

ENGLISH SKI COUNCIL LTD

(t/a SNOWSPORT ENGLAND)

Minutes of a Board Meeting held on Saturday 16th April 2011 at 10.15am
At SportPark, Loughborough

Present: Barry Spouge Chairman
 Jennifer Denning Finance Director
 Jemima Barnes Director
 Karen Richardson Director
 Peter Stratton Director

 Tim Fawke Chief Executive
 Peter Heath Company Secretary

Apologies: Fergus Bisset
 Dan Hardie
 Nigel Matthews

856 SSE Facilities Strategy Presentation

Before the main agenda, the Chairman welcomed Sarah Green and John Roberts of Sport Structures, who presented their final report on their review of existing facilities and the proposed SSE Facilities Strategy 2011-2015.

They noted that, unlike many other facility-based sports, there is no standard design for ski centres. The report follows visits to 50 facilities in England and 5 meetings with the SSE steering group.

Part 1 – Overview of current provision

Part 2 – Vision, objectives and outcomes up to 2020

Part 3 – Identifies 12 priority centres which show potential for growth or face significant challenges, the work required to achieve the objectives and proposes standards for the provision of new facilities and for the development of existing facilities.

Part 4 – Action Plan for 2011-2015

Part 5 – Detailed specifications for alpine, freestyle, snowboard and roller skiing facilities to be suitable for hosting competitions at various levels, training elite performers, developing talent or encouraging participation.

In the following discussion, it was noted that the Board had already agreed in principle to advertise for and appoint a chairman/co-ordinator to be responsible for leading a small committee from the membership to deliver on the action plan. The initial appointment to be for one year with a small retainer funded by the Sport England grant. Circulation for the advert could include Sport England, UK Sport, Youth Sport Trust, CSPs as well as within our membership.

Some of the work may fall within the remit of the existing SE funded Whole Sport Plan – e.g. promotion of the strategy, but additional funding is required to deliver the full Action Plan as proposed.

If we get our strategy right, we may be able to benefit from the government's proposed reallocation of lottery money for capital projects after the 2012 Olympics. The funding round for 2013-17 starts next January.

It was noted that outdoor facilities are comparatively cheap to build and, if properly managed, are more cost effective to operate than indoor sports centres.

Directors were asked to read and comment back on the executive summary, so that this can be promoted as Board policy.

Sarah and John were thanked by the Chairman for their presentation and then left the meeting.

Subject to any feedback on the detail, the Board approved the proposed strategy and action plan, also the Terms of Reference for the new committee, and agreed:

1. That a case be prepared to support an application for lottery funding next January.
2. Jennifer and Tim to review the 2011 budget to seek funding for a co-ordinator
3. Tim to prepare a job description for the chairman.
4. Once the chairman has been appointed, to invite individuals with the required skills to the new group.

857 Declaration of Interests

Jennifer noted that her daughter has not applied for membership of the 2011/12 England Alpine Team as she is now training abroad.

858 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 22nd March 2011* were confirmed as a true and accurate record thereof and, together with the minutes of the 29th January Board meeting, were signed by the Chairman. Confidential items to be omitted from the published minutes were agreed.

859 Matters Arising

Actions from last meeting:

828a. Andrew Bingham MP. Tim has offered Mr Bingham a number of events which he could attend and awaits his reply.

Reporting of other actions to be deferred to next meeting

860 CEO Report

a) **Facilities Strategy** – reported under minute 856 above

b) Office Accommodation

The Board viewed the available room and the other facilities at SportPark.

Other sports governing bodies currently in the same building include:

Amateur Swimming Association
British Swimming
England & Wales Cricket Board
England Squash & Racketball
English Federation for Disability Sport

Sport England also have an office here and the site is one of the options for a merged UK Sport and Sport England headquarters after the 2012 Olympics

* inserted into the minute book for record purposes.

Tim provided an update on the two locations being considered: SportPark and the Deckhouse, Merryhill, with his recommendation to choose SportPark.

Karen reported that she had spoken to all members of the office staff to get their views on the proposed move and read out her notes of their comments and some written comments.

The Board considered and discussed a number of points from the staff, e-mailed views from Nigel and Dan's view by telephone to Tim.

At the end of the discussion, the Chairman put two proposals to the Board:

Move office to Merryhill: No votes in favour

Move office to SportPark: 5 votes in favour (all Directors present), no votes against.

As Tuesday is the first time that all staff will be in the office, Tim to hold a staff meeting on Tuesday morning to advise them of the Board's decision and to give them formal notification letters. Karen to attend the meeting.

c) Proposal to outsource the financial function

Jennifer presented a business case for the possible outsourcing of SSE's finance function.

As the organisation has grown, the accounting workload has increased to the point that additional resources are required.

At present, we have one full-time staff member covering the full range of financial administration with no holidays or sickness cover and little qualified support. The preparation of monthly accounts and project reports continues to be a challenge despite last year's transfer from QuickBooks to Sage. Together, these factors leave the organisation very exposed.

Options considered include:

- a) employ some qualified accounting support for an average of say two to three hours per week – estimated additional cost £5,000pa. This does not resolve holidays and sickness cover for routine bookkeeping.
- b) add more support at the bookkeeping level to enable the Finance Manager to concentrate on the more complex tasks - estimated additional cost £10,000pa

With the Board's declared aim to reduce administrative overheads where possible so that a greater proportion of funds can be used to support the development of snowsports, another option has been researched – to outsource the accounting function to a contractor.

