

## Full Board Meeting – Draft Minutes

3pm, Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – Online via Zoom

**Directors:** Brian Shackleton (President & Chair); Nigel Clark; Jo Dyтч; Lucy Fraser; Ron Neville; Ilona Turnbull; Hazel Meehan; Dominic Hall; Alistair Todd

**CEO & Company Secretary:** Stuart Younie.

**Observers:** Megan Griffiths (sportscotland);

**Papers:** ++ for information / discussion; ## for decision; Other items: verbal update or papers to follow

### 1.0 Welcome and Apologies

BS welcomed everyone to the meeting and made reference to the sombre events which had unfolded in Ukraine and the impact this was going to have on all of us in the future.

Apologies noted from LF who would be delayed in joining the meeting.

### 2.0 Declaration of Interests

DH updated on his new role with LLTNP and although the focus of the role was on nature restoration there may be potential conflict in matters relating to planning issues within the park which he would step back from. BS congratulated DH on his appointment.

No other declarations of interest were noted.

### 3.0 Draft Minutes of the Full Board meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

- Action Note from Interim Board meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021

KJ to be removed from the attendance list for the 16<sup>th</sup> and the agenda for this meeting. Note to be added to confirm LF chaired the interim board as BS was out of the country and uncertain how stable his internet connection would be.

The minute and action note were approved with those amendments.

### 4.0 Actions and matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda

#### From 4<sup>th</sup> Nov

- SY confirmed that there were some changes to Go Membership that would impact club volunteers but updated advice and guidance would be provided once the migration to the new system was live.

- Online consultation on the new strategic framework had just gone live and had been highlighted in the members ezine.
- Review of the Policy and procedures list and feedback any specific implications for their portfolios to SY and IT. To be covered under item 8.4
- Child protection – JS looking at additional support for clubs to promote participation by children and young people linked to the outcome of the sportscotland investment application and following review by Children First.

**From 16<sup>th</sup> Dec**

- All actions have been completed or will be covered on the agenda.

**5.0 Call for AOCB**

No additional business had been submitted

**6.0 Operational report**

**6.1 Operational Plan - Update**

SY reported that he was awaiting a response from Bidwells regarding vehicle access to Glen Strathfarrar, a paper detailing the key locations of interest for walking and climbing along with access routes and parking had been submitted to the estate. Joint letter sent to Eurostar on behalf of Mountaineering Scotland, BMC and Mountaineering Ireland regarding their classification of climbing equipment as “dangerous sporting equipment”, awaiting response. Ben Gibsons contract has been amended following the review of mountain safety and he would be increasing his hours to 3 days per week from 1<sup>st</sup> March. Submission has also been sent to St Johns Scotland to extend the funding for the student safety programme for a further two years.

SY also reported that he had participated in a Snowsports sector consultation on the future of ski centres in Scotland which had been commissioned by the Scottish Government. The first team development day since lockdown was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb in Perth and feedback from staff had been positive. It was noted that three staff had tested positive for Covid since Christmas although this had not had a significant operational impact.

Other highlights to note in the operational report:

- Membership was at its highest ever at 15,407.
- Thanks were noted to HG & JA for all their work on the migration to the new version of Go Membership
- A digital infographic version of the Snowsports Touring Code had been launched with input from AT
- Club month planned for April 2022

- RSPB were looking to restrict access to climbing crags due to nesting birds, DB has responded requesting more information. PKC intending to make their temporary clearways permanent and SY has written to the convener of the Transport Committee with PKC to arrange a meeting.
- DB had met with the new Director of the Centre for Mountain Studies UHI based in Perth to identify possible areas of collaboration.
- 14 Scottish athletes had been selected for the GB development Squad and the Scottish Team had their best ever result in the YCS Grand final coming in third place.

RN added that it had been a busy time on access and a number of issues remained outstanding including Dalwhinnie, Invervar, Glen Strathfarrar and Salisbury Crags and the PKC traffic restrictions mentioned in the operational report. RN offered to provide more detailed updates to Directors on any of these issues and invited any contributions particularly those involving any local knowledge. AT had received correspondence regarding access at Fionn Bheinn at Achnasheen which was being impeded by a locked deer fence gate. The access officer at The Highland Council (THC) has been contacted although little progress had been made.

**Action:** AT to forward on correspondence to DB who will add this to the access log and follow up with THC.

SY provided an update on progress in developing the operational plan and the outputs from the away day to identify actions which will sit under the outcomes set out in the strategy. The current format for the board report would be used as the basis for future reporting and Directors were invited to feedback any thoughts on information they would like to be included. Consideration will be given to allocation of time on different areas of work and those activities which are process based and those which are project based.

