



## BOARD MINUTES

Minutes of the 152<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Ulster Hockey Board, held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.00pm at Ulster Hockey Office & online via zoom.

**Present:** George Wilson (GW), Peter Kelly (PK), Neal Lucas (NL), Sarah Little (SL); Gareth Herron (GH), , Christine Aiken (CA), Adrian Murphy (AM), , Chloe Gillard (CG)

**In attendance:** Margaret McCormack (MMcC), President; Marc Scott (MS) Chief Executive & Company Secretary; Shannon Booth (SB) Boardroom Apprentice

**Apologies:** Tim Cockram (TC), Mervyn Logan (ML) Vice-President

Item	Comments
Chairperson's remarks	<p>GW welcomed everyone to the 152<sup>nd</sup> meeting and noted that he was having to join the meeting remotely.</p> <p>He congratulated CG on the arrival of Lilly and extended a welcome to Eamonn McFerran, UH Inclusion &amp; Diversity Officer.</p>
Conflict of Interest	None
Minutes of last Board meeting	Minutes of the August Board meeting were agreed. Proposed PK, seconded SL.
Matters Arising	<p>The Board Handbook, deferred from June was included in the Board pack.</p> <p>Shannon Booth was formally appointed as non-voting Boardroom Apprentice.</p> <p>Chloe Gillard was formally appointed as a Board member – proposed by PK, seconded AM.</p>
President's Update	<p>In the President's absence, it was noted that MMcC had attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interprovincial matched;</li> <li>- Opening of the new pitch at Dromore HC</li> <li>- Ballymoney HC</li> <li>- Linked with match secretaries to ensure a broad attendance at club matches</li> <li>- Club 1896 Lunch</li> <li>- Lurgan Ladies 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner</li> </ul>

Staff Presentation	Eamonn McFerran – Inclusion & Diversity Officer – presented an overview of his key work areas with focus on the schools’ outreach programme and cross-community collaboration with GAA, challenges faced and key objectives.
Chief Executive’s Report	<p>MS provided a report and highlighted the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An update on the position of Sport NI funding and increased award.</li> <li>- An update on the new financial controls system being applied to Ulster Hockey where the levels of scrutiny and requirements around claims has been reduced significantly in line with the strengthening of financial controls by UH.</li> <li>- An overview of Club 1896 launch was provided with the event held at Titanic Belfast on 22 September with Lord Ian Botham in place as key-note speaker.</li> <li>- Feedback on positive feedback received around communications &amp; social media content.</li> <li>- OPERATIONAL RISKS UPDATE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sport NI funding update</li> <li>o Safeguarding issue has been resolved with PSNI indicating no concerns</li> <li>o No further progress on PSNI investigation onto incident in Kilkeel v Raphoe match</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Finance Report	<p><b><u>Finance &amp; Governance</u></b></p> <p>Budget provided to the Board for review.</p> <p>It was noted that the Finance Committee did not agree to the development of a profiled version as they felt it added little value with significantly increased time to prepare.</p> <p>A draft profiled version was provided which highlighted some of the challenges around effectively profiling on a monthly basis accurately without the ability to undertake a trend analysis over a number of previous years..</p> <p>NL raised concerns that an inability to provide detailed and profiled budgets broken down on a monthly basis did not reflect good governance and lacked transparency by the CEO and Finance Committee. This position was not shared by all Board members.</p> <p>It was advised that all club affiliation fee invoices had been issued and fees were on track for collection by 31 October.</p> <p>It had been agreed by the Finance Committee to consider an alternative banking arrangement for the reserve, to receive enhanced interest on the balance which was not being offered by Dansk Bank. <b>ACTION – MS/AM to investigate options.</b></p>
Committee Reports	<p><b><u>Coaching &amp; Pathways</u></b></p> <p>No report</p>

	<p>Operational issues highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appointment of Joel Cathcart as Talent Officer</li> <li>- Funding received from Sport NI to support coach mentoring programme</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Participation &amp; Development</u></b></p> <p>No formal report – update on Review of Competitive Hockey provided.</p> <p>A draft document has been provided for comment alongside a summary of recommendations. This is to be reviewed by the Review Working Group in the first instance. <b>MS to convene group and update to be provided to November Board.</b></p> <p><b><u>Communications &amp; Marketing</u></b></p> <p><b>No Report</b> – SL and MS have met with Andy Morrison (Comms Officer) to commence and support the process of developing a Communications Strategy. <b>Update/Draft strategy to be provided at November Board meeting.</b></p> <p><b><u>Welfare &amp; Inclusion</u></b></p> <p>No formal report</p>
Operational Plan	The operational plan objectives were reviewed, and targets are currently on track.
Risk Register	<p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The process for reviewing the risk register was discussed at the Finance Committee and a working group identified to undertake this role. A paper was presented to outline the proposed process.</p> <p><u>Operational Risks</u></p> <p>Sport NI funding remains a small risk as the longer-term funding programme is still under design and agreement. It has been communicated that Sport NI will be engaging sports governing bodies in September to plan the long term funding. The ‘increased’ funding application was moderately successful.</p> <p>The risk regards the current safeguarding function remains, pending restructure of this area.</p> <p>There is currently a potentially damaging safeguarding issue being addressed which is currently being investigated by PSNI however it has been indicated by the club involved that the PSNI are content there is no substance in the issue raised. UH will await the final confirmation from PSNI and has been advised to ensure we record the case number for future reference.</p>

	There is currently a live PSNI investigation into an incident in the Kilkeel v Raphoe match in May 2023. Following legal advice, the UH Disciplinary Committee continued with its process with an appeal submitted by the player following the sanction applied. The outcome of the appeal is expected on 18 <sup>th</sup> September.		
Policies & Procedures	Board Handbook provided.		
AOB	Note of recognition to South Antrim Hockey Club for the Eric Cunningham memorial event and a thanks to staff who were in attendance.		
Summary of Actions	Action	Responsibility	Completion
	Options for reserve bank account to be considered	MS/AM	November 2023
	Competitive Review Working Group to meet to consider recommendations	MS	Report back in Nov 2023
	Communications strategy drafted	MS/SL	Report back in Nov 2023
Date of next meeting	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023		