The work to be carried out would be defined in a service level agreement with full holiday and sickness cover and supervised by the contractor. There would be some loss of flexibility to do ad-hoc work as part of the agreement.

Outsourcing to a contractor allows the appropriate level of staff to be allocated to each task with full holiday and sickness cover, all overseen by a qualified accountant.

Jennifer had prepared a detailed specification of the work required and invited three national outsourcing firms and a London-based accounting firm to tender for a one year contract. She had also invited Harrison Salmon to tender. This is a NW based accounting practice offering audit and accountancy services to small businesses, which helped set up our systems on Sage and consequently knows our scope of work well. The practice is managed by Karen Richardson, a Director of SSE.

Four quotations had been received and circulated to the Board for consideration before the meeting. It was noted that Karen took no part in submitting Harrison Salmon's quotation, nor in any discussion on the merits of any of the service providers being considered.

At this point, Karen left the meeting and took no part in the decision-making process.

With one exception, the outsourcing quotations are considerably cheaper than our current spend on financial administration even before the costs of options a) or b) are added.

Based on all the evidence provided, Jennifer recommended that:

- a) the finance function be outsourced as described in the business case
- b) the quote from Harrison Salmon be accepted, having provided the lowest quote by some margin

Following a brief discussion, the Chairman put two proposals to the Board:

- a) to outsource the finance function
 - 4 votes in favour (all Directors present); no votes against
- b) to accept the quotation from Harrison Salmon
 - 4 votes in favour (all Directors present); no votes against

At this point, Karen re-joined the meeting.

The Board agreed interim arrangements for the accounting function and for the staff meeting to be held on Tuesday.

d) Proposed Staffing Structure

The Board agreed the following staffing structure effective from the move to SportPark and the agreed outsourcing:

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| | CEO | |
| Membership Services & Admin Support | | Sports Development Team |
| Operations Manager (full-time) 2 part-time admin support staff | | Senior Sports Development Officer 2 Sports Development Officers |

Jennifer/Tim to write a job specification for the operations manager. This should include: self-motivator, ability to make good use of modern technology, ability to manage staff and projects, ability to show and use initiative. Peter to advise on an appropriate salary.

The existing staff are to be invited to apply for the membership services posts.

Tim to forward the responses from Peninsula to the Board.

e) Communication Strategy

Peter presented a report which lists SSE's existing methods of communication with the target audience and cost for each in terms of resources and money. The report was prepared by the Communications working group as part of the Strategy Review, with Peter's comments added.

The Board discussed the two major communication channels – The Piste magazine and SSE's web site.

The Piste. Currently 3 issues per year (Sept, Nov and Jan) with a print circulation of about 16,000 copies to members, clubs, facilities etc. Each issue is also published on the web site. Current cost £20,000 per year including distribution and postage costs.

As this is a significant investment, alternatives were considered:

Publish on web only as a digital edition – approx. 50% cost reduction, but expect reduced advertising revenue

Outsource publication as an insert in another magazine

Replace with frequent (monthly/weekly?) e-newsletters to all members and anyone signing up, plus enhanced web site with increased use of Twitter/Facebook for immediate news.

While the current trend is towards instant online media, there is still a demand for a printed copy – primarily by members who receive their personal copy by post.

Following discussion, it was agreed to reduce the circulation by stopping the bulk mailing to clubs and slopes with immediate effect.

Increased use of e-newsletters, Twitter, Facebook and the new website to become the main means of communicating beyond the core membership of performers and instructors.

Position to be reviewed in nine months. Dan to be asked to lead the review.

2011 Budget for The Piste to be reduced to £12,000.

Barry to consider the viability of 4 issues per year based on the reduced circulation to avoid the long summer gap between issues.

Web site. Test site now available; some updating required before it is ready for comment. Proposals/solutions still required for providing material for and updating the site

f) UK Coaching Pathway

Tim reported that the new course material is almost complete and will be ready in time for courses to be delivered from September. Discussions are on-going with Snowsport Scotland and BASI regarding the logistics of delivering the courses – who is authorised to deliver which course, course fees and income allocation.

g) Board members

The deadline for nominations for election as Director at the AGM is 10am on Friday 6th May. Peter and Fergus have indicated that they will not be standing for election. The Nordic Committee has been invited to submit a nomination by the deadline as a possible replacement for Fergus. It was noted that AGM notifications should be sent by e-mail where possible as allowed by the Articles.

h) Renewals and Registrations

Total registrations to end March only 1.5% behind last year. The detailed analysis has been circulated to Key Committees. 75 clubs now affiliated (2010 total 77 clubs)

i) Risk Register

To be reviewed at next meeting.

861 Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Deferred to next meeting as Dan was not available to present the final draft.

862 Finance and Admin

a) 2010 Audit

Stephen Jones to begin the audit next week.

Jemima proposed the Board's thanks to Jennifer for all her recent work on the accounts and audit.

863 **Key Committees**

No reports

864 **British Ski and Snowboard**

It was noted that BSS held an open meeting at the British Championships in Meribel and reported that they were concentrating on the Senior Team and a smaller Junior Team for the next season. Planning to hold an AGM in the autumn to include proposals for a new constitution.

865 **AOB**

None.

866 **Next Meetings**

Wednesday 18th May @ 7.15pm Conference call
Saturday 18th June AGM & Council meeting

Post meeting note: AGM and Council meeting to be held at SportPark, Loughborough.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 4pm