

# MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING



**Meeting Title** OutdoorLads Board Meeting  
**Location** Northern Wine School, Manchester  
**Date and Time** Saturday 8 June 2024 at 1pm

**Attendees**

	RM	Rob Mitchell, chair
	JB	Joe Bailey, vice-chair
	JH	Jake Higgins, treasurer
	DN	David Norris
	DB	Dan Blackwell
	LR	Liam Russell (secretary/ staff)
A	YGR	Yvonne Goldsmith-Rybka (staff)
	DBY	Dan Byrnes (staff)
A	RO	Richard Overton
A	LM	Luke Mills
A	WA	Will Allaway
	SC	Stephen Clifford (attended online – part of meeting)

## **23/24 Welcome and apologies**

Rob Mitchell welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Yvonne Goldsmith-Rybka (non-working day). Will Allaway and Luke Mills, committee chairs, had sent apologies as they were volunteering for OutdoorLads in a different capacity today.

Liam Russell took the minutes of the meeting.

## **24/24 Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest arising for matters on the agenda.

## **25/24 Confirmation of receipt of papers / references / reading**

Liam Russell confirmed that most of the ten requested references for trustees had been received, all those received were satisfactory.

**DN**  
**JH**

Two references are outstanding for Jake Higgins, and one for David Norris. Jake and David to chase a response from their contacts.

## **26/24 Approval of previous minutes and matters arising**

Minutes of the meeting held Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024 on were approved as a true and accurate record. They will be signed electronically by the chair and secretary.

LR  
RM

## **27/24 Reports from Committees**

### *People Committee*

Steve Clifford, Chair of the People Committee, attended online to provide an update.

Ask for Calvin did not take place at BIG Spring Camp due to volunteer availability. There are more volunteers available for Summer Camp.

The committee has been looking at disability and how we can improve inclusivity on the website. This area does overlap with the sustainability sub-committee, and hence the two committees are working together on this matter.

A paper had been submitted on a proposed mentoring scheme and Steve gave a verbal overview. Under the suggestions, anyone can apply to ask for a mentor. Mentors would come from a small team of trusted people, not specifically for a particular activity. They would provide support and guidance to the member / leader. Mentors at this stage would not be openly recruited, but would be headhunted instead, to ensure the quality is there and that trust would be established in the initial stages.

Joe suggested that longer term this could be openly recruited to, with a selection process involving an interview. However, running a pilot with trusted individuals initially would be a good idea.

Rob asked who would lead and take an overview on this? This would need to be determined. It may be David Norris as trustee for People. A further suggestion was made of Regional Co-ordinators, who are well connected at the "coal face" and know a wide range of members well.

It was agreed that initially this would be managed by the committee, who would report back to the trustees in around six months for the project to be reviewed.

Steve Clifford is to liaise with the office team about setting this up.

SC

Dan Blackwell highlighted that the Delivery committee is also looking at accessibility in a wider context.

The proposal for the mentoring project was approved, and Steve will now continue with this work.

### *Sustainability Committee*

The committee had submitted a paper on Policies and Risk Assessments. Trustees noted that the contents of this paper will be substantially updated by this meeting and offered their thanks to the committee for undertaking this review.

A paper had been submitted on Environmental Sustainability. This was discussed by trustees, who agreed that we should try to be as sustainable as possible but as a small charity, need to ensure things are realistic, and not to have for example, hostel leaders frowned upon if they don't buy fairtrade, etc. A form of words to share with leaders as encouragement would be useful, but if we don't have the resources to police or enforce specific actions.

Trustees discussed and agreed that our actions should focus on the direct environmental matters such as leave no trace, countryside code, etc, and be mindful of actions we can take easily.

Suggestions were made that we ask the Marketing and Comms team to come up with some suggested words to encourage the right actions and make people mindful, but that this should never be to the detriment of the charity's core activities and events.

This wording can be added to the handbooks and also in the newsletters. The ideas were considered to be good, but need to ensure what we do is well received and making this a formal policy may not be the right approach.

**DB**

The sponsorship booklet was presented for board approval.

