

# BRITISH FENCING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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Last Updated: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15.09.2020
<b>Location</b>	By Video Link
<b>Present</b>	Chair, JC, TC, MO, PA, TCJ, CH, JT, CO, YH, AC-S
<b>In Attendance</b>	CEO, KR, DM, FG, JM, Tom Wilson (Auditor) Part

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it has been a busy period for staff. Members were sent a Board update after the last Board meeting.

**Apologies:** None

**New Declarations of Interest:** No new declarations of interest.

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Interim Decisions:** There were 2 Interim Decisions; 1. 1<sup>st</sup> July, Bye-Law change to allow electronic nominations. 2. There were three decisions on the FIE grants, Board agreed to accept a federation grant on the 10<sup>th</sup> August, they also agreed to allow the referees to accept the grants offered by the FIE, committee members should not accept grants as it would go against BF's policy on gifts. All decisions were approved.

**Notable results:** None.

**Action Items:** Several old actions on hold – to be reviewed outside of meeting.

**New Risks:** Will cover as part of separate topic on agenda.

**Strategy & Objectives:** VMOST in the Board folder and attached as an appendix to the agenda

## 2. APPROVE PREVIOUS BOARD MINUTES

The minutes of June 2020 were approved.

## 3. CEO UPDATE

Chair noted there has been 62 News items on website since the last Board meeting.

The CEO updated the Board on:

- Worked with DCMS on lobbying and representing BF with Stakeholders (UKS,SE,SRA) on the 'return to play and 'return to training'. Had discussed with Sport England /DCMS to increase adult pod size to 15 but in view of the government's recent tier changes and increase in lock down restrictions this was on hold.
- Website and social media effort on website

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- Community discussions still going
- Not much activity in the return to fencing working group as a group – mostly dealing with HN specific responses. Need to get together at some point in light of latest research around equipment and sanitising.
- No significant governance questions to report
- Will discuss safeguarding later in the meeting
- FIE – no activity before January 2021. [REDACTED]
- The EFC conference took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> September. There were no dates announced for future events
- Sport England launched the 2021-25 strategy consultation
- UK Sport – Continuity fund has been successful with BF being awarded a grant of £33,000
- CEO invited to join the DCMS Integrity Group
- The Annual Report is in Dropbox and has been emailed to the Board Directors for feedback
- Staff Changes: Nickie Bailey will be working 2 days a week from 1<sup>st</sup> October and will be funded 50-50 with England Fencing. She will be supporting work across the whole referee pathway
- The Q1 Balance Scorecard is in board papers

[REDACTED]

CH also asked about the welfare of the staff and whether they were being looked after.  
CEO - Everyone is well and healthy. CEO informed the Board that together with KR, she is working on a staff risk assessment to get staff back into the office.

Chair asked about the relationship with the Home Countries. CEO – relationship working really well, good collaboration.

### 4. FINANCE PART 1. 19-20 YEAR END

DM reported, Statutory accounts prepared. All updated documents have been placed in the Board Dropbox folder.

[REDACTED]  
Audit was much more detailed and in depth than in the past due to high profile business failure leading to increases in regulations. The regulations are more strict on auditors and therefore on businesses.

Accounts standard with no major points to note.

There is a disclosure note in the accounts to mention Covid-19.  
Audit findings report outlines control points for the year. Only one control point this year.

The Directors report has to be approved by the Directors. AGRC have been through them in detail.

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Tom Wilson joined the meeting and reported on the following:

- Audit Findings Report. All work done remotely. The process was run well and in line with the work done this year.
- Section 1 – the intro and executive summary, overall conclusion and opinion – we anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion. Without modification on the financial statements.
- Section 2 – key points highlighted at the planning stage. No specific issues found.
- Section 3 – summary over Covid-19 – work done remotely and looked at 2 areas over disclosures – 1. Growing concern (cash flow) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> point over events (non-adjusting and adjusting post balance sheet)
- Pleased with outcome of financial statements

Chair asked about the cash in hand statement.

