

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors Held on 27 January 2020 at the Sport Wales National Centre**

**Present:** Steve Perks (SP) Chair, James Williams (JW) Interim CEO, Bernie Plain (BP), Nicky Lewis (NL), Sue Alvey (SA), Nick Everitt (NEv), Chris Jones (CJ) WA, Adrian Palmer (AP) WA (for part of meeting), Neil Emberton (NE) Sport Wales & Alan Currie (minutes).

Before opening the meeting Chair spoke on the recent passing of Ron Odunaiya. His contribution to athletics in the Wrexham area and in Wales generally had been considerable. A minute's reflection was observed.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies.**

Apologies were received on behalf of Adrian Thomas and Charlotte Waite. Chair reported that Charlotte Waite has resigned as a director as her work commitments do not enable her to continue.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting (25 November 2019) were read for accuracy. There was an error in a number of places where 'Nick Hewitt' should have read 'Nick Everitt'. With that correction the minutes were accepted as a true record.

### **4. Matters Arising**

4.1 With the loss of both Ron Odunaiya and Charlotte Waite the need to recruit new directors becomes even more acute. There are now only six directors and the Board quorum is five. Today's meeting has just that number of directors present.

A recruitment procedure will need to be instigated immediately. Ideally there would be an increase by the next meeting but whether this is practical is uncertain. The Board requires a mix of skills and NL reminded the meeting that the question of diversity will also need to be addressed.

4.2 The notification procedure for AGM is contained in the byelaws.



4.3 Matt Newman had resigned, not retired, as CEO of WA. Reference to his attendance at Board meetings was unnecessary. It was agreed that some form of presentation to him in recognition of his contribution would be appropriate.

4.4 WA are working with R4W on the Service Level Agreement. The Board of R4W is very different to that of WA. WA is entitled to one place on the R4W Board who is normally the Chair, (currently occupied by Carol Anthony). SP and BP are R4W trustees.

4.5 Welsh Schools AA is now funded directly by WA. The role of WSAA within WA is under review. The School District infrastructure is need of urgent support.

## **5. Sport Wales Matters**

5.1 NE had circulated members with information on SW activities. Phase 2 of the organisational re-designing is under way. Regarding the progress of the SW funding model he said that the SW Board will meet on 14 February.

5.2 Meetings will be held between SW managers and all partners, commencing 24 February. Individual meetings will be held as each sport has separate requirements and different approaches will be made for different partners.

5.3 SP was aware of a meeting planned to discuss Community Chest but he has received no official notification of it. NE will investigate.

## **6 Governance Considerations**

6.1 A skills audit of Board members had been undertaken. All directors had self-assessed their individual skills in various activities (on a 0-3 scoring system) so that an overall picture could be obtained for each individual and collectively. The process highlighted some areas of need.

6.2 When recruiting, matters that need particular attention include gender parity, equality and diversity and knowledge of legal matters. Transition through succession planning is important. An appointment panel needs to be established. Current stipulation is that this should comprise Chair, Chair of General Council and one other. A high quality induction process is another necessity, perhaps something on which Sport Wales could give guidance.



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## **7 Staffing Update**

7.1 JW spoke on his proposed organisational structure. In his role as Head of Operations he had taken on many functions which, to a large extent, were entirely dependent on him. He felt that there is a need for all roles to be clearly identified so that they can be continued without having to rely on a particular individual.

7.2 The new structure will be based on four major areas of operation ultimately answerable to the CEO. These would be a) Coaching & Performance, b) Development & Participation and c) Competition, with Corporate Services underpinning all three.

7.3 Head of Coaching & Development is Chris Jones, with Adrian Palmer responsible for certain activities. It was noted that Liz Davies had recently stepped down from a role, and a new endurance lead would be recruited. Development & Participation will be headed by Chris Moss. There is currently a vacancy for a head of Competition. The role of the Officials Secretary will be clarified in the new structure. Rob Sage will head Corporate Services on a temporary basis.

7.4 There will be changes to the finance department over the Summer. It is hoped that the new structure will be operational by 1 April.