Trustees reviewed the document, and a suggestion made that the name of the sponsorship booklet could be changed slightly as the "sponsorship booklet" title was not appropriate. Trustee liked that this is an information booklet about OutdoorLads, and saw its use as being adapted to the audience as appropriate.

Trustees had a discussion as to whom this is aimed at, and it was agreed that this would be for specific projects, rather than the core business of the charity.

The document was approved as is, recognising that it may be adapted from time to time as appropriate.

The M&C committee are to be asked to put this into a standard format.

**M&  
C**

#### *Marketing and Communications Committee*

Joe gave an update on the committee, which is now set up. They see themselves as a resource for the other committees. They are looking at a campaign to celebrate membership of ODL. They will be meeting the other sub-committee chairs later this month.

#### *Delivery Committee*

A written report on the work of the committee had been received for review. Watersports events have been put on in new locations, cultural and heritage and running events are now up and running.

The committee are to look at disability access, however they are awaiting the results of the annual member survey to help determine their future projects, and then follow with a recruitment drive for new members.

## **28/25 Office Report**

Liam gave a verbal overview of the contents of the office report, which had been made available in advance for review.

Matters raised included two members being asked to leave the event as they had taken illegal drugs, which is against our code of conduct policy. Those concerned are welcome to join in future events but have been warned that their membership would be terminated should there be a repeat of the incident.

Trustees noted how well BSC had ran and gave their thanks and gratitude to all of the BIG Events Team and leaders for running such a fabulous event.

The results of the annual member survey have gone to trustees and will be shared with sub committees to help inform future planning. The intention is to report back at the AGM on what has already happened as a result of the survey. The response rate was good but not quite as high as in previous years. It was noted that some feedback on specific matters was perhaps not fair or shared in a constructive manner, and people reading should be mindful of this at time.

## **29/24 Finance**

Jake gave an update on the budget. Comparing the budget to actual spend, there is nothing out of expectation yet. There are no indications of any significant costs that aren't comparable to last year or haven't been budgeted for.

Finances are healthy and the reserves policy is currently above target.

The refund policy has been discussed with the sustainability committee who want to examine this alongside office staff. The committee recognises they need to hit the right balance between not putting ODL at a financial loss, but not making a profit from refunds.

Dan Byrnes highlighted the justification for refunds is similar to many related industries and that there needs to be the same system in place for all events. This should be viewed across the whole events programme, which clearly is a source of income for the organisation.

Jake is to work with the committee and bring back to the next board meeting some principles for any proposed changes.

**JH**

A query was raised over event costs which may be related to how the chef costs for BIG Spring Camp have been coded. Liam to check this with Yvonne.

**LR**

Event costs and mark-up were discussed. Jake and Joe are to look at event costs and consider any proposals as a result.

**JH**  
**JB**

### **30/24 Bank account permissions**

Liam outlined permission / signatory changes to the various bank accounts. The following was agreed:

- Steven Allan to come off the Barclaycard as a signatory and contact but to remain as a cardholder.
- Liam Russell to be given permission to apply for a Virgin Money debit card.

Liam also proposed that the organisation open a savings account with the Vernon Building Society; after reviewing available accounts the 35-day notice account seems to meet our needs at a decent level of interest.

This was discussed and it was agreed to open a savings account at Vernon Building Society with Liam Russell and Rob Mitchell as signatories.

**LR**  
**RM**

### **31/24 Policies**

Reviewed and updates policies had been submitted to the board for approval.

The Leader Credits and Leader Expenses Policy V1 was approved subject to some clarifications being made around the difference between leader expenses and the event budget.

**LR**

The Code of Conduct has been circulated previously and discussed by trustees at previous meetings. It was now approved.

The paper on "ADDRESSING AN ANOMALY BETWEEN THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE" was approved – making it clear that the complaints policy procedures are the ones used in the event of a serious issue, rather than the Code of Conduct.

The safeguarding policy was submitted for approval. Trustees agreed that David Norris would be the safeguarding lead. The policy was approved.

Liam said that the document needs to be distributed to hostel and camping leaders and other leaders made aware it has been reviewed. It was agreed that David will do a video to assist with this and as a more accessible way of communicating this.

