

BRITISH FENCING BOARD MINUTES

Date of Meeting 12th September 2024

Time 17.00 – 20.00

Location Linklaters, London and online

Present

Directors (Voting)

Mark Lyttle, Chair
Pat Aiyenuro, Anti-Doping Champion
Brian Brittain
Tabatha Barton
Jade Clarke
Mary Cohen
Tommy Curran Jones
Chris Tidmarsh
John Troiano

Executive Attendees (Non-Voting):

Georgina Usher, CEO (GU)

Observers/Home Nation Representatives (Non-Voting)

Jack Magill, Northern Ireland Fencing

Guests

Alex O'Connell
Thomas Nippres

Apologies

Yashmin Harun, Director, Safeguarding Champion
Matthew Russell, Welsh Fencing
Members of Senior Athlete Rep Panel
Francesca Gliubich, BF Charity Chair
Caryl Oliver, England Fencing
Sara Pantuliano
George Liston, Scottish Fencing

Item	Item Description
1.	Board Director Reserved Items Apologies Board Director - New Declarations/Conflicts of Interest For Discussion • Competition Gender Policy (30 mins) • EF/BF Project update • Wheelchair WCP transfer out of UKSI (Minuted separately)
2.	General Introduction Chair's Opening Remarks – reminder of process Other Apologies – YH Notable Results – Senior European Championships - Carolina Stutchbury (WF) 3rd Condolences – Mark paid tribute to David Moseley and his contribution to the sport at all levels. Condolences were sent to the family, and the funeral was extremely well attended by the executive team. David's family were grateful for the support and reflected David felt highly valued in his role. Other New Declarations/Conflicts of Interest – There were none. Interim Decisions – JC is helping in Finance with JT stepping into Chair of AGRC which has been approved by the Board. Noting of Policies / Papers for (Pre)Approval with no discussion anticipated: Inputs: Pre Approved Documents "Pre-approval" and for in-meeting in "For Approval" Board folder • GBR Selection Policy (Executive) • EFC Candidates (NomCom proposed) • BF Honours Correction (NomCom proposed) The Board approved the policies. Noting of Papers for Information with no discussion anticipated in this meeting: Board folder "For Noting" • 2024 AGM Draft Agenda & 2023 AGM Minutes
3.	Action Items Updated action log attached to agenda. There were no comments or queries.

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	New Risks <i>Inputs:</i> Action List (below), Interim Decision (none), Risk Log There is one new risk in relation to the WCP transition for finance and a cyber security audit has been completed which will require action. For discussion in AGRC.
4.	Approve Previous Board Minutes The minutes were approved.
5.	<i>Strategy Area: Sustainability (& Resource Management)</i> <i>Tactic: Continue to prepare and manage a managed budget</i> Noting & Discussion JC introduced herself to the board. JC received a handover from DM. <u>Finance Part 1. 23-24 Year End</u> Update on Year End and Audit (JC) There have been some delays but more recently, BF Finance team and Auditors have come together and formulated a concrete plan. They will have everything they require by the end of the evening and there will be regular meetings moving forward. It is being managed and we know where the support is required. The accounts will be finalised within two to three weeks. We have recruited a part-time role which will be start in October, 1 day a week in September. <u>Finance Part 2. 24-25 Q1 Management Accounts</u> Short verbal update of highlights There have been some financial constraints and staffing management required as some are not taking responsibility of their budget. The membership number was slightly lower than they should be due to an error with booking. At year end, there is a correction journal, and this should have been completed using a different form. JC explained the budget and finances. <u>Finance Part 3. 24-25 Q2 Update</u> <i>Input – Membership Financials, Commercials</i> Commercial - We have 44 schools and there are 7 renewals coming up in September. Commercials have allowed additional funding with a new programme in schools and licensing. PGL is one of the big providers who are looking into renewals. There has been a free CPD course advertised through social media which has attracted schools. Commercial activities are bringing financial stability and enabling opportunity.

