



BRITISH FENCING BOARD MINUTES

9 May 2013

At Beazley

*Present; David Teasdale (Chair), Tom Cadman, Clare Halsted, Alp Orge, William Pitt.
Apologies; Paul Abrahams, Julia Bracewell, Graham Paul, John Troiano, Georgina Usher.
In attendance; Peter King (CEO), Penny Moseley, Ray Stafford, Jack Magill, Alex Newton,
Margaret Nolan.
Observer; Rich Beer, Sport England.*

MINUTES

1. The Chair noted that the Board meeting was quorate.
2. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. CH queried the style of minutes, when were they changed? How did the change affect BF Committees? PK responded, when the Chair took over writing them, in October last. DT said that these were in "Cabinet Office style", dealing with decisions and actions rather than "who said what", a style he was used to and deemed appropriate. There was no budget for a formal minute taker. Re BF Committees, the Chair said it no longer seemed appropriate to dictate how its committees wrote their minutes, so long as they were clear and conveyed decisions, actions and recommendations effectively.
3. Under Matters Arising, CH queried the reference to payment of referees as they had been paid at the recent BYCs and the Cadet & Junior Championships. PK and PM explained that, on checking, no Board decision to this effect was found. The issue would come to the Board once GP was ready to present his recommendations for the new Refereeing Committee.

DIRECTORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. The Chair noted that, now the new Board was in place, with eight new Directors, it was timely to review all the declarations for consistency and accuracy, so they had been circulated. He asked TC for any comment; he had none, either about the forms themselves or the process. No other Directors offered views. TC reminded all that it would be essential to check for any new or potential conflict of interest before every Board meeting. The Chair confirmed this was Board practice.

CHAIR REPORT

5. DT took the Board through the following matters;
 - a Barclays Bank form covering powers of signatories required the Board's formal approval. This was duly given;
 - General Meeting - the Board approved the proposed running order. Each Director confirmed that so far there was no general discontent evident with the Board's two resolutions;
 - the Nominations Cttee that day had agreed the Chair's proposal that the Board should start recruiting the next CEO of BF in October, based on a specification the Committee will recommend to the Board in September. The aim was to make an appointment in December/January, to take up post in March and thus enjoy training and a handover from PK. The Board approved this plan;
 - there were rules change proposals from the Rules Committee for the Board to approve, which it was agreed should be done speedily via e mail in view of the FIE deadline;
 - our formal governance review this year, by Sport England and UK Sport, was to be on a self assessment basis;

- there was a suggestion from two people wishing presently to remain anonymous for a new BF fund to give financial help to fencers under 22. The Chair is to take this forward toward a detailed proposal for the Board to approve - he asked for volunteers and CH agreed to assist; she reminded the Board that a similar fund mechanism, the Bobby Winton Fund, already existed. The Board gave approval for this work to be taken forward.

CEO REPORT

6. PK reported as follows;-

- the e mail load within BF remained enormous and it was a serious impediment to the effective running of the organization. DT, RS and other Directors agreed. But the Board accepted this was part of the continuing need to improve our standing with the members and community through good responsive communications. AO suggested that more comprehensive information with FAQs on the website and circulated might help to decrease mail traffic;
- a new insurance package was now in place (for which RS agreed to draft a summary and website FAQs).

GROW UPDATE

7. MN reported on progress with the Grow pilots, adjusted to meet Board comments and doubts. She was being helped by a small group of Directors, plus RS, with necessary urgency. Two of the three projects were getting all necessary priority, and would be started by July with initial results by September.

The University based pilot would follow later. R Beer expressed his support for how the latest plans were developing, stressing that the pilots represented “product testing” in which “mistakes are OK”. MN noted that the Grow staff were under pressure; PK added that it was important they be left so far as possible to manage the urgent priorities.

8. On other matters, MN reported;-

- the “safeguarding” work approved by the Board had been well received. The Board proposed a vote of thanks to Liz Behnke for this, from PK;
- the Regional Hubs are about to have initial meetings;
- for the Beazley coaching initiative tutors’ meetings are about to take place;
- team management training meeting is arranged for June;
- MN plans a club and coach conference in September;
- the AASE scheme will continue with cohort 3 and will be within the lower part of the Talent Pathway.

9. The Chair noted that this was likely to be Rich Beer’s last BF Board meeting and it was appropriate to thank him for all his hard work and support for fencing, over 3.5 years as our Sport England Relationship Manager. All present gave RB a sustained round of applause.

GOLD UPDATE

10. AN reported that;-

- the KPIs and milestones for the WCP were now signed off with UK Sport;
- with MN she had visited Scottish Fencing and had very useful discussions;
- talks with Lea Valley on the elite centre continued;
- the search for a new Head Coach continued;
- the announcement of the appointment of the TP Manager
- Joanna Wray, had been discussed that afternoon with the Comms Group and would be made within 24 hours.

BUDGET

11. PK reported that the accounts for last year were in preparation, with haysmacintyre now installed as our auditors after Spofforths had agreed to resign. The Board confirmed their approval of this change and of haysmacintyre's appointment.

12. PK informed the Board that intensive work had continued, including with a small group led by JT, on the finances and budget. JT was leading a small group looking at events and action will be taken fast to reduce the potential deficit. Lessons had been learned about cost control and management. PK stressed to Directors that urgent savings had to be found and he looked for more suggestions. The Board discussed two specific options;-

- a) the Sword, which the Board was reluctant to stop publishing. It was agreed that the Comms Group would look urgently at options, and would consult the Editor;
- b) membership, the Board is in favour of the new scheme but work is needed on IT and marketing. A launch in 2014/15 should be planned, subject to Home Country discussions in particular with the Welsh who oppose it. But we should look urgently at introducing direct debit and perhaps adding any credit card charges to members' payments.

13. PK stressed to the Board that the finances and budget were our "most serious issue", demanding urgent reflection and action. The Chair, summing up, noted that –

- savings for this year must be found;
- it may not be possible to finalise the budget at the May 18 Board meeting;
- we should look at a "clean start" budget approach for 2014/2015.

GLOVES, SABRE

14. The Board approved the recommendations from the Safety Committee (There were two changes recommended).

AOB

15. AO asked when the final report was due from the Committee Review Group; DT said this was treated as urgent. The key questions for the Group still to consider were on implementation.

16. PK noted that the BF Athletes Commission wished to nominate James Davis for the FIE; the Board gave its approval.

17. The Chair agreed to restart the practice of putting Board minutes (with confidential items removed) on the website.

18. The Chair warmly thanked William, on the Board's behalf, for the excellent hospitality during a long day of meetings.
