



DRAFT MINUTES

British Rowing Board Meeting

Location	British Rowing, 6 Lower Mall, London W6 9DJ
Date / Time	Wednesday 29 January 2020, 1 – 5pm
Present:	Mark Davies (Chair) Kate O’Sullivan Liz Behnke Jack Beaumont Nick Hubble Theo Huckle Laura Lion Simon Reeves Jonathan Vickers Karena Vleck Andy Parkinson (CEO)
In attendance:	Susan Lightman (Company Secretary), Maureen O’Brien (Minute secretary) Helen Rowbotham (Director) & Hugh Elwes (Trustee of Love Rowing, for item 8.1)

1. Chair’s introduction

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence and quorum

The meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from John Hinnigan who was attending a UK Sport workshop aimed at Senior Independent Directors.

3. Declarations of interest

Jack Beaumont – Club Captain – Leander

4. Approval of minutes from the Board Meeting on 29.11.19

The minutes were noted and approved as an accurate representation of the Board meeting and will be uploaded to the British Rowing website replacing the draft version currently available on the website.



5. Matters arising & action tracker (not otherwise covered on the Agenda)

Diversity Action Plan: The Chair to work on this paper. Carry forward this action.

Diversity & Equality Paper: Susan Lightman (SL) to table a paper on this at the next Board meeting.

Home Nations Board input: Theo Huckle (TH) to table a paper on this at the next Board meeting.

Governance: Liz Behnke (LB) gave the Board an update on the Governance review and will table a paper on this at the next Board meeting which will establish the principles of how the new Governance system will work.

Governance: Jonathan Vickers (JV) to liaise with the new Director of Finance regarding level of delegation for the Director of Finance.

6. Decision items

6.1 Succession Planning

The Board considered the paper prepared by SL. The Board discussed the need to bring people on early to ensure sufficient overlap for new and departing Committee Chairs and members, particularly noting that both the Finance Committee Chair and the Audit & Risk Committee Chair are both due to finish their terms in 2021.

Board members with a particular interest in either of these positions to contact the Chair to discuss.

SL will table a paper at the next Board meeting regarding training for the Board.

Kate O'Sullivan (KOS) highlighted the good work that had been done in producing this paper.

JV and Laura Lion (LL) suggested adding Safeguarding & Risk which the Board agreed. KOS' date needs to be corrected, the skills gap column needs to be renamed and a Nominations Committee to be organised. SL will complete these action points and circulate a revised document to the Board **(Action)**

Decision: The Board approved the British Rowing Board Action Plan for Succession and Development.

6.2 Board oversight of Safeguarding

LL gave the Board an update on progress in this area to increase oversight of safeguarding, this has included the setting up of a separate committee for this area. SL has put together

Terms of Reference for the new Safeguarding Committee. A new temporary Lead Safeguarding Officer is being recruited and a Safeguarding Audit will be undertaken in May.

Safeguarding will become a standing item at each future Board meeting.

KOS raised the need for training to be available for coaches. TH highlighted the need to ensure the safeguarding policy is aligned with all the home nations where possible. SL is arranging a working group of representatives from the home nations to take this piece of work forward and aiming to have aligned policies in place.

Simon Reeves (SR) raised the possibility of a welfare officer from the regions becoming a member of the committee. However, the CEO highlighted the need for the committee to be agile and not to add to the administrative burden on the committee particularly in its early phase. The Board agreed to consider this suggestion at a later date. LL assured the Board that the Regional Chairs Forum will have continued input into Safeguarding matters.

Decision: The Board agreed to the recommendations in the paper and the framework put into place.

6.3 2020/21 Rates of Affiliation and Subscription

Karena Vleck (KV) highlighted the increase in the seat levy and the potential impact this may have. The CEO told the Board that the seat levy had not increased since 2005 and that the increase in the levy would help move towards a more self-sustaining financial model for the British Rowing Online Entry platform.

