

REGIONAL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 9 December 2017

Conference call/virtual meeting

In attendance: Bryan Youlden (Chair), Ron Richards (SWest), Charlie Hedgecock (East), John Biddiscombe (South East), Aneel Khanna (WMVA); Charlie Orton (London) - Part, Janet Inman (Chief Executive VE), James Murphy (Competitions Group Lead)

Apologies: Phil Chanin (NWVA), Steve Jones (EMVA), Dave Reece (SWVA), Keith Sowden (NEVA), Elizabeth Clarke (Board Member Core Market),

1. Minutes of Last Meeting:

Minutes of the July meeting had been circulated. There were no amendments.

2. Matters arising

2.1 Following decisions on the junior competitions format, dates and organisation comments had been received from Pete Bragg in the West Midlands and Darren Lewis in the South East. Whereas these comments were noted, the decisions made still stood and it was agreed that it was for the individual regions to represent the views of their participants.

2.2 BY also reported that he had received a call from Denise Austin in respect of potential conflicts between the junior finals and the beach programme. It was discussed that a decision had been taken for next year's competition, but this may be reviewed for subsequent years.

3. Introduction and Welcome

BY commented that this was the first time we had experimented with the virtual meeting concept. Attendance was lower than might have been hoped for but was affected by NVL commitments and foreign travel.

4. Volleyball England Hub Update – Janet Inman

- 4.1. Janet advised the meeting that Sport England is in the midst of a restructure which will not be completed until March 2018. A different working model is anticipated with a reduction from 10 to 4 client managers. What has been described as a “more grown up relationship” is anticipated. This will focus more on our needs as an organisation.
- 4.2. The more consolidated governance structure continues to develop. We are now one year in and further development is ongoing. This was a prerequisite from Sport England.
- 4.3. Simon Lofthouse has also been appointed as coaching lead after a three way interview process.

- 4.4. Finance remains a problem in that we still have no accounts for Year 2015/2016. Sport England has kindly offered to fund the preparation of this and it is planned to be available by the end of January. This is a substantial piece of work given the lack of information that was left.
- 4.5. The Board has now been completed with the addition of Laurie Edwards as Finance Director however. Laurie is from the North East and it is great to have someone from that Region involved and this appointment gives a good geographical spread of
- 4.6. Going forward, it has now been agreed that papers will be published on the website within two weeks of Board meetings.
- 4.7. The Panel of Experts now comprises 145 individuals with a great range of varying skills and interests. The delivery group inductions will probably take place on 20th January, but this will be confirmed.
- 4.8. A working group has also commenced to review the annual calendar (email subsequently received and circulated from Keith Nicholls).
- 4.9. The four subgroups are all due to meet in January or February.
- 4.10. Janet also advised that she had met with Richard Callicott to discuss the role of Volleyball England within the BVF. Further discussions are also planned with the individual home nations.
- 4.11. A visit had also been hosted with the Presidents of the FIVB and CEV without any significant benefit. The visit was planned to discuss support for hosting certain big events in London but given current finances, there was not any benefit to Volleyball England and little progress could be made.
- 4.12. Work has also commenced on the GPDR. As a result of Government changes in data protection there will be a need to tighten up who we can contact across the sport. In future, the sharing of information without permission will be significantly restricted. New data policies will need to be developed. This will need to be cascaded down to clubs but it has not as yet been determined how this will be achieved. One option may be a webinar so clubs understand what is expected of them. Fines will be levied with a team of 50 or so staff engaged to levy such fines. They will be funded from monies raised so this may be a significant focus that could affect us at various levels. Larger organisations will most probably be affected first.

