

DRAFT MINUTES

Minutes to be approved at 29 January 2020 Board meeting



Meeting	BOARD
Location	British Rowing, 6 Lower Mall, London W6 9DJ
Date / Time	Wednesday 27 November 2019, 1 – 5pm
Present:	Mark Davies (Chair) Kate O’Sullivan Liz Behnke John Hinnigan Nick Hubble Theo Huckle Laura Lion Andy Parkinson (CEO) Simon Reeves Jonathan Vickers Karena Vleck
In attendance:	S. Lightman (Company Secretary), P. Randolph (Minute secretary) B. Purcell (Director of Performance, for part of the meeting)

1 CHAIR’S INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, particularly the new members of the Board; Nick Hubble (NH) appointed as Chair of the Sport Committee in October, Karena Vleck (KV) appointed as Independent Director in October and Theo Huckle (TH), Home Nations Director, who was attending his first Board meeting since becoming Chair of Welsh Rowing.

The Chair also welcomed Susan Lightman (SL) who had taken over as Company Secretary, and Brendan Purcell (BP), Director of Performance.

M. Davies (MD) reported that the launch of British Rowing’s charitable foundation, ‘Love Rowing’, on 21 November at the Cutty Sark, Greenwich had been a great success. He believed the charity would raise awareness of the sport, support under-represented areas and this inaugural event had raised £50,000.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE and quorum

The meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from J. Beaumont.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NH – Director of AM System Limited
K. O’Sullivan (KOS) – Coach Educator
A. Parkinson (AP) – Board member, English Institute of Sport
S. Reeves (SR) – Trafford Rowing Club Ltd

SL was asked to send the Directors’ Declaration of Interest form to TH.

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4 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from the Board Meeting on 17.09.19

The minutes were noted and approved as an accurate representation of the Board meeting and will be uploaded to the British Rowing website.

5 **MATTERS ARISING** (not otherwise covered on the Agenda)

Affiliated Club Tracker: The tracker will be presented to the Board at its meeting on 29.01.2020. KOS confirmed that it had been well received at the Regional Chairs' Forum held on 22 November.

Rules of Racing (4.1.b): Consideration of the removal of this rule was addressed in the CEO's Report.

Action Follow Up: Specific actions were included in the Board tracker which reflected the matters that had been acted on but did not provide a commentary. It was agreed that the CEO would include a summary of actions completed for future Board meeting to accompany the Tracker.

AP

6 **PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

BP gave a presentation on the current focus of the Performance Programme and an overview of strategy.

The Paralympic programme was on target, while the Olympic programme had achieved 3 of the 4 medals agreed with UK Sport at the World Championships. It was felt that the medal target for the Olympic Games was achievable and BP firmly believed that this should remain the aspiration. However, that pre-supposed ideal conditions for the team.

The programme had introduced a number of positive steps that it continued to build on;

- Bringing together the men's and women's squads
- Better use of psychology
- Seeing the benefit of an improved focus and more resources on mental health
- Improving the athlete pathway
- Ensuring that athlete support internally was seen to be effective and non-punitive
- Development of coaches
- Creating athlete mentors.

Eight former athletes had now committed to giving their time and support as mentors to new and potential members of the team.

The strategy for the qualified boats and for the qualification event ahead of 2020 was explained. The Paralympic programme was extremely successful and the potential in the junior and U23 programmes was exciting. Key elements of the programme were

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clarity, improvement of technical delivery, race profiling, management of progression, and succession. It had to be remembered that the rest of the world was also intent on raising its game in the run up to the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Board was invited to comment. B. Purcell was congratulated on achieving a significant change in culture since his appointment. It was understood that the youth and lack of experience of this cohort was significant and that there were challenges ahead but that there were many positive aspects too.

The Chair thanked BP for his presentation.

7 DECISION

7.1 SELECTION APPEALS PROCEDURE (8.4)

There was discussion about the timing as, on behalf of the Athlete Director, the Chair reported that some athletes believed the three-day window to be too short. The CEO explained that some sports only gave two days for an appeal to be lodged and that five days was considered too long. The CEO also advised that he would seek formal confirmation from Sport Resolutions related to timing and costs.