**The Board accepted the proposal.**

## **8 European Championships Considerations**

8.1 SP had recently attended an informal meeting at which Chairs of all regions/nations were introduced to the new Chair of UKA. The representative from Scotland made the point that Scotland is seeking to participate as a separate entity at future European Cross Country Championships. This would inevitably lead to implications for the other nations within the UK so that they will need to consider their positions should it come about.

8.2 Such a move would give greater opportunities for athletes not considered to be of podium potential at major championships to gain international experience. There are many issues to be considered, such as funding, and the view of the European AU, which has not yet been ascertained. It is known that they would like to see more small nations taking part in their events.



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8.3 Whether or not Scotland have ambitions of similar involvement in track and field championships is not clear. There are other areas that could also be affected such as fell and mountain running, trail running, etc. In addition there are competitions for age groups below seniors.

8.4 No firm decisions have been made as yet, but this is a situation that WA will need to monitor.

**The Board accepted the proposal for the CEO & Chair to undertake a formal feasibility exercise to explore whether the HCAF could compete as individual nations at European Championships.**

## **9. Finance Update**

9.1 NEv had circulated finance information in the agenda pack.

It is anticipated that accounts will be £4k ahead of budget at year end.

Current reserves are insufficient to meet the risk register level. A risk assessment exercise is required so that reserves match the risk level.

Budgets are being set both at current levels of funding and with an anticipated 5% reduction in funding.

9.2 In common with all governing bodies (except charities) WA are subject to VAT as our turnover exceeds the minimum qualifying level. This is a legal requirement and the impact is likely to be in the region of £13K - £20K per year. The meeting felt that financial reports are now much clearer and easier to understand than previously.

## **10 Commonwealth Games Holding Camp**

10.1 AP joined the meeting and gave a presentation on proposals for a holding camp for the 2020 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. In order to be as well prepared as possible it is essential that athletes are removed from their usual environment and allowed to focus on the Games.

10.2 A timetable of events was shown indicating that the holding camp will operate from 11 July 2022. The Games village (which will be smaller than the one in Glasgow in 2014) is expected to be open from 24 July, although this is subject to confirmation. The Games opening ceremony will be held on 27 July and the closing ceremony on 7 August.

10.3 It is likely that there may be just one qualifying standard, with B standards being discontinued. The standard is based on a top 6 placing at previous Games. A management & selection panel will be established and selection will take place in late 2021 or early 2022. There will be an appeals procedure, which will be



dealt with by WA, not Team Wales, as will matters such as de-selection, injury management and athlete commitment.

It is important to state that WA nominates athletes, with the final decision on selection resting with the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales.

10.4 Three sites had been considered as a holding camp; in Portugal, Turkey and Slovakia. The preferred option is for San Morin, Slovakia. The presentation showed the facilities available which are all to a high standard and very accessible. Athletes would be housed 3 per room and would be on site for 7 – 10 days. Some WA staff have visited the site and viewed it from the perspective of coaching requirements, medical facilities and access for paralympic athletes. In response to a question it was stated that visitors from Scotland and Northern Ireland considered the venue to be suitable for female athletes.

**The Board supported the plan and preliminary arrangements can be made.**

## **11 Updates and Reports**

Many items had already been discussed.

### a) Competition structure

JW said that while there were reservations in some quarters, feedback had been predominately positive. There has been dialogue with clubs, committees and other interested parties including UKA and the other home countries. A fixtures list for 2020 has been published. It is not the intention of WA to impose plans on the clubs and they will react positively to any comments received. Consultation is key and new ideas will be welcomed. The WA rationale for the proposed changes will be published.

### b) Equality & Diversity

WA is due to submit its advanced level plans to SW but the resignation of Charlotte Waite has caused a delay. It was suggested that the submission for Intermediate level be postponed for a period of six months.

### e) UK Members Council

While opinions are expressed forcefully, meetings are generally amicable. Issues discussed at recent meetings included the Salazar situation and the taking of supplements by athletes.



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f) Welfare and Safeguarding

JW has attended a number of meetings and the general agreement is that our systems are satisfactory. Welsh Athletics along with UK Athletics and the other Home Countries have agreed to undertake a review of safeguarding practices in an attempt to drive improvements in the area.

**12 Correspondence**

There was none

**13 Any Other Business**

No matters were raised

**14 Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting of the Board will be on Monday, 23 March 2020