- 4.13. Ron Richards commented that the age of consent will also be relevant to this subject. It will be important to consider how data is held and shared so for example, spreadsheets may only be circulated if they are password protected.
- 4.14. At the hub the office team has been slimmed down from 26 to 14 staff. There are now also only 3 mobile phones reduced from 23. To reduce occupancy costs, the office is to relocate within Sportpark thereby reducing the rent from £30K pa to £24K. There have been one or two staff changes but little of significance although we have welcomed one or two new people.
- 4.15. The SRA survey is important and we need to encourage everyone to participate and to complete the survey to build the critical mass. All regions were reminded to promote this and they should already have the details. The survey closes next week so urgent action is needed.
- 4.16. The issue of communication was raised. At present, the main outlet has been via the website rather than through the Regional Chairs. Concerns were raised at this approach and it was felt that all channels need to be employed rather than just relying on the membership to visit the website. There is no criticism of using the website to publish material, but attention needs to be drawn to such posts.
- 4.17. Janet advised the group that "janet@volleyball" is her Twitter account.

5. Reviews

5.1. Commercial Marketing

- 5.1.1. The intention will be to identify commercial partners with whom we can work. The key will be to connect our existing volleyball people with potential partners. This may be through employers or other linkages. Stewart Dunne will be taking the lead on this piece of work.

5.2. Coaching Review

- 5.2.1. The latest position has been published on the VE website. It was explained that this is our own course developed to meet the needs of volleyball and not UKCC. A question was asked as to whether this would affect NVQ status. It was felt not, but this will be checked.
- 5.2.2. Coach tutors were oriented on the new format at the Coaches Conference in September. The new Level 1 course is therefore fully tested for implementation from January 2018.

5.2.3. The intention had been to shorten and to reduce the cost of the course.

5.2.4. In respect of coaching young people it was explained that Volleyball England has no specific remit or funding to work in schools. This is the responsibility of the Youth Sports Trust who are simply providing resources for Level 1, 2 and 3 school Games without any other specific support.

5.2.5. As a result, at present there is a hole in provision. Funds have been sought from the CEV and the Premier Football Stars Programme community aspect by adding volleyball into the programme.

5.2.6. There is more work to be done in the area of youth and schools coaching.

5.3. Volunteer Review

5.3.1. An overall strategy has been completed and the next challenge will be to cascade this down to specific groups, Competitions would be one such group and various interested parties from around the country are needed.

5.3.2. Another group which needs support is the welfare leads.

5.3.3. A discussion followed on what the role of the hub should be. In particular how do we identify volunteers and employ them effectively.

5.3.4. Should we split the pool of experts into regions? It was agreed that this may be useful. We should also be looking to encourage more people to join the panel.

5.4. Competitions Review (James Murphy)

5.4.1. Sitting Volleyball

5.4.1.1. Ken Edwards has co-ordinated a status paper with options that has been submitted to the Board.

5.4.1.2. A significant number of people have been consulted with a small core group then having been identified.

5.4.2. Beach Volleyball

5.4.2.1. Jake Sheaf is leading on this review with Sarah Hill. A large meeting has been held and work is progressing.

5.4.3. Junior Volleyball

5.4.3.1. Freda's work was the first stage and Steve Kerr has now offered to take this forward.

5.4.4. Senior Volleyball

- 5.4.4.1. James commented that he had always been a strong advocate of local and regional volleyball and he wanted to establish what is needed in terms of support.
- 5.4.4.2. Super 8's – It was intended that the Super 8 clubs would arrange for one of them to host the Finals to reduce the load on the volunteers. A RFI (Request for information) had been issued to the Super 8 clubs to see who was interested.
- 5.4.4.3. Cup Finals day – the plan is to review and refine the event. An issue is that it is a very long day and difficult for volunteers and the teams themselves. One idea had been to play the junior competition over two courts with the seniors using one court, but with a second court for use for warming up purposes to reduce the time required.
- 5.4.4.4. There was some confusion as to whether this was considered appropriate but Janet explained that the Board was interested in anything that moved us on and suggested that the competitions group put some flesh on the ideas. It was agreed that a separate conversation will be undertaken.

5.5. Referees Group

- 5.5.1. Bryan advised the group that as usual Richard Morten as Regional referee representative had been invited to attend but he was unfortunately away on holiday. As a result, there was no report from the Referees Sub-Group for this meeting.