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	Questions were invited Is the feedback good to encourage renewals? Yes, they are keen to renew, the biggest challenge is onboarding and equipment. Do the schools buy the packs? Yes. Do we have any idea of how many children are following through into clubs? One of our strategies is how we are going to make that happen, but this is about self-efficacy through fencing rather than a 'learn to fence' programme. Is Forging Futures a Primary school offer? Yes, and also Secondary. With the numbers going up, we need to continue to build on this. There is a dedicated salesperson, and we will keep adding to this, if it's working. We need people available to come in, to train the staff, to deliver the lessons. The Board thanked JC.
6.	<i>Information & Approval (to be confirmed after Nom Com)</i> <u>Board Sub-Committee Items: NomCom</u> BF Honours Correction – detail in pack. The structure lacks diversity as the average age is 65 years and contains appointed vice presidents and president. There are some benefits to this, and it is well intentioned, it is managed well but the age profile could be reviewed. TOR are published. Action: NomCom to review BF Standing Committee membership through inclusion and diversity profiles. Election Results – As emailed to the Board Directors. Congratulations to PA and TCJ. This means we now have 11 Directors and 12 including casual appointment so we are in a good position. NED & Chair Recruitment Having been approved by BF Board, next step is for AOC (new SID) and SP(new Chair) to be approved by members at the AGM. EFC Nominations – previously approved via email, copy in pack
7.	CEO Update Stakeholder Update – Funding Bodies/BOA/BP/FIE/EFC Olympics - GU and Hillary attended the Paris Olympics, GU in capacity as BOA Board Director. The atmosphere in the venue was incredible and so well presented. The Paralympic athletes delivered record results. Funding Bodies - Sport England has offered delivery funding of up to £454,048 for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027. This is what we would expect based on the current

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	and previous 2 years of funding. To confirm, the 3 strands of funding; Systemic and Governance is 5 years, Delivery is 2 (the extra funding above is to take us to 5) and Talent is 2. (As a reminder The indicative Sport England talent investment figure for the 2025 – 29 period for British Fencing is up to £550,466 which equates to an ‘up to’ average of £62,615 per annum.) Sport England Steps and Goals have been reviewed and updated for the next 2 years delivery, reflecting changes in the status and direction certain areas of work have taken. FIE – Additional request to approve Janet Huggins as a candidate as FIE system won’t allow entry to Congress unless she is a candidate. (other Congress attendees permitted by FIE in existing role). Approved. GU reported on the challenges with getting in candidates for recent FIE Referee exams – FIE Referee exams candidates were submitted a month earlier than normal. We were informed a month later it was full, but we can put a sabre candidate forward (which we had done). Next year we will need to run the exam process without the candidates knowing where and when the exam is so that we can enter the candidates on receipt of notification. We are not the only country who missed out. Eg France missed out too, therefore PA will liaise with them and others to see whether interim exams can be hosted. Action: PA to liaise with France. EFC - President Elections, 3 candidate, Sweden, Belgium and Romania. Pathway/GBR – Selection Policies, Olympic Qualification Referees were brought in in August ADP for more collaboration and to close the gap between fencer and referee interpretation. The TAP Mentoring Programme is concluded. Ran a mental health course for 17 athletes. Using the ‘Explore Fencing’ application which can be used to add information for example accessing ADP warm up from their phones. FIE continue to change circuits moving more competitions outside of Europe and are more expensive. Some changes also to the Under 23’s. In response GBR Pathway team has tried to be agile and allow use of nominated FIE satellites and new EFC circuit to get qualifying standard results. This has meant additional administration, with GBR Support team taking on referee allocations. There have been several queries about the changes. Membership/Clubs/ Customer Service New coaching workforce manager, working with UK Coaching to refresh the Fencing Development Team. Some advanced coaches with an appetite to put a steering group together. Learning week – Various activities occurred in the first week of September covering a variety of topics. We ran a risk assessment session, and some were recorded and are available online if they were missed. feedback positive. Looking to expand the content of community discussion events and use as 'follow up' to learning week

