



Minutes – November Board 2015

Date of Meeting	26/11/2015
Location	Beazley
Present	Chair, P Abrahams, T Cadman, J Campbell, C Halsted, G Palmer, B Speight, P Wedge
In attendance	C Hyde, M Liston, J Magill, H Nicholls UK Sport (for latter part of meeting). CEO, D Moseley, K Robinson, A Newton.

1. Introductions, Apologies, New Declarations of Interest.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting with a special welcome to the Home Country representatives. He confirmed that it would be the last Beazley British Fencing Board meeting as the sponsorship arrangement concludes in December 2016.

There were apologies from John Troiano/Director, Caryl Oliver/Director and William Pitt/Director. Apologies were also received from Hilary Philbin/President.

There were no new declarations of interest.

On behalf of the Board and British Fencing, the Chair extended his thanks to Beazleys for all their support, over the five year period. The Board agreed this had been a very effective and valuable partnership.

The next Board meeting will be the Board Awayday at Cranfield in January starting at 10:30 on the Friday. Part of the work leading up to and during the workshop will be as a result of the High Performing NGB project (from Sport England) in which BF has been selected to participate.

The away day will cover three key areas;- 1. The HPNGB Workshop, 2. Further discussions arising from previously conducted Board evaluations, 3. The BF Strategy going forward.

The CEO and team will provide input in advance.

BF has secured Governance support funding from SE for the HPNGB work and the Awayday.

Action: CEO to send HPNGB questionnaire to Directors

Chris Coleman of Sport England will attend the February Board to talk about Sport England's new strategy.

Chair noted that Helen Nicholls from UK Sport will join the meeting to update us on where BF is with UK Sport and how we are perceived.

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The Chair reported that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on the previous day represented a good day for British Sport – a 29% increase was announced in funding for UK Sport, and the Government has now confirmed funding through to Tokyo. Sport England has had a reported 3% increase. These were surprise results, given that it was well known that both bodies had modeled for the Treasury various levels of cut in funds.

The next "hurdle" is the DCMS Strategy announcement, to be published in December. Sport England and UK Sport will then publish revised strategies (reflecting the DCMS strategy) to be expected February/March 2016.

CEO reported, from more specific guidance, that the key message is NGBs' need to become more commercially sustainable. The 29% UK Sport increase reflects a maintenance of the current funding level as UK Sport has been funding current programmes from their reserves.

2. Urgent catch up items/Actions from last meeting (non exec)/Interim Decisions approved/New Risk Management Items

There were no urgent catch up items.

Non-executive actions – The Chair evaluation has been sent around to the Board. There were no other outstanding actions.

There were no Interim Decisions.

New Risk Management Items – The CEO drew the Board's attention to a potential risk of legal action from a non-member. We are receiving legal advice and insurers have been informed.

3. Q2 Accounts

DM reported that the accounts were in the same vein from the previous quarter. Q1 accounts were very much on budget at the time and this is still the case for the end of the second quarter. As with the previous quarter additional information has been supplied where the timing differences have been removed. This is to try and give a 'where we are now' figure.

"Performance" has an overspend, which the PD is managing and is satisfied we are on track - the budget is fluid as it is a four year grant. "Talent" has a deficit of just under 4k, representing the expecting bounce back from the end of the first quarter where there was a deficit of 21k. Again, the PD and Talent Manager are satisfied with progress.

"Development" shows an adjustment to remove the participation aspect of the Development budget. As usual, the only surplus is showing on our education and achievement awards programme.

"Events" – there were no events in the July - September period, and therefore this budget included primarily staff costs. The overall results show a variance of 4k behind budget, which is a result of the National Championships in quarter 1.

"Corporate Services", which is a good indicator of the overall BF position, shows a deficit of 38k. This year we are budgeting that we will not break even – we expect a deficit in line with the surplus made in the previous year, as explained at the AGM. There are no areas of concern; results are where we expected them to be after six months.

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GP asked if there were any issues elsewhere, apart from sponsorship. CEO responded that there were a couple of minor issues but nothing to be concerned about. The Board had agreed an additional budget spend on the commercial sponsor search which is over and above the deficit which has already been agreed. The Board should note that this would mean that the agreed budget deficit will be increased by that additional approved spend. DM confirmed that the sponsorship issue has more significant implications for next year.

PW suggested a few presentation changes which DM agreed to look at. The CEO suggested that PW brings it to the attention of the Chair of the AGRC and for that group to agree formatting changes.

Action: PW to discuss and agree accounts formatting changes with JT.

The Chair thanked DM for his briefing.

4. Commercial update/Sponsorship update

CEO reported that BF had gone through a process of looking at commercial products and services and how we can maximize income in the future, this item to be discussed by Directors after the formal meeting.

