

**Minutes of a Meeting of the SBU Board of Trustees
held on 10 December 2024 at 6.00 p.m.**

In the Chair: Alan Goodman

Present:

Ian Patrick
Gavin Easton
Robert Ferrari
Ronan Valentine
Sarah Gunn
Mike Hodder
Jean McLaren

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising from October 2024 Board Meeting (not on agenda)

Issue	Update
To agree Trustees Report text with final numbers coming for approval and signing December 2024.	Deferred until next Board meeting
Mapping between the Risks and the Strategic Goals to be discussed at Away Day	Referred to Risk Group
Youth Project – letter to FFB	Completed
SAG to report progress on agreed goals	Report expected at next Board meeting

4. Finance Report

Since the last board meeting there has been no Finance Committee meeting, mainly because it allowed time for the Financial Controller to work on the quarterly accounts for the Board, since returning from holiday.

Financial management accounts for the quarter to 30/11/2024. There are no material differences to what was budgeted/expected. The management accounts are not yet in the best format, and this will be worked on by the Financial Controller for the next set of management figures going to the Finance Committee. It is intended that the Finance Committee will have first sight of management accounts for the next 9 months ahead of being presented to the Board.

Matters arising from the October Board Meeting.

Actions were placed on the CEO and Financial Controller to define the Procedures as to how requests are lodged for funding for individuals competing in home internationals. These procedures need to be confirmed with the Director of Selection. Unfortunately, with the resignation of the CEO there is an absence of lead on this. Sarah Gunn, as Chair of the Finance Committee, is uncomfortable having to make unilateral and subjective decisions and has been working with Ian Patrick and Joan Forsyth to determine the process – the basis of which will be an application form which has now been agreed. Alan Goodman and Robert Ferrari, as the other members of the Finance Committee have a conflict of interest.

Sarah Gunn is in communication with the EBU to find out what they do with regards to the allocation of their contingency funds for this purpose.

Actions: Sarah Gunn

Procedures as to how requests are lodged for funding for Juniors competing in home internationals. These procedures need to be confirmed with the Director of Selection.

Action: SG (deadline 19 December)

Action was placed on the Financial Controller and Finance committee to agree final costs for Camrose 1, so a decision can be made by the finance committee as to the final sum invoiced for all players. This was agreed via email and all visiting NBOs and players in Scotland have been informed of the costs. Thanks to the influence and negotiations by Robert Ferrari, the hosting for this event will be at NO cost to the SBU and is 100% recovered by charges to all players.

Final Accounts to 31/08/2024

These will be reviewed by the finance committee before coming to the Board of Trustees at the next Board Meeting. We only received the final set this week from Henderson Loggie and there is no rush to sign.

Action SG

5 Reports from Director of Selection

Mike Ash presented a report detailing the activities conducted over the last 6 months. He also made a few recommendations and points for consideration.

- a) The whole Performance and Selection structure should be reviewed in the light of experience, particularly since Mike would like to demit office at the end of March. The Board agreed that Sarah and Alan should meet with Mike since they had been involved in recent organisation structure deliberations. **Action SG/AG**
- b) All Youth Development activity should be integrated with all youths being taught, supported and developed in a single squad. This would be discussed with Joan Forsyth as part of the Education structure reorganisation. **Action AG**
- c) The multitude of required tasks necessitate admin support being provided for the DoS. This has been difficult to acquire and needs to be addressed by the Board. The Board has already agreed that admin support needs to be provided across the organisation.
- d) The coaching and performance improvement programme has been very successful and has been run at zero cost because participants pay to attend, and coaches have provided their service for minimal cost. Free coaching is not sustainable longer term

so a realistic budget will have to be set in future if professional training is to continue.

Action SG

- e) An online mixed teams "Camrose" has been organised by Mike Ash which will take place on RealBridge 28 – 30 March 2025. It is expected to be self-funding with teams paying £120 per team. The question of whether Scottish teams should have their entry fee paid by SBU was discussed but referred to the Finance Committee. It was agreed that SBU would donate a trophy from the horde of already decommissioned silverware.

Action SG

- f) Selection criteria has altered and is now based on performance rather than total reliance on trials. Initially there had been some objections, but having now been implemented there is a general acceptance by most of the players that this is the most appropriate means of selection if our goals are to be achieved.

6. Organisation Structure

A revised structure recommended by Alan and Sarah, and discussed with key convenors, was agreed in principle.

It was agreed we should advertise for an Operations Lead (now being called an Operations Coordinator), initially within our own membership.

Because most of our operational convenors are self-sufficient, but still require a measure of support, and as we are an organisation heavily reliant on volunteers, we have concluded that a more appropriate role is an Operations Coordinator rather than a CEO.

The Operations Coordinator will provide operational oversight and be the communication link between the operations and governance of the organisation. At a practical level they will coordinate the production and reporting of the Operating Plan on behalf of the Operational teams and will support the operational teams but will not directly manage them.

