

BRITISH FENCING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting	16.03.2021
Location	By Video Link
Present	Chair, PA, TC, MO, PA, TCJ, CH, YH, CO
In Attendance	CEO, KR, DM, MR, JM, FG
Apologies	JC, JW, JH

1. INTRODUCTION

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, with an extra welcome to Matt Russell, Welsh Fencing Representative. Chair also noted that the focus of the meeting will be on the restart and recovery programme, version 2 of the budget and noting that most of the items of the meeting will be to note progress rather than an in-depth discussion. Management team very busy and doing a really good job. Budget outlook for next year looking better. January Membership figures were very poor for January but have since started to pick up with March figures looking better.

There has been a special edition of the Sword by parents and Karim, a Souvenir edition which has been circulated to the parents of the ADP fencers and is also available online.

Board noted thanks to the parents involved in the Sword edition.

There will be an updated selection policy for the Senior Europeans for approval.

Awayday in three sessions worked out well.

Sport England issued their 10 year strategy.

Apologies: JC, JW, JH

New Declarations of Interest: No new declarations of interest.

Conflict of interest: None

Interim Decisions: Board approved the policy decision for seniors going to Olympic qualifying events. It was noted that the fencers did not attend the competition in Kazan.

Notable results: None.

Action Items: No further action to note.

New Risks: None

Strategy & Objectives: As noted in introduction

2. APPROVE PREVIOUS BOARD MINUTES

The minutes of November 2020 were approved providing the incorrect date was amended and an action against annual survey on culture in ADP is added.

3. CEO UPDATE - CURRENT COVID LANDSCAPE

CEO reported on the restart of community fencing including:

Roadmap fencing specific

- Step 1 no earlier than 8th March – School Curriculum, Registered Childcare (outdoor, local and public 1-1 continues)
- Step 1 no earlier than 29th March – increased outdoor opportunities
- Step 2: no earlier than 12th April – indoor fencing (training & competition) for under 18s
- Step 3: no earlier than 17th May – indoor fencing for 18+
- Step 4: no earlier than 21st June – indoor fencing competition for 18+
- NGB sport specific guidance will still be in place at each stage to reduce the risk of transmission
- Cabinet office guidance expected the week beginning 22nd March 2021 and thereafter 7 days before each Step.
- CEO will speak with CH about expanding groups of 6 if restrictions allow.
- Sports will be expected to have certain restrictions still in place. We will be working closely with Sport England on this.

Restart and recover

- Membership statistics are running at 60%
- Finance comparisons show membership increase for March
- Digital membership cards will be launched
- Continued communications with members through all our channels, latest covid community discussions series, resource plan #retuntofencing has been created to guide members and clubs through news posts relating to getting ready to return to fencing
- Content and assets to help clubs sign up new members
- Campaign to capture those that did not renew their membership
- Community discussion groups working well
- Resource plans for clubs including the return to fencing guides
- There is a programme of news posts going out
- Looking at getting the GB league started to drive recreational membership
- Travel to Tokyo challenge – a way of getting people motivated to get fit
- Hoping to inform the clubs on the 25th of the results of the cabinet office update on the 22nd March
- Have conducted a roadmap discussion with the community and have another on the way
- BF funded applications for a small grant
- Speaking with England Fencing about running the EYC's in early Autumn
- Will postpone the introduction of levy on ranking events
- Looking at event volunteers having a community discussion with them and supporting them back into activity
- Speaking with the Home Nations on the Commonwealth – aligning activities for athletes on

pathway

- Looking at plan to restart national rankings
- Started work on calendar coordination
- Rescheduling major events – will inform more once we have confirmed dates
- We will not publish the rankings (need for seeding) of non-members, people must be a compete member to retain their rankings

CO asked about the focus from clubs - has there been feedback on retaining members or do clubs need to get new members. CEO – it has not been a discussion particularly from the clubs, the club priority right now is getting open and the challenges around that.

PA asked about the number of clubs engaged in the community discussion days. CEO community clubs around 30%. Universities are on a WhatsApp group and are active. CEO also pointed out that venue space was more of an issue than volunteers. We had also asked all clubs to let us know if they are struggling.

