

BRITISH FENCING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting	14.09.2021
Location	By Video Link
Present	Chair, PA, PAiy, TC, TCJ, CH, CO, MO, YH, FW, JL
In Attendance	CEO, KR, DM, MR, Tom Wilson (part)
Apologies	JC, MC, FG, JW

1. INTRODUCTION

Chair Opening Remarks

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Francis Wilkinson (Appointed Director to be approved at the AGM in October) and Jochen Losch (Independent Director to be approved at the AGM in October) both attending as observers.

New Declarations of Interest: None

Conflict of Interest: None

Interim Decisions: Board approved the 2021-22 Selection Policy, FIE & EFC Post Holder Nominations

Action Items: Item 72 waiting for update on the event, 70 added to the agenda, 71 Insurance information in the Board pack, 69 Board Subgroup, 68 Executive action - head of Culture to report annually to the Board.

Risk Items: None

Papers to note with no discussion: there was an online briefing for Directors from the ADP programme that is recorded and available in the pack.

2. APPROVE PREVIOUS BOARD MINUTES

Board minutes of June 22nd approved (CO proposed, CH seconded)

3. FINANCE PART 1, 20-21 YEAR END

Tom Wilson joined the Board to give a summary of the audit/finance year ended 31 March 2021 which included the following points:

- No change from an accounting disclosure perspective
- Changes to auditing standards that we have adapted to this year

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- Clean and unmodified audit opinion with a couple of tweaks: The going concern paragraph, the bullet point section that talks about any irregularities spotted
- Audit is a clean report
- Balance sheet shows the change in the investment balance that has been converted to cash
- Accounting policy BF is a going concern and there is comfort in that BF have reserves
- Audit findings report is in the Board pack for the Board to look over

Executive team (KR, CEO and DM) left the meeting to allow the Board Directors to question Tom Wilson. (no minuted items arising)

Chair thanked Tom Wilson for the time and work done on the audit.

TC asked the Board to thank the executive team, particularly DM for his hard work in the preparation of the audit.

The Audited Accounts were approved subject to minor amends on the Directors' report.

4. FINANCE PART 2 21-22 Q1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

DM summarised the Management Accounts.

Accounts showed a good start to the new financial year with a positive variance against a conservative budget for 21-22.

Membership and Commercial both better than budget and Q2 continuing in the same direction.

As a reminder the profit and loss (P&L) summary 1 is a result for every department including funded departments. P&L 2 excludes funded departments.

The variance showing in P&L 2 comes largely from membership and commercial.

We had not budgeted to get back to 100% pre covid membership levels. Year to date the tracking of membership is close to pre covid levels.

It was noted that there would be a much higher number of late renewals.

5. CEO UPDATE

- EFC congress was held on Saturday 11th September. Hilary Philbin was not elected to the Executive Committee; the current committee was (as expected) voted in with one change/new person joining
- EFC published their international calendar

- EFC voted on but did not receive sufficient majority to agree that the senior European championships will go ahead
- COVID: an updated document has been published by BF regarding indoor event hosting and BF is encouraging clubs to do risk assessments. It was noted that restrictions are still in place
- Stakeholder update: Mapping in the Board pack. Board being asked if wanting any changes: Are they the right stakeholders, are there any others you would like us to track at that level? Conclusion - No additions to Stakeholder mapping identified.

Disciplinary and Complaints: completed the complaints log and all recent events are being dealt with.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Board discussed the top risks with the following points:

