

# MINUTES

Approved at 23 May 2022 Board Meeting



**Meeting**                    **BOARD**

**Location**                Online (Google Meet)

**Date / Time**            Monday 21 March 2022

**Present:**                Mark Davies (MD) (Chair)  
Kate O’Sullivan (KOS)  
Liz Behnke (LB)  
Nick Hubble (NH)  
Laura Lion (LL)  
Simon Reeves (SR)  
Karena Vleck (KV)  
Martin Claxton (MC)  
Peter Milhofer (PM)  
Tina Kokkinos (TK)  
Alastair Marks (AM) (Interim CEO)

**Apologies:**             Susan Lightman (SL)

**In attendance:**        Tatiana Doncaster (TD), Genevieve Collett (GC, Minute Secretary)  
For item 6.1: Jacqui Traynor

1	<b>CHAIR’S INTRODUCTION</b> Mark Davies (MD) welcomed the Board to the meeting.	
2	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> and quorum The meeting was quorate. There were apologies for absence from Susan Lightman.	
3	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> There were no new declarations of interest from the Board.	
4	<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> from the previous Board Meeting on 24 January 2022. The minutes of the above meeting were noted and approved by the Board.	
5	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b> (not otherwise covered on the agenda) All matters on the action tracker were completed apart from: <b>Action:</b> An update on the Nike Gifting in Kind to be brought to the next Board meeting. <b>Action:</b> Prepare a 12-month Succession plan for the next Board meeting.	AM AM
6	<b>DISCUSSION ITEMS</b>	

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<p>6.1</p>	<p><b>Transgender Policy (with Jacqui Traynor in attendance)</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Jacqui Traynor (JT), British Rowing’s Anti-Doping and Integrity Manager, to this part of the meeting.</p> <p>A full and constructive discussion was held on the background, challenges, evidence, and next steps regarding a Transgender Policy for British Rowing. JT opened the discussion. She noted that their current policy was unusable as dependent on competition organisers deciding on eligibility for transgender women to compete. The goal for British Rowing was to produce a workable, clear, and transparent policy overseen by a panel of medical experts to determine eligibility.</p> <p>Ten key principles from which to develop the policy were discussed and it was agreed that these could be developed further into a clear policy that needed to comply with World Rowing’s vulnerable adults safeguarding policies.</p> <p>MC raised a concern about the tone of the ten key principles, finding them blunt and authoritarian and stressed that the principles should focus on including and inclusion rather than excluding and exclusion which the Board broadly agreed on. It was raised that the policy document should be drafted for further review with explicit discussion with the Home Nations to ensure alignment. Regarding Principle 6 MC stated that transmen could feel unwelcome and excluded as well as transwomen. Overall, in his view, enabling transgender people to take place in sport rather than sift them out should be the idea.</p> <p>The Board thanked JT for all her considerable work on the policy paper noting that her proposal was reasonable and should be progressed. The consensus was that people were comfortable with the principles, grateful to Jacqui for her work and looked forward to seeing the further research and amendments being made around inclusion and the junior policy.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> It was agreed that the British Rowing Transgender policy now needed to be written up in full ready for presentation and approval at the May Board meeting including clear details on how it may also apply to juniors.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> It was agreed that a recommendation final policy would be brought to the May meeting.</p>	<p>JT</p>
<p>6.2</p>	<p><b>FINANCE UPDATE</b></p> <p><b>Interim Update on Investment Mandate</b></p> <p>TK confirmed that the Finance Committee had undertaken their annual investment mandate review and were continuing operating on a low-risk stance. The portfolio was still up by £148K year on year as of 15 March, dropping 4% over the Russian sanction period but positively remained 2% up. Ten days before year end the forecast was</p>	

