Board of Directors Meeting – July 2026

Minutes

Date: Monday 13 July 2026

In person meeting at The Studio, 7 Cannon St, Birmingham, B2 5EP

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

Apologies: Gregg Peers, Justine Albert.

Minute Taker: Peter Brooke

1. Meeting Administration

- The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- The Chair noted Justine Alberts apologies and that of Gregg Peers who has resigned from the Board. To be discussed in a later agenda item.
- The Chair welcomed Rob Lines onto the Board following his election as an elected Director at the recent AGM.
- The meeting was agreed to be recorded; the recording will be stored on Peter Brooke's personal drive and deleted once minutes are approved.
- The Chair reminded directors that safety, environmental and welfare considerations need to be at the forefront of our decision making.
- The Chair noted the recent passing of a number of members including Sarah Brown, Dave Gittus and Rodney Freeburn. On behalf of the Board, he sent his respects.
- No declarations of interest were raised.

2. Strategic Plan

The Chair introduced the session in which the Board aim to confirm the strategic intent to 2032, articulate the organisation's desired future state, and provide initial direction on the proposed strategic framework.

The goal for the Board, is to differentiate the overall strategy from the operational plan, and to enable British Orienteering's workforce to be able to operate without the need to constantly ask the Board.

The Chair began the discussion with a focus on the paper that had been sent out prior to the meeting and working through a diagnosis of what the strategy is aiming to achieve.

Five challenges were discussed with comments from the meeting noted below each point:

Challenge 1 – Demographic Sustainability. British Orienteering faces an ageing participant and volunteer base and must attract and retain younger participants, families and volunteers.

- What lessons can we learn from relatively new orienteering NGB's such as Spain to help with our approach?
- Culture can vary across events and clubs, how do we support best practice and provide a consistent experience. How do clubs test success? What is the role of the NGB here?
- What role does our complexity of information put people off? Both as volunteers and participants? What will encourage people to come back to the sport? What perceived barriers for a variety of roles are there? How can we ensure the requirements and safety elements within the roles are maintained but in a more user friendly way?
- Consideration to our event officials demographic. How do we recruit, develop and support our next generation of event officials and coaches?
- It's important to be able to demonstrate success, what are our conversion rates from newcomers? How can these be tracked? How can our data identify more areas for growth or areas for concern?

Challenge 2 – Visibility and Relevance. The sport remains relatively unknown to the wider public despite strong alignment with contemporary interests in outdoor activity, wellbeing and adventure.

- Brand identity/ visibility/ relevance, what three things can we and clubs stand for?
- What is our consistent message which can sell the sport, how can we be consistent?
- Essential to raise the profile of orienteering across the UK.
- How can we join up our social media campaigns to club events and activities? How do we ensure clubs are more invested in the campaigns?
- How does learning from events such as Quid Games migrate to clubs? How can clubs evolve and deliver similar experiences to encourage newcomers? (Note: the aim is not for clubs to deliver everything Quid Games does but how can they take elements to enhance the experience of participants)

Challenge 3 – Club Capacity and Resilience. Clubs remain the foundation of the sport but some face challenges relating to volunteer capacity, succession planning and organisational resilience.

- Are there additional partners (such as our delivery partners) who can support in our delivery/ reach of orienteering?
- Consideration to our event officials demographic. How do we recruit, develop and support our next generation of event officials and coaches?

- How does BOF support processes such as safeguarding and safety to become embedded within clubs?
- Ensure mechanisms are in place to support clubs on a one to one basis.
- What markers would identify a club requiring support?
- Effective use of data for the organisation and clubs will be important identify gaps, challenges and successes.

Challenge 4 – Financial and Organisational Sustainability. British Orienteering must maintain a sustainable organisational and financial model capable of supporting long-term development.

- Ensuring that our financial responsibilities are maintained.
- Avenues for expansion/ additional income streams are investigated.
- What processes can be simplified and streamlined to reduce volunteer workload. Simplicity.

Challenge 5 – Competitive Excellence. International success should continue to be supported through strong and sustainable athlete development pathways.

- How to grow the depth of elite athletes?
- How to ensure the elite and development athletes have the best opportunities and guidance to perform on the world stage.
- Contributing factors include, depth of squads/ skills/ training and access to appropriate areas.
- Developing appropriate test races and programme structures.

Other

- What other areas should the Board consider in addition to a focus on clubs/ performance?
- Access and permissions continue to be challenges in a number of areas.

Throughout the discussion, key words recurred (in no particular order):

- Brand identity
- Relevance
- Visibility
- Simplicity
- Retention
- Back to Orienteering
- Focus
- Access (O accessibility/ land)

Consultation

The Chair and CEO reflected on the importance of consultation and ensuring clubs and members were involved in the development of the new strategy. It was important that they are part of the journey.