AP

The Chair said that the Athlete Director felt it was important to be as transparent as possible about the implications of results on selection. BP said that he intended to organise a session with the Athlete Reps about the revised procedure. For the next cycle it was important to set an extremely high standard for selection criteria.

BP

The Selection Appeals Procedure for the 2020 cycle was approved.

7.2 PARIS CYCLE PERFORMANCE STRATEGY (8.2)

The UK Sport requirements and British Rowing strategy had been covered in the Performance Programme presentation delivered earlier. This had included an update on the development of the investment application.

It was noted that matters relating to leadership and succession were addressed on page 9 of the UK Sport template. The Head of Governance and the CEO had been working on the Governance Framework as part of the submission.

The Organisational Health Strategy was approved in addition to the overall strategy.

B. Purcell left the meeting at this point

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7.3 MAJOR EVENT STRATEGY (8.5)

The strategy related to the hosting of international events to 2028. It was noted that the International Relations Steering Group and UK Sport strongly advocated a new strategy.

The CEO stated that at this stage the main cost in supporting the strategy lay in human resource. The Board debated the value to the sport of hosting a major event versus the cost of hosting.

The Regional Chairs Forum had expressed keen support for a bid, as had the athletes in the senior squad.

The Major Event Strategy was approved.

7.4 GOVERNANCE (8.1)

8.1.1 – Review of Governance Statement: In line with the requirements of the Code for Sport Governance, the statement for 2019 had been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Annual Governance Statement was approved and the actions noted.

8.1.2 – Scheme of Delegation: The scheme had been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee and no amendments proposed. However, following a question raised about the level of delegation and financial controls awarded to the Director of Finance, JV undertook to liaise with the CEO and email the Board with an explanation.

Subject to resolution of this matter the Scheme of Delegation was approved. JV / AP

8.1.3 – New Director Appointments: The following appointments were approved;

Senior Independent Director (SID): John Hinnigan (JH)
Home Nations Director: TH (casual vacancy to 31 December 2020)
Company Secretary: SL

The Board also noted the following Board appointments:

Independent Director: KV (from 07.10.2019)
Chair of Sport Committee: NH (from 12.10.19)

7.5 INTERNAL REVIEW – FINAL UPDATE (8.3 Annex I)

The CEO said that a good deal of work had been done to address the culture of the high performance programme. Input from UK Sport and L. Lion (LL), Duty of Care Champion, was in place and the environment

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was generally agreed to be much more supportive. BP and UK Sport had run a number of focus groups for athletes and staff and LL had looked at the outcomes. LL would be meeting again with BP week commencing 2.12.19 and could report back to the Board following that meeting. LL

In the light of BP's presentation, and the processes that were in hand, it was agreed that the review could be concluded. It would no longer come to the Board as recommendations but there would continue to be updates from the CEO on the culture of the programme on a 'business as usual' basis.

The Board noted that a UK Sport 'Walk the Floor' report would be presented once completed. AP

7.6 AFFILIATIONS & RESIGNATIONS (8.6)

The changes to British Rowing affiliated clubs and events were noted and approved.

In future that Chair asked to see a chart of trends included. SL would liaise with Membership. SL

7.7 COMMITTEES (6.2)

6.2.1 – Finance Committee Minutes: Noted and no matters arising.

6.2.2 – Audit & Risk Committee Minutes: With regard to Item 4.4, inter-company liability, MD asked JV and JH to discuss and reach a decision outside the Board meeting. JV/JH

6.2.3 – Disciplinary & Grievance Panel Report: The following recommendations were noted and supported;

- Mike Walker to be re-appointed as Chair of the panel for the coming year.
- A procedure was being drawn up for the appointment of new panel members. Prospective candidates would be recommended to the Board prior to formal appointment. SL
- National Umpiring Committee procedures regarding appeals to be reviewed following a meeting between M. Walker and the NUC.