1. **Loss/Lack of Government Funding** to run our funded programmes – 40,30,111, 67
 - A risk of not receiving government money will result in having to make cuts
 - If ADP is not successful, where do we go from there, what is plan B
2. **Inability to be independently financially sustainable/cover core costs** (Membership, Commercial, Events) – 74, 85, 13,
3. **Loss/Lack of Talent** to ultimately achieve medal success – 67, 63
 - The lack of talent. Building talent takes a long time
 - Provide those with talent with the support
 - Cost of competitions and getting to competitions is putting people off from going forward
 - BF have set up a fund that people can apply for if they cannot afford entry fees
4. **Loss/Succession of Key Senior Executives** – 29, links to 1-3
 - Hours that staff are working not sustainable and the pressure to deliver high quality to extremely short timescales is overwhelming.
 - We have a small staff (equivalent of 13 full time) and need more resources to continue at current activity levels.
5. **COVID** - impact of COVID on re-starting - short term risk (another lock down) and medium/long term risks over lack of venues and volunteers
 - There is a risk of those volunteers who are travelling with the teams are asked to organise Covid tests for the fencers – who would pay
 - Referees not being paid impacted on them not willing to turn up to the events
 - AGRC agreed a volunteer strategy is needed to look at the mechanisms of paying

- volunteers going forward
- Venues an issue as prices have gone up
- Should encourage camp organisers and support them to get their camps up and running again
- Many people are uncertain as to how many will attend their competitions so are sceptical on going ahead.

Summary – we need to deal with some of the risks that have emerged during Covid. Sustainability and government funding not an immediate risk.

7. BOARD STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

The review of the strategic plan was agreed in January.

- Financial management remains a focus with commercial off to a good start.
- P&P and Social impact – the second stage of the ASD pilot will begin in September in partnership with the Change Foundation and the University of Hertfordshire.
- Projects continue in the HE space.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Setting up training opportunities for new projects starting.
- MGF role recruitment has been completed and new joiner will be starting on the 15th of September.
- Crowd DNA work looking at motivation for people wanting to take up fencing focusing on under 24's.
- Environmental Policy - Board should be happy with what is proposed which is to publish a high level statement of intent then to set up two consultations, one with clubs and one with events out of which, it is hoped, that a group of volunteers will be recruited to draw up a check list of major actions down to smaller actions and an action plan.
- Board to approve if this is the way forward.

Events

- We are in our final weekend of back-to-back ranking competitions. BF will have run 5 consecutive weekends of activity – (1 ADP camp, 3 competitions and 1 P&P session)
- Encourage more participation in the younger groups for younger people to get ranking points
- Licencing process of B British Ranking Events (U17, U20) about to launch
- Automated rankings now live
- Covid testing protocols a feature of events going forward
- The Eden Cup has been cancelled due to additional cost of Covid and uncertainty over travel restrictions for athletes/squads visiting UK, venue will be used for Senior Nationals.
- Currently securing venues and dates for 2022 (availability and cost significant issues)
- Discussion events with event organisers going on to get their events back up and running

CO left the meeting

8. BREAK

9. STRATEGY AREA OVERVIEWS

- The Balanced Score Card is in the Board pack.
- The next ADP camp will be held in October. 30 new fencers are being inducted.
- Following GBR selection policy approval, panels being created and website updated
- We have had good feedback on the pilot GB League events
- Membership is coming back steadily and following the typical years trend. We are working on a plastic membership category.

Chair felt that the Board needed to have a shared understanding on the status/outcome of regional review and for it to come back to the Board.

CEO noted that the governance agreement being created was between EF (as a Home Country) and the Regions and it was not necessarily a Board agenda item to approve.

TC noted that the Board needed to be informed.

10. STANDING ITEM - ANTI DOPING

NB took the Board through the BF Anti-doping Policy noting:

- There are new requirements to make sure that BF is compliant with WADA standards.
- BF's task is to ensure they are compliant with the assurance framework. Evidence has to be collected which goes into the online assurance portal.
- The deadline for uploading all the information is December.

Board noted the following

- All coaches attending ADP, Senior National Championships and International Competitions must do Coach Clean every three years.
- All coaches attending National Championships (Cadet, Junior or Senior) or coaching an ADP athlete must either do Coach Clean or attend a BF education session every three years.
- Draft Clean Sport Education Strategy (in Board Pack) in development with Board Anti-Doping Lead(s)

Board is being asked to agree that BF formally adopts UKAD rules. **Board agreed that BF formally adopts UKAD rules (PiY approved, TC seconded).**

PiY as Board lead for Anti-Doping will ensure that Anti-Doping as discussed as a topic at the Board at least once a year.