LL raised the impact of the increase in the student race license. The CEO told the Board that the model used was to apply an inflationary increase and round up to the nearer 50p or £1, hence why the student increase was as it is.

Jack Beaumont (JB) asked how the organisation monitors who is eligible for a student licence. The CEO will clarify the process and update the Board at the next meeting (**Action**)

Decision: The Board approved the proposed rates of Affiliation and Subscriptions and an increase in the seat levy for 2020/21

6.4 Affiliations & resignations

The Board discussed the paper and JB asked if help and support was offered by British Rowing to any school or club that notify us of their resignation to see if it is possible to assist in keeping the rowing club open and affiliated to British Rowing. TH highlighted that it is preferable to try and help to keep a club open so that it can retain its affiliation rather than to try and

establish a new club that would then need to go through the affiliation process. Nick Hubble (NH) agreed that a club going dormant for a period could be an option rather than resigning and then needing to go through the affiliation process again.

The CEO confirmed that support was offered to clubs on an ongoing basis and will further check with the Membership Services team what formal processes are in place. KOS will raise this at the next Regional Chairs Forum and check the processes in the regions. **(Action)**

The CEO highlighted that the document now showed trends to provide the Board with better information.

Decision: The Board noted and approved the affiliations, resignations and club changes.

6.5 Lower Mall

SR gave an overview of the paper highlighting to the Board that most organisations would have a maintenance plan in place for their building.

KOS asked for accessibility to be included in the review.

SR asked the Board to proceed with this undertaking as soon as possible so that any future financial obligations for maintenance could be better understood before any problems develop. JV agreed this was a pressing need.

Decision: The Board agreed to the allocation of budget to undertake a Facilities Management Review of 6 Lower Mall and the preparation of a planned and costed maintenance programme for the building. This will be allocated to the budget for the 2020/21 financial year.

6.6 British Rowing Awards funding

The Chair left the room due to a conflict of interest for this item and returned to the meeting after its conclusion on this item. KOS chaired the discussion for this item.

Several members of the Board commented that this was a generous offer from the Chair to underwrite an amount of funding towards the inaugural British Rowing Awards dinner.

There was an in-depth discussion and mixed views on the pros and cons of the arrangement from a financial governance perspective, as well as related to funding in future years. The final decision was put to a vote.

Decision: The Board agreed to the funding structure for the 2020 British Rowing Awards. The Board further agreed that a review should be conducted after the event by the Executive Team and the findings be reported back to the Board so that a decision on hosting any future



British Rowing Awards Events can be made by the Board. No commitment was made for the repayment of any contribution from this year's event.

The Chair re-joined the meeting.

7. Discussion items

7.1 Membership Growth Update

TH had to leave the meeting for another appointment

The CEO asked the Board if the format for reporting on the work related to increasing membership worked and asked for comments on the paper.

SR stated he was disappointed not to see plans around the Tokyo Olympics included and felt this could be a missed opportunity. He highlighted the likely influx of new enquiries to Rowing clubs and how British Rowing could provide help, support and information to clubs. KOS highlighted the need for British Rowing to put on additional courses to meet the likely increase in demand and further highlighted the tight timescales and the need to engage with clubs very soon. LB raised the need for a social media/communications toolkit for clubs and the need to gear up our Coach education and training offering. SR highlighted that clubs were unlikely to be able to meet the demand for indoor rowing and that British Rowing should be fully engaged and helping clubs as this was a once in every four years opportunity.

The Chair commented that British Rowing needed to be mindful that it wasn't dictatorial in its approach to clubs and to ensure the organisation had a supportive tone and undertaking.

The CEO advised that this paper was specifically related to the recent market segmentation work recently undertaken and the plan centred around that work.

The CEO reminded the Board that the Tokyo plans and toolkit were discussed at a previous Board meeting and agreed to bring the Tokyo plans to the next meeting for further discussion.