**DN**

It was agreed that hostel and camping leaders will need to confirm receipt and that they had read the document. If people fail to respond to that ultimately, they will need to have leader permissions removed.

**LR**

Rob raised an issue that a member had highlighted to him about a potential general health policy for members in attending events and for leaders to be able to send people home who appeared to be suffering from a contagious disease.

Trustees discussed at length, and agreed that national guidelines should be followed, for example for members with Covid-19. Joe commented that even at his work in the NHS people do not challenge or tell him to go home.

The board agreed that this was not appropriate for us to introduce.

### **32/24 Charity Commission**

Rob gave an update on the recent conversations with the Charity Commission. They were comfortable with the approach being taken, including us not asking hostel and camping leaders to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, although reiterated their advice that DBS checks should be completed by charities where required. OutdoorLads' view is that having considered the evidence, our events do not fall into the categories that DBS checks are required for.

Trustees discussed and confirmed that their decision is not to undertake DBS checks for all leaders, including not for hostel and camping leaders, as the events we run do not require these to be undertaken.

Trustees approved the sending of the draft letter to the Charity Commission.

It was further agreed that for transparency with members, a copy of this letter to the Charity Commission will be made available with these minutes as Appendix 1.

### **33/24 DBS**

Trustees agreed that staff and trustees will have DBS checks completed. The Basic DBS checks will be undertaken. This is to be initiated by 31 July 2024 and is a future requirement for all trustees. DBS checks will be undertaken for all new staff when they start employment, and for all new trustees when they start their term or are re-elected for a further term.

Liam is to initiate these DBS checks and keep appropriate records.

**LR**

### **34/24 Risk assessments**

Nick Read has completed a review of the majority of the walking and climbing risk assessments and made changes where appropriate.

Trustees had some queries on the wording on medical issues being declared at the start events. The documents need to reflect both approaches to managing this. Liam to discuss with Nick Read.

**LR**

There needs to be some clarifications in the documents over first aid requirements, which is not required for lowland and hill leaders but is for mountain leaders.

**LR**

Trustees felt it would be helpful to include:

- A mention of the numbers of people permitted on particular event types
- Ensure there is consistency of language including event leader / event volunteer in the documents

Liam to ask RCs (Regional Coordinator) to review these before being distributed to leaders. **LR**

Trustees discussed the categories used for mountain leaders and how broad the lowland and hill category is. A range of views were expressed. It was confirmed that the ML assessment includes assessment on all criteria to pass.

Trustees agreed that walk categories would remain as is for now but is a subject for discussion at next year's January RC (Regional Coordinator) meeting.

The ongoing mountain bike risk assessments were discussed. A range of comments have been received and Liam will review the documents for consistency considering this. These will go to RCs for review and ultimately back to the board for approval. **LR**

David asked how we train people in the use of risk assessments – Liam and Joe confirmed this is covered in the leader assessments. The importance of ensuring that all new leaders' access and understand the risk assessment for their event type was highlighted. This should form part of the leaders sign off process in future.

### **35/22 Mountain biking**

Rob said that he had reviewed the recent correspondence he had been sent between leaders on MTB issues.

Rob is to reply to those involved on the conversations on MTB. **RM**

### **36/22 Action Planning**

The actions from the away weekends were reviewed to see if there were matters that items that have slipped through the net from away weekends that need to pick up.

Mostly in hand. David is to look at the articles of association items for the August meeting. **DN**

### **37/24 Confirmation of dates**

The following meeting dates were confirmed:

- Monday 12th August 2024, 7:30pm, online
- AGM 2024 – Saturday 21st September, after AGM, face to face and online, Manchester.
- Wednesday 6th November 2024, 7:30pm, online (changed date)
- Sunday 12th January 2025, face to face, Kettlewell (after away weekend)

- Tuesday 8th April, 7:30pm, online
- Tuesday 5th August, 7:30pm, online
- Summer meeting TBC
- AGM – Saturday 20th September, face to face and online, Manchester (venue TBC)
- November meeting TBC

**The Meeting closed at 15:20pm.**

**Signed Chair**

**Date**

**Signed Secretary**

**Date**