6. The Role of the Regional Commission

- 6.1. Janet asked the question “What do the Regions need from Volleyball England at local level?”
- 6.2. It was discussed that local associations certainly need to be educated as to what Volleyball England does for them. Whereas local areas may not have an interest in the NVL, they should certainly be interested in the areas of coaching, refereeing and funding as a minimum.
- 6.3. One issue that was identified was the lack of two court venues. As James identified, it is easier for a growing club to operate over a two court venue than to take on the commitment of another training night. It was questioned how can Volleyball England assist with this? Janet explained that facilities were a very low priority for Sport England but there may be a bigger opportunity by linking with the Further and Higher education sectors who are keen to link with local communities.

- 6.4. Charlie Orton advised that London has a unique requirement for arena facilities. He asked for input from Volleyball England in working with Crystal Palace.
- 6.5. Coaching was discussed as an area of particular note at local level. Gillian's report is helpful and some of the concerns over the cost of running courses and securing the qualifications are being addressed. Further assistance can be given by Volleyball England in identifying potential grant aid for such courses.
- 6.6. In terms of the number of people required to run a coaching course, it was agreed that Regions could buddy up to run a combined course across more than one region. Volleyball England could help facilitate this by maintaining a list of course requirements.
- 6.7. Another idea floated by JM was that VE could perhaps assist the grass roots competitive teams by reviewing scoring apps for tablets. He asked if there was an appetite for such an initiative at Regional level with some limited interest.
- 6.8. A survey monkey for clubs was also suggested but it was thought that this had been superseded by the SRA survey. It was suggested that this is just more of what we have been doing i.e. same old, same old. The problem remains that of accessing the membership effectively and it was queried whether VE could host the details of individual members for clubs. The group was advised that before this could happen, the membership systems and website would need reviewing.
- 6.9. To promote the work at the hub the context needs to be set for clubs. This needs to include the positive initiatives that had been developed including the shorter and cheaper coaching and referees courses, the availability of the Art of Coaching to coaches and the refereeing app for officials.
- 6.10. It was agreed that it was important to do a few things well rather than spread ourselves too thinly. The philosophy needs to be that we deliver some quick wins and then look at the medium to longer term separately.
- 6.11. It was agreed that there should be no mandating from the centre other than in respect of a few key areas such as child welfare.
- 6.12. At present, the Region and grass roots volleyball in general is a disparate group with various strengths across England.

6.13. It was also important to establish that it should not be for the Regions to develop volunteers only for them to be stolen by the centre. Instead, we need to facilitate the development of volunteers to help share the load and then give them the opportunity for them to progress if they aspired to this. We are now in a different world. Whereas previously VE predominantly ran the national competitions, it was now back to the volunteers to develop and deliver which was viewed as a positive.

6.14. Further financial cuts are suspected and it is therefore necessary to further develop the volunteer base.

6.15. It was discussed that a Regional representative should be included on all working groups.

ACTION: BY to lobby or add a reminder for this

6.16 The following key functions were agreed for the sub group

- Communication to and from the hub
- Providing grass roots representation on the working groups
- Promoting and sharing good practice
- Seeking to develop consistency of delivery across the country
- Developing volunteers and resources

6.17 A discussion on the frequency and nature of meetings agreed that a combination of virtual and face to face meetings was best with perhaps more frequent catch ups supplemented with around 3 face to face meetings per annum. Wherever possible, it was thought that organising meetings around the Board calendar could also be of use.

6.18 More frequent discussions between sub group leads was also promoted

7. Any Other Business

7.1 RR asked if anything as proposed for the Under 14 age group competition. Nothing is planned at present although Freda and Steve Kerr have it as an area that needs review at a later date. Any changes will take some time and in the meantime some Regions are setting up their own local competitions and structures. RR suggested that we could do with a lead and there is a need to capture and share best practice. Could this group undertake that?

ACTION: BY to circulate the regions for activity and share the outcomes.