

# Board of Directors



## Minutes

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 11:00

The Studio, Manchester

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**Board attendees:** Duncan Birtwhistle, Peter Brooke, Alison Howe (online), Zac Randall, Andy Robinson, David Rosen, Pauline Tryner, Drew Vanbeck, Keith Willdig, Rob Woods (online)

**Invited guests:** Pippa Archer, Ruth Beale (online)

**Apologies:** Laura Kaye Tomlinson,

**Minute taker:** Peter Brooke

## 1. Meeting Administration

### 1.1. Welcome and introduction.

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

Apologies were received from Laura Kaye Tomlinson.

### 1.2 Any other business

PT Raised a discussion point on how Championship events are delivered to the required standard.

DV Raised the Board position on the reserves and agreeing a level for the reserves to sit at which included a buffer for projects.

No other items of business were received.

### 1.3 Declaration of interest

No declaration of interests were made.

## 2. Minutes of Last Meeting

**2.1** The minutes of the 3 February 2025 meeting of the Board were approved without any changes.

**2.2** Actions from previous meetings

- **Staffing update**
  - Mark Nixon and Graham Gristwood have joined the performance team.
  - Discussions on an updated staffing structure covered later in the agenda.
- **Club Insurance Consultation**
  - Discussed later in the agenda.
- **WOC 2024 Finances**
  - WOC 2024 have confirmed they have received the final money due and is concluding the IOF report.
- **AGM**
  - Discussed later in the agenda.

- **BT Internet emails issue**
  - The issue of those members with BT internet email addresses not receiving some of our emails has been raised directly with BT. No solution forthcoming from BT.
  - Working with ZYGO, we have updated our database function and rerouted emails which should address the issue.
- **Corporation Tax**
  - This action remains outstanding, and Peter Hart will be following this up.
- **Loughborough Building Society Account**
  - Kelly Perryman and Andy Robinson are assessing options to split funds across a couple of accounts. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
- **Leaving X (Twitter)**
  - We have suspended our X account pending full cancellation. No comments from members have been received in relation to this.
- **Membership journey**
  - A team discussion has been held and further work is being undertaken.
- **Campaigns and specific branding**
  - The new participation officer will be leading on this with the communications officer. (Note the job advert was going live on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April)
- **Support for non-squad seniors**
  - Discussed later in the agenda.
- **Hosting major event**
  - No further action
- **Risk management**
  - No further action

### 3. Finance

#### 3.1 Receive the management accounts to the end of February 2025

The Treasurer referred to the Management Accounts.

Expenditure on salaries remained lower than budgeted but was expected due to the recruitment of the CEO and some vacancies not being filled. A surplus will show on this line until new roles are filled, expected from June 2025. All other budget lines were tracking as expected.

The Treasurer reflected on the recent audit meeting where no issues were found and the deficit for 2024 confirmed as £61,660K.

The Board approved DV to sign off the accounts.

#### 3.2 Budget 2026

The CEO provided a draft 2026 budget for the Board to review to provide guidance when agreeing the proposals for the AGM. Actual spend from 2024 and allowance for inflation had been considered to provide forecasts of required income from membership and levy fees.

It is anticipated that the 2026 budget will run at a planned small deficit as reserves are further reduced.

No queries were raised.

The 2026 Budget will be approved at a later Board meeting following the 2025 AGM.

## 4. Performance

### 4.1 Performance presentation

Pippa Archer Performance Pathway manager presented a reflection on 2024, an update on the performance programme for 2025 and setting out the programmes aims for the forthcoming season.

Pippa discussed performance highlights in 2024 events with the sprint format proving a strong area for the team at the moment.

The results of the athlete survey, conducted at the end of the season was discussed. This highlighted a positive team atmosphere, good support and coaching. Challenges remain the costs incurred by athletes to attend training and events.

It was discussed about various avenues for athletes to obtain financial support such as regions, clubs and the Orienteering Foundation. No athlete has approached Pippa to discuss challenges, but Pippa is available for confidential conversations if an athlete has concerns.

As highlighted earlier, two additional staff members had joined the team with specific remits following a review of the role by Performance Pathway Steering Group (PPSG) and taking into consideration athlete feedback. Mark Nixon focuses on athlete development support and Graham Gristwood coordinates camps and competitions.

Pippa provided an overview of the budget including constraints and considerations which vary each year.

An overview of PPSG was provided highlighting the people on the group and the positive support and guidance they have provided so far.

*Ruth Beale joined the meeting online*

### 4.2 Support for non-squad seniors

Ruth Beale as Chair of PPSG joined the meeting and discussed the long term considerations in how we are developing our athletes and what does the club structure lead into. How do we support those who show the next level of promise and address the gap between the clubs structure and performance programme. There will be athletes who will not have reached the required standard for the performance programme at that time but may do with further support.