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6.2.1	<p>a £50K deficit, clearly better than last year which was approximately £600K. The Chair thanked the Finance Committee for their work in this area.</p> <p><b>Finance Report (Including unrestricted management accounts)</b></p>	
6.2.2	<p>A discussion took place on the finance report.</p> <p><b>2022/23 Budget Outlook</b></p> <p>The Board discussed the base level budget, aiming to reach a decision on whether the Budget in its present incarnation should be approved and how the surplus budget could be used and spent. The Board was asked to consider whether it was comfortable with the approval of the baseline budget. The baseline budget covered key overhead costs, salaries, salary related costs only and expected costs such as membership support and events delivery. It did not include marketing for membership which was in the surplus budget instead. These were included in a recommendation as to how the potential surplus budget (£407K) could be invested along with other key areas presented in the paper agreed by the Board that would progress British Rowing's strategic aim of growing the membership to 100,000 by 2024. A discussion was held on ensuring that a full understanding of potential deficits in the BREL and BRCF accounts were accounted for before approving the additional budget in full. It was also agreed that a focus on safeguarding resources should be prioritised within this budget. It was agreed that spending would be gradual and costs incremental, such that the CEO should be allowed to get on with his job without having to check back on costs every week without there being a risk to the organisation, if reviews took place at each board meeting. If the reforecast was going well across the year additional funds could be released when required. The Board had greater transparency and confidence on approving the budget. Taking that into account the Board discussed whether a phased budget plan would be helpful. TK pointed out that the terms of delegation of authority would provide comfort in the level of risk control in any event. AM asked to have approval of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Appointing a sponsorship agency</li><li>2. Potential Capex for Coastal Plans</li><li>3. A firm confirmation that £50K for app could be spent and rolled forward to next year</li></ol> <p>MD asked for the spending of money on a sponsorship agency to be deferred until the full and discrete sponsorship offerings were explored.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board agreed that they were comfortable with approving the baseline budget in principle and that the decision should not be deferred. The Board also agreed on the spending of planned</p>	

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	<p>surplus but agreed that spending would be determined when the true surplus was clarified and the Chair asked that the money should be spent sensibly as cashflow allowed. The Board agreed on the budget focus areas in the main but agreed that safeguarding should be prioritised. They agreed that the spending should be monitored and reviewed but that they should allow the CEO to execute the spending without overly frequent updates. They further recognised that there could be less in the surplus budget due to Love Rowing and the World Coastal Championships operating at losses that BR would have to cover.</p> <p><b>6.2.2.1</b></p> <p><b>Membership Financial Modelling Paper</b></p> <p>The Membership Financial Modelling Paper was for information only and no decisions were required. Presently it had no material impact. The freemium model would be launched in May, with wider changes to be made towards the end of the year. The Value proposition was still being researched and content for the app was being trialled and evaluated.</p> <p>It was noted that it cost more to do a monthly membership than an annual one. Club and individuals' insurance were also discussed and the difference between the two was queried. AM confirmed that Marieke Hagemans had done work in this area.</p> <p>Day ticket membership was confirmed as fundamental to the new membership offer even if the current language being used may not reflect that.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> To circulate the information about the insurance cover after the meeting.</p> <p>The full membership financing modelling would come to the May Meeting.</p> <p><b>6.2.3</b></p> <p><b>Indoor Rowing Plan</b></p> <p>The plan was noted by the Board who acknowledged that there was little emphasis on how the plan would be sustained. Discussion centred around how the previous activity had been developed with Sport England specific objectives in mind and had not focussed specifically on mass engagement as part of that. AM outlined how the plan was to expand the reach of the programme and level of engagement whilst attracting a wide range of audiences through a partnership-based model he was currently exploring with the likes of GLL - Greenwich Leisure Ltd, the largest leisure trust running local facilities in the UK.</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>MH</p>
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<p>6.2.4</p>	<p>MD noted that British Rowing's approach to Indoor Rowing remained was frustrating to witness and disappointing. PM asked for clarity on how the plans being made linked together in the next iteration.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board asked for an increasing focus on engagement with users and for more critical interaction with the indoor rowing community whilst recognising it was a work in progress.</p> <p><b>Coastal Rowing Plan</b></p> <p>The paper sought to clarify what market they were aiming for with the Coastals and had been written with the help of the Southwest Rowing Community. AM confirmed that the aim was to make rowing an accessible sport to as many as possible. The plan looked at developing coastal rowing to grow a different type of rowing to include paddling, touring and adventure countrywide as well as interclub activity. Tourists and residents along the coastline would be actively encouraged to take part. The new infrastructure proposed meant that more people could be coached and therefore brought into the sport through a fun programme. It was noted that The World Coastal Championship and Beach Sprints would provide a further platform to amplify this part of the sport later in the year.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Board asked if this information could be made more explicit in the paper.</p>	<p>AM</p>
<p>6.2.5</p>	<p><b>Education Plan</b></p> <p>The Board discussed the Education plan paper focusing firstly on the issue of whether it was right to make approximately £50K profit from running the education courses. If profit were to be made, should it be reinvested into making the courses more affordable and thus attract a wider socio-economic group into the sport. The Board suggested that the plan also needed to focus on getting the right individuals in place to run the courses and then actively retain and then retrain them if needed. It was noted that coaches with over ten year's coaching experience should be re-educated and brought up to speed with current policy and thinking. The Board agreed that the plan was a significant improvement.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> It was agreed that the education courses should be run at cost only, with an aim to educate as widely as possible and bring in as many people as possible into the sport: as a principle, events could be run for profit but development of the sport should be at cost. It was also agreed that this should be the case domestically only, and selling the courses overseas could be treated differently. It was further noted that that there was a transition to be made when changing the price points and that revenue would need to be deployed within budget.</p>	<p>AM AM</p>

