

Board of Directors



Minutes

Thursday, 25 September 2024 09:00

Online meeting

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

Invited guests: Justine Albert, Gregg Peers.

Apologies: Drew Vanbeck, Gregg Peers.

Minute taker: Peter Brooke

1. Meeting Administration

The Chair opened the meeting by noting the tragic passing of Italian athlete Mattia Debertolis and sending our thoughts to the family and Italian Federation. The board observed a moments silence in respect of Mattia.

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.

The Chair welcomed Justine Albert the new Independent Director who gave an overview of her experience to the Board.

Apologies were received from Drew Vanbeck and proposed Independent Director Gregg Peers due to a personal matter.

1.2 Any other business

1. To discuss a letter received from an MP regarding extension of British Summer Time.
2. Support to find a new Chair for Trail O.
3. A query regarding ranking points.

No other items of business were received.

1.3 Declaration of interest

No declaration of interests was made.

1.4 International Success

The Board congratulated athletes and members for their successes internationally recent noting a 5th placed podium at EOC and at EYOC, Emily Atkinsons 10th place in the long race together with relay success, W16 6th, W18 6th and M18 5th.

2. Governance

2.1. Independent Directors – Recruitment & Resignation

Justine Albert left the meeting

The Chair introduced that following the recruitment and interview process, Justine Albert and Greg Peers had been recommended as new Independent directors for the Board.

The CEO noted that Greg Peers confirmation as an Independent Director would be delayed to the December meeting due to his unavailability to attend this month.

The Chair noted feedback from DR who objected to the role of Independent Directors. No other objections were raised.

Justine Albert was confirmed as the new Independent Director: Proposed AH and Seconded AR. All present voted in favour.

The Chair noted Drew Vanbeck's resignation and thanked him for all his support during the director recruitment process in the summer and previous handover period.

Justine Albert rejoined the meeting

2.2. 2026 Draft Board & AGM dates

The Dates for the 2026 Board meetings were confirmed.

AH requested that meeting requests for all dates were sent out in advance. CEO to action.

The AGM is confirmed for Saturday 27th June with a view to link in with the British Sprint Championships.

The Chair requested that should two or more directors be unavailable, to let the CEO know ASAP and the date may be rearranged.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the 7th July meeting of the Board were approved without any changes.

Proposed AH/ seconded KW.

3.2 Actions from previous meetings

- **Staffing Update**

- Josh Wright Events Development Officer and Gracie Grant Access & University Officer have joined the team in the last couple of months.
- The CEO provided an overview of the roles and recruitment process.
- It was requested for the new staff could dial into the December meeting for a short introduction. CEO to facilitate.

- **2026 Board meeting dates**

- Discussed in the previous agenda item.

- **Corporation Tax**

- Discussions and a handover has occurred with Peter Hart and this will be picked up centrally by the team in 2026.
- **Loughborough Building Society Account funds**
 - Discussion later in the agenda.
- **Database update**
 - Sex at birth change is in progress
- **Xplorer update**
 - The Board reviewed the current financial details of the programme. The CEO highlighted improvements that have been made which included partner communications, database enhancements and increased focus on data capture. The Xplorer programme provides an additional income stream and product that community groups and local authorities can buy into to support our growth.
 - The Board were keen to ensure that in 2026, there is a clearer understanding of the data including the number of events and participants. How do we also understand the quality of events being run and do these external events demonstrate the sport in the right way? CEO to feed this back to the staff lead.
- **Reserves Level spending**
 - Discussion later in the agenda.
- **Shadow Board**
 - To be a future Board agenda item in December.
 - Board members are requested to feedback to the Chair with their thoughts about how this could work from previous experiences.
- **Diversity Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) progress**
 - Some changes have been requested by Sport England prior to sign off.
 - These are to be completed by the end of October.
- **Standards at Major Events**
 - Discussed later in the agenda.
- **Non-member Insurance cover at events**
 - Digital membership is being developed with a scope to include a future use to provide a trial membership period.
 - Main insurance renewal discussions will start at the end of October.
 - AH and PT will be the Board link/ support if required.
- **Campaigns & specific branding**
 - Work will be undertaken be led by Josh in his new position with Kay and Alex in communications and marketing supporting.
 - Comments raised from the Board include utilising external support to enhance this area. JA is happy to support the team here.
- **Support for non-elite seniors**
 - DB has distributed a paper on this area.
 - Action - The Board are to review and provide feedback ahead of the December meeting.
- **Hosting major events**
 - No further action – to be a Board agenda item within nine months.
- **Risk management**

- No further action – to be a Board agenda item within nine months.