MR asked about extending membership dates. Chair – if there was a dramatic drop off, we might have to consider it, but it would have a knock-on effect on those that have renewed their membership throughout.

4. FINANCE PART 1 20-21 Q3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Membership summary on a month-by-month basis shows a bad month in January 2021 with approx. £16,000 taken, in comparison to January 2020 when the membership income taken was £56,000. February shows a considerable uptick taking approx. £41,000 which, although down on the previous year, shows a good result against budget. As of the 15th March we have taken approx. £15,000 revenue which is more than budgeted for the whole of March. However, most of the impact will show next year due to revenue recognition.

We are seeing an increased interest in commercial with people generally more positive.

Q3 Management Accounts (to end of December 2020)

Result at end of Q3 is a deficit of approx. £41,000 against a budgeted deficit of approx. £27,000. There is a slightly better than budgeted result (approx. £6,500 better than budget) across all departments apart from GBR International Events. Showing a better result in membership, almost on budget in corporate services with commercial down a little, which we might expect. ■■■■■

Year-end forecast for 31st March 2021 shows a deficit of £25,576, which considering the first budget we put together was at around £80,000-£90,000 deficit it is a good result.

Much of the membership deficit in cash terms, will be recognised next year. Next years' financials will be a challenge. We are budgeting for a deficit of approx. £60,000 in 21/22.

PA – Optics of membership going to be reasonable and not as bad as could have been. We do have

a deficit however, so we need to keep aware. The danger is coming out of downturn and having to take on costs. We also received £64,000 from the UK Sport Continuity Fund and without that things would have been worse.

Budget

From the previous draft of a deficit of £103,000 this budget shows an improvement. Commercial revised down by £5,000 to be prudent, remaining figures are coming from real leads. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Events budget has not changed from first draft, I have allowed for a negative swing of £45,000 to provide for reduced entries and additional costs. Corporate services deficit of just under £50,000, have reforecast figures for membership.

Sport England have said that NGB's can repurpose some of the funding received from them. Talent shows a significant under-spend so we are able to repurpose the funding there giving a significant opportunity to protect us for the coming year.

CO asked the Board to thank David and the CEO for their appreciated efforts.

CEO we could not do it without the strong staff support that we have.

PA we have to be aware of, depending on if we can run events, are organisers going to be able to afford to run them.

5. UPDATED BF BOARD STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

Chair took Board through the latest Board Strategic Work Plan in the Board pack.

Immediate Priority Initiatives identified included:

- Sport England funded projects – demonstrate progress against contracted objectives.
- Environmental Policy – next step is to discuss with the CEO after moving forward with CH.
- Support Clubs to restart.
- ADP and progression funding (UK Sport progression fund contract will be signed next week)
- GBR Athlete support

Are the priorities of the Board initiatives still important, do we have them in the correct order of importance? Have we missed anything that should be on the list?

There was general agreement that the identified areas were important and priorities should be managed.

6. BF BOARD STRATEGIC WORK AREA UPDATES

6.1 COMMERCIAL

Chair reported on Commercial with the following points:

- Explore fencing short course aimed at teachers went live on the 18th November with a revenue of £830.00
- The online safeguarding renewal course went live on the 20th October 2020 and has a revenue of £1,800 against a target of £1,600. Next year £4,280 is forecasted against a budget of £2,996
- Online Core Coach went live on 26th November 2020. The updated version will make a better customer experience
- Online ITCF course is pending release
- There is a 2021-22 Commercial plan

6.2 ADP

- Delivery on award conditions. ADP is the umbrella program for several other programs. All one pathway/programme with different funding pots (Sport England and UK Sport supply bulk of funding)
- UK sport contracted terms and Sport England's award conditions are in the Board pack, we will be tracking against them
- First draft of the funding programme will go to the Board for approval. We have been given an indicative range of 1-3 places, 6 weapon independent
- UK Sport contract will be signed this week, which will contain three major goals and a set of milestones. Details are in the Board papers

ADP priorities and issues

- International Travel and competition
- Doha – athletes could face a quarantine bill
- Draft European selection policy is in the Board pack, has already gone out to Selectors and athlete senior panel and will be going out to the athletes this week. The process has been updated to reflect best practice advice from the BAC and UK Sport. The policy will then go to the Board for approval
- Tokyo is still going ahead
- World University Games is also going ahead
- It was noted that the decision to go to events, that may be subject to restrictions from the Government, is a Board decision without getting involved in selection.
- Domestic ranking competitions – change to cadet and junior ranking points to measure performance.
- Exploring changes to the 21-22 domestic competition structure for cadet and junior
- Domestic training support – selected ADP fencers will be moved to elite status
- There is a proposal to run 2 more competitions under the ADP camp umbrella
- Encouraging communities to run B points competitions
- We have recruited a new cohort of 2021 ADP athletes

YH asked about mental health incorporation into strategy and focus. And for something to be written into the strategy.