There will be consultation with members, ideally through a number of small focused steering groups and seeking club specific feedback. A survey maybe considered, but it was noted the limitations this can bring.

It's important that the full diagnosis of the challenges has support from clubs.

The draft values were not discussed and will be revisited in the autumn.

Action: The Chair and CEO are to set out timelines for achieving the next steps. Including consultations.

Lunch – Taken with the development team to enable a networking opportunity, discuss the morning session and other areas of the development team's work.

DR joined the meeting at 13:50

3.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the 11th May 2026 meeting of the Board were approved pending an update regarding a discussion regarding expanding the number of directors to allow the Board flexibility should someone who could bring valuable experience/ skill set to the Board become available.

There was a discussion on Board continuity and considering future implications where multiple candidates are voting for a limited number of director vacancies. It was discussed that it remained important that members have the final decision on director elections, but it would be prudent to consider how valuable skills and experience are not lost from the Board when a director has not concluded up to three terms.

The Board noted that it was an appropriate time to conduct a director skills audit.

Action: The CEO to arrange a director skills audit.

3.2 Action Points

JK2028

The CEO provided an update on progress following collaboration with Forestry England (FE) and using Cannock Chase.

A recent meeting had been held between Access Officer Gracie Grant, Partnership's Manager Kay Hawke and the ecologist for the area from Forestry England. No environmental concerns were raised regarding hosting the event. An application for permissions was being completed. The next step is to meet the local council and investigate if areas of their land can be added to that of FE. It is envisaged that days 2 and 3 will be hosted at Cannock with options for days 1 and 4 now being explored.

The Chair discussed conversations they'd had with the SWOA Chair and with others at the British Sprint Championships. The CEO is to arrange a call with Mike Forrest to provide an update on central progress away from the South West.

The CEO outlined the next steps in British Orienteering taking a leading role in the event for 2028.

Trans Policy

This was now live (from 1st June 2026) and has been published. Further communications will need to be followed up with a focus around the membership renewal period.

Heat Policy

AH raised the current interim heat policy. It was queried whether BOF needed to wait for an update on the current IOF interim guidance before the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is able to produce a formal BOF policy. The Board recognised that our approach requires us to evolve as we learn. It was suggested that SAG could consider a lower temperature threshold for the UK. It was recognised that clubs required firm guidance of what to do in certain situations.

The Board also noted that it was everyone's responsibility to approach events in the right way whether that be as an organiser or a participant.

The CEO noted that guidance had been issued to clubs in May prior to the first heat wave of the year. The CEO is also to follow up on the publication of the safety pages on the website.

JK 2026

The accounts are very close to being finalised. British Orienteering is expecting a levy of approximately £9,300 versus a budget of £21,000. This is slightly better than initial projections.

The Board noted feedback from the JK Treasurer which highlighted challenges in achieving the desired participation figures and requirements to accommodate Trail O.

4. Governance

4.1 AGM 26:

The Board discussed the AGM with nothing of significance arising from the meeting and noting that the Monday night online format worked well.

It was noted that the pre meeting voting was very professional but on the night could have been slicker. The CEO noted a couple of other examples where voting at the meetings had a significant delay in counting live votes. It will be reviewed for future AGM's.

DR noted that it would be useful if there could be discussions on items during the meeting. The Chair noted that information had been sent out in advance and due to keeping to time, discussions were not always practical on the night. However, should a member wish to discuss any points during the meeting this will always be available.

The Board discussed a desire to attract a younger audience to the AGM but appreciated that the governance requirements of the meeting are not appealing to this demographic.

4.2 Director Resignation

The Chair reported that Gregg Peers (Independent Director) has resigned due to personal reasons and work commitments outside of British Orienteering. The Chair thanked Gregg for his work since taking up the role in December.

The CEO set out the timelines with an advert promoted shortly, closing date for applications in mid September with interviews to follow. It was discussed that the desired skill set be someone with a knowledge of safeguarding and safety.

AH is to act as Board liaison for Safeguarding/ Safety in the interim period.

4.3 Staff departure

The CEO reported that Josh Wright, Events Development Officer had left the organisation. Due to the uncertainty of the Sport England funding from April 2027, there would not be recruitment to immediately replace the position until any funding is confirmed.

4.4 Code of Sports Governance

British Orienteering has received confirmation from Sport England that British Orienteering is now fully compliant with the code.

