

Meeting: BOARD

Location: Hammersmith – face-to-face

Date / Time: Monday, 25th September 2023 – 12:30 – 16:30

Present

Mark Davies (MD) (Chair)
 Alastair Marks (AM)
 Kate O'Sullivan (KOS)
 Liz Behnke (LB)
 Tina Kokkinos (TK)
 Karena Vleck (KV)
 Chris Conway (CC)
 Martin Claxton (MC)
 Simon Reeves (SR)
 Peter Milholfer (PM)
 Clare Briegal (CB)
 Mohamed Sbihi (MS)
 Rebecca West (RW) – Minutes

Other Attendees

For item 6.3 – Iain Edmondson and Rachel Dulai (RD)
 For item 6.4 – Marieke Hagemans (MH)
 Peter Melrose attended as an independent observer

Apologises

Nick Hubble (NH)

1.	<p>Chairs Introduction</p> <p>MD welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>He opened the meeting by introducing Peter Melrose to the Board Meeting. Peter joined the Board meeting as an independent observer.</p> <p>MD commented that British Rowing had seen a successful coaching week last week with some positive feedback received. The team had some very positive results at the World Championships and the hard work in the build up to Paris will continue.</p> <p>MD also informed the Board that outside of the World Championships, there was World Congress as well as a separate meeting earlier in the week about its future policy on Transgender athlete inclusion. Ann Redgrave presented a statement on behalf of British Rowing at the Meeting. The meeting was largely inconclusive as to the future direction of the route that WR may take post the 2024 Games.</p> <p>MD informed the Board that Guin Batten had been re-elected to the World Rowings World Coastal Commission.</p> <p>There was a discussion about having more awareness of what is happening with World Rowing and who represents British Rowing in those groups.</p> <p><i>Action</i></p>
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	<p>The Board requested ongoing transparency of the International Strategy and more input on future planning / what roles are available as both development and succession opportunities.</p>
2.	<p>Apologise for Absence and Quorum There were apologies from NH. The Board was announced as quorate.</p>
3.	<p>Declaration of Interest There were two declarations: KOS highlighted to the Board that she was a trustee of Infinity Board Club, which was being presented to the Board to be affiliated. AM informed the Board that he is now on the Board as a Trustee for Royal Albert Docks Trust.</p>
4.	<p>Approval of Minutes from previous Board Meeting The Board approved the August board minutes. The Chair noted that while the minutes from the August Board Meeting were accurate in stating that at the time it had been said as part of the CEO update that there had been only limited feedback on the transgender issue, it was important to note as part of this meeting that the feedback from members since has been on-going, including at World Congress, and had been all positive. The only negative feedback that the Chair had seen was from one group of three people on Twitter, one of whom was the activist Holly Willoughby.</p>
5.	<p>Action Tracker Action 1: is now completed Action 5: is now completed; it just needs to be circulated to the Board <i>Action</i> KOS requested that an action be added explaining that British Rowing will be exploring future research opportunities with Universities on the subject of Transgender in rowing.</p>
6.1	<p>CEO Update AM updated the Board on various key elements in the business between the Board Meeting in August and today's meeting. Explaining the following: Governance Reform: Meetings with stakeholders are ongoing concerning future governance models that could be adopted. This will result in further changes to previously-presented ideas being brought to the board, and then to the Members. AM advised that a clear outline would not be available in time for the AGM and sought (and received) the Board's support to take the necessary time to complete the work and call an EGM when appropriate at a later date. AM updated the board on the new DCMS Strategy on sports participation which is in line with BR's future ambitions to drive growth in the sport. AM also updated the Board on the UK Sport process for the next cycle of funding awards for the LA2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Further details will be brought back to the board at a later date</p>

