Board of Directors

Minutes

Monday 09 December 2024 @ 11:00

Hybrid meeting: Bird & Bird, 12 New Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1JP

and via Teams

Board Attendees in Person: Duncan Birtwistle; Peter Brooke; Alison Howe; Lauren Pagé; Zac Randell; David Rosen; Pauline Tryner; Drew Vanbeck; Rob Woods.

Via Teams: Keith Willdig; Andy Robinson;

Guests: Peter Hart; Amanda Wynne-Jones (Item 3); Howard Blackman (Items 3 & 4);

Apologies: Darren Bernstein; Laura Kaye Tomlinson.

Minute taker: Peter Brooke.

1. Meeting Administration

1.1. Welcome and introduction.

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked Lauren Pagé for hosting the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Rob Woods (proposed Chair elect), Zac Randell (proposed independent director) and Keith Willdig (new elected director) to the meeting and everyone introduced their roles.

The Chair informed the Board that a recording of the meeting would be held on the Peter Hart's (advisor) computer on a personal drive and would be deleted when the minutes were approved. It was agreed for the meeting to be recorded.

1.2. Apologies:

The Chair informed the Board that Darren Bernstein and Laura Kaye Tomlinson had submitted their apologies.

1.3. Any other business

One item was raised;

- An enquiry was raised in relation to mixed junior teams competing at the JK.

No further items were raised.

1.4. Declarations of interest

Pauline Tryner declared an interest due to her involvement in the JK for a later item.

British Orienteering. Registered in England & Wales No.1606472.
Registered Office: British Orienteering, Scholes Mill, Old Coach Road, Tansley, Matlock, DE4 5FY Tel: 01629 583037

2. Chair, Independent Directors and CEO Recruitment update

The Chair asked Rob Woods and Zac Randell to leave the room during this item.

Chair

Alison Howe provided an overview of the new Chair recruitment process and the interview that took place. A summary paper had been shared with the Board prior to the meeting.

Alison confirmed that she was pleased to recommend Rob Woods as the new Chair elect.

After a discussion, the Board unanimously approved Rob Woods as Chair elect to be confirmed at the 2025 AGM.

Rob was congratulated and welcomed back into the meeting.

Independent Directors

Alison Howe provided an overview of the new Independent Director recruitment process and the two interviews took place. A summary paper had been shared with the Board prior to the meeting.

Alison confirmed that following the interviews, it had been decided not to progress with one individual and that she was pleased to recommend Zac Randell as a new independent director.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that Lauren Page would continue as a Director until the end of 2024, with Zac Randell assuming the position in 2025.

Zac was congratulated and welcomed back into the meeting.

Acknowledgements

The Chair thanked Alison and the Panel for their efforts in the recruitment process.

Lauren Page was commended for her valuable contributions over the years.

CEO Recruitment

Peter Brooke left the meeting. (Notes for the minutes provided by Peter Hart)

Peter Hart provided an overview of the CEO recruitment process, discussions held with potential candidates and that four applications had been received so far and advised the next steps in the process once applications closed on **15th December**.

Alison Howe was tasked with leading the process on behalf of the Chair.

The recruitment panel will consist of:

- Alison Howe
- Rob Woods
- Duncan Birtwhistle
- Chair of an Association (East Midlands as per the rota)
- An Independent Director

Peter Brooke returned to the meeting.

3. Insurance

Amanda Wynne-Jones and Howard Blackman joined the meeting online.

Alison Howe declared a conflict of interest and refrained from discussions where applicable.

The Chair welcomes Amanda Wynne-Jones from Howdens Insurance Brokers to give a presentation on sports insurance.

Amanda talked through a presentation highlighting insurance risks, an overview of the sporting landscape and challenges as a sport that orienteering should consider.

Amanda referenced the limited options for companies providing insurance cover for sports and highlighted specifics to orienteering within our current policy. British Orienteering is in the last of a three year deal with its insurers and it's unclear what changes to costs there may be for the next renewal.

Amanda highlighted that British Orienteering are one of the few National Governing bodies to provide non-member coverage to the current level.

The cost to British Orienteering for each non-member run at an event, is the equivalent of insuring a member for a full year for public liability insurance (PLI). This is a significant cost to the sport each year and as a membership organisation, this was providing a membership benefit to non-members.

It was reminded that regardless of insurance status of participants; volunteers, clubs and those organising events are covered by PLI as long as appropriate policies, procedures and risk assessments are completed.

Duncan Birtwhistle joined the meeting during this item.

The Chair thanked Amanda for overview and her time.

Amanda left the meeting.

The Board discussed the presentation, insurance options moving forward with a view to recommending a position ahead of the 2026 renewal and the 2025 renewal.