4.5 Board training

The CEO reported that we had been unsuccessful in securing funding from the Sports Governance Academy in this round for Director training. Feedback was being sought, but it was understood that there was a very high number of applications received. There will be another opportunity in 2027.

Action: RW is to investigate other Director training opportunities.

5. Finance

Sport England

The CEO reported that Sport England had confirmed a change into their initial approach to the funding awards for governing bodies from April 2027. The multi year agreements will be pushed back to April 2028 and a transition funding period for 12 months will be implemented.

At this stage British Orienteering has not received any further communications as to what this looks like.

There is a chance that the funding application for this maybe required during the July/ August period where a number of holidays are scheduled.

The Directors offered to support where needed.

Action: Directors to let the CEO know dates they would be available to call on if required.

5.1 Management Accounts

The Board reviewed the management accounts to the end of June. The final accounts for the JK will be accounted for in July and a more accurate picture of the forecast deficit known at the next Board meeting in September.

No other concerns were raised.

5.2 JK 2026 Finances

Discussed within action point 3.2.

5.3 Milage rates

The Board noted the increase in HMRC mileage rates from 45p to 55p per mile.

A proposal was presented to the increase rates for staff and volunteers.

The Board are supportive of a change but wished to understand the current financial implications prior to any final decision.

Action: CEO to confirm further details with the finance manager and report ahead of the next meeting.

5.4 Membership autorenewals

The CEO presented projected cost comparisons for providing an auto renewal option for memberships. This was to provide an easier process for members and streamline administration operations.

The Finance manager is to compare costs with Sport ident (Si), prior to confirming the system to implement.

6. Matters of Significance

6.1 Insurance Claim

The insurance claim relating to the British Championships in South Wales, has been concluded and an insurance payout agreed to the landowner.

6.2 Complaint Update

Due to members of the independent panel stepping down ahead of considering the report, the update remains unchanged from the May meeting.

The Chair shared that the investigation part of the complaint has concluded, an independent panel will provide recommendations based on the independent report.

This will result in recommendations to be provided to the British Orienteering board, and to SOA.

6.3 Public complaint

The CEO reported that a complaint had been received from a member of the public. A video was captured which showed an incident of an orienteer at an urban event in a confrontation with a member of the public.

The Board condemn any actions by orienteers which potentially brings the sport into disrepute.

An investigation had taken place and action taken against the individual. It was also noted that lessons could be learnt for future urban events. The learnings are to be collated and distributed to all clubs.

ZR advised that regulations apply to all those taking part in an event regardless if they are a member or not.

Action: Lessons learnt to distributed to all clubs. The resident is to be contacted directly from British Orienteering in addition to the email to discuss outcomes.

7. Welfare & Safeguarding

7.1 Safeguarding report

No incidents or concerns to report since the last Board meeting.

7.2 Safeguarding Regulations

Further work is required on these and they will be presented to the Board at a future meeting for sign off.

7.3 British Orienteering and Orienteering Ireland, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

It has been highlighted that the MoU needed some minor wording updates which didn't affect the basis of the MoU.

The Board are happy to approve the MoU pending final confirmation of the wording by AH and the CEO.

8. Standing Items

8.1 Rules Group

No update for this meeting.

8.2 Performance Pathway Steering Group

There had been one athlete appeal for World Cup 3 which had been rejected.

No other updates.

8.3 Safety Advisory Group

8.3.1 The updated First Aid policy and guidance was approved.

8.3.2 It was noted that the final report from the World Games 2025 had been published. The Board was to read the report. The Board thanked Graham Gristwood who was one of the authors of the report for his contribution to a crucial piece of work.

9. International Matters

The Board noted and congratulated Bob Dredge's award of an IOF Bronze Pin at the recent IOF general assembly for his work on the IOF Ethics Panel.

The CEO attended the IOF General Assembly on British Orienteering's behalf. The Chair joined the meeting online.

It was noted that the fee structure for IOF nations had changed and resulted in a significant increase for British Orienteering. Feedback on the structure is to be agreed and fed back to the IOF.

The IOF's new strategy was approved and will be a useful reference point to consider during our strategy discussions.

There were no other concerns of points of note from the meeting.

AR left the meeting at 15:55

10. Any Other Business

1. A member has raised a question regarding BOF only membership and asking the Board to consider removing this option. This item is to be rolled over due to time restrictions in this meeting.
2. The Chair reported that he was due to have a conversation with Steve Cram regarding his role as President and ensuring the Presidency works for both parties.

No further business was raised.

Next meeting is due to be online on Saturday 12th September 2026. However, a number of directors highlighted unavailability.

Action: The CEO is to circulate a number of date options for a switch of meeting date.

The meeting closed at 16:05.