	<p>Team performance: The Board wanted to acknowledge how far the GB Rowing Team has come in the past two years since Tokyo.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> For LK to attend future board meetings as the UKS funding cycle progresses. The Board to send the Performance Team a letter to thank them for their hard work.</p> <p><i>Approval</i> It was agreed that due to the importance of any future governance proposals, time to consult properly was required before moving towards an EGM.</p>
6.2	<p>Where the Money Goes <i>Summary of Agenda Item:</i> It has previously been agreed that post the 2022/23 audited accounts, a summary of where British Rowing membership money is spent should be developed to share with members, the aim of which would be to increase transparency around how income is generated and invested.</p> <p><i>Key Discussion:</i> The Board were overall happy with the direction of travel presented.</p> <p>There was a discussion about how it could be presented in an annual report to make it easier for members to read and understand.</p> <p><i>Actions:</i> An annual report to be developed and designed. To include a summary of what comes from members and other income such as grants. Expenditure to be presented in a similar way with the focus being on where the membership generated income is spent.</p> <p><i>Approvals:</i> The Board agreed with direction set out in the paper.</p>
6.3	<p>Events and Senior Champs Proposals <i>Summary of the Agenda Item:</i> The Event Review Working Group was tasked with finding a date and format for a National Championship. At the August Board Meeting, it presented data from the research it has been conducting.</p> <p>The Event Review Working Group asked three things from the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve hosting a 'British Rowing Club and Junior Championship' in July 2024 at the National Water Sports Centre, including different levels of competition. 2. Approve announcing the date and concept for this event as soon as possible, with further details announced before Christmas. 3. Approve the principle of establishing the event over three years at the same venue subject to the annual budget setting. <p><i>Key Discussion:</i> The paper went to the Finance Committee on 15th September, and it was explained that they were broadly supportive. As a Committee, they highlighted a few risks, such as being mindful of the competition calendar. The importance of supporting volunteers properly and being mindful of the pressures that volunteers experience was emphasised.</p>

	<p>RD explained to the Board that they are working on creating local partnerships to ensure better deals.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the communication to those involved in the Junior Championship was vital, as was ensuring that their experience is not diminished through having a combined event .</p> <p>There was a discussion around the costs modelling for the event and the importance of being realistic about income streams. The budget needs to be balanced and managed as the plans progress.</p> <p>MC raised a question seeking assurance that the time tabling and proposed singular location of the Senior event for a three-year period would not affect the commitment BR has to bring major events to Strathclyde Park on a rotational basis. RD responded to the effect that it would not affect that commitment.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the below asked, based on the understanding that the event would breakeven or make a profit, it would not be a loss making event from year 1.</p> <p><i>Approvals:</i> The Board approved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hosting a 'British Rowing Club and Junior Championship' in July 2024 at the National Water Sports Centre, including different levels of competition. 2. Announcing the date and concept for this event as soon as possible, with further details announced before Christmas. <p>The Board approved the third ask of the paper on the basis that when three-year contracts are signed, there is a break clause after the first year.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The principle of establishing the event over three years at the same venue is subject to annual budget setting.
6.4	<p>Membership Pricing Proposal <i>Summary of Agenda Item</i></p> <p>This paper set out proposals for increasing membership fees in the next financial year, which has not been done for the last five years. The paper set out the options explored to mitigate increasing costs as well as the opportunity to invest more funds back into the sport in the future. It was recommended that CPI should be the basis of future rises to ensure costs are covered</p> <p><i>Key Discussion</i></p> <p>A question was raised as to what time of the year CPI would be set. It was agreed that the Executive Team would look at the whole year's rate and take the average from across the year, in order to get a fair rate and remove any spikes/outliers.</p> <p>Having previously been discussed at the Finance Committee on 15th September, it was recommended and agreed that any rises would not be backdated to bring prices in line with today's rates.</p>