Decisions

- The Board will proactively communicate to clubs about potentially removing non-member insurance coverage.
- Alison Howe and Pauline will assist Peter Brooke with this communication.
- The Board agreed to retain Howdens as the insurance provider without a tender process and approved the premium.
- The Board approved the insurance premium for 2025.

4. Strategy Update

Peter Brooke and Howard Blackman highlighted key successes in 2024, these included:

- A new competition format and participation initiative linked with an external partner which will be taking place early in the new year.
- Outcomes and recommendations from the *Find Your Way* project. A very positive independent report (By Sports Structures) on the project and been produced and was available for the Board to review.
- Progress on *Lifelong Pathways* including the positive work in coaching.

Actions:

- A further discussion on the *Find Your Way* project was requested at a later date.

The Chair acknowledged Howard Blackman for his contributions.

Howard Blackman left the meeting.

5. Minutes of Board meetings 7 September 2024

5.1 The minutes of the meeting 7 September 2024 were approved without amendment.

5.2 Actions from previous minutes

- **Staffing update**
    - Additional staffing had been brought in to cover the retirement of Peter Hart. Improvements in efficiencies had also been made to the database.
- **IT invoice**
    - A dispute over an invoice has been concluded. It is our intention to tender our IT services in 2025.
- **Copyright infringement**
    - No further correspondence has been received and we regard this action as closed.
- **Club insurance consultation**
    - We are to investigate insurance options for non-members for 2026.
- **Insurance Ireland**
    - Action to be closed as further discussions will be held around the overall insurance.
- **Corporation tax**
    - A webinar will take place during the development conference in 2025.
- **Environmental strategy**
    - A questionnaire had been sent to clubs and the results are being analysed. Future guidance is to be provided to clubs.
- **Forest/ Urban ranking list**
    - This has been completed and is now live for members to view where they rank.
- **Building society account**
    - Kelly is in the process of looking into options to split the money held in our current account.
- **Hosting major events**
    - No further action
- **Risk management**
    - No further action

6. Finance

6.1. Management Accounts

The Treasurer referred to the Management Accounts.

The Treasurer informed the meeting that the income from membership and levy was as forecast.

Expenditure on salaries remained lower than expected but this was a result of some vacancies not being backfilled during the year. At the moment and subject to end of year adjustments we should be below the forecasted end of year deficit of £100K in the region of £58K.

6.2. Budget

The Board reviewed and approved the Budget for 2025.

6.3. Trail O Major event levy

The Board considered a request that Major Trail O events remain paying only the standard levy.

The Board agreed that Trail O British Championships and Trail O events taking place at Major events should only pay the standard levy.

6.4. Financial support for WOC 24

The Acting Chief Executive informed the Board that British Orienteering has supported WOC 2024 with funding up to £40k to date.

WOC 2024 has informed British Orienteering that they expect to make a small surplus of between £2k and £4k and does not expect to require any further funding from British Orienteering.

Final confirmation will be provided in the New Year.

7. Governance

7.1. AGM 25

The Acting Chief Executive referred to the options provided in the papers for the AGM and Board meeting in 2025.

It was agreed the proposed AGM in 2025 would be held earlier than in 2024. A provisional date of Saturday 17th May was agreed pending a suitable venue close to the Northern Championships.

8. Matters of Significance

8.1 Major events costs & concerns

The Acting CEO informed the Board of concerns raised over the budget for BOC 2025 and the Sprints 2025. The event organisers were working hard to reduce the forecasted initial deficit and ensuring they have a minimum level of surplus.

8.2 Russian athlete enquiry for a major event

An enquiry had been made by an athlete wishing to attend a major event. After further investigation, they met the current criteria as they are a current member of an unsanctioned IOF affiliated country.

The Board reviewed the current position for athletes from suspended countries. The Board provisionally agreed the following which was to be confirmed following checks at the next meeting in February 2025:

The Board will follow the IOF rules (agreed in July 2024) moving forward for elite races:
https://orienteering.sport/regulations-iof-independent-athlete-status/

[Independent athlete status regulations]

Overview:

Elite/ WRE events in the UK:

- Athletes from an IOF suspended country may only take part in M/W21 Elite/ WRE races if they hold Independent athlete status sanctioned by the IOF. (Note: Independent athlete applications are granted twice a year in April & November and lasts for 12 months)

Non-Elite/ WRE events in the UK:

- Russian and Belarusian athletes would be permitted to compete in the non-elite classes at events providing they were members of a British Orienteering affiliated club in 2021 and/or who had joined British Orienteering in 2022 prior to the invasion or where members of an unsanctioned IOF affiliated country/ association/ club prior to the invasion in 2022.

All events:

- No athlete from an IOF suspended country, competing as an independent or at non-elite events, can compete in any kit associated with the suspended country, such as club or national shirts.
- Whilst the suspension by the IOF is in place, British Orienteering will not accept any new Russian or Belarusian members.