**Action:** Directors to feedback any thoughts on the content of the operational report to SY.

LF joined the meeting at 3.20pm

## 7.0 Finance Report

### 7.1 Treasurers Report - Management accounts for Q3 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

As of 31<sup>st</sup> Dec, the P & L forecast has dropped to circa £8.5k due to a reduction in income and an increase in costs relating to insurance, energy (up 60%) and for the magazine. Membership continues to perform strongly and an additional grant of £4k has been received from sportscotland to help offset inflationary pressures. To note the potential for an improved

position as no charge is expected from the BMC for GB athlete and coaching support which would save an additional £9k.

The third layer of public liability has increased costs for insurance cover considerably and mitigating action has been discussed at the FAG. SY confirmed that from the annual membership fees approx. £7 was going on insurance an increase from under £4, 4 years ago.

**Action:** BS proposed the establishment of a working group to support SY in looking into alternative insurance options and highlighted the need to communicate this situation to members and this was approved.

SY provided an update on the new funding arrangements for the Scottish Mountaineer as a result of increased costs of publication and distribution. It was noted that the current model for financing the delivery of the magazine had not been updated to reflect the increase in membership which had almost doubled since it was originally agreed. JD asked whether we had consulted the membership on the options for the magazine and SY confirmed that this would be included in the Feb edition of the magazine along with a survey to gauge members views.

NC asked about insurance cover for members of the board and SY agreed to look into this. BS raised the question of claims which may be in excess of the level of cover provided by the current policy. IT volunteered to look over the current arrangements and participate in the insurance working group.

**Action:** SY/BS/HM to develop terms of reference for the insurance working group. SY to look onto the personal liability of voluntary directors in relation to insurance and company structure and report back to May board meeting.

## **7.2 Draft Budget 2022/23**

HM provided an overview of the draft budget indicating the forecast position and the significant pressures relating to the increases in insurance and magazine costs. The draft budget projected a deficit of £40k however it was hoped this was the worst-case scenario.

Key highlights included the membership forecast, the revised sportscotland investment and the potential partnership support from the SMT. The mountain safety forecast was based on the figures from the review of the delivery model, and the budget for Scottish Mountaineer was based on the maximum contribution which could reduce depending on advertising revenue. SY added that a £7k saving had been delivered through the new photocopier contact. HM added that the current forecast did not include any pay increments or salary increase for staff.

NC thought it was large figure to come back from but it was important to build in salary increases and highlighted that the current situation with Mountain safety is a net positive for

the budget following the recent review. LF noted thanks to SY and DL for preparing the budget and had sent some detailed queries to SY and DL.

LF raised the risks relating to the delivery of competitions which have been well run when compared to the BMC in relation to costs however increased pressure on the commercial climbing walls may have an impact on the funding model. LF also highlighted that a budget had not been included for the BMC Winter Disciplines officer and asked whether there was potential for sportscotland to contribute to this opportunity?

MG said the investment cycle was completed and additional investment was not available at the moment. The first opportunity to revisit it would be in 12mths time but more clarity would be needed on the scope of the role and what it covered. MG suggested that the current reserves seemed high in relation to turnover and asked whether there was the potential to use them to offset the projected budget deficit for next year. HM agreed that the reserves were healthy and there was the potential to look that as an option.

AT highlighted that the budget does not include any increase in membership fees HM agreed that this was a consideration in contributing to the projected deficit next year. BS agreed that given the fixing of the membership fees for three years there was a risk of a deficit in year three and this has to be balanced against the performance in years one and two.

JD asked whether we can we increase mountain safety fees and if there was an opportunity to upsell merchandise when members register for courses. NC confirmed that the price point for courses would increase by 10% as an outcome of the review. SY added that there was the potential for further increases in course fees whilst ensuring they remained at an accessible price point. There was also scope to increase revenue through merchandise but staff capacity was a limiting factor and the ideal situation would be to find a third party that could deal with orders and fulfilment.

LF asked if there was an agreed position on where the board would like the budget to be given the projected deficit. Given the commitments to fix membership fees BS suggested that the deficit should not exceed £35k and an increase in salary should be incorporated into the projections. HM agreed with this proposal and highlighted the need to communicate this to members. DH asked about the sequencing of the commitments given the number of unknowns at this stage.

**Action:** SY / DL to review the draft budget to reduce the deficit to £35k.

## **8.0 Governance**

### **8.1 sportscotland investment application - Update**

MG provided an update on the outcome of investment proposal following the sportscotland board meeting on Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Although the specifics relating to the individual funding arrangements for each SGB were not available the outcome had been reported as positive

and the annual investment paperwork for Mountaineering Scotland would be progressed on the basis of the level of funding submitted in the investment proposal.