	<p>The Chair said that he had discussed with the CEO prior to the meeting the fact that we could be a lot bolder and a lot more strategic than what was being presented. Some wider ideas were discussed, and it was agreed that other models should also be explored.</p> <p><i>Actions</i> MH to look at different models of how to increase the membership price.</p> <p>MH to look at how to capture people who aren't members.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i> The Board approved a CPI-led annual fee increase across all membership products.</p>
7.1	<p>Annual Accounts Update <i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> The purpose of this agenda item is for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Accounts 2022/23 to be approved and signed - Letter of Representation to be approved and signed - Parent Letter of support for BREL to be approved and signed - The other documents attached to this paper were for information <p><i>Key Discussion</i> There was a discussion about whether the dormant companies should be kept at Companies House to prevent a third party from taking names that are key to British Rowing. The Board felt that the dormant companies should be kept.</p> <p>The role of BREL was discussed in the context of signing the letter of support of it as a going concern. It was agreed that this would not prevent any further changes to the entity in the future is deemed appropriate.</p> <p><i>Actions</i> The Accounts are to be filed and then released to members. The option of a webinar will be offered to members should they want to ask any questions about the accounts.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i> The Board approved all the accounts.</p>
7.2	<p>Governance Statement <i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> A draft of the Governance Statement was brought to the Board for approval.</p> <p><i>Key Discussion</i> CC informed the Board that the Governance Statement had been through the Audit and Risk.</p> <p>The Board raised a question about the status of policies highlighted in the statement and a review of all policies was requested. In the meantime, further detail will be added to the statement as to when the policies will be reviewed.</p> <p><i>Actions</i> All policies are to be reviewed as soon as is practicable.</p>

	<p><i>Approvals</i> The Board approved the statement following the changes being made to it.</p>
7.3	<p>Club Discussion</p> <p><i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> This paper is related to concern that a club (“the Club”) that has been in breach of British Rowing Affiliation Requirements and Regulation. The paper outlined the current concerns and that the club was now taking action to resolve the issues. At this stage, it is recommended the Club should not be disaffiliated. However, British Rowing will continue to work with the Club to ensure the improvements are implemented ahead of a final recommendation as to its future affiliation being made within three months.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> A further paper will be presented to the Board in the December meeting.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i> The Board agreed with the recommendation set out in the paper.</p>
7.4	<p>GB Rowing Selection Policies for 2024</p> <p><i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> This paper's purpose was to approve the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games selection policy.</p> <p><i>Key Discussion</i> There was a discussion about what the appeals process noted in the policy, as well as about how long independent selectors can remain in place before they cease to be seen as independent.</p> <p>It was also suggested that additional detail in the eligibility section should be added to cover safeguarding and discipline</p> <p><i>Actions</i> AM to send around the Board what the appeals policy is so that they have oversight.</p> <p>AM will look into the details of how long the independent selector stays as an independent selector.</p> <p>AM to update the eligibility criteria as suggested.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i> The Board approved the policy.</p>
7.5	<p>Affiliations</p> <p><i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> The Articles require the Board to approve the affiliations.</p> <p><i>Key Discussion</i> AM explained everything was for approval apart from Infinity Boat Club which has yet to be approved by the Regional Council.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i></p>

	The Board approved the affiliations.
7.6	<p>Scheme of Delegation <i>Summary of Agenda Item</i> The Scheme of Delegation was brought to the Board for the annual approval, having been approved by the Finance Committee on 15th September.</p> <p><i>Key Discussion</i> CC highlighted to the Board that there have been various changes to the Scheme of Delegation, which are to address the audit findings, these changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacing “Finance Director” with “Chief Operating Officer” - Increasing the amount that the Performance Director can sign off (previously agreed in 2022) - Changing the ability for senior line managers to be able to sign off expenses <p>It was also explained that the Finance Committee had reviewed and approved the scheme.</p> <p><i>Approvals</i> The Board approved the Scheme of Delegation.</p>
8	<p>AOB A question was raised regarding the uptake of the day tickets. It was explained that it was too early to tell but that the trial was being extended.</p> <p>AM confirmed that BRIC would be going ahead this year.</p> <p>The Board praised the detail in the directors’ report but suggested that some of the items that come from the report should be coming to the Board as individual items.</p> <p>Proposed 2024 board dates were also presented</p> <p><i>Actions</i> The Board asked if the following items could come to a future board meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology and digital strategy - Facilities - Pathways <p>RW to send around a doodle poll to schedule 2024 Board Dates.</p>
	Date of Next Meeting: Monday 6th November 2023: Virtual – 08:00 – 10:00