Due process for checking an athletes status and applications is advised to be produced.

9. Welfare & Safeguarding

9.1 Overview

Peter Brooke, Lead Safeguarding Officer, reported that working together with the Welsh Orienteering Association (WOA), we had achieved the Level 1 CPSU standards in Wales. This demonstrates good practice and is a requirement for continued funding from the Welsh Government.

Due to a wider ongoing review into the annual frameworks, there was not a CPSU (England) annual review. In its place was a catch up with CPSU. They maintained they were still very happy with our work in safeguarding.

The Chair thanked the WOA and Peter Brooke for their good work in safeguarding.

There is one ongoing case currently, it is envisaged that a decision will be confirmed before Christmas.

10. Standing Items

10.1 Steering Groups and Committees

Keith Willdig agreed to be the Boards new rep for Trail O replacing Scott Collier.

British Orienteering. Registered in England & Wales No.1606472.
Registered Office: British Orienteering, Scholes Mill, Old Coach Road, Tansley, Matlock, DE4 5FY Tel: 01629 583037

10.2 Steering Groups and Committee matters

10.2.1 Rules Group

The Board noted and thanked Alan Wallis for an update on the Rules Groups progress provided in advance of the meeting.

10.2.2 Competition Schedule Group

The Board noted the major events competition calendar for the next few years.

10.2.3 Coaching Committee

Howard Blackman had earlier in the meeting provided an update on the work of the coaching committee and the new qualifications structure being developed.

10.2.4 Performance Pathway Steering Group (PPSG)

The Board noted Tom Bray's resignation and thanked him for his work. The Board also approved the recruitment process to find a suitable replacement.

The selection policy was not available and will be completed shortly.

Duncan Birtwhistle provided an update from the latest PPSG meeting which took place in Birmingham and the positive work being taken. Duncan and Ruth Beale (Chair of PPSG) will support Pippa Archer (Performance Manager) in the recruitment process to replace Tom Bray.

11. International Matters

The Board noted and congratulated Scott Collier's appointment to the IOF Foot-O Commission.

12. Strategic Plan

12.1 Membership and participation figures

Peter Brooke, presented the latest member and participation figures.

He reported that membership numbers were 8,949, which was slightly below those forecasted at the start of the year (9,000). 16-40 segment of the membership was now at 1,945 (22%) which was up on the previous year.

Participation was predicted to be approximately 148,000 at the end of the year against a forecast of 140,000. The number of non-member runs was up to 19% of the total runs.

12.2 Board discussion

Duncan Birtwhistle led a discussion on the strategic plan. The Board reviewed several slides demonstrating trends and charts for membership and participation across major events.

The Board agreed that the strategic plan is fit for purpose with the four strategic themes still being relevant and appropriate to our sport.

It was appreciated that as a sport we need to develop and embrace new concepts and approaches when we deliver events. By continuing to do the same, there is a high risk of no long-term growth.

The Board recognise the need to provide direction for clubs in areas such as social media profile, event experience and formats, for example can score courses be rebranded? Are there also additional learnings that could be made from other sports.

The Spanish Orienteering Federation was noted as a relatively young NGB with a young participation profile. Could British Orienteering, identify some key lessons from Spain and other newer orienteering countries to understand their approaches.

Local partnerships were highlighted as a positive area for growth that has been successful for a number of clubs. This route provides a variety of opportunities including other local community groups.

The Board recognised that resources are crucial here and there is a need for a collaborative approach between British Orienteering and clubs to be able to drive change and neither on their own have all the resources to be successful.

Moving forward, can British Orienteering and Clubs develop a deliverable roadmap applicable to suit clubs of all levels. Together, how can we bring the strategic plan to life for clubs?

The Board agreed to consider updating the strategy in approximately 12 months time when the new Chair and CEO will have had time to settle in. The Board was keen to ensure more time is dedicated to in depth discussion on areas of the strategic plan during Board meetings.

13. Closing business

13.1 Any other business

Pauline Tryner raised a concern about Juniors from other clubs combining to form relay teams. Pauline was to discuss the query with Terry Smith and Alan Wallis.

No other business was raised.

13.2 Conclusion

The Chair thanked Lauren Pagé for her time and valuable contributions on the Board over the years as she steps down.

14. Future meetings

Key Dates	Venue
Monday, 3 February 2025	The Studio, Birmingham
Monday, 31st March 2025	The Studio, Manchester - tbc
Saturday 17th May 2025	AGM – Lakes tbc
Monday, 7th July 2025	The Studio, Birmingham - tbc
Saturday, 13th September 2025	Online - am
Monday, 8th December 2025	Bird & Bird, London - tbc

The Chair thanked Lauren and Bird & Bird for hosting the meeting.
The Chair formally closed the meeting at 16:10