British Rowing Board Meeting Minutes – 29 April 2026

Minutes of British Rowing Board Meeting

held at 08:00 on 29th April 2026 on Google Meets

Attendance

Board Members

- Diana Hunter (DH), Chair of the Board
- Tom Solesbury (TS), Chief Executive Officer
- Harn Jagpal (HJ), Chair of Safeguarding Committee
- Mike Westcott (MW), Chair of People & Culture Committee
- Seb Walker (SW), Member Nominated Director
- Sarah Davies (SD), Home Nations Director – arrived at 09:00
- Niamh Corbett, (NC), Independent Director
- Martha Nutkins (MN), Member Nominated Director
- Luke Dillon (LD), Rowing Committee Chair

Apologies

- Moe Sbihi (MS), Home Nations Director
- Clare Briegal (CB), Deputy Chair of the Board

Also in attendance:

Rebecca West (RW), Operations Manager

James Sampson (JS), Chief Digital Officer

Jude Taylor (JT), UK Sport

Sajid Hussain (SH), interim Chief Financial Officer

BRITISH ROWING

1. Opening Business

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

DH opened the meeting, noting MS's apologies and that CB won't be able to join as they are committed to the Table Tennis World Championships.

SD was expected to join later due to the Toronto time difference. HJ noted they would be partially present, as they needed to drive to work. JT advised they would need to leave at 10:00.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

No new declarations were made.

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.
Action: RW to record the previous minutes as approved.

1.4 Matters Arising

- Phishing training to be extended to all new Board members.
- Safeguarding training to be rebooked as a majority a new Board, ideally during a Board meeting.

Actions:

- RW to extend phishing training to all new members.
- RW to rebook safeguarding training.

2. Main Business

2.1 CEO Report and Strategy Development

TS welcomed new Board members and provided an update on organisational activity, including the near completion of the regional tour. Feedback will shape the strategy discussion at the 8 June meeting.

Key themes raised included safeguarding, inclusivity, financial resilience, and sustainability. The Board supported a narrative focused on stabilising the organisation, reconnecting with the community, and fixing foundations.

SW emphasised understanding why people leave or never enter the sport. MW asked about "quick wins"; TS identified two: refunds for cancelled events and making umpire membership free.

DH and TS stressed the importance of visible leadership and high-quality communication over the summer.

TS intends to present a concise strategy document on 8 June.

Actions:

- TS to explore quick wins (refunds; umpire membership).
- TS to prepare a short draft strategy for 8 June.

2.2 Culture, Safe Sport and Oversight Panel

TS updated the Board on the safe sport initiative and positive engagement with CPSU. Updated CPSU reporting is expected shortly.

JT outlined the scale of the culture project, noting it requires sustained Board commitment. DH emphasised the Board's role in championing cultural change.

Draft Terms of Reference for the oversight panel were due for feedback that day.

2.3 Staffing and Organisational Model

TS reported on the challenging staffing period and the need to reach a break-even position. Voluntary redundancy applications were due that week; if insufficient, selection for risk would occur the following Tuesday.

Two paused roles (administrative support and deputy head of events) may need revisiting in six months.

2.4 Youth Rowing, LYR and Social Impact

TS updated the Board on London Youth Rowing's partnership with Thames Water, which had not been disclosed in advance. BR and the Henley Trust agreed they would not fund LYR if the partnership continued due to reputational concerns.

DH confirmed that BR, Love Rowing, the Henley Trust and NROD are developing a combined view of social impact beneficiaries for the September Board meeting. The meeting may be held at a beneficiary location.

Action: Group to develop a combined social impact view for September.

2.5 Finance and Budget 2026-27

SH presented the 2026-27 budget:

- Income: £13.82m
- Expenditure: £13.81m
- Surplus: ~£4k

Key points:

- This is a "reset baseline year" to stabilise the organisation.
- 76% of income comes from UK Sport and Sport England.
- Membership income (~£2m net) funds infrastructure and operations.
- Central overheads remain the core challenge.
- A 5% surplus target on membership income (~£118k) is recommended.
- Investment income (£170k) should remain ring-fenced for clubs and projects.
- Quarterly reforecasting will be introduced.

The Board approved the budget.

Actions:

- SH to conduct a line-by-line review of unrestricted expenditure and contracts.
- SH to produce a financial guide/joining pack for Board members.
- SH to work with performance team and UK Sport to determine true cost of hosting performance.

2.6 Delegation of Authorities, Procurement Policy and Risk Framework

TS outlined the revised Delegation of Authorities, introducing a new level where the CEO and Chair may jointly approve spend up to £250k.

HJ recommended reviewing the delegations in 6-12 months. SW proposed adding a named individual responsible for each contract. MW suggested the Finance Committee could pre-approve certain spend; TS will review this after implementation.

The Board approved:

- Delegation of Authorities (with clarifications)
- Procurement Policy (with named contract owner requirement)
- Risk Policy and Framework

Actions:

- TS to bring updated risk register to the 8 June meeting.

2.7 Digital Transformation

JS presented the digital roadmap, highlighting foundational work required to stabilise the digital estate.

Key interventions:

- Azure consolidation across seven tenancies
- Google → Microsoft migration (noting timing challenges near Olympic cycle)
- Single sign-on identity layer
- Replacement of legacy systems and licences
- Budget allocation for JS's leadership time

MW recommended showing how digital spend offsets savings from legacy system removal.

Actions:

- JS to calculate efficiencies and savings from digital transformation.
- JS to prepare a year-2/year-3 roadmap deep dive for 8 June.

2.8 Safeguarding, Discipline and Regulatory Framework

TS presented the new safeguarding and disciplinary regulations, developed with extensive consultation.

Key points:

- Regulatory Framework to be published.
- Annual club dispute reporting raised; SW suggested easier real-time reporting.
- Ocean rowing exclusion to be checked.
- Disciplinary Rules adapted from athletics.
- Affiliation Terms regularised; new obligation for reporting club disputes.
- Competition affiliation terms to follow.
- Transitional arrangements: retrospective effect for historic matters; ongoing cases remain under existing rules.

The Board approved the safeguarding and disciplinary regulations.

2.9 Transgender Policy

TS presented the updated transgender policy, reflecting the Four Women Scotland Supreme Court decision and IOC changes. The Board approved the updated policy.

2.10 Love Rowing Update

The paper was noted for information. A fuller discussion will take place at the September Board meeting.

5. Any Other Business

There was no further business.