

Board of Directors



Minutes

Monday 7th July 2025 11:00

The Studio, Birmingham

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

Invited guests: None

Apologies: Drew Vanbeck

Minute taker: Peter Brooke

1. Meeting Administration

1.1. Welcome and introduction.

The new Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and appreciated their support. He looks forward to working with everyone.

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 Drew Vanbeck.

1.2 Any other business

Two areas of AOB had been raised ahead of the meeting and are duly noted.

No other items of business were received.

1.3 Declaration of interest

Duncan Birtwhistle registered an interest in the Independent Directors recruitment.

No further declarations of interest were made.

1.4 International results

The Board noted the positive results at the recent international events, JWOC and World Cup 1. The Board congratulated the athletes on their achievements.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the 31st March 2025 meeting of the Board were approved without any changes.

2.2 Actions from previous meetings

- **Staffing update**

- Jeanette Downing has started in her full time role as Lead Safeguarding Officer and Development Officer.

- After the interviews for the Participation Officer, there was no suitable candidate. The role was amended and readvertised as an Events Development Officer. Five interviews are due to take place on Tuesday 8th July.
- Emma Monkman (Access & Environment Officer) has now left the organisation due to other work commitments. There will be a temporary gap whilst the events position is recruited.
- Discussions on an updated staffing structure were covered later in the agenda.
- **Corporation Tax**
 - This action remains outstanding, and the CEO is to follow up with Peter Hart.
- **Loughborough Building Society Account**
 - Kelly Perryman and Andy Robinson have assessed options to split funds across a couple of accounts. We hope to conclude this over the summer.
- **Membership Structure**
 - A team discussion has been held, and further work is being undertaken. See also notes re non-member insurance.
- **Non-member insurance cover at events**
 - Work is currently focusing on a digital membership (discussed later in the agenda) which combines the Go Orienteering portal. Discussions will be held with the insurance brokers from September to consider potential options to provide some additional cover if required by clubs.
 - A suggestion by the Board was to consider if clubs could pay an additional fee to cover non-members at some events.
- **Campaigns and specific branding**
 - The new events development officer will be leading on this with the communications officer.
- **Support for non-squad seniors**
 - Discussed later in the agenda.
- **Hosting major event**
 - No further action. This will feature as an agenda item within the next six months.
- **Risk management**
 - No further action. This will feature as an agenda item within the next six months.

3. AGM Review

The Board reflected on the AGM and that all resolutions passed. Two questions raised in the AGM had been addressed. A change to the database event filter now shows Indoor events and a proposal was being finalised to scope out increasing participation within the University setting.

The Board discussed future AGM's and a desire to encourage more members to attend and be involved. Linking to an existing event works well and speakers for future AGMs will be discussed at in due course.

The Board provisionally felt a date in June for the 2026 would be appropriate.

Action: The CEO is to identify 2026 Board & AGM dates for consideration at the September Board meeting.

4. Trans Policy

Following updated legislation since the March Board meeting, the Board subgroup have considered the current Trans Policy and implications of the ruling.

The Board noted that a UK Code of Practice was due to be published over the summer, and this may provide further advice and clarification on this matter and impact the policy.

The policy had been updated and removes the ability for those born male at birth, who have not been through puberty, to apply to compete in the female category.

The Board approved the updated policy to be implemented immediately. The Board committed to further reviewing the policy once the UK Code of Practice has been published.

There were discussions on other factors relating to the Trans Policy.

- **Recording of those running non-competitively in event results.**

There are several reasons someone may run non-competitively at an event. A majority of the Board decided to not make any recommendations for where these runners should feature in the results table.

- **Ranking points**

No changes are proposed, at the moment, to the way ranking points are displayed, pending the further review.

- **Database update**

It was identified that amendments to the database are required to recognise chosen gender and sex at birth.

Action: Updates to the database to be completed.

5. Non-Squad seniors' support/ development

Following an earlier Board meeting, the Board continued the discussion regarding support for senior athletes who fall outside of the elite squad. Duncan Birtwhistle had produced a paper on the subject which was circulated to the Board for further thought and discussion. The Chair thanked Duncan for his work.