TW – it is referring to the year-end cash in hand balance (physical cash)

- No misstatements that need to be brought to your attention
- Letter of representation – standard with no specific matters that we require you to disclose to us
- Stand changes for future reference. An increase in the look into growing concern, looking at cash flow sensitivities. Accounting estimates work will increase going forwards
- Section 4 detailed control points – one item found that a credit card did not have documentation to back it up. Which is an isolated incident.
- Prior year we flagged checks of bank details on payment runs – pleased to say now resolved by implementation of PT-X usage

JT asked about the going concern for next year – what do we have to evidence.

TW – one area for audit purposes and one for organisation operations.

Looking to check that you considered the evidence to be appropriate – cash flow forecasts, are events going ahead, are you going to receive SE monies. From an operational point of view – do you need to look further into the future.

JC asked about the control point on the credit card. Even though you did not have the receipt you are satisfied with the expenditure on the credit card.

TW – yes – DM knew what it was. Letter will be sent to staff by DM on this point. **Action DM.**

CEO, KR and DM, FG and JM left the meeting to allow the Auditor to speak to the Board Directors.

The Audited Accounts were approved subject to minor editing changes.

Proposed: Caryl Oliver, seconded: Janet Campbell

*Tom Wilson left the meeting at 5:50*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## FINANCE PART 2 - Q1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Result is a deficit of approx. £3,200 against a budget deficit of just over £5,000. Things going as we would expect.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It is important to view cash and revenue recognition budgets together for full picture.

JT stated that we normally aim to run a balanced budget but this year we will use reserves to cover the [REDACTED] deficit. There may also be an impact carried forward to the following year.

[REDACTED]

**Action DM** to send around updated figures to AGRC.

Chair – we need another AGRC in October/November.

CEO the proposal is that membership fees will not increase next year.

Board agreed and approved the membership fees not increasing in January 2021.

CH asked if we could encourage clubs to make their members of BF.

CEO we are already doing everything we can to make them members.

Chair thanks DM and JT.

## 5. STRATEGIC AREA - SUSTAINABILITY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Commercial Update:

JC presented with the following points:

- Revenue target for 2020/2021 is £77,000 with a surplus of £43,000
- End of Q1 achieved £11,126
- Remaining surplus required is £14,100. Projected around £10,000 from PSRP, the Remaining to generate is £3,600, through online offerings and any return to face to face coaching.

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- Ambition is to return to coaching in Q3
- Q4 Coach education will deliver online offerings
- Sponsorship: 2 more partners are interested in a partnership with a value equating to £116,000
- An agreement is proposed with Inspiring Learning
- PSRP: continues to attract attention with 4 prospective partners under negotiation – 2 are multi-academy trusts
- Explore fencing app has been launched and the feedback so far is good. It is available on IOS and Android
- Online Learning: the content filming day on 9<sup>th</sup> August was a success.
- We have a three-stage online Core Coach course. Timeline for Beta testing is from September 7<sup>th</sup>-October 16<sup>th</sup> – then the plan to commercialise it is from 17<sup>th</sup> October onwards

Chair asked how likely are we to meet our revised budget surplus of £43,000?

JC it is highly likely we will meet it – business continuity funding will hopefully amplify our online offer. There is a demand and want from people to have coach education from us.



## 6. INSIGHT LED - PARTICIPATION CENTRED PROGRAMMES

VB presented with the following points:

- Scouts: there are currently 150 Scout Leaders signed up to the online resource through our Facebook page
- Have had over 800 video views (across the 32 videos produced). Feedback very positive
- There is a breakthrough in our relationship with the Scouts. The challenge is the navigation around the commercial aspect of the relationship
- Higher Education: have had a second successful networking group. 37 universities were at the last one we conducted. Have had good feedback from those universities around how we can support them during and post Covid-19
- Challenge is around the space. Lots of university concerned about lack of space this term
- London Youth: Meeting with London Youth next week. Will have a consultations to agree support needed to get fencing up and running and we will discuss sport for social change – looking at what they are doing and what we can do
- MGF: Majority of delivery taking place online due to local lockdowns, which is proving a challenge.
- Have had 2 film screenings since the last Board meeting as well as a Twitter takeover through the Sport for Development Coalition
- Work is underway to create a MGF brand