LB asked the CEO for further information on the Friends of British Rowing being promoted to lapsing members which was highlighted as a red issue. The CEO explained the technical issues regarding sign up to FOBR to the Board and highlighted that a new one-page sign up process was being created and would be in place in February which would provide a temporary solution.

The CEO highlighted the need to build any investment in this area into the budget for the next financial year which will come to the next Board meeting.

8. Reports & Information

8.1 CEO Report

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

A discussion followed SR raising a concern over the annual number of lapsed members and asking what the organisation was doing to try to retain those members and win them back. He said he felt that the organisation was moving too slowly on this and suggested more pace was needed, including perhaps direct calling to lapsed members. He urged the organisation to be bold in seeking to increase its membership.

The Chair responded that the issue of a third of the membership lapsing every year had been the subject of discussion in almost every meeting that he and the CEO had had over the last 18 months, and that the entire strategy of the organisation was focused on addressing membership through retaining existing members and tempting back lapsed ones. He highlighted that the new Friends of British Rowing was one specific example of this. While he agreed that the pace of progress had been slow, he suggested that a strategy had been agreed and that direct calling was not part of that strategy because it was expensive to do and inefficient, bearing in mind how many people would be required to make the number of calls needed to make a difference. The Chair went on to say that things were now finally nearly in place for the one page sign up process on the website for the new FOBR and this should help to make it easy for new friends to sign up.

JV stated that the CEO had a plan in place for growing membership and that the organisation should focus on delivering it.

Tatiana Doncaster (TD, new Finance Director at British Rowing joined the meeting)

The CEO spoke to the Board about the upcoming departure of Phil Hornsey, who is seeking to explore new ventures after 4 years in his role as Director of Membership and Rowing Community. The CEO stated that Phil had been a valuable member of the Directors' Team and that Phil's leadership skills had been transformative for his Directorate.

Multi Lane Umpires Panel: The CEO outlined the process undertaken recently to appoint a new Chair of the MLUP.

Decision: The Board approved the appointment of Claire McIntosh as the new Chair of the MLUP with immediate effect.

Jack Beaumont left the meeting due to a conflict of interest regarding the next item for discussion.

Walk the floor final report: The Board noted the report and agreed it was very useful to see the report. Questions were asked related to the apparent decline in response from the

Men's squad, which the CEO assured were being dealt with. The pre-Tokyo recommendations are being worked through and an update on progress against them will be provided at the next meeting.

Jack Beaumont re-joined the meeting.

Management Accounts: JV queried why a rent overspend was showing? The CEO and TD will look into this further and report back to the Board at the next meeting. **(Action)**

Major Event Strategy: JV asked what costs/spend British Rowing was being committed to. The CEO responded that at this point we are not committed to any spend on the events. We are formulating our expression of interest and a further paper will come to the next Board meeting for a Decision on any bids.

8.2 Love Rowing Update

Helen Rowbotham (Director) & Hugh Elwes (Trustee of Love Rowing) joined the meeting to give the Board an update presentation on progress with the charity. Promotional videos were shown highlighting the inaugural event that took place for the charity in November and the inspiring work underway. HE outlined the plan to appoint a chair for the charity and new trustees. HE & HR then discussed the need to appoint a Foundation Manager, initially for two years to maintain the momentum to date. HR & HE will formally write to the CEO & Chair regarding future funding for the charity. The CEO will incorporate this within the budget plans for 2020-21 which will come to the next Board meeting for decision. The Board congratulated HE & HR for the work undertaken to date and the positive difference it will make.

8.3 Sport Committee

Decision: The Board considered the new rules of racing and formally approved the rules. The Board thanked Nick Hubble, Chair of the Sport Committee for the work undertaken to produce the new rules.

8.3 Regional Chairs Forum

Kate O'Sullivan gave an overview of the recent RCF meeting where there was considerable discussion around flooding issues.

9.0 Any other business

None

10 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 25th March, Di Ellis Room, 6 Lower Mall, 12.30pm lunch with a 1pm start