Capacity within the performance programme is limited and could not take this on currently. A consideration was discussed around capacity within the regions to support this principle, however this could vary from region to region. Funding was highlighted as a key challenge.

The CEO referenced that this could be a work area within the new Participation Officer role to investigate.

**Action:** The Board to consider how members who are showing a promising level of skill who haven't reached the performance criteria are supported. How is the gap between club training and the performance programme filled?

The CEO is to consider if this falls within the remit of the new Participation Officer or following a Board suggestion, if this may be a standalone 0.2 role.

Duncan (Pauline to support) to write a paper to bring to the next Board meeting on this subject considering a potential role and the target groups.

- Who are the target athletes?
  - Suggested as non-squad athletes and over 35's veteran support such as those selected for the VHI's.
- What are the responsibilities of the role?
- What types of training would be considered?

Drew thanked both Pippa and Ruth for their input and work and concluded with the positive feedback received within the athlete survey.

*Ruth Beale left the meeting.*

## 5 Governance

### AGM 2025

#### 5.1 Non-member insurance cover at events

The Board had been presented a paper ahead of the meeting which included the responses from clubs both for and against the recommendation.

The CEO presented the findings from the recent club consultation seeking club's support for the Board's recommendation that non-member insurance cover is removed from events. Of the 31 clubs who responded, 21 were in favour of the Board's recommendation and 10 were against.

A number of clubs had sought further clarification which had been provided.

The Board felt it was a useful consultation and appreciated the helpful feedback provided by clubs.

There were several concerns raised by clubs which the Board discussed at length. They reflected on the potential risks and approaches taken in other sports.

The Board voted on the matter, three voted for keeping the cover, four voted for removing the cover, and two abstained.

Therefore, the non-member insurance cover is to be removed from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

The Board recognised that there is a desire from clubs for non-members sampling the sport to have cover. It will be investigated to see if an introductory or day membership could be introduced.

**Action:** British Orienteering is to investigate the membership structure and identify if an introductory membership is feasible which would include insurance cover.

*Pippa Archer left the meeting*

#### 5.2 AGM 2025 proposals

##### 5.2.1 Member proposals

No member proposals for the AGM had been received.

##### 5.2.2.1 Proposed membership 2026 fees

Following on from the discussion on the 2026 budget, the Board agreed the following proposed membership fees for the AGM:

#### **Memberships fees**

- Seniors £17 (increase of £1)
- Young Adult £11 (increase of £1)
- Juniors £5 (no change)
- Family £39 (increase of £2)

The basis of the fees remains the same. Young Adults being two thirds of the Senior fee and Juniors being one third of the Senior fee.

#### **Club affiliation fees**

- Clubs £95 (increase £5)
- University clubs £25 (no change)

#### **5.2.2.2 Proposed 2026 Levy fees**

As the Board had agreed to remove the non-member public liability insurance from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. It was decided that any saving should be reflected within the levy for 2026.

There was a long discussion on the merits of both retaining a non-member levy and having a smaller increase in membership levy versus removing the non-member levy and having a standard levy for all seniors. This would increase the levy paid per senior run for members.

The CEO provided proposed levy fees based on both scenarios which provided a similar level of income in line with the 2026 draft budget.

The Board voted and were evenly split between both models (four for A, Four for B and one abstention). It was therefore agreed to put both models A and B out to the membership at the AGM to vote on their preference.

	Current 2025	2026 - A	2026 - B
Senior Members	£1.80	£1.85	£1.95
Junior Members	£0.60	£0.60	£0.65
Senior non members	£2.75	£2.80	£1.95
Junior non members	£0.60	£0.60	£0.65

#### **5.3 Director nominations**

Only two nominations had been received for the two director roles which were available from David Rosen & Pauline Tryner.

As there were two vacancies, they would be declared elected unopposed at the AGM.

#### **5.4 AGM handbook**

Peter Brooke referred to the previously circulated Draft AGM Handbook.

He informed the Board that the circulated version did not contain the updated proposals. Peter Brooke is to update the text following this meeting. David Rosen agreed to review the final document on behalf of the Board before publication.

## **5.5 2024 Annual report**

The draft Annual report was circulated to the Board and had some sections missing. David Rosen and Drew Vanbeck are to review and sign off on behalf of the Board ahead of publication.

## **Governance - other**

### **5.6 British Orienteering Succession Plan**

#### **5.6.1 Independent directors**

Four people had applied for the two available independent director positions. Peter Hart is leading this process and is currently arranging dates for interviews.

#### **5.6.2 Staffing structure**

The CEO provided an update on the amended staffing structure following discussions with the staff and a review of needs of the strategic plan versus current capacity.

Three positions were due to be advertised from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. These are for a Participation Officer FT, Safeguarding Officer PT and a Development Officer PT. Interviews are to take place in early May.