YH ran through the Sport for Social Change noting the following points:

- Strategy is about diversifying our offering to the communities

- Landscape changing
- Hoping to start the launch of the strategy by the end of September/beginning of October
- BF will need to create a training programme and gather information to improve fencing for social change
- Four areas of focus that we are trying to develop are: MGF, London Youth, Change Foundation and Scouts
- Project officer role – need to check if funding is available
- The emphasis is on quality over quantity

CO asked if there is a connection with Girl Guides

V – GG UK is a separate organisation. If we can establish the direction we are going with the Scouts it opens the door for us to have the conversation with the Girl Guides

TCJ asked about the prospect of university students that engage with fencing at university level to then move on to a different form of fencing and does it feed into ADP or is it just grass routes.

V – we now have a clearer idea of what is going on across the entire HE sector and aim to better connect all levels of fencing in the HE space.

## 7. BREAK

## 8. GBR ATHLETE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (ADP)

SK presented with the following points:

- Running virtual ADP Camps since lockdown and that process is continuing. They are a learning process
- Each camp has 35 sessions. July Camp had 130 fencers, September 11 fencers as well as 4 sparring venues
- Challenges in running camps but a lot of positives
- Dis: have changed rules to only allow state school place
- We have 36 out of 40 places at present.
- Need to look at how we work smarter with some of the schools making sure we allocate all of those places
- Networking Groups: have had networking groups with Sport England and UK Coaching. BF will present to the NGB group on our approach on wellbeing and mental health issues on the 24<sup>th</sup> September
- Senior groups have had many Zoom calls working on how we can align the ADP/pathway going forward. Female foilists have really grabbed the opportunity.
- On phase 3 with UK Sport – which outlines athlete profiling and data, defining the number of athletes that are engaged in fencing from a competitive point of view
- TAP: BF wellbeing survey has been sent out with a respond from 146 fencers
- October Sword will future the ADP and that work has also been put online

CH – Noted the wellbeing survey 97 fencers did not reply, therefore difficult to find out anything about those 97.

CH – Asked about the plans for October-March given Covid-19 uncertainty.

CO positive step forward as far as fencers concerned giving them a target of being selected.

CEO closed by saying ADP is moving to a programme that covers all the way up to Olympic level fencing. Does not necessarily deliver the same thing to everyone at all levels. CEO encouraged the Board to read the article in the October Sword when it is published.

## 9. EVENTS, COMPETITIONS AND CALENDAR

VB Presented with the following points:

- Senior Nationals: aiming to run the event at the beginning of December with the many challenges and restrictions in place
- Evie and Jon have been working through the format which will form the back to competitive fencing guidance that we will provide to the community
- Conversations on the venue are taking place
- GB Cup and BYC's: indefinitely postponed. We will communicate with the fencing community at the end of September beginning of October.
- GB League – a new project which will allow for local club nights but tying in with the national league with the hope that it will encourage new members.
- Cadet and Junior Championships – no change currently – waiting for further information from the EFC and FIE
- Event Licensing – no events can be licensed until competitive fencing plans are approved
- We will send out a survey to all event organisers/volunteers on how they are feeling about returning to events

JT - does indefinitely postponed meant that it was definitely postponed or would we be running two seasons next year.

CEO – we have a replacement idea for the BYC's 2020. We cannot run the BYC's in its current format, similarly the GB Cup. We will announce once we have thought about alternatives.

PA ask if there will be ranking points for the senior nationals.

CEO – it depends on if the country is in lockdown. Will know more nearer the time.

JM asked about BUCS events

VB – we will ask Ian Lichfield who is our University lead to send through some information (information supplied and copied below)

Ian Lichfield provided a summary of information on BUCS for the Board minutes

Summary

- BUCS League fixtures are planned to go ahead in January but with reduced fixtures, leading to the usual knockout format. There will be no promotions or relegations this year.
- BUCS individual championships has been separated to make a smaller event. This is the same for most sports to reduce the size of the events to ensure they are COVID-19 secure.
- BUCS Series events (for novices) will now be combined with a new regional qualifying event to select qualifiers for the individual championships.
- A review of the current DCMS guidelines for fencing will be needed to ensure these events can take place.