Sponsorship update – CEO advised the Board that there was not a lot of interest so far. Nine NGBs are also looking for sponsors and the market is tough. We are still going after companies with a brand alignment. Getting meetings with potential sponsors is key.

JC asked for the Board members' opinion as to whether BF should speak with betting companies, as that sector appears to have money and companies are working well with communities to better their image. CEO responded that currently we are working with the Muslim community and we could not be sure that we would get the same opportunities if we took on gambling companies. However, we would not say no to companies that have an interest. "Brand Meets Brand's" short list is financial services and best fit. We can expand the search but it would be at an extra cost. We could ask them to approach not so high-end companies.

There was a brief discussion regarding the pros and cons with no conclusion. The suggestion was that we would table all unusual opportunities to the Board but we are currently not in a position to turn away money without serious consideration. CH asked if the BF code of conduct prohibited gambling. JC felt that the Board needed a discussion on the subject. BS asked if the CEO was satisfied with Brand Meets Brand. CEO confirmed yes – they are doing what we have asked them to do. Chair noted that the overwhelming response is timing; people are fully booked for 2016. CEO said we are also interested in any offers for 2017/18.

Chair said he was in the early stages of looking at philanthropists as another alternative approach. JC asked how Directors are taking forward the request for suggested possible sponsors, from the Chair; Chair confirmed that a form would be circulated.

GP asked if there was any possibility of Beazley extending. CEO confirmed no. JC asked what the Board was doing with the leads that they had come up with.; these are all being followed up. CH asked if smaller companies were being looked at; CEO confirmed yes. PA asked if the list from Brand Meets Brand could be shared as he may be able to assist; CEO agreed to liaise with him.

CEO reported that she had organised a networking event on the 23rd February at the Lansdowne Club to invite potential sponsors to meet the leadership team and to see what fencing is and what we do.

Action: CEO to send detailed list to PA.

Action: CEO to create a full report to Directors on progress.

Action: Chair to circulate the form that has been produced.

5. Governance

Annual HR Policy Approval

CEO alerted the Board to the fact that BF HR policies need to be approved annually and between now and the next Board, the new policies accompanied by a list of changes to the policies will be sent out to Directors. The CEO asked the Board how best they would like to manage approval of interim minor changes to policies as the numbers of policies precluded these being presented at Board meetings for discussion. The Board agreed that the summary changes would be sent out in a list and for the Directors to approve them within two weeks.

Safeguarding

The Board was informed by email of recent Safeguarding result – that the NSPCC had concluded that BF now meets the NSPCC Advanced Safeguarding Standard. Chair congratulated everyone involved on this Safeguarding result and reiterated the importance and the Board's commitment to Safeguarding. The CEO thanked GP for her contribution with essential work on the Youth Panel. GP updated briefly on the progress of Youth Panel and agreed to send the Directors a list of names of the members of the panel and to send an update for the website, once the Panel had agreed. Once the Panel has something concrete to report, the Panel leader will be invited to a Board meeting to present the report. The Panel may also request that the CEO attend a meeting with them if there are operational issues they would like to be addressed. CEO made it clear that Board needs to leave the Panel to do their work with the support of GP – this is a group created as a mechanism to allow them to express and escalate their views.

Chair thanked GP and Liz Behnke on the work done to form the Youth Panel.

Action: GP to update website with Youth Panel names.

6. Break

There followed a break at 15:19

7. BF New Membership Scheme

CEO reported that the AGRC had been presented with a spreadsheet model on the effects of income based on moving to the new scheme. Representatives of NI, Wales, England & Scotland and therefore attendees JM, ML and CH have all had sight of the model. The model currently assumes that not a single new person will join BF and that 20% of people sitting as a competitor will move down a category – ie a fairly conservative starting point.

CEO advised that all other models presented previously have relied on a significant increase in membership to outweigh the costs in certain categories.

Individuals should be individual members to benefit from the public liability insurance. BF is continuing down the individually insured route, rather than significantly increasing club or competitions insurance costs. Competitive categories will remain the same but with prices going up – eg a full member will go up from £40 to £48. In terms of “compete” the benefits do not particularly change. There was a lengthy discussion about insurance, based on questions and concerns from CH, and the insurance aspect will be

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articulated as clearly as possible. Recreational category is the category that non-competitive Social members will move to.

All Home Nations have agreed to put up their prices.

The message is collectively we deliver insurance, The Sword, officials, workforce training, safeguarding and we are all “looking after your sport and this is what you pay for”.

There will be more FAQs and guidance for members.

ML noted that we had to have a scheme that worked for all Home Nations and BF. This structure fits with all Home Nations and does not put anyone in a position of being worse off. We also looked at what members wanted and took into consideration the membership survey. This scheme is a foundation upon which we can build.