7.8 REGIONAL CHAIRS' FORUM

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2019 were noted. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November were not complete but one matter arising had been the question of support for clubs and events affected by flooding. The Regional Chairs felt that this was a situation that would continue to beset the sport.

The CEO advised that he had followed this up with the Environment Agency and the Canal & Rivers Trust in the past. KOS undertook to circulate an email from the British Canoeing Union which addressed this. KOS

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7.9 SPORT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Board received the report which was an update of activities since the last meeting.

Racing Calendar for 2020: As requested, the Board noted and endorsed the Competition Calendar April 2020 to August 2021. The comments of the National Competition Committee in Appendix 2 were also noted.

The discussion around a Senior Championships continued; the working group was awaiting feedback from the Performance programme.

Rules of Racing 2020: Discussion around rules 1 – 4 was ongoing and the final Rules of Racing would be presented to the Board for its approval in January 2020.

NH

7.10 GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE (6.5)

Liz Behnke (LB) gave a verbal update on the governance review of internal procedures. She had met with KOS and NH on 12 October 2019 to discuss the next steps. They were planning an event for staff and volunteers in Spring 2020 to look at the best way of delivering change, with a view to having a plan in place for October 2020.

The working group would now liaise with the CEO to set out their terms of reference. **The governance review will be considered at the March Board Meeting**

LB / AP

8 REPORTS & INFORMATION

8.0 CEO REPORT (6.1)

The Board received the CEO's report on operational matters covered since the last meeting. Matters arising;

Transgender & Trans-sexual Policy: The CEO and LB confirmed that it was usual to expect in the region of two to four enquiries from transgender sports people or clubs each year. FISA was considering its own policy following an IOC review and British Rowing would consider this when it was received. The Board understood the medical, legal and ethical sensitivities involved and agreed to keep a watching brief.

asensei: Following approval from the Board, British Rowing had signed a contract with this coaching app company. This was seen as a potential revenue generator. The CEO to recirculate the terms of this agreement to the Board.

AP

Coaching Education: The CEO advised that UK Coaching was going through a restructure and as a result there was some uncertainty about the coach development audit for British Rowing.

Digital Action Plan (Annex 3 to CEO Report): This was raised and is covered under Draft Budget (Item 10 below).

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8.1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (6.1)

The Board received the management accounts to 30 September 2019 which had been reviewed by the Finance Committee.

JV requested that there should be adherence to the Scheme of Delegation and in particular the signing off of more than £10,000 by the Finance Committee be recognised. The CEO agreed to ensure this is the case.

AP

8.2 VISION (6.1.2)

In July a review of British Rowing's Strategic Plan was initiated and a summary of progress provided on page 11 of the CEO's Report.

A further draft was now being developed and would be discussed at a staff workshop in December. Feedback will then be sought from all stakeholders after which the updated strategy document will be developed. It is intended that the outcomes will be promoted through social media and roadshow style forums.

AP

8.3 LOVE ROWING FOUNDATION (6.1.3)

The launch event was covered in the Chair's opening remarks.

8.4 RIO 2016 OUTCOMES (6.1.4)

This had been covered earlier in the meeting under the review of the Performance Programme. The paper presented by K. Baillie in 2016 with a summary of outcomes had been recirculated as Annex 1 to 6.1.4.

8.5 SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE (6.1.5)

It was noted that there was a Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Panel, responsible for reporting to the Board, and agreed that the terms of reference for this panel should be revisited.

SL said she was in the process of consulting with LB, LL and KV on this matter. SL will report back to the January meeting with recommendations for further action. This was an important responsibility for the Board and despite sensitivities around reporting she believed that they should be kept fully informed of the relevant cases.

SL

SL also reported that she had attended a positive meeting with the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). The CPSU had been most helpful and had offered training for the Board. Thoughts on what that might look like would be welcomed.

All

MD said he looked forward to receiving the recommendations stressing that this was a vitally important area for all sport.

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It was noted that SL and LB were finalising the Safeguarding guidance and associated policies which would be going to the CPSU for sign off.