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	BF Awards (not honours) criteria is due final run through and sign off - looking to open applications end of Sept. U14 Ranking Scheme - Temporary ranking tables now on website • P&P/Social Impact ASD - Conversations underway with the Change Foundation to look at developing our Social Impact further and agreeing more formal ways of working around funding and staffing etc. Positive work continuing with 'Fencing for Change' and our partnership with the ASD pilot. Conversations underway to secure delivery outside of London, possibly South Wales, in 2025. Seated Fencing - Wheelchair frames have been distributed to clubs across the UK. Newly developed wheelchair club frames are also in-situ. During Q4 we will be updating Active Partnerships to ensure National Partners are aware of our work, as well as looking to secure external funding to support clubs with promoting and delivering community sessions. The wooden 'pyramid frame', developed by engineers at Bath University, is in the very final stages of testing. Once in production, this will transform access to seated fencing, due to the cost, storage and assembly needs. • Events/Event rating project/Para World Cup Cadet and Juniors this weekend - Entry numbers are good, the addition of U14 A BRC (nearly to capacity) and DEU Foil - numbers growing in DEU area. Costs well controlled for Cadet and Juniors, all referees are domestic so less reliance on bringing in from abroad. Shows growth (particularly in sabre where we have previously struggled) at BF events. Final stages of confirmation for 2025 dates which will be released in next few weeks. Para World Cup - Awaiting final confirmation of audit paperwork. Plans underway for November Submission to UKS for Euros 26 bid. • Environmental Sustainability – No update • Disciplinary/Sport Integrity – No update • Misc Sophie DeVooght has returned from maternity leave and joins the team again on a part time basis. John Stanley stays on as Communications Manager until December. Learning Week has concluded with a round up report pending full attendance figures and debrief now being collated. Paralympics coverage saw very successful audience engagement (reaching over 4k on social posts) and reporting with quotes and info gathered in collaboration with the Paralympics

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	team and our media liaison in Paris. Commercial ads ran alongside, attracting leads to a special offer on the CPD app. • Safeguarding This is a busy period with more contentious arguing and people flagging issues as welfare/safeguarding which are not safeguarding which is a worry for next year. We are under resourced. Q: Do you think the rise of the issues is the underlying culture? It's the wider society, outside Fencing, but because it involves Fencers, it comes to us. Q: Would it be helpful if we provided some safeguarding scenarios so the lower-level incidents are managed without our involvement? Possibly we can look at this • Anti-Doping We've had our assurance framework accepted, subject to a recent request for some more information. Usual update to our TUE pool (fencers selected for the senior European championships in 2024). We now have 3 fencers classified as International-level athletes by the FIE definition. Recently shared an education opportunity, put on by UKAD, with our ADP fencers. Reminders to all ADP fencers they should do the Clean Sport Hub course Compete Clean+. Anti-doping stand, with the quiz running, at the cadet and junior national championships, 14-15 Sept 24" • Equality & Diversity SE yet to confirm final sign off DIAP, but we have been advised by Sport England to continue any implementation as we currently are. RRI (Race Representation Index) will be carried out later on this month. Sport England have been very clear that the RRI is not mandated by them, however we will continue to complete it, whilst attempting to have conversations with Sporting Equals about the reporting of the data. There were no further questions.
8.	<i>Information & Approval</i> <u>Board Sub-Committee Items: AGRC</u> (items not already covered above) Risk - Cyber Security Q: What was the cyber security risk? An audit was completed, and a couple of people got caught on phishing. It will cost £30k per year to put in the measures required so it's an open risk. We are educating everyone, but it needs addressing somehow within next financial year's budget
9.	<u>Membership Fees 2025</u>

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	<i>For Approval</i> Approve 2025 membership fees (Home Nation element subject to HN approval) BB has received feedback on cost of running events. This is also happening for other Sports as the underlying costs for putting on events has increased with venues, hotels, transport costs rising. Board approved the Membership Fees.
10.	<u>Board Strategy Away Day Outputs</u> <i>For Noting</i> GBR Round-Up Club Strategy A folder has been created on strategy elements which includes a summary on the Away Day and the high-level strategic work plan with other documents for all to look at the strategy moving forward. It is clear what the current strategy is and there will be opportunity to review this, if needed.
11.	<i>Information</i> <u>Standing Item – Safeguarding</u> Covered in CEO Update
12.	<i>Information</i> <u>Standing Item – Anti-Doping</u> Covered in CEO Update
13.	<i>Information</i> <u>Standing Item - Equality & Diversity</u> Covered in CEO Update
15.	AOB AGRC membership – AGRC proposed AOC to join as member - Approved AGM - There is a hybrid meeting planned for 19/10/2024. We are proposing a face-to-face meeting for BOA. The draft minutes and agenda for AGM are in the pack. The Directors Report will be worked on over the next few weeks. GU and other members gave thanks to the Chair for his commitment and contribution to the Board. Comments were that the Board feel they have benefitted highly from his input and there has been a lot of work put in, behind the scenes, which has been recognised. The Chair reciprocated his thanks and commented it has been a pleasure to work with everyone and wishes everyone the best of luck.

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	SP also thanked for the Chair for his handover.