## 10. CLUBS AND MEMBERSHIP

HG presented with the following points:

- We have 143 Covid-19 officers registered on the club register with the number slowly rising
- Club Poll: recently pulled together snapshot questionnaire to find out where activity levels are currently and to find out what clubs are facing as they return
- Initials results are 117 submissions with 58 with no activity
- Many are aiming to get started in the next couple of weeks
- We are aiming to repeat the survey in a few weeks time
- Community Discussions: 14 events have been hosted with 3 scheduled in the near future, we have had over 500 sign up with the most recent Covid-19 officer session hosting 94 individual clubs
- Playwaze: our new partnership which helps clubs manage their activity and focuses on the track and trace element which is available free for all our affiliated clubs
- Regional Review: secured funding from Sport England and have brought in Jacky Bryson who will be looking to host regional chairs in a discussion event towards the end of the month

MO asked what would happen if a club did not follow the guidelines

HG – we have taken steps to ask our clubs to upload their risk assessments so we can check them. There are no sanctions put in place as we are advising clubs and helping them work through their problems.

## 11. COACHING AND WORKFORCE

- COVID-19 is impacting on delivery – we are moving elements online
- Welfare courses are online together with safeguarding courses
- We have done some refereeing with ADP



- Working on the restart of Coaching Courses
- Coach register transitioned to an online register
- Team Manager – involved in the development of guidebooks for the athletes/parents
- Workforce survey completed

TCJ asked if we think coaches are in a position to come back and start coaching.

SK – there definitely is a sense of anxiety from some of the coaches, some coaches are very confident and some coaches creating a level of tension.

CEO thanked the Executive team for all their presentations and help.

### 12. STANDING ITEM - SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding details are in the quarterly Balance Scorecard.



Threshold level 2 – reflects cases that are reported to Statutory Authorities. We have a variety of cases at that level.

The CEO briefed the Board about one case moving forward to Sport Resolution and the challenges involved. A budget is set aside to cover legal support. This is an open case and a significant case to be aware of. We have 2 other level 2 cases open.

The Chair asked about the annual audit.

CEO – CPSU have received our safeguarding submission and gone through it and reviewed with comments. A copy of the submission and CPSU report is in the board papers.

There followed a short discussion on safeguarding and how the Board needs to discharge it's responsibilities appropriately. Including the need to have appropriate oversight of the type and numbers of cases without the need for identifiable details to be shared.

CEO to flag cases that have been reported.

### 13. AGM

The date for the AGM has been proposed as the 10<sup>th</sup> October starting at 9:30. It will be a virtual AGM with all voting by proxy.

TC informed the Board that the government have put legislation in place to provide for virtual meetings.

Board approved the AGM being held virtually.

## 14. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: NOMCOM

The Board Elections had 2 clear winners: Pat Aiyenuro and James Williams who have been elected and will take their post after the AGM in October.

The information is embargoed until the announcement later in the week.

Nomcom reflected on the impact on the Board Skills matrix.

Nomcom noted that neither of the candidates have serious financial knowledge.

As JT is stepping down, Board accepted PA's offer to chair the next AGRC

NomCom to add legal and IT skills as a requirement for next year's Board Director elections.

The post of Independent Director is vacant. It was noted that the Appointed Director slot does not have to be independent.

The Appointment Letter (in the Board Induction pack) had been updated to include Social Media statement. Safeguarding and Equality area to be strengthened.

The Board Champion for Safeguarding Job Description will be looked at.

TCJ noted that the age requirement had not been fulfilled by the elected Directors.

## 15. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: AGRC

Main items covered earlier.

AGRC reviewed Procurement Policy, Reserves Policy and Conflict of Interest Register. Policies approved and recommended by AGRC. Board approved.

## 16. STANDING ITEM - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Covered earlier

## 17. AOB

None

**Meeting closed at 20.05**  
**Date of next meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020**