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	<p><b>Decision:</b> To publish the Education paper.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> To produce a proper audit of what is needed and what is missing within the coaching plan to reveal the gaps and what problems needed to be solved. This would be done through liaison with the regional chairs and members of the team.</p> <p>The plan should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Attract and retain good coaches</li><li>2. Re-educate existing coaches who had been trained over ten years ago to bring them up to date with current policy</li><li>3. Help for coaches in taking their technical training further</li></ol>	
7	<b>ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL</b>	
7.1	<p><b>Athlete Director Elections</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board agreed that this needed to be pushed forward with speed. It was agreed that it would be effective to have a retired member of the squad in the role as the previous incumbent had to miss a lot of meetings due to training schedule.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> An Athlete Director (preferably a recently retired member of Olympic squad) to be appointed as soon as possible and an update on this brought to the next meeting.</p>	SL
8	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>Reappointment of the Chair</b></p> <p>8.1 This was formally noted by the Board.</p> <p><b>New Affiliated Competition – Salford Sprint Regatta (Extra AOB Item).</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> This was approved. It was noted that it was the Board’s responsibility in terms of its governance to approve new affiliated competitions.</p> <p><b>New Travel Supplier (Extra AOB Item).</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board approved the new supplier.</p>	
	<p><b>PAPERS CIRCULATED IN ADVANCE FOR APPROVAL AND COMMENT</b></p> <p><b>Resignations and Affiliations</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board agreed that they had approved this paper by circulating it by email.</p> <p><b>Chester Le Street Update</b></p> <p>The paper was noted by the Board. Chester Le Street Club had asked whether the Board of British Rowing would consider relaxing the restrictions made on them by their next Board Meeting of 30 April.</p>	

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<p><b>Decision:</b> The Board decided to refuse this request and would make the decision on releasing restrictions at the May Board meeting as previously agreed.</p> <p><b>Facilities Opportunity</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> This paper was formally approved by the Board as an acknowledgment of something that could be explored and investigated further.</p> <p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b> This paper was formally approved. However, there was a request for the proviso to be added that drinking alcohol when rowing or looking after minors was not encouraged. However, alcohol could still be sold at events and be an income revenue stream.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> A more nuanced wording to be used on the paper about individual's responsibilities when rowing or officiating and alcohol. AM to also check the insurance policy on wording on this issue.</p> <p><b>Water Safety Guidance Paper Update</b></p> <p>The Chair shared that himself NH and PM had had a discussion yesterday regarding this and decided a way forward.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> It was agreed at the above meeting that this would go to Audit and Risk to decide how best this would be managed in liaison with NH.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> A recommendation would be brought to the next meeting</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>PM</p>
<p><b>The Board noted the following papers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A1. Membership &amp; Rowing Community</li><li>A2. Partnerships &amp; Marketing Report</li><li>A3. Performance Team Report</li><li>A.4 World Coastal Update</li><li>B1. Audit &amp; Risk Committee Minutes</li><li>B2. Sport Committee Update</li><li>B3. Safeguarding Committee Report</li></ul> <p><b>Youth Panel Survey</b> – KOS asked to whom this had gone out.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> AM to double check and confirm those to whom this had been emailed.</p> <p><b>UK Sport</b> – Regular update on this situation was requested.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Performance Team conversation with Kate Baker was still outstanding and the CEO would follow up.</p>	<p>AM</p>

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	<b>Cultural Review – Caversham</b> – This was deemed necessary under the new appointment of Louise Kingsley.	
9	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> – 23 May 2022, 12:30 – Caversham (The Chair suggested a lunch before or dinner afterwards as it would be the first time for the group to meet in person in over 2 years).	