

Welsh Athletics Board Meeting Minutes Held on the 8th July 2020

Meeting held remotely via video link

Present: Steve Perks (Chair) (SP)
Nicky Lewis (NL)
Nick Everitt (NE)
Adrian Thomas (AT)
Sue Alvey (SA)
Bernie Plain (BP)
James Williams – CEO (JW)
Chris Jones (CJ)
Neil Emberton (NEm)
Helen Adams (HA)
Tom Overton (TO)

Papers circulated in advance:

Paper – Updated 2020/21 Budget
Finance Report
Affiliation and Membership Report
May 2020 Minutes
Commonwealth Games Draft Policy
Interim Agreement – UKA & Home Countries

1. Apologies for Absence

None received

2. Declaration of Interest

None declared

3. Discussion items

1) Commonwealth Games Policy

AT gave an overview of the selection process, and reminded Board members that Welsh Athletics only nominates Athletes, the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales select the team.

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CJ talked through the policy – performance standards are based on a top 6 performance at previous Games. AT stated that these were the toughest standards ever, this coupled with the quota system being imposed on each Sport could mean athletes achieving the standards may not get selected.

CJ gave background on the scrutiny provided by the Performance Sub Group on the standards and ethos of the policy. AT supported CJ views that the level of scrutiny and challenge provided by PSG has not previously existed.

CJ presented a timeline for selection, and highlighted many of the challenges that the Performance team are working through in relation to preparation plans given the impact of COVID on athletes' ability to compete.

CJ also highlighted the challenging financial climate, and this was being factored into preparation plans.

JW gave an update on the discussions with the other Home Countries and UK Athletics about the challenges of the World Athletics Championships being moved to 2022.

CJ wants to create a specific support package for coaches in the lead up to the Games.

CJ wants to publish the policy at the end of September, and start to communicate with athletes and coaches during the Autumn period in preparation for the window opening in early 2021.

CJ presented an overview of specific competitions that the athletes may target to hit the qualification standards, whilst also outlining the qualification timelines in 2022.

Several Board members highlighted concern at the tight of the appeals window in respect to the final nomination date to CGFW.

CJ presented a timeline for the appointment of the Team Leader and Team Manager. Internal applications will be sought first. NL asked if this process could be clarified. JW stated that an executive lead as Team Manager was a recommendation of the 2018 review.

JW suggested that we could use 2022 as an opportunity to blood future Team Managers – JW/CJ agreed to explore this in further detail.

Board agreed that the Team Leader and Team Manager should be executive leads, but a recruitment process be put in place to validate the process of selection

TO highlighted the possibility of using the close proximity of Birmingham to support the development of volunteers? JW stated that this should absolutely be explored.

HA asked whether a COVID clause should be included in the policy? JW Welsh Athletics will ask for legal guidance before the policy is signed off.

HA asked whether a reduced team size will impact on Sport Wales funding.

TO enquired as to the duty of care provided for athletes who are not successful in selection.

ACTION – The Performance Sub Group to look into this in further detail.

NL suggested that external support be sourced, and the offer extended to coaches and parents.

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The Board approved the Policy

SP thanked the PSG for their hard work in creating the policy.

2) UKA/Home Country Master Agreement

JW gave an overview of the Master Agreement, and how it is required as part of the UK Sport review into UK Athletics. UK Athletics and the Home Country CEO's have met weekly during lockdown to review and update the agreement.

JW stated that the agreement protected Welsh Athletics as an independent Body, and protected its ability to deliver its strategy.

The Home Country Sports Councils are charged with ensuring the agreement is delivered, and several positive meetings have taken place with Sport Wales.

Working Groups are to be established to oversee the delivery of key strategies within the sport – these will relate to areas such as competition, coaching, commercial etc. Welsh Athletics will have a seat at every working group.

TO queried whether the agreement impacted on any intellectual property or impact to deliver any Sport Wales required activity. JW gave assurances that the agreement would not impact in any way on the deliverables required as part of Sport Wales funding.

AT asked whether the talent hub's are included as part of the agreement. CJ confirmed that the talent hubs would be quality assured via a performance and talent oversight group that he sat on.

The Board agreed to support the master agreement between UK Athletics and the Home Countries.

3). COVID update

JW working on a submission to the Sport Wales sport resilience fund

Welsh Athletics are continuing to deliver the Ask Us series, with positive engagement to date during the series.

Facilities gradually re-opening across Wales, Chris Moss is liaising with facility providers and offering support where possible. Elite Athlete hub established at Cardiff Met, with strict medical protocols in place.

Return to Racing guidance being finalised – with pilot competition events being planned.

Welsh Athletics continues to support the Welsh Sports Association return to sport groups

Membership is currently tracking at 62% compared to the same period last year, with Junior membership very low in comparison. Female Membership accounts for 56.8% of overall membership.

Some furloughed staff may return part time to support the return to sport activity.

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Bended learning Coach Education will be finalised by September and will enable coach education to re-start.

4) Any Other Business

Work on re-surfacing Newport stadium has begun

Coach Development webinar series continues to be well received, with weekly webinars planned throughout the Summer. HA stated how she had joined a recent webinar through the Run Wales programme and had been very impressed with the content.

Clwb Run Wales has now gone live

Safeguarding Review – SP gave an update on the recent UK Athletics and Home Country safeguarding review. A separate meeting will be convened to discuss the findings.

ACTION – JW to circulate the report to the Board

SP discussed the need to review the way Board meetings are delivered – it may require more frequent meetings to ensure that all areas of work are given due consideration. He asked Board members to consider options in this area.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Joint meeting with the General Council – 14th July 2020

September 21st 2020