4. Finance

4.1 Receive the management accounts August 2025

The Treasurer referred to the August 2025 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 vacancies at the start of the year. This has led to an anticipated surplus despite additional spend being made on areas such as IT.

The Budget in 2026 is to reflect additional spend where the reserves have been used.

It was highlighted that Trail O had put together a proposal for equipment for technology in order to host a World Ranking event. They have approached the CEO who has advised approaching The Orienteering Foundation in the first instance.

Actions:

1. The final 2026 Budget is to be presented to the Board in December.
2. The Board are to consider ideas to utilise excess reserves and any ask of funds from the Orienteering Foundations.

4.2 Loughborough Building Society Account

The Board reviewed several options provided by Kelly Perryman (Finance Manager) to split the current funds that sit within Loughborough Building Society (LBS).

The Board agreed to follow option E and to withdraw completely from LBS. The CEO discussed that there may be changes with rates during the withdrawal process and LBS have a 120 day withdrawal policy. The Board authorised AT, KP and the CEO to make the final decision should rates or offers change based on the agreed option.

Action: KP and CEO to begin the process to withdraw these funds and split across other banks.

4.3 Project Spend

The CEO presented an overview of investment projects that had been undertaken so far in 2025. This included significant unexpected IT costs that had arisen.

To date, one off IT costs currently stand at £8,600 with a further £8,000 invested into database and website enhancements. A further £12,000 had been spent on other projects. The work within the database to create a Digital Membership is awaiting the final quote (*note post Board meeting: cost expected to be £3,500*).

PT raised the funding support for members (outside of the elite squad) competing at national level and asked where the progress was. DB will be concluding the proposal before the next Board meeting.

PT discussed the removal of JEC from the performance structure and if this could receive funding from the reserves to allow the GB team to continue to attend the competition. It was explained that costs to British Orienteering included, entry fees, volunteer expenses and kit when required. Travel and accommodation costs of the athletes are self-funded. PT is coordinating an approach to support the competition outside of the Performance team.

5 International Matters

5.1 World Games response and reflections

The CEO provided an update on the actions British Orienteering and the Performance staff undertook in supporting the athletes when we became aware of the tragic incident. Priority was placed on checking in with the athletes and their welfare. It is to be noted that the athletes conducted themselves very professionally in China in difficult circumstances.

The Board thanked the athletes, the Performance Team and British Orienteering staff for their efforts and support during the World Games

There is no immediate need for UK events to amend their approach to their events given the time of year. Advice has been to ensure event risk assessments are up to date and consider changing weather scenarios.

The Board discussed their concerns over high temperatures and highlighted JWOC and World Masters as two events of concern this year. In addition, for the UK, British Orienteering must consider what is safe for everyone taking part. In the UK it's also advisable consider extreme cold weather and lightening.

The IOF has produced its Interim Heat Policy and is recommended that it is adopted for UK events.

The Chair noted that the IOF policy is interim and produced quickly following the event. However, there are concerns that the policy is only advisory in extreme temperatures and this wasn't strong enough unlike in other sports, where delays and postponements must happen at a set level.

The Chair highlighted that we should consider the IOF information and decide if we should take a stronger lead on events within the UK and a subgroup should consider the next steps and treat this as a priority.

The CEO highlighted that the new Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has been in the process of being set up and was due to meet for the first time in the next couple of weeks. They will be considering the Interim Heat Policy as part of their early work. A consideration is if there should be a Board rep on this group to support the discussions on the heat policy.

Action: The CEO is to feedback to the IOF the Board concerns.

6 Matters of significance

6.1 Trans Policy communications

The CEO referred to the previously circulated Trans paper, highlighting that some communications had been received from external groups. Communications to groups or individuals will be assessed on each occasion.

As stated within the policy, the Trans policy is under review pending further government advice. This is yet to be published. The subgroup on this subject will assess the advice once it is available.

6.2 Insurance claim

The CEO discussed that the outstanding claim had been settled with agreement from all parties involved.

6.3 Complaint update

The Chair provided an update on the outstanding complaint. He has been working with the SOA to compile terms of reference ahead of appointing an independent person to review the complaint. SOA are leading the identification of the independent to assess the case.

6.4 JK 2028

The CEO referred to the Board paper and reported that SWOA had withdrawn from hosting JK 2028.