8.6 LEGAL SERVICES UPDATE (6.1.6)

The paper was noted. The Board was invited to let SL know if they had any recommendations for external legal support. She planned to trial a number of companies during the coming months and to seek savings where possible.

All

8.7 ADAPTIVE STRATEGY (6.1.7)

Progress with the new Adaptive Rowing Strategy was noted on page 5 of the CEO's Report. Funding for delivery had been identified as a key challenge and would in part be supported by Howden, as part of their contribution to the Love Rowing Adaptive Programme.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 MEMBERSHIP GROWTH UPDATE (7.2)

Market Segmentation & Community Engagement:

The market segmentation conducted by Clearhound and Structured Thinking was agreed to be helpful. As a result of the recommendations provided the CEO sought agreement from the Board on the recommendations and the direction of travel with respect to membership growth.

It had been agreed previously that British Rowing would promote rowing as a whole rather than British Rowing, as the governing body.

The research demonstrated that safeguarding and coaching remained important areas for members.

The Chair said it was important to effect a shift in mind-sets, to alter perceptions about what the NGB was able to offer. The organisation must be seen as the trustees of the sport. British Rowing needed to address a trust deficit and deliver what it promised.

LB agreed that British Rowing was a trustee of the sport and must succeed in passing on a going concern to a new generation of rowers. SR said that coaching courses and training for launch drivers and umpires were seen by many as priorities. There must be sufficient resource to deliver rowing in 2020, in particular to those inspired to take up the sport after the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

MD said that the Board also had to demonstrate good business practice and training was expensive, delivery required more money than the sport had. British Rowing needed to turn its members into advocates, which could only happen if it first addressed its trust deficit. With the support of members in a year or two British Rowing would be in a position to deliver an increased service.

Concern was expressed about worrying people about the financial position, but the Chair insisted that the organisation had to restructure financially. People had to be educated about the bigger picture, the

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base of support must be broadened and the ability to sign up to British Rowing must be easier.

NH said it was not the volunteer/social group who were the dissenters. JH believed that there were two types of membership group; those such as National Trust members who might be lifelong supporters and those such as AA members who would subscribe as long as there was a direct benefit to them. British Rowing could appeal to both.

The CEO acknowledged that the user experience had created a number of challenges for the launch of the 'Friend of British Rowing' package. However the research demonstrated that the majority of members felt that British Rowing did get things right.

AP

From this discussion the CEO concluded that the Board was on the whole in agreement with the recommendations of the research. He would feed back that building trust and engagement were key areas of focus for the Directors' Team.

LB was concerned that the financial challenges ran counter to the organisation's core purpose. JH said that they did not have to be mutually exclusive.

The Chair felt that the organisation must be able to deliver a 30 second sign up process which would be deliverable if other savings could be made. SR believed that membership revenue would be increased by roadshows, telephone sales, improved sign up and communication.

There were many strands to be considered and clarity of approach was needed. It was necessary to establish a smooth pathway for a lapsed rower to become a Friend, while moving people's perceptions away from the membership fee being to cover insurance and a race licence (especially given that current fees do not cover the cost of delivering the sport), to it being key to the sport flourishing.

9.2 DRAFT BUDGET 2020 / 21 (7.3)

Options for the next round of budget planning had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and were recommended to the Board for their consideration. The CEO asked the Board to consider the areas of priority identified so as to inform the creation of a final draft budget for their approval in March 2020.

It was noted that coaching courses were being subsidised by British Rowing. The Chair believed that it was essential to commit funding to enhance user experience and build trust. It was also essential to offer members some return on their investment and British Rowing should not lose sight of its member benefits. It was agreed that while

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it was vital to future proof the sport there was little or no appetite for risk.

AP

The Board agreed that the CEO should create a base line budget with no expectation of income growth, and to incorporate the areas of reduced cost for the March 2020 Board meeting. The Board agreed that the 2020/21 budget should be breakeven at worst, using a conservative £2.4m assumption for income.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 29 January 2020, 12.30pm for a 1.00pm start. The Di Ellis Room at British Rowing, 6 Lower Mall, London W6 9DJ.

The meeting ended at 5.00pm