### **5.7 Directors/ Companies house**

The Chair confirmed Darren Bernstein's resignation from the Board and thanked him for his work for British Orienteering particularly in the improvement in marketing.

The Chair also confirmed that this was due to be Laura Kaye Tomlinson's last meeting as an independent director. Laura Kaye had passed on her thanks and best wishes for her time on the Board. The Chair thanked Laura Kaye in her absence for her work particularly around the support for Safeguarding.

The Board confirmed Rob Woods as an independent director prior to him taking up the Chairs role in May.

### **5.8 Anti-Doping**

The CEO referred to the circulated paper and informed the Board that two members of the elite squad were no longer on the UKAD whereabouts list.

Rachael Handley had also refreshed her training as an anti-doping trainer. This ensures training can be provided to the Performance squads.

*Pauline Tryner left the meeting.*

## **6 Strategic Plan**

### **6.1 Membership and participation figures**

Membership figures for the year to date show a stable figure in line with same stage in 2024.

Participation figures from competitions are on a par with 2024 and there would have been expected growth had a significant number of events not been lost to poor weather in January.

## **6.2 Key projects within the strategic plan**

The CEO provided updates on the following:

### ***Quid Games***

The second and third events have been confirmed for July and November and will be linked into other events at which SportsShoes are headline sponsors. This will provide reach into significant new audiences and into facilities which will already be present such as event arenas.

### ***Volunteer awards***

Nominations have closed and are at a good level compared to 2024. These will be presented on the Friday at the JK.

### ***National Outdoor Expo***

BOF linked in with 13 other partner stands creating a trail around the expo in which over 400 people took part. 80% of people asked for further information about orienteering. The Trail won Best Stand Activation Award.

Lots of conversations were held throughout the expo with keen participants and partners. A new potential partner arose from it and is being followed up.

### ***Youth Sports Trust Conference***

Another positive conference and discussions with influential policy makers. This conference provides an ideal opportunity to speak with potential delivery partners to ensure joined up thinking for those delivering orienteering in the education sector.

Links with partners and the YST have been strengthened from this conference.

## **7 Matters of significance**

### **7.1.1 Insurance claim update**

The Board were informed of an ongoing insurance claim from an event earlier this year. The case is currently with the insurers.

### **7.1.2 Air IT Credit**

Air IT had provided a credit due to an undeliverable project where money had been paid. A refund was not requested due to orders and services which are expected to be undertaken in the next few months.

### **7.1.3 Suspicious emails**

The Board were informed that several members had highlighted a suspicious email from an external source claiming to be able to provide BOF data. Immediate action was taken and checks made with both ZYGO and Air IT to check over our systems and look for any breaches. No fault or breach was found, and no further emails were reported to BOF.

We are happy no data breach has occurred, and the emails were a phishing attempt.

## **8 Welfare & Safeguarding**

### **8.1 Welfare matters**

Peter Brooke provided an update on a case that had been concluded and gone to appeal. The appeal was heard by an independent panel and was not upheld.

## **9 Standing items**

### **9.1 Steering group and committee matters**

#### **9.1.2 Rules Group**

An update to the rules had been issued. No other updates.

#### **9.1.3 Performance Pathway Programme Group**

In addition to the presentation earlier in the meeting. The Board were informed that one athlete appeal had been received which had not been upheld. A minor update to the appeals policy had been made ahead of the next selection meetings. This allows an appeal panel to adjourn for further information if required.

#### **9.1.4 Trail O**

Trail O are looking to host a World Ranking Event in 2026.

Neil Cameron is standing down as Chair of the Trail O Selection committee at the end of 2025.

## **10. International matters**

### **10.1 Trail O commission nomination**

It was confirmed that Ben Kyd had been nominated by the Board to the Trail O IOF commission. It was noted that his nomination had been accepted and the Board wished Ben well.

## **11. Any Other Business**

### **Standards at major events**

As PT had left the meeting early this item was put on hold.

## **Reserves levels**



Drew Vanbeck led a brief discussion on the level of reserves as these were still above the required level. It was proposed that this be added to the next agenda to agree a Board position on the level of required reserves, plus a buffer to fund projects and any unforeseen circumstances.

#### **Drew Vanbeck Thanks**

Drew Vanbeck concluded his final Board meeting as Chair with thanks to everyone who had supported him on the Board over the last six years. Drew was confident that the organisation had progressed in this time and wished Rob Woods all the best as he takes on the Chairs role.

## **12. Future meetings**

Key Dates	Venue
Saturday 17 May 2025	AGM Bampton Memorial Hall, The Lakes
Monday 7 July 2025	Birmingham, The Studio to be confirmed
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Online
Monday 8 December 2025	London, Venue to be confirmed

Further Conference calls to be organised as required.

Meeting finished at 15:45