The Board agreed the scheme subject to all Home Nations also agreeing to it.

The membership category/pricing was agreed.

An increase in prices based on an increase in inflation was agreed in principle.

The principal of subsidising the loss to a Home Nation (excluding England) with a BF gain was agreed.

Chair and CEO thanked Home Nations for work on the new scheme.

Subject to the Home Nations agreeing to the scheme CEO confirmed that the launch is likely to be in January with joint statements put out.

The Home Nation working group terms will be brought to the AGRC.

Action: CEO to collect formal agreements through HN working group

8. CEO update

The Board had been sent the Q2 report. Attention was drawn to the new membership system with Sport80 – currently it is not perfect and still has some issues, but the system has additional functionalities. CEO will send around figures on percentages of renewals and direct debit.

Balanced Scorecard

CEO noted that the balanced scorecard was a draft. She ran through the following points.

- Set strategy – what should we be measuring
- Draft has been shared with UK Sport and received positive feedback
- Areas indicated relate to our strategy lines on our VMost – providing a way to ensure that our strategy and KPIs relate to each other
- Will be discussed further at the Board away day in January
- Strategies remain the same but the tactics may change
- The CEO would like further consideration and input regarding the useful things to measure?

JC requested clarification on target headings.

Action: GU to update timescales for next Q3 scorecard.

9. UKS - Tokyo Investment Strategy

Helen Nicholls from UK Sport joined the meeting to give a brief update on where BF were with UK Sport. Chair thanked her for her long standing support for British Fencing and ever helpful, and frank, advice.

The following points were made:

- UK Sport is going through the Tokyo process
- UKS is aware that making decisions after the Games is challenging
- A lot of work has to be done on athlete numbers, financial and business planning between now and March
- Sports are given an indicative figure pre Games time
- There are 3 stages - 1) agree athletes and targets, 2) the draft stage, 3) submit pre Rio final submission
- Once submissions are in during early March the Programmes and PDs will be able to concentrate on Rio
- The recent announced UK Sport percentage increase from Government is not huge if you take inflation into account – neither does it change the position on medals and medal success
- BF is in band 4 – a medal target sport
- The first part of the process is to define your medal target. UKS is honest with sports as to where their targets are
- BF has been agreed as top 8 to medal sport in 2020
- Agreed rough size of athlete cohort
- UKS is working with sports to make sure they medal
- Not increasing programmes
- Performance team will work with UKS and EIS
- The key message is to focus on where BF can medal in the next 4-8 years and show what the evidence is
- The key message for NGBs is to focus on where you can medal in the next 4-8 years and show what the evidence is.

There were no questions from the Board. Chair thanked Helen for her ongoing help and for the clear and helpful explanations.

Helen Nicholls and Alex Newton left the meeting.

CEO reported to the Board that she had asked Alex Newton to cost up an epee programme of six athlete places. CEO will bring the costing to the Board, so the Board can understand the money that we would need to find to run this in addition to the foil and sabre programme. BF will need a significant contribution for such a programme.

Chair added that there is always an onus on us to deliver further income to supplement the programme, further to the UK Sport income. This is a concern as we have no additional commercial income at this point.

As part of the process the CEO explained that she and Alex Newton are looking for Board Directors to form a working group to help the executive with the workload. At the recent AGRC it was agreed that CH will participate, and it must be noted that the group will not be making strategic decisions or discuss individual athletes. The executive would like to involve GP with her work with the Youth Panel and PA. The group will be an executive working group costing out the programme and making sure nothing is missed.

10. AOB

Referee Expenses

The CEO briefed the Board on ongoing issues with a few referees who submit expense claims too late. The Board asked the CEO to give a strong message to referees from the Board that referees must submit their expenses within the required time frame. The Board noted that BF has an expenses policy and cannot have ongoing liability for expenses not submitted in accordance with that policy. The Board noted that the CEO can make decisions where the budget exists, and further investigation with regards to the outstanding amounts out-with those budgets should be made. The Board agreed that the CEO has the authority to approve a limited sum that must be reported to the Board.

Charity

As the two Board Directors dealing with the Charity were not present this item could not proceed.

Letters to Board

The Board acknowledged receipt of the letter received from Mark Kent.

Patrons Lunch

Chair informed the Board that the Patrons Lunch to celebrate the Queens birthday would take place on the 12th June. Tickets were available for the street party for organisations that have the Queen as their Patron. BF has bought ten tickets and Chair has asked for a further ten tickets. The intention is to involve members; this was also an opportunity to show off our sport.

World Veteran Championships

Congratulations were extended to Paul Wedge and John Troiano on their World Championship Men's Foil Titles.

The meeting closed at 17:33.