

Welsh Athletics Board Meeting Minutes

19th May 2025.

Meeting held remotely via video link.

Present: Steve Perks [SP], Jonathan Ford [JF], James Williams [JW], Nigel Walker [NW], Chris Gough [CG], Lorna Kerr [LK], Dan Clements [DC], Laura Mason [LM], Tom Overton [TO], Catherine Lewis [CL]

Apologies: Fay Benningwood [FB], Philip Draper [PD], Lynne Brier [LB]

Circulated papers:

1. 2025-05 WA Board MAY 2025 – Finance Update for BOARD
2. CEO update May 25
3. May 25 Agenda
4. Safeguarding Report May 25
5. Starting Blocs Engagement 2025
6. SW board paper April 2025
7. WA Board Minutes – March 2025

1. Welcome

SP welcomed the Board and started the meeting by sharing apologies from the members

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

N/A

3. Previous Minutes and Actions

SP and JW presented updates following the previous meeting, specifically with Team Wales and CWG selection. The position remains the same.

CG mentioned minor changes to budget including deferring funds into this financial year to manage costs going forward.

4. Future Board Priorities

Before the meeting, the board was asked to think about two areas they wish to prioritise or examine within the Board in the future.

1. JF

- a. Strategic planning and operational planning.
- b. Pattern to board meetings / rolling calendar of what will come up in which meetings. JW asked for further information into the first point. NW agreed that the strategic planning / ops planning is an important area. NW suggested that this could be done through an away day by looking at each quarter.

2. LM

- a. Bigger picture / looking further into future.
- b. Financial impact.

3. LK
 - a. Wants to be utilised further and wants the WA staff to reach out more.
 - b. Finding out updates further in advance / prior to the public finding out. LK used the women's running conference as an example.
4. CG
 - a. Commercial partnerships.
 - b. Cash flow management.
5. DC
 - a. Digital transformation.
 - b. EDI/ culture change within the sport.
6. CL
 - a. More invitations to events.
 - b. Behavioural change / mental health.
7. TO
 - a. Board engagement – what do the team want. Build excitement for the future of athletics.
 - b. Values and culture piece and what do we look like as an organisation?
8. NW
 - a. Supports strategic thinking and future funding as priorities.

JW summarised the priorities into themes; strategy and communications, financials, EDI / cultural change, digital transformation, Board engagement and horizon scanning. JW would like to facilitate, alongside a few members of the Board, the creation of wider operational dashboards and data to drive insight.

5. Updates / Reports / Information for circulation

a. CEO update

JW presented finance as being one of the key challenges to WA, with more UKA responsibilities now sitting with WA. JW highlighted the potential of investing in digital infrastructure to enable developments in that area. Key areas to focus on include Coach Education as well as membership following certain UKA system issues.

A second key risk and opportunity JW presented was the unique nature of WA compared with other governing bodies. Alongside the growth of the wider sport, there is the concern over the 'core' of the sport, including club and junior membership figures.

WA membership is showing a positive trend, although there is concern over the statistics in terms of demographics. JW reported that he would like to take the opportunity to dive into this deeper as a Board. The impact of the positive membership work is presented with recent performances up to the Commonwealth standard, although few come from Wales and are English individuals who are eligible through parentage or grandparentage.

Finally, the resource of WA itself was presented as a challenge with opportunities presenting further plans, but with a limited number of internal staff to lead and drive said opportunities. CG asked about the differences in trends if only participation was looked at. JW explained that collecting that data is a challenge in itself, to know how many people are

regularly participating in social athletics. LM added that the work they are doing with Katy Evans involves data on the transition through the sport and levels of drop off.

Transgender update – the previous paper circulated has been paused by UKA following the recent court rulings, and JW will feed back with any further updates. DC reiterated the wider impact of this ruling in other areas of sport.

Age group changes – English Schools are no longer going to adopt the new age group changes; this may affect British Schools and therefore Welsh Schools. If Welsh Schools do support this WA may not be able to license these events. Scotland are adopting new age groups from the 1st January on their own timings.

b. Safeguarding

The paper was circulated prior to the meeting with the Board aware of updates. WA have been awarded level 3 safeguarding standards with plans to develop an action plan for the Ann Craft Trust training.

c. Finance Update

Only being one month into the financial year means no significant updates. WA are still on track to meet FY24 budgets.

d. Development & Participation

TO acknowledged Katy Evans' work with WA's stakeholders and plans to bring that work together in mid-June with a Board discussion to follow.

e. General Council

JW presented on behalf of Lynne the need for a wider discussion around what WA want from the general council and where their work sits alongside the governance structure with regional councils as well as committees.

f. People & Culture

LK – No updates this month.

g. Performance

DC presented that the general feedback on the policy has been good and that it has been well received, although there has been specific feedback regarding time scales as discussed in the previous board meeting. There is also a fear that the standards are much higher than at previous games, again, as previously discussed.

h. Sport Wales

FB from Sport Wales provided a report on how WA are aligning with Sport Wales and their expectations.

6. AOB

Possibility to move the September Board meeting to the 22nd September. This was agreed by the Board.

7. Date of next meeting

16th July JOINT WITH GC