MG confirmed that SY had provided all the additional information that was required with some further refinement of the outcomes and long-term targets required. The final documentation would go forward to an internal review meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March and formal notification would then be sent out. Following the strategic review meeting MG added that there was a request that further consultation on the strategy was carried out and it was positive to hear this was taking place.

## **8.2 Review of Mountain Safety – Final Report**

BS provided a brief update on activity since final draft paper was endorsed by the board following the internal review of the mountain safety delivery model. Some additional queries had come from sportscotland relating to the review and follow up meetings had been held with representatives from sportscotland and Glenmore Lodge to address these.

NC confirmed that the content of the report had not changed since the final draft had been circulated however a slight decrease in income had been noted and incorporated into the draft budget. NC also referred to the constructive discussions with sportscotland and Glenmore Lodge about how the new model would support the strategic work of the Mountain Safety Group.

MG added that as part of the investment process that annual targets will be set for mountain safety, one which is more strategic, and one which is based on broadening the reach of the programme to a wider range of people. MG also supported the move away from higher end courses and the change in emphasis towards those that may struggle to access training delivered by the commercial sector as well as supporting the strategic work of the MSG.

NC also suggested that consideration is given to the way the accounts were presented to ensure that all the costs relating to Mountain Safety are included in one place and HM agreed to look into this. RN conveyed his thanks for the work that had gone the review and hoped that this may provide a template which would help in reviewing other areas of organisation.

The final version of the report was formally approved by the board.

## **8.3 Appointment of Director of Member Services and Communications**

BS reported that the selection panel had reviewed the six notes of interest submitted in relation to the role and four had been selected to attend interviews. It was noted that two of the candidates had a potential conflict of interest however the panel agreed they should be

invited to attend the interview so this could be explored with them. Interviews were scheduled to take place on Mon 21<sup>st</sup> and Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> June. This approach was approved by the board.

#### **8.4 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report**

SY provided an update on the revised format for the schedule which had grouped the policies and procedures under a set of themes. The next stage was to review each area to identify which documents could be either removed and put in an operational handbook, amalgamated with other documents, or should be retained as a formal policy / procedure.

SY advised that a similar approach could be applied to the risk register and in developing the risk policy which was a key priority. HM had done some work on a draft risk policy and would forward this on to SY. DH supported the approach which was proposed and asked if the documents could be prioritised as part of the next stage.

**Action:** SY to undertake an initial review to look at how the current documents could be streamlined and prioritised for further discussion with the staff team and Directors.

### **9.0 Standing Agenda Items**

BS suggested that Anti-Doping was included as a standing item and reviewed at the May and Nov meetings, with the potential for each board meeting to have a more in-depth focus on one of the standing items. SY asked MG how other SGB's approached these issues and MG advised the H & S and the Risk register are generally dealt with on an exceptions basis but are retained on the agenda as a check point.

Other issues tend to be examined in more depth when more specific incidents occur however child protection was something that should be embedded in everything that we do. A consideration for the board may be to also take a deeper look at certain aspects of the organisation for example Mountain Safety or ClimbScotland activity.

#### **9.1 Risk Register**

To note changes in red including the fire risk assessment of the Granary and Finance risks relating to the budget. MG advised that some sports are adding the risk of allegations of racism within their sports in the light of recent developments in cricket. BS highlighted the need to identify those risks which are quantifiable as well as those risks which are reputational, and the need to retire risks as and when they were no longer considered a risk.

**Action:** HM to share draft policy framework with SY & IT for further input before sharing with the board in May.

#### **9.2 Health & Safety**

Nothing further to report

### **9.3 Child wellbeing and Protection**

SY reported that Children First had conducted a review of our policies and procedures against the Minimum Operating Requirements to ensure we were continuing to meet the required standards. Thanks to JS for his contribution in leading on this area of work.

### **9.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

SY reported on the ongoing investigation into racism in cricket and the potential implications this may present for the sports sector. To note the ongoing work to update club guidance on handling complaints, bullying and harassment and the new documentation that had been developed to support this which had been well received at the most recent club call.

### **10.0 Future meetings 2022**

To note that following the outcome of the recruitment process for the vacant Directors post the intention would be that the preferred candidate would be invited to the May board meeting as an observer. To consider option to hold a hybrid meeting in May either at the Granary or meeting room at AK Bell Library in Perth.

- **FAG** – Thurs 28<sup>th</sup> April
- **Board** – Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> May
- **FAG** – Thurs 28<sup>th</sup> July
- **Board** – Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Aug
- **FAG** – Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> Oct
- **Board** – Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov
- **Annual General Meeting** - Nov TBC
- **Post AGM Christmas Meeting** – Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Dec

**Issued by Stuart Younie, CEO & Company Secretary**

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