The Board discussed the challenges and their experiences of hosting previous JK's. Views were shared which included:

- Do all regions across the UK have the ability to host the JK? Noting resources, areas and volunteer capacity.
- Is the format the right one? Does it need to change?
- Is the JK at Easter the most appropriate time to host the JK when considering increasing environmental factors?
- What is the purpose of the JK? Does this view differ across members and clubs?
- Should a larger scale shake up of the JK be needed, it wasn't a decision to be rushed and would not likely be achievable if desired for the 2028 event.

The following steps in relation to JK 2028 have been taken:

- An initial discussion is being held between Peter Brooke, Alison Howe and Andy Yeates to consider an approach.
- Discussions with key volunteers, followed by engagement with the events and competitions committee to identify potential hosts are underway.
- An approach to SWOA to discuss their concerns and identify the feasibility of the event remaining in the region with additional support.
- Develop a contingency timeline for decision-making and planning.
- Review support structures (financial, logistical, and volunteer resources) available to regions hosting JK.
- Consider initiating a strategic review of JK delivery and hosting models to secure sustainability and growth.

Sum up actions:

- Discussion on long term aim for JK (not for JK28), consider the creation of a JK sub group.
- For JK28 look to deliver it as is, approach SWO and identify a contingency plan.
- Consider utilising an external company to deliver JK 2028.

Actions: the CEO and team are to follow up discussions with SWOA and subsequent actions.

7 Strategic Plan

7.1 Membership and Participation figures

The CEO reported that:

Membership was on a par with the same stage in 2024 (down 42 members) at 8693.

Participation was up on 2024 at 110,391 compared to 104,200 to the end of August.

The number of events run in 2025 is approximately 100 less than in 2024 but the average runs per event has increased.

The Board agreed to future targets that were set out, this includes:

Membership – Target 10,000 members within 5 years. Growth of 200 members a year.

Participation – Target 160,000 competitions runs within three years. With a vision of increasing further beyond this.

Board data dashboard

It was agreed that this is useful for the Board. DB highlighted that it would also be useful for those outside of the Board as well.

The Chair discussed how we take our members and clubs along the journey with up.

Action: Board members to feedback to the CEO for areas of data they would like to see.

7.2 Sport England Update

British Orienteering received positive feedback from our last six monthly submission.

7.3 Forestry England

The CEO referred to the Board paper, discussions had been taking place and work is ongoing with their staff.

7.4 British Orienteering Webinar

The CEO outlined the plans and work underway for the BOF webinar on 13th October. It is envisaged that this becomes an annual occurrence to engage clubs and members.

7.5 Quid Games 2

The CEO provided a brief overview of Quid Games 2 which is linking in with the Kendal Mountain Festival in November. The event opens up access into new markets and brands which will be important for the future.

8 Welfare & Safeguarding

8.1 CPSU Safeguarding Assessment

The CEO referred to the annual CPSU safeguarding assessment. This year, an independent assessment was conducted rather than by CPSU themselves. British Orienteering continues to meet the required standards with one area identified around training of roles within the sport to focus on.

It was discussed that the new Independent Director Gregg Peers will take up the Board representation role for safeguarding.

8.2 Welfare matters

The CEO provided an overview of a case where a member had been suspended for a short period of time. Ongoing support and clear guidance have been provided to both parties involved. The new Lead Safeguarding Officer has been handling the case and has performed her duties very well.

9 Standing items

9.1 Steering group and committee matters

The Committees and groups paper is to be recirculated to the Board.

Action: Board members to identify potential groups in which they could provide additional support.

9.2 Safety Advisor Group

This was discussed earlier, and the Safety Advisory Group are meeting very shortly for the first time.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Letter from MP Alex Mayer

A letter had been received requesting British Orienteering support for a change in UK time to British Summer Time throughout the year.

The Board decided to a neutral response pending any further developments and progress.

10.2 Trail O selection committee Chair required

Trail O require a new selection Chair which has proved a challenge so far. If anyone on the Board could support that would be appreciated.

10.3 Ranking points

For a future discussion to consider the ranking points scheme and updates.

11. Future meetings (11:00 to 16:00 unless stated)

Key Dates	Venue
Monday, 8 December 2025	London, Bird & Bird
Monday, 9 February 2026	Birmingham, the Studio TBC
Monday, 11 May 2026	Birmingham, the Studio TBC
Saturday 27 June 2026 - AGM	South West TBC
Monday 13 July 2026	Birmingham, the Studio TBC
Saturday 12 September 2026	Online (9:00 – 12:00)
Monday 7 December 2026	London

Further Conference calls to be organised as required.

Meeting finished at 12:20