



**BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 9.30am**  
**House of Sport, Belfast**

**BOARD MINUTES**

**Present:**

George Lucas  
 Jay Colville  
 Gavin Boyd  
 Kieran Harding  
 Alison Nicholl  
 Kyle Ferguson (via remote access)  
 Richard Bullick (via remote access)

**In Attendance:**

Antoinette McKeown, Chief Executive  
 Rebecca Morgan, Chief Operating Officer  
 Richard Archibald, Director of Sport  
 John Hart, Head of Policy & Innovation  
 Orlagh Watters, Head of Sports Systems  
 Laura Carland, Board Secretariat

	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>		
	Apologies were received from Wendy Elliott and Denise Burns		
<b>2</b>	<b>Declaration of Conflicts of Interest and/or Changes in Declaration</b>		
	There were no declarations or conflicts of interest to note, however, Member KF advised of an ongoing interest that KF continues to be engaged in; namely strategic advice work and projects with DfC on the ten year strategy for sport and physical activity as part of his role within Ulster University.		
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting   19<sup>th</sup> October 2022</b>		
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted pending a minor amendment, to clarify that the Board priority of Health and Safety and the ELT priority of 'Staff Welfare' are linked rather than separate priorities.</p> <p>In respect of the actions from the previous meeting, Members noted that the draft Board Schedule of dates would be circulated to Members for their information w/c 14/11/22</p>		<p>Approval: The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted pending a minor amendment to clarify that the Board priority of Health and Safety and the ELT priority of 'Staff Welfare' are linked rather than separate priorities.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Chair's Introduction</b>		
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair took an opportunity to acknowledge the expertise and dedication of the management team and staff of the organisation in delivering programmes to implement 'The Power of Sport' Corporate Plan, to help change lives.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Board had agreed to improve focus at monthly update meetings and quarterly meetings with full and comprehensive papers and that the meeting [16<sup>th</sup> November] would have a focus on engagement and the exchange of ideas for improving and increasing constructive challenges.</p>		

	<p>The Chair commented that the Board will continue to confront Governance challenges and strive for continuous improvement, by focusing on cohesive leadership, values and culture in order to increase the pace of change and optimise the potential of the organisation.</p>		
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> Nothing by exception</p>		
<b>6</b>	<p><b>CEO Report</b> The CEO Report was tabled as read.</p> <p>Members queried the receipt of the Governance Action Plan and were advised that this information would be provided during the Quarterly Board Meetings. Members queried if the CEO Report could include recurring headline information relating to Health and Safety, Internal Audit, the Staff Engagement response, the Business Plan and the Outstanding Lottery Accounts moving forward. Members were advised that the CEO report will provide a monthly update on these issues as well as a quarterly report to Board.</p> <p>In respect of the outstanding Lottery Accounts, Members were advised that the organisation continues to engage with NIAO and have issued a letter (included with the CEO Report Appendices for Members' information) regarding the ongoing resources pressures at NIAO. Members noted that a response has not been received from NIAO to date.</p> <p>Member, JC advised Members that JC attended the sponsor branch ARAC Meeting on 09/11/22 and stated that an overview of the information and agenda items discussed would be provided later in the meeting.</p> <p>Members referred to the Health and Safety update information provided within the CEO Report and the CEO thanked the COO for compiling this information. Members stated that the information on current practices had assured them on Health and Safety and the Chair stated that it reflected CEO leadership on these matters. Members noted that mandatory courses for staff on the LInKS platform include Health and Safety modules. It was agreed that an updated list of completion statistics be provided to the Board for information at the next Quarterly Board Meeting.</p> <p>Action: An updated list of LInKS completion statistics be provided to the Board for information at the next Quarterly Board Meeting</p> <p>The Chair queried current provisions in the Health and Safety report in terms of identifying, recording and the management of hazards, near misses and alert bulletins. Members were advised that existing policy and procedures will be reviewed as part of the independent Health and Safety review across all three Sport NI sites. The Chair proposed highlighting approx. 10 actions for Health and Safety which have been undertaken and focusing on a 'topic of the month'. The CEO proposed that the organisation waits until the independent review has concluded before initiating a new process and parallel procedures in the midst of said review.</p> <p>Member, AN joined the meeting.</p> <p>Members thanked the ELT for the information provided and requested that future reports provide assurances to the Board on ongoing work in respect of Health and Safety checks. The COO advised that details of H&amp;S checks carried out at HoS were included in the Operations quarterly reports to the Board but that assurances on checks relating to other sites will be included going forward.</p> <p>The COO flagged a point of accuracy within the report, advising TNOc do not use any element of motorised leisure pursuits.</p> <p>There were no further issues or queries to raise in respect of the CEO Report.</p>		<p>Action: An updated list of LInKS completion statistics be provided to the Board for information at the next Quarterly Board Meeting</p>