The CEO followed up on an earlier action to identify if support could sit within the proposed new participation officer role. The participation officer role was not recruited following initial interviews, and the role reassessed which meant support on this subject did not fit within the new role.

The Board were split as to if this area of work was appropriate to continue at the current time.

The Board do see the value in this area of work, it's links to the strategic plan and agreed in principle to invest some reserves to support it.

Actions: The Board is to reflect on the discussions, Duncan's paper and feedback to DB. DB to identify the next steps to move this forward.

6. Finance

6.1 Receive the management accounts to the end of June 2025

The Treasurer referred to the Management Accounts.

Expenditure on salaries remained lower than budgeted but was expected due to the recruitment of various positions taking time and 2025 forecast with a different structure due to the CEO recruitment. A surplus will show on this line until new roles are filled, now expected from September 2025. Office expenditure was also down on budget due to additional contract savings that had been found. All other budget lines were tracking as expected.

The Treasurer commented that there was expected to be a surplus for 2025, and an accurate estimate would be discussed in September once major event levies and costs have been concluded.

The updated staff structure was reviewed and there was a brief discussion on Xplorer.

Action: The CEO is to provide the Board with considering the financial aspects of running Xplorer.

6.2 Reserves level

The Board discussed the current reserves levels and how this has varied in recent years. The reserves policy provides a minimum level which varies each year, and the discussion focused on a what a buffer above the minimum amount should be.

After a discussion, it was agreed that a £100k buffer above reserves was appropriate. This would provide emergency funds and an opportunity to invest if an opportunity arose.

This currently leaves an amount above this buffer (an accurate figure will be provided in September once the major events finances are concluded) which the Board will discuss further at the next meeting as to how it could be spent.

Action: The CEO and Board members are to create several proposals for investing the excess reserves.

7 Governance

7.1 Shadow Board proposal

The Chair discussed a future proposal which could see the introduction of a Shadow Board. This would involve those aged late teens to early 20's who would consider some areas of the Boards work and provide their insight and feedback. The Chair highlighted how it had proved very beneficial in other areas and would be important to involve more youngsters' views in our decision making.

The Board felt this could be very beneficial.

A proposal is to be worked up and produced at a future Board meeting.

Action: The Chair is to produce a Shadow Board paper.

7.2 Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

Sport England had fed back that they wished for some areas of the plan to be updated following the plans submission in early 2024.

Action: The CEO is to complete updates by September.

7.3 Independent Directors

The CEO has taken over the recruitment process for the two new Independent Directors. Two interviews were now scheduled for Tuesday 15th July and further interviews are being arranged.

7.4 Director/ Companies House

The Chair confirmed that Drew Vanbeck had agreed to stay on as the Senior Independent Director for a short period to assist the recruitment process for new Independent Directors concludes. Drew will then officially step down from the Board of Directors.

8 Strategic Plan

8.1 Membership and participation figures

Membership figures for the year to date show a stable figure in line with same stage in 2024. To the end of June there were 8491 members compared to 8557 in 2024. This slight reduction has remained constant week on week since April.

Participation figures show that after a weather affected start to the year (over 2,000 runs were lost to bad weather in January), participation had caught up and was on a par to the end of June compared to 2024. To the end of June in 2025 runs are estimated to be 82,400 compared to 82,700 in 2024. A strong July and better August compared to 2024 was predicted.

A discussion was held on a more comprehensive data set which could be available for the Board and members. The Board recognise the benefit this could bring to identify any concerning trends and measuring overall progress, alongside greater engagement with clubs to understand the sports progress.

The CEO discussed plans to create a 'Board data pack' which could be accessed for members via the website.

Action: The CEO & team is to work with ZYGO to develop a data pack which will utilise existing and historical data held within the database which is available for clubs, members and the Board.

