

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 – Interim CEO (JW)
Chris Jones (CJ)
Neil Emberton (NEm)
Jo Coates (JC) – Part of the meeting

Papers circulated in advance:

Paper – Updated 2020/21 Budget
Finance Report
Affiliation and Membership Report
April 2020 minutes
Governance Action Plan
Performance sub-group minutes
Sport Wales update
Interim Agreement – UKA & Home Countries

1. Apologies for Absence

None received

2. Declaration of Interest

None declared

3. Discussion items

1) Presentation by Jo Coates

The New CEO of UK Athletics Jo Coates joined the Board and presented an update on her work to date, including a preliminary overview of the new UKA strategy.

JC highlighted many of the challenges that the sport is facing, but also emphasised that a number of new opportunities will be available to the sport going forward.

JC also discussed the significant amount of dialogue between the CEO's of the Home Country and UKA in recent weeks. The master agreement will hopefully clarify roles and responsibilities between all parties.

The Interim agreement confirmed that Welsh Athletics will have a representative at the Board of UKA going forward. AT queries whether this will cause a conflict, and will stop the WA representative from challenging if they did not agree with the UKA position. JC stated that if UKA & the HCAF had a formal agreement and good communication then that would reduce the potential for conflict.

AT also queried how the process will evolve and who will hold UKA to account. JC stated that the master agreement will enable each party to hold each other to account, with the respective Sports Councils also playing a key role.

BP queried the current Commercial challenges for UKA. JC stated that it was a challenging climate, but positive discussions with partners had taken place. She reiterated the need for positive communication. Through discussions, she also stated that joint opportunities would be a benefit going forward.

NE stated a joint 'Call 2 action' to promote the sport between UKA and the HCAF should be put in place.

JC highlighted the need for improved insight for the sport, and stated a joint dashboard for UKA and the HCAF could be put in place for each party to use.

NL stated that she was very heartened by what has been presented and would be keen to understand more about the governance changes that may be required.

CJ gave an overview of the good work already done to date in relation to performance and talent between UKA and WA.

SA enquired how will UKA improve engagement with Welsh Coaches and officials. JC stated that they hope to join the pathway and support WA to do this.

JW gave an overview of the work done to date on the master agreement, and the pressure on delivering against the Dame Sue Street report. JW also thanked JC for the level of engagement to date between UKA & WA.

SP thanked JC for her presentation and for providing the Board of Welsh Athletics with the update on the UKA strategy, and hoped that they could arrange a physical meeting soon.

JC left the meeting.

The Board agreed that Steve Perks would represent Welsh Athletics on the Board of UK Athletics. This will initially be as an observer until the UKA articles are amended to confirm Welsh Athletics position on the Board of UK Athletics.

2.) Finance Update

NE gave an update on the 2019/20 provisional year end position. It was still showing a negative position, but this was mainly down to the drop in performance of the investment fund due to the impact of COVID.

NE confirmed that the investment fund had since recovered its initial losses.

NE highlighted the challenges with forecasting of budget by budget holders. He stated that he was surprised by the level of variance between the previous report in March and the year end figures.

JW stated that the control mechanisms have been tightened, and hoped that the changes in budget holders as part of the recent re-structuring will improve the situation going forward.

3) Updated Budget and finance position 2020/21

JW gave an overview of the financial challenges being felt by the COVID crisis.

JW presented an updated budget based on a scenario of no activity in the first 2 quarters of the financial year. The budget demonstrated a significant reduction in income (circa £380k), but offset by reductions in expenditure. Despite the reductions in expenditure, a significant deficit position was being budgeted.

JW also stated that due to the financial challenges of the previous 12 months, there was very little scope of operational financial efficiencies.

JW agreed to provide details of how the deficit position will be managed, and the Board agreed a maximum deficit position that it would be comfortable accepting.

The Board agreed to approve the revised Budget.

NEm committed to work with Welsh Athletics to support access to any potential funding streams that may come available.

4) Governance Sub Group Update

NL gave an overview of the recent updates to the Governance Action Plan. The GSG stated that codes and conduct for members of the governance structure (inc Board) need updating or introduced. The updated Board appraisal process is ready and will be rolled out over the coming months.

The Board does need to appoint a senior Non Executive Director to take on the role of Vice Chair.

NL also stated that a reflection on risk should be added as a standard agenda item going forward.

5) Performance Sub Group

AT & CJ gave an update on the planning and preparation for the Commonwealth Games

Welsh Athletics Board Meeting – May, 2020

A provisional timeline has been created to support preparation for the Games.

The sub group supported the need to maintain preparation plans as previously agreed.

The Board requested that the selection policy be discussed at the next meeting and approved. The sub group would like to publish the selection policy in September.

6) Any Other Business

JW gave an overview of the Ask Us series and additional member engagement plans.

8. Date of Next Meeting

TBC – early July

Joint meeting with the General Council – 14th July 2020