CEO – we do regularly check in with staff and community. Mental Health is also wrapped into ADP work and within existing operational plans. We are still having mindfulness sessions run for the fencers. We will also do an article and see how we can add it into our reporting.

6.3 PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

All the information is in the Board documents - slides have not been updated since the last awayday. Objectives and delivery in Board papers including 3 slides for the Board to read.

Priority is getting the ASD pilot off the ground. The ASD is a funding application through the BF Charity.

FG reported that the charity has received an award of £4,000 to do the pilot ASD programme.

Board thanked FG and the team for their work in securing the award.

7. STANDING ITEM - SAFEGUARDING

No new cases since Q4 reporting.

We have signed a new contract with Globocal, the output of the Sport England pilot. This will give us a proper case management system as well as additional linkage into sport resolution. Whilst this will increase costs, we have significantly mitigated administrative risks in this area.

8. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: NOMCOM

On behalf of the Board, Nomcom received an update from the CEO to the staff organisation structure.

Had an advertisement for a new non-elected Director and have 4 people to interview. The position is still open for applications. The interviews will commence in the next two weeks.

Jade Clark has attended the AGRC as an observer to add core accountancy skills

The evaluation process for staff, CEO and the Board will be the same format as previous years.

There is a follow up action to raise with TC the ability to implement online voting in light of Covid regulations change.

TOR for NomCom recommended for re-approval. In relation to recommendations of trustees for the

Charity, updates will follow changes to BF Charity governance documents.

Board skills and continuity a concern with a number of experienced and skilled Board Directors retiring in September.

Whilst not a long term solution, it is possible under the Governance Code for the Board Chair can to also chair the AGRC on an interim basis. AGRC discussed the risks as well.

New Board Director inductions completed.

9. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: AGRC

Board are being asked to note and approve the finance policies and TORs for AGRC & NomCom.

TC noted that the only amendments are typographical therefore he was happy to propose that the Board approve them. CH seconded.

10. STANDING ITEM - EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Terminology report which has been prepared by Sporting Equals is in the Board pack. We must be aware of the terminology we use when making presentations.

The Women in Sport document is also in the Board pack. CEO will look at the NGB recommendations and align it with the BF Strategy.

Diversity action plan – has been built on CPSU information. Not fully comprehensive at this stage.

Diversity plan will be brought up at each Board.

CEO noted that we are encouraging the female referees to come together to see how we can better support them.

11. AOB

CH thanked YH for arranging the forthcoming session on the 31st March with Ibtihaj Muhammad. YH will pick up with SDV to put on the BF website.

Meeting finished at 20:45

Interim Decisions and Approved Items since the last meeting

See Interim decision log in Board Dropbox Folder.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES 16th March 2021

Board Action Log

Ref	Date Raised	Action	Owner	Due Date
70	16.03.21	2021-22 Budget for Board circulated for offline approval.	DM	
69	16.03.21	Board to look at European Championships policy proposal and come back with any issue before being asked to approve.	GU	
68	16.03.21	Annual survey on culture in ADP	Chair/JC	
█	█	█	█	WIP
66	26.11.19	PAb and CEO to work on the events competition training and the rating system	PAb and CEO	WIP
64	18.9.19	DM to agree terms of VAT review and inform Board – DM waiting for quote from Haysmacintyre then will take to Board	DM	Updated
█	█	█	█	On hold
11	22.11.16	Follow on for discussion the recommendation of the Governance Code to filter down to BF standing committees and possibly clubs once TORs amended	CEO	On hold
16	26.11.15	CEO to collect formal agreements through Home Nations working group	CEO	On hold