed on the improvements made and received good advice on work in progress.	
41.7	GROW: This priority focuses on the organisation achieving the targets measured by the <i>Active People</i> (AP) survey, the largest consumer survey of its kind in the industry. The original target was just under 6k participants (to be fencing once a week), but with the lack of results over the last two years, the target was now c. 10k.	
41.8	We are doing lots of good work and hitting many proxy targets, but the priority was absolutely to hit the AP target.	
41.9	We are returning to Sport England with an updated plan in June and have some brainstorming sessions planned with England Fencing etc in the next few weeks.	
41.10	GOLD: This priority focuses on the organisation achieving a gold medal at the Olympic Games.	
41.11	Individual Directors were very uncertain about winning a medal in London 2012. However, the Chair stated the real goal should be gold; he asked the Board to agree that the coherent mental approach, to be led by the Board, should focus on gold and a gold standard programme.	
41.12	To achieve this we need a change of culture to ensure our athletes understand the work required to become a gold medal winning athlete. We now are in a good place to do this with a full time Performance Manager, but we are undeniably aware of the urgency. The Board were in full agreement with this gold target approach.	
41.13	The Board agreed the 3G Strategy and the Chair explained that progress towards these targets would be reported at each Board meeting. <i>[BC and AN left the meeting; MT joined the meeting by conference call]</i>	
	<u>Legal Cases</u>	
41.14	The Chair reported to the Board on the case with Nosheen Khan. He explained that we had agreed a settlement figure with Mrs. Khan and he thanked LP for her excellent work on bringing the case to a conclusion.	
41.15	The Chair reported to the Board on the case with Graham Watts. He explained that we were waiting on a report from DK into the complaint made by LP.	
	<u>England Fencing/British Fencing Partnership</u>	
41.16	The Chair reported to the Board that he had met with the CEO and representatives of the England Fencing Board. Further meetings were scheduled but in principle aims and a possible structure were agreed; he would report back at the next Board meeting.	
	<u>International Relations</u>	
41.17	The Chair reported to the Board that he had met with Peter Jacobs who had drawn his attention to the need for international succession planning. The Board noted that this was the reason for establishing the International Relations Committee and requested an update on this from the Committee. The Chair agreed that he would look into this with the CEO and bring	DT/PM

	recommendations back to the Board.	
	<u>Committee Review</u>	
41.18	The Chair reported to the Board that he was aware of uncertainties around the roles and membership of some committees. He and the CEO would review and make Board recommendations.	
	<u>Board</u>	
41.19	The Chair reported to the Board that he had received correspondence from KS requesting to know what the roles of the Chair, CEO & Directors of British Fencing were and asking for this to be on the agenda for the meeting.	
41.20	The Chair informed the Board that he had brought with him the Job Descriptions, Code of Conduct and Directors' Responsibilities Letter which had all been approved by the Board and signed by directors.	
41.21	He added that KS had stated that "several directors" were concerned. Those directors present stated that they had no concerns and requested to know who these directors were. The Board requested the Chair to ask KS for more information about this request.	DT
	<u>Board Training</u>	
41.22	The Chair explained to the Board that, in accordance with new governance recommendations, Board "appraisals" or reviews would take place in January 2012 and annually from then on.	
41.23	He asked the Board for ideas on training and development for the Board and a programme would be put in place.	
	<u>Truro</u>	
41.24	The Chair reported to the Board that he had visited Truro Fencing Club and was extremely impressed by the club and the people he met.	
42.	Sword Price Fighters Fencing (SPFF) Equipment	
42.1	MT asked for the Board to discuss, based on the vast e-mail interest, the decision by the DT at the British Youth Championships (BYCs) not to accept this equipment and subsequent questions raised about the position of British Fencing in this matter. The Chair agreed and MT voiced his concerns about the BF position.	
42.2	The CEO reported that a safety report commissioned by Barry Paul was first received by the Safety Committee on the 7 th April and they were reviewing this information. This report was then made public immediately prior to the BYCs and the DT decided that they could not risk the safety of young fencers and acting on this information made the decision. It was noted that only a small number of fencers had SPFF equipment and that the DT had provided kit for those who required it.	
42.3	Advice had been received from Peter Cadman (Legal Adviser) and Catherine Nicoll (Insurance Adviser) which focused on the risk of British Fencing's position of both acting and not acting going forward.	
42.4	The Board deliberated this advice at some length and agreed the following:	
42.5	1. The DT at the BYCs made a decision not to accept protective equipment* from SPFF for that specific event. The decision was made by the DT with the appropriate delegated authority to make decisions for that specific event and time only. The DT made this decision with the information they had to hand and only in the interests of young fencers' safety. The Board are aware that the DT also organised for equipment to be borrowed for those fencers who had turned up with this equipment. (*masks were allowed following a check by British Fencing Armourers).	
42.6	2. The Board asks the Safety Committee urgently to seek future assurances from SPFF that its equipment fully complies with relevant safety standards.	
42.7	3. The Board asks the Safety Committee also to provide appropriate and urgent guidance for Competition Organisers; and to recommend further steps to be taken by British Fencing, clubs, event organisers, etc, to secure safety of equipment and clothing for fencers, acknowledging appropriate legal and insurance advice.	
42.8	The Board requested that the CEO post a notice to this effect on the website and circulate widely.	PM

43.	<u>CEO Report</u>	
43.1	The CEO presented his report to the Board and took questions from directors.	
43.2	The CEO reported to the Board that he had received a request from KS to report on the British Championships. He explained that the Competitions and Calendar Committee had deliberated at length the British Championships for 2011, recognising that due to the European Championships and the Olympic Games both being in July a move to later in the year was required. The Committee had noted the potential clash with the Welsh Open and had agreed to work with the organisers to arrange the schedule to allow fencers to attend both events and to source (if possible and fitting with sponsor requirements) a venue close to the Welsh Open.	
44.	<u>Risk Register and Plan</u>	
44.1	The Chair presented a Risk Register and Plan to the Board for approval.	
44.2	RS raised that he had completed some work on this and would forward to the Chair to improve the document.	
43.3	The Board approved the Risk Register and Plan, noting this would be reviewed by the Board annually.	
45.	<u>Directors' Attendance at Events</u>	
45.1	In response to queries from PS, and after some discussion, the Chair proposed (and Directors agreed) that if Directors wished to attend events they should inform him or the CEO prior to the event and discuss and agree what role they should play. Board directors can claim expenses on official business, once approved by the Chair; expense claims sent in without such prior discussion should not be paid. Directors should attend events in their capacity as Board Directors only, unless there was a specific technical requirement (e.g. Refereeing or Welfare).	
46.	<u>Any Other Business</u>	
46.1	The issue of Board elections was raised. It was highlighted that the original SABMiller partnership proposals were to use the elections to improve the Board structure. DT agreed to present a proposal to the next Board meeting.	
46.2	It was noted that Teddy Bourne had been appointed by the Board as Honorary Electoral Officer for this electoral year and LP agreed to speak to Teddy Bourne about proposed amendments to the voting system.	
47.	<u>Date of the next meeting</u>	
47.1	The date of the next meeting is the 13 th June. The meeting in July at the European Championships would be set as soon as possible, on receipt of further information from the event.	
47.2	With there being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 19.45.	