11. STANDING ITEM - SAFEGUARDING

The new safeguarding system contains a section where you can download a report for the Board, which is currently showing 2 cases. Activity is low at the moment but once fencing gets back up and running it is expected that the reports will increase.

There will be a draft terms of reference coming to the Board in November on the new Safeguarding Working Group.

12. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: NOMCOM

JL and FW have both signed their Board induction papers.

NomCom recommended their approval by the Board for subsequent member approval at the AGM.

JL will also join NomCom as an independent director and FW will join the AGRC as an appointed director.

There was only one candidate who stood at the BF elections and who was duly elected to the Board. 2 spaces remain. NomCom proposed appointing Tom Murray who was interviewed as part of the director recruitment for 1 year on a casual basis and Jade Clarke, who already attends the AGRC as an observer.

It was noted that the impact on gender ratio will go from 45% to 41% and the ethnicity ratio will drop slightly. Nomcom discussed and agreed that the two appointments would be appropriate.

The Board approved the proposed appointments noting that the appointments are appointed now to start after the AGM (TC proposed, PA seconded)

Honours - Nomcom recommended the BF Honours Committee proposals and the **Board approved (TC proposed, PA seconded)**

Standing Committees - Updated Standing Terms of Reference policies in Board folder after further feedback from Standing Committee - **Board approved (TCJ proposed, TC seconded)**

BF Charity - The BF Charity's articles are being updated with new trustee appointments acting within the rules of BF. CEO will be joining the charity as a trustee. TC declared a conflict and would not vote. **Board agreed CEO joining as a trustee (Chair proposed, YH seconded)**

13. BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS: AGRC

Insurance - The online news post has been changed to show the new insurance changes and the reasons for the changes.

Conflict of interest (exc Board Directors) - forms have been created and sent out to standing

committees, senior management and all selectors.

Declarations and Conflict Of Interest Register last updated 10.06.2021 reviewed – no actions arising

Membership fees for 2022- will be frozen as agreed with the Home Nations. 2023 membership fees will increase in line with inflation.

14. AGM/EGM PREPARATION

BF Formal Notice of 2021 EGM inc Article Amendments in pack.

EGM - BF received 71 votes in favour of the EGM going through which will be held on the 23rd September. The AGM notice will be issued on the 24th September.

The AGM will be held on the 9th October online, PA will lead on the finance update.

15. STANDING ITEM - EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Board noted that the Equality & Diversity survey had been postponed due to COVID and work was underway to get this out following the start of indoor fencing. The results of this need to be brought back to the Board, to review alongside the and of cycle report on Board Diversity objectives. And new/updated objectives should be set. Currently we have 4 objectives.

ML - Looking at 2024 do we want to be stronger in certain areas? Feedback invited offline before end of year. Of the back of the discussions CEO can then update the objectives and bring back to the Board.

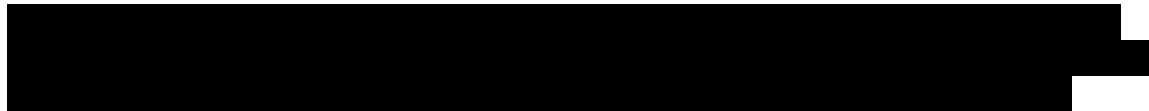
16. AOB

A new complaints form to log complaints is in the Board pack, Board being asked to note the form and approve associated amendments to the Comments and Complaints Policy

Board noted the complaints form and approved Comments and Complaints Policy

Board being asked to support the governance and finance audit and note terms of reference.

Board noted terms of reference.



2022 Board dates – in the Board folder. Directors to email with any issues with the proposed dates.

Ann Hanrahan award – it was proposed that the award should go to Sian Hughes Pollitt. Board approved the proposal

Chair and the Executive thanked the retiring directors for all their support over the years

Youth Panel discussion to be held over.