


FINAL Minutes: Badminton GB Board Limited Meeting Thursday 11th November 2021 Blended meeting – NBC and Teams		
10:30-11:00 Pre meeting 11:00-14:00 Main Board		
PLEASE NOTE THAT THE UNREDACTED VERSION OF THESE MINUTES ARE STAFF SENSITIVE		
Board and invitees:	Stephen Baddeley (SB)	Chair and Non-Executive Director
	Pete Fitzboydon (PFB)	Interim CEO
	Priya Guha (PG)	Non-Executive Director
	Derek Batchelor (DB)	Director (Badminton England)
	Mark Beecher (MB)	Head of Performance Operations, Badminton England
	Amanda Fry (AF)	Performance Team Support (minute taker)
	Linda Freeman (LF)	Performance Team Support (minute taker)
Joining via Teams	Stephen Farrow (SF)	Company Secretary/Non-Executive Director
	Graeme Finch (GF)	Non-Executive Director
	Christine Black (CB)	Director (Badminton Scotