

BRITISH FENCING BOARD MINUTES

Date of Meeting 13th March 2025

Time 17.00 – 20.00

Location ODI Offices, 203 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NJ, UK

Meeting link

Meeting ID: 394 482 506 297
Passcode: mU6ET7j8

Present

Directors (Voting)

Sara Pantuliano, Chair
Brian Brittain
Tabatha Barton
Jade Clarke
Mary Cohen
Tommy Curran Jones
Yashmin Harun, Safeguarding Champion
Thomas Nippres
Alex O'Connell, Senior Independent Director
Chris Tidmarsh
John Troiano

Executive Attendees (Non-Voting):

Georgina Usher, CEO (GU)
Helen Hewson, FD (DM)

Observers/Home Nation Representatives (Non-Voting)

Francesca Gliubich, BF Charity Chair
Caryl Oliver, England Fencing
George Liston, Scottish Fencing
Matthew Russell, Welsh Fencing
Members of Senior Athlete Rep Panel

Guests

Jackie Bryson, Project Manager

Apologies

Jack Magill, Northern Ireland Fencing

Item	Item Description
1.	General Introduction The Chair welcomed all. Apologies were accepted for JH. The Chair reflected on a fantastic strategy day and thanked all who contributed. There were no new declarations or conflicts of interest.
2.	Notable Results The Chair congratulated the team and praised the achievements of the JMFT gold, JMET gold, JWFT bronze at Junior European Championships. Other Notable The Board congratulated recipients of King’s New Year Honours - Dimitri Coutya, MBE and Brian Speight BEM Condolences The Board paid tribute to Robert Kirton Dobson, 1938-2024, coach Mallard Club and Michael Compton 1946-2024 treasurer and coach Cotswold Fencing Club. Interim Decisions: • BF/EF Agreement There is now a signed agreement with BF and EF. This was a team effort across both organisations to create an agreement founded in good governance and we now feel comfortable we can work together to take fencing forward. There is now a more cohesive approach for British Fencing & England Fencing to work with more robust guidance on who leads what, we are looking forward to moving fencing forward and making it bigger and better. Thanks were expressed to UK Sport for funding this project and Sport England for their participation and support. Once the agreement is signed, there will be a proposal from EF in regards to projects. We will be jointly promoting the agreement and the benefit of it to the community. Thanks were also expressed to Jackie Bryson, the project manager. 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 The Photography policy has had minor changes made. This policy was approved. The Bye Laws have had minor changes made. This was approved. Noting of Papers for Information with no discussion anticipated in this meeting: Board folder “For Noting” • The FIE Congress election analysis is available.

Item	Item Description
	- UKSI Operational Update – As we expect to build a relationship with UKSI it is worth being aware of the pressures and challenges they are facing as it will inevitably impact us. - Confirmation of Compliance with A Code for Sports Governance 22.11.2024 - Insurance - British Fencing Association Affinity PA Schedule
3.	Approve Previous Board Minutes The minutes were approved.
4.	Action Items The action list was reviewed from the previous meeting. The Chair noted there are still outstanding actions from 2023 and proposed closing 128/129/130 as tracking of KPIs will be reviewed as part of the Strategy work. 139 closed. Action 117 will be escalated to the Athlete Panel by GU with TCJ supporting. New Risks <i>Inputs:</i> Action List (below), Interim Decision (none), Risk Log There are no new risks other than those recorded and discussed separately under the recent Directors Only items. Using the filter the Board can see the 10 Strategic Risks currently identified by the Board. AGRC will do a deep dive. Action - TN and AOC to work with GU and HH. The Chair proposed a new template for the risk report to Board. Action – Chair to forward preferred template.
5.	Strategy Discussion The Chair had shared the latest document in advance. The key question - is the Board happy with where we are, then the executive team can review how they can report on and targets/KPIs can then be set. The Chair welcomed a discussion. BB commented he likes the breakout and how this is split as it adds to the focus. Q: Regarding goal 2; given the breakout, does it become repetitive? A: We wanted goal 2 to really stand out, because if it's under general inclusion, it will get lost, and we have a lack of girls and women, so we want this to improve. A Director highlighted it needs to be clear on the expectation of the overall goal, then look at the KPI for different objectives so there is a clear vision. There are quite a lot of objectives in total, and the focus level is clear, and others are general and broad. One thing good about the USA strategy was the clear objectives, KPIs and actions and this is an important part of finalising a strategy. Q: What do we need to do in practice to make the

Item	Item Description
	objectives/targets achievable? To do some of these, you need resources, and we might not have the resources available. KPI points need SMART targets and could do with tightening up. The Chair asked the board to send any specific suggestions to GU and the executive team will come back to is with more detailed KPI's which will provide a sense of direction. The timeframe for this will likely be around the end of April/early May. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.
6.	BREAK
7.	Discussion and Approval <i>Noting & Approval</i> <u>Finance Part 1. 24-25 Q3 Management Accounts</u> Short verbal update of highlights from Chair of AGRC. <i>The Board is being asked to approve the Q3 Accounts.</i> Input – Q3 Management Accounts (copy in for approval folder). This is showing a surplus but we don't expect this by the end of the year as there are some adjustments to make, such as safeguarding and year end in the unfunded departments. There were no comments or queries on this. Board approved <u>Finance Part 2. 24-25 Q4 Forecast & Year End Outlook</u> <i>Input – Membership Financials, Other Income</i> There were no comments or queries on this. <u>Finance Part 3. 24-25 Budget</u> AGRC reported on 24-25 budget review. There is a consolidated small surplus of £4,000. We have tried to include some elements of the budget for strategic areas which we feel would be important such as planning costs for communication support, branding, media and sponsorship acquisition. We have allowed for a salary increase of 4%. The main area is the commercial budget, and the budgeted income is lower than it has been in the past, so we have tried to make it more realistic with a bit more stretch. Q: Is the 4% increase budget for salary, after considering the National Insurance increase? A: Yes. Board approved working budget, noting that it will need to change depending on Strategy work and any WCF WCP transition AGRC has reviewed Financial skills and assessed they are sufficient to deliver budget/strategy. (Governance requirement, financial skills assessment in pack). Board noted.

Item	Item Description
	<u>Finance Part 4. 24-25 Q3 Returns</u> <i>Input</i> – UK Sport and Sport England Returns For noting There is a busy period coming up focussing in Q4 reporting to Sport England. We are working on ensuring we minimise carry forwards and maximise what we are claiming, for those projects. We have submitted the integrated budget to UK Sport for the LA cycle, and we have not received any feedback. Everything is now up to date following a requested short extension on the Q3 report as we needed more information from people who are overseas. There were no questions or comments on this.
8.	CEO Update The accompanying notes are in the Board Pack. Highlights covered here: Stakeholder Update - GU was part of a group of NGB CEOs from the CEO Forum who met the Minister of Sport. This was the first time that NGB CEOs have had this representation and the NGB Forum is looking at it's future and how the Sport Sector is better engaged and represented into Government. Pathway/GBR – BF welcomes a new Head of Talent, Sarah Jones, Olympic medallist (hockey). Membership/Clubs - Two investigated accidents recently in clubs both individuals were not members. Had they been members, they would be entitled to make a claim for financial assistance to support them with the injuries that they sustained. It is a concern there are people coming into club environments and not being British Fencing members. We are communicating these messages to clubs. Increasing challenges from random member requests to the Executive Team and expecting a full response in 3 days. Will be reviewing the at the response time messaging. Coaching & Workforce – the creation of the new Fencing Development Team is vital – these are the people that train up others to support fencing (be they instructors, referees, coaches etc). The FDT needs to contain the people that are positive about the Sport and can deliver great courses. P&P/Social Impact - Early stages of supporting the set up of the fencing based intervention for people who have had mastectomies. Led by Board Director MC, the project team has been established and plans are moving forward. Events – Recent School Teams with entry via Home Nations, intention is to support HNs to build Home Nation school teams qualifying events. Busy period coming up with Nationals and BYCs. Still navigating the challenge of the unknowns around the Para qualification window as our bid for a Euros which will only be supported/financially viable if it falls in the window.

Item	Item Description
	Disability Inclusion - There is a neuro-diversity CBT session on Monday. Environmental Sustainability - A requirement for a board decision coming up as UK Sport have a target under the climate action framework to reduce carbon footprint by 50% by 2030 and reach zero by 2040. BF have signed up to this and are encouraging others to sign up. 75% of our carbon footprint is linked to travel that we book. We are asking the board to give us a consensus of 'should the executive team be looking toward the net zero commitment?' There will be a cost to BF to get to net zero. There was a discussion around how travel of fencers is contributing toward the environmental sustainability panel and the significant costs involved if BF deciding to offset that, which is sometimes controversial with many discredited schemes Action – ES Working Group to come to Board to discuss further. Disciplinary/Sport Integrity - Nothing of significance to be noted. <i>(Input – Balanced Scorecard, CEO Accompanying Note)</i>
9.	Standing Update Items • Safeguarding Note the new information on website based on Board feedback – 'Is it Safeguarding' and 'Poor practice examples' • Anti-Doping Board thanks MC for taking on Board role, acknowledging a slow start as some training to do. • Equality & Diversity Following Sport England review, some recommended improvements to make, and will re-submit end March <i>(Input – Balanced Scorecard, CEO Accompanying Note)</i>
10.	Information & Approval (to be confirmed after AGRC) <u>Board Sub-Committee Items: AGRC</u> (items not already covered above) Insurance – AGRC agreed that we would not be looking to test the broker market this year and therefore renewal quotes being sought with Marsh. GU noted insurance costs are rising.
11.	Information & Approval (to be confirmed after Nom Com) <u>Board Sub-Committee Items: NomCom</u> There was not a meeting, and the Committee report is in the pack. Highlights include: • New member of Safety Committee – Peter Huggins • Anti-Doping Lead Director role – taken on by MC

Item	Item Description
	- Board Induction update – Action - Board members to request any outstanding areas from GU - Confirmed membership of AGRC and NomCom - no further changes expected - Independent Board Review – work underway - Intention to replace what has become an all staff bonus scheme with improved employee benefit package and with bonuses by exception over. Commercial commission will remain where appropriate. For approval – proposal in pack: - Pay-rises 4% - Board approved
12.	AOB Sport England Governance – items not already covered above – none to note
	Meeting Closed 20.00
13.	Directors and CEO Reserved items Wheelchair WCP transfer out of UKSI GU updated the Board on the status of the transfer of the wheelchair fencing world class programme and outstanding issues and items, including mitigation of identified risks. BF team is in regular contact with UK Sport, taking legal advice and liaising with our insurers. There is a desire to move quickly as extending process creates risks for athlete performance and athlete/staff engagement. The Board reiterated its approval to move forward with the transfer subject to finalising legals and contract satisfactorily.
15.	Directors Only items No minuted items.