



BRITISH FENCING

Minutes - February Board 2015

Date of Meeting	26/02/2015
Location	Lee Valley (WCP Training Centre)
Present	Chair, T Cadman, J Campbell, C Halsted, A Orge, G Palmer, G Paul, B Speight
In attendance	CEO, K Robinson, M Liston, A Newton, D Moseley, G Williams, J Magill, Paul Bickerton (Sport England).

Before the Board meeting commenced, the BF Directors and observers met the WCP staff team, and athletes, in training at this base.

1. Introductions & Apologies/New Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; with a special welcome to Paul Bickerton, from SE, and to observers Marie Liston and Jack Magill. He noted, with TC, that the meeting was quorate.

Apologies were received from Paul Abrahams, Caryl Oliver, William Pitt and John Troiano – Directors – and from H Philbin, President.

The Chair explained that this meeting was the first of the quarterly Board meetings for the year, with the specific task of reviewing the BF finances.

2. New Declarations of Interest/New Risk Management Items/Urgent catch up items

There were no new declarations of interest.

There were no new risk management items.

There were no urgent catch up items.

3. Finance

David Moseley updated the Board, starting with the Quarterly Q3 management accounts, which he said were positive. There was a deficit of £4.5k for the first nine months. The Performance section has an over spend in that period, which was not a real concern as a reversal is expected in the final quarter. Talent currently has an under spend due to an HR issue, which is expected to reduce in the final few months. Development shows a surplus of £10k. Adjustments have been made to the England Fencing funding which is deferred as agreed with England Fencing via the Grow Group.





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Sponsorship money will be used to offset any deficits in Events. We are on course with the Sport England funding to break even as necessary.

Corporate Services show a deficit of £16k in the first nine months. Membership is always high in January, February and March and this deficit will come back by the year end. Events are on budget so far.

In summary: the Board noted that results were reflective of where we planned to be with an expected break even in Performance, Development and Corporate Services.

Moving to next year's budget, Directors were informed that the AGRC has reviewed the sections so far worked on; DM reported that he and the Committee expect the budget for 2015/16 to break even. CEO commented that the budget showed "business as usual". She reported that she looks to take on a Commercial Manager who will help achieve sustainability, eg for membership, achievement awards scheme, etc. JM asked where the new Commercial Director would fit in to the general BF business. GU replied that she is looking at a shift in culture and organization structure, with necessary changes in accountability and productivity. BF needs to explore ways of generating more income.

The Board noted that the next Board (Directors only) meeting in March will receive the AGRC's approved version of the budget. The Chair reported that the AGRC confirms that we have been on a journey with regards finances, but after a hard time we have reached a stability which should satisfy the Board. He gave thanks on the Board's behalf to DM, the CEO and the AGRC.

ACTIONS;

- AGRC to review next year's budget and advise Board.

4. Development

Paul Bickerton (Sport England) briefed the Board on three areas related to the Sport England investment and funding process - the SE Investment in funding sports; the rationale for the decision to provide BF with funding, to take it out of the one year funding process, and to receive increased money; and what Sport England will be scrutinizing in 2015/16.

PB said there were six sports restricted to one year funding for the 2013-2017 cycle. The reasons for one year only funding ranged from concerns about governance, leadership, planning and, primarily, SE's risk on investment. British Fencing now has a committed award up to 2017; PB said it had done well to achieve this. Specifically, PB reported that;-

- Sport England now has confidence in British Fencing – in the people and in the quality of insight; hence the new commitment and the increased level of funding. There has been a "step change";



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- the evidence based planning and strategy work BF has done (eg with Deloittes) is very strong;
- at Chair and Board level, there is now a “strong engagement between Sport England and British Fencing” with a desire and commitment to tackle participation;
- on an executive level the CEO has made a great start and showed real commitment to the outcome;
- the Development Director has shown herself to be the right person to lead the programme;
- the feedback PB received from the SE management at the BF December presentation was very positive.

In conclusion, PB noted that it was rare to get significant increases half way through a funding cycle. Sport England is very happy with what they have seen so far from British Fencing’s Development plans and personnel.

The Chair thanked PB for a very clear and helpful summary of SE’s position and for all his advice during what had been a very challenging process. He confirmed that the Board appreciated the confidence that Sport England had placed in BF. GW and the CEO also thanked PB for his support.

ACTIONS;

- Executive to manage Development programme, in consultation with SE, reporting to the Grow Group.

5. Performance

AN briefed the Board on the UK Sport funding decision, which was much as was predicted at the January Board Meeting. Fencing was one of only two Olympic sports to receive an increase in funding. One podium potential place has been converted to a podium place, so there are seventeen podium potential places and one podium place. More importantly, fencing has moved from Priority Band Six to Priority Band Four – based on a likely medal in Rio. Priority band four also means that fencing has a greater priority for additional wrap around services from UK Sport. It also puts BF in a more secure funding position.