8.2 Key projects within the strategic plan

The CEO provided updates on the following:

Quid Games

The second event have been confirmed for 21st November as part of the Kendal Mountain Festival. There are several exciting partners due to be announced which will help showcase orienteering to new audiences and build on the reach of the first event.

Entries will be opened in stages and will once again feature top athletes from a range of sports as well as entries open for the general public.

Go Orienteering/ digital membership

Work has been underway to look at a membership and create a fan/ free/ digital version which anyone can sign up to such as newcomers at club events or activities alongside visitors at exhibitions and shows. This would not be a full membership but allows use to speak directly to potential future members and participants in a more appropriate and consistent way based on their preferences. Data from other sports shows this has a good level of transition from this membership into full members.

The aim is to have this in place by the start of 2026.

University scoping project

A role to scope out the current university landscape and identify areas for growth will soon be advertised. The role for 1.5 days a week through the academic year will focus on two phases, phase one, research and insight followed by phase two development of initial participation formats. This would provide strategic recommendations and vision for long term development in the sector.

The role would be funded by staffing underspend from this year.

Discussions highlighted the challenges in setting up new clubs. This project was to work with existing clubs and members at universities where no activity is currently happening. More clubs would be a long term vision, however establishing initial participation would come first.

Safety update

The online reporting form is live and is being used. Further promotion to raise awareness will be conducted. This new report form provides a more efficient process away from the paper form.

A new safety advisory group is also being formed with several potential members of the group showing interest.

Coaching Instructor award

The Coaching Instructor award is ready with an orientation session for coach educators in early September. Initial focus is for this award is to target centres, schools and uniformed groups. The next step is to see the Coaching Advisory Group recommend this for use in clubs in line with the recommendation from the independent coaching review.

The independent led Performance Coach survey results and recommendations are due at the end of August.

9 Matters of significance

9.1 Complaint received

The Chair made the Board aware of a complaint that had been received and was being investigated. The Chair was hoping for a quick resolution but is unable to put a timeline on the matter. There would be an independent panel looking into the matter.

9.2 Insurance claim update

The Board was informed of an ongoing insurance claim from an event earlier this year. The case is currently with the insurers. One small claim has been paid and another is still ongoing.

10 Welfare & Safeguarding

10.1 Welfare matters

Jeanette Downing had joined the organisation in June and has taken over as Lead Safeguarding Officer. Whilst Jeanette undergoes the appropriate Lead Officer training, she will be supported by Howard Blackman.

11 Standing items

11.1 Steering group and committees

The Board reviewed the current committees which are in place and those which are aspirational to set up to support the sport. There are currently some key committees which require new Chairs and this is to be looked at over the next couple of months.

This area will be reviewed in more detail at a future meeting.

11.2 Steering group and committee matters

Performance Pathway Programme Group

The international season is well underway with World Cup 1 and JWOC completed. WOC & EYOC was taking place shortly.

It was noted that an athlete appeal had been heard and rejected by the appeals panel.

12. International matters

10.1 IOF event advisor

It was noted that Duncan Archer had been nominated as an IOF event advisor.

13. Any Other Business

Standards at major events

A discussion was had around some of the standards at major events. It was noted that there had been some challenges at a few major events in areas crucial in delivering high quality events/ experiences such as contacting organisers, entries opening late and map quality.

Andy Yeates (Major Events consultant) supports the event organisers, in the lead up to major events and provides feedback to British Orienteering on progress. Andy has shared challenges to BOF that he has encountered.

The Board discussed potential solutions to put safeguards in place and considered if a documented RAG rating system could be used at stages leading up to the event. This would identify potential challenges early and allow for time to address any concerns.

Action: The CEO is to work with AY to identify a potential assurance process for the Board to consider.

Board away day

It was noted that a Board away day was to be considered once the new Independent Directors were in place.

13. Future meetings

The September date is to be rearranged for a mid-week date due to a clash with the Compass Sport Cup Final taking place on the same weekend.

Key Dates	Venue
Saturday 13 th September 2025	Online
Monday 8 December 2025	London, Bird & Bird

Further Conference calls to be organised as required.

Meeting finished at 16:00