We would very much like the role to be filled by one of our members. It is a flexible part time role expected to average 15 hours per week once fully established. A level of remuneration will be paid (expected to be around £1,000 per month). We are looking for somebody with the following relevant skills and experience:

- Understanding how to support volunteer teams in a not-for-profit organisation.
- Admin, interpersonal and chairing skills.
- Excellent communication and listening skills and used to engaging with stakeholders at various levels.

Other key positions were identified with priority being given to a Website Editor and somebody to coordinate our communications. These roles will also be advertised to our members.

Action AG

7. Operations Plan

Mike presented an early draft of a revised Operations Plan to include metrics, and a draft Tournament and Membership tracker.

The metrics in the Ops plan are basically MBO (Management by Objectives) style. In an organisation staffed primarily by volunteers, annual assessments are not appropriate. Consequently, we need to sell the concept as "this is what we want the organisation to achieve" rather than "this is what we want you to achieve".

The best objectives are a combination of "Top Down" and "Bottom Up". The more Bottom Up the objectives become, the more buy-in we get from the volunteers and the more they will see the objectives as a useful tool or plan rather than an imposition. The Board agreed that the overall format was clear and simple, although the metrics need to be reformatted, and that Mike and Gavin should work together to produce the future format. **Action MH/GE**

The Membership and Tournament trackers were widely liked although there's no need for trustees to get a detailed budget breakdown for each event, but the numbers participating are important. It would be useful to see the trends and to adjust the tournament mix accordingly.

Mike expressed the view that tracking membership is important and expressed disappointment that dates of birth are not in MEMPAD. Dates of birth are now being sought for U31s but there are no immediate plans to request dates of birth for adult members.

8. Safeguarding Policy

No changes are recommended to the policy. As usual, any issues we have are more to do with implementation. We might consider at some point separating the policy from the procedures – at present they are all in one document.

A series of recommendations were made in Alex Hunter's report to the Board

1. Date of Birth must be recorded in MEMPAD (or elsewhere) and this information should be available to Tournament / Congress Convenors and Directors and the Elite Performance Director so that they know in advance whether there may be an issue with safeguarding. This is understood to be in progress
2. We need an up-to-date list of people teaching in schools (action Youth Education Group). This is understood to be in progress
3. We recommend that PVG registration should be renewed every 10 years (or if the person concerned changes their address), although there is no official requirement for this.
4. Where SBU members or other volunteers accompany U18's are travelling to events, it would be advisable if at least one of the responsible adults had undertaken the on-line safeguarding training and had First Aid training. We also need to ensure there is an appropriate gender balance in the responsible adults. This is understood to be in progress
5. We should track updates to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy document published by Education Scotland (action Child Protection Officer).
6. A good practice guidance note has been prepared and should be circulated to clubs and teachers and made available on the website (action Child Protection Officer).

Action MH to ensure implementation in accordance with these recommendations

9. SBU Complaints Procedure

The current procedure was reviewed by Jean who concluded that no material changes are required. It was noted that no formal complaints have been made since the policy was adopted. Recommended minor changes to the policy were approved.

10. Contracted IT Support Options

A paper prepared by Martyn was tabled and discussed along with recommendations from Marc Shearer. It is recognised that in an ideal world we would maximise security and centralise file storage. The MemPad team holds files in Dropbox whilst the Board and its subcommittees use SharePoint. Since the MemPad team is very reluctant to change and regards any security issues as very low risk, it was agreed that current storage arrangements would remain in force for the time being.

There is a need for occasional IT support for volunteers. This is currently provided by DCS on a pay as you go basis. The alternative of a fixed price contract at £250 pm with a different supplier was rejected on the grounds that it would not be value for money given the limited demand. Marc will be asked if any of his wider team of volunteer IT experts from within our membership could be made available to help volunteers on an ad hoc basis. **Action AG**

11A. Laws & Ethics Report

The Board approved recommendation from the L&E committee.

- a) Julia Palmer becomes a member of the Laws and Ethics Committee, replacing Liz McGowan.

11B. Risk Group

It was highlighted at the October meeting that there was no documented relationship between the Risks and the Strategic Objectives. In addition, while there are 3 risks relating to Finance there is no strategic objective related to Finance.

It was agreed that it would not be appropriate to undertake a full review of the Risk Register until the operational structure is finalised

Links between Risks and Strategic Goals

To address the Finance risk issue above it was agreed that Strategic Objective 1.2 is amended to: *Maintain financial sustainability and strong and effective governance.*

In addition, it was agreed that one of the suggested activities for Goal 1 is:

Produce regular management information including budgets, forecasts and variance reporting.

12. AOCB

It was noted that our Data Protection Officer has resigned from her post. We are seeking external advice how best to proceed. **Action IP**

Date of future meetings

Board Meeting 4 February (18.00)

Board Meeting 11 March (18.00)

Board Meeting 15 April (18.00)

AGM 20 May (time TBC)