AN informed Directors that the WCP will be moving to the Leon Paul Centre on 1st April for fencing activity and at the end of April for the wider programme activity. Sport England has provided substantial capital funding to make the necessary changes to enable the Programme to be operated from there.



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In Board discussion, JC asked, what contingency does BF have for the building works scheduled? AN responded that there is a “fit out” contract and unlikely to be problems. The project management is being led by Sport England. To AO queries, AN said that the downstairs facility would be for the exclusive use of the WCP but the upstairs training venue will have shared use.

The WCP will now be taking over responsibility for the whole of the junior programme to bring it in line with WCP policies and to raise performance standards. It will be more performance focused; BF will be recruiting for a new pathway manager and a part time head coach to support the programme.

CEO confirmed that the cadet programme will remain separate and that BF would not reverse the decision taken in April 2014 to stop being the deliverers of the cadet trips. The IYC will no longer exist in its present form and will cease as a committee. Juniors will come under the WCP, the cadets will have a new International Cadet Management Working Group.

TC confirmed that the Board needs to note the IYC’s disbandment. CH asked if it can be finalised at the next Board meeting. So, the Board noted that the Committee is to be disbanded and that CH will inform the Board of the date.

The Chair thanked and congratulated AN and her team, on behalf of the Board, for the secured funding and for finalizing the deal for the new national WCP centre.

ACTIONS;

- Executive to manage associated risks of WCP move to Leon Paul Centre.

AN, DM and GW left the meeting.

6. Governance

GU noted that the Board “away day” output documents had been circulated. The documents were noted by the Board.

In discussion, CH pointed out that whilst there were seven specific areas of strategy we did not have an overall strategy and asked if the seven strategies covered everything we should have a strategy for. She did not feel the document covered the international strategy. In August last year the Board had tasked the Chair and President with pulling together an international strategy, which she felt was a key area for the Board and BF. In a lengthy discussion, GU responded that a number of parts of what was “international” were clear - eg the WCP, International Relations (and UKS funding for it), International Events. There are many pieces of the overall BF strategic “puzzle” that can be labelled International and they sit across the Strategic areas identified by the Board. Currently we have clear international objectives when it comes to results. We have a funded plan in terms of the FIE, with events



we have agreed the types of competitions we will run, we have a referees pathway programme.

In discussion, TC said that it was not necessary for the Board to specify a strategy for every particular area of its work. GP gave the view that it is important to make sure key aspects are covered and that the strategy makes sense to all, ie our fencers, clubs etc. Communicating the Board's aims and plans will be important. The Chair noted that delivery of the BF strategy was the CEO's responsibility and she must decide on its communication.

Directors agreed that the discussion should be taken offline, with the CEO working further on the strategy documents, with Chair advice.

Chair reported that the Nominations Committee has approved the Board Induction Document.

Chair reported that the CEO Appraisal was going forward, in accordance with the process agreed by the Board last April/May; there had been a Nominations Committee discussion followed by a first stage meeting between the CEO and Chair. The second stage meeting is on Friday 6th March. The Chair will then report to the NC.

ACTIONS;

- CEO to continue planning work on strategy, based on Board "Awayday" decisions;
- Chair to finalise CEO appraisal, in consultation with NC;
- Board Directors to sign off their induction programmes and their sight of all BF policy documents.

7. CEO Update

GU drew the Board's attention to her monthly Operational report; there were no questions or comments; on the Board's behalf, the Chair thanked her once again for what had now been established as vital briefing for Directors and observers.

GU noted that the membership scheme review was still ongoing; it is critical that to get it right and this was a key priority for the year. We are putting in place a project manager, with advice from Project UK. We were no further forward with the communications plan. Chair agreed to follow up with PA on the proposed communications workshop. In a HR update, GU said that all staff will go through a performance appraisal process. Senior leadership will have a 360 degree feedback by an independent person who will be supported financially by a grant from UK Sport for the Senior Leadership Team Development project.

The Board noted that Copperdale had now been wound up.

ACTIONS;

- Chair to follow up with PA on proposed workshop.



8. Communications; Annual Report

The CEO said she wished to upgrade the Report, using as an example the model in the web link that was circulated before the Board meeting. The CEO will put this together by September and will ask all Board Directors to reflect on their views for the year and input content where appropriate.

9. Any Actions offline - AOB

There were no **Actions offline**, but GP asked about the actions from the “away day”. Chair said all was going forward and D Sales would attend the next Board meeting to review with Directors.

AOB – CEO requested Board put out a statement that Beazley funding was ending this year. It was agreed that she and the Chair would draft a statement.

CEO also reported that we have two companies responding to the tender for our Commercial Framework project, of which a key deliverable is the articulation of the assets available to a potential sponsor and the potential brand proposition

ACTIONS;

- CEO & Chair to prepare Beazley statement for Board approval.

Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 16:59.

Date of next meeting – 26th March 2015, 5pm at Beazley