7	<p><b>ELT Issues to advise or request input from Board</b></p> <p>Nothing by exception</p>		
8	<p><b>Leadership, Values, Capacity and Learning</b></p> <p>The Chair invited Members and the ELT to speak to, and exchange ideas on, leadership, values, capacity and learning across the organisation.</p> <p>The Chair stated that work is underway in respect of the response to the Internal Audit and that the Board and ELT are clear on the current priorities, how existing problems can be managed and that moving forward, the monthly Board update meetings will provide a forum to discuss any issues to raise by exception. The Chair advised that priorities were four action plans related to the Internal Audit Plan, outstanding Lottery Accounts plan, the Staff Engagement Survey and Health and Safety:</p> <p>Members discussed the Staff Engagement response and the current status of culture within the organisation.</p> <p>The CEO asked members to note the Staff Engagement Working Group was established to take forward this work, and plans are in place to reconnect with staff post COVID-19 and improve survey results; actions were being taken including a series of 'Town Hall' meetings – led by the Director of Sport and Chief Operating Officer. The CEO advised that the organisation is following NICS guidance in respect of the current return to the workplace guidelines and recognised the challenges of returning everyone to work on a 5 day basis when many NICS staff were, and are, still working remotely. The CEO advised that returning staff full time is not feasible for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Members discussed the impact of staff working from home and the return to the workplace measures to date. Members noted concern that a hybrid working model could be a contributing factor to anticipated results reflected in the Staff Survey on Staff Engagement, ELT visibility and cultural cohesiveness. Members and the ELT discussed staff wellbeing and Members were advised that the ability to address staff engagement is dependent upon the time available to embed the restructure, implement the Learning and Development plan and enable reconnection with the culture DNA. Members were advised that the current priorities did not allow space for these areas to be progressed currently.</p> <p>Members were advised that staff developed the Sport NI DNA directly, that a Culture Working Group, reporting directly to the CEO, had championed this work but progress on the culture of the organisation was impacted by the Staff Restructuring Project and the impact of COVID-19. In addition, Members noted that many staff withdrawing from COVID project teams into new teams with new roles and to new Managers also affected this work. Members were advised that this change requires time for adjustment and opportunities to re-engage on culture and the Corporate Plan relevance to individual new roles.</p> <p>Member, AN, left the meeting.</p>		
9	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair advised that he had attended the DfC ARAC Chair's Forum and provided an overview of this meeting for the information of Members and the ELT. Members were advised that the meeting focused on the review of financial processes and the budget update. The Vice Chair advised that financial processes for all the branches under DfC will be consolidated into one report by 2023. The Vice Chair stated that discussions also included ensuring that business plans reflect forthcoming, anticipated budget cuts.</p> <p>In addition, the Vice Chair stated that queries were raised in respect of the Sport NI Internal Audit response and the outstanding Lottery Accounts. The Vice Chair advised that he had clarified that Sport NI's Lottery Annual Accounts are fully up to date, and have been for some time, and that the delay in their certification is outside the control of Sport NI. Members were advised that the COO met with the Finance Director, DfC, by way of introduction. Members noted that the COO</p>		

	<p>clarified at the meeting that the Lottery Accounts have been prepared by Sport NI and submitted to NIAO up until the previous financial year and the backlog is with the audit process.</p> <p>Members and the ELT noted a potential perception from DfC's DARAC that Sport NI may not have Lottery Accounts prepared. It was noted that miscommunication could result in an inaccurate perception, causing unnecessary scrutiny despite well evidenced documentation and rationale submitted by Sport NI, to date, outlining the underlying reason for the Lottery Accounts backlog. The CEO advised that KH, DfC, did have an accurate picture of Sport NI's position on a range of matters.</p>		
<b>10</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>		
	<p>The next Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 in Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (TNOC) between 9.30am and 12.30pm, followed by lunch.</p>		

Signed by Sport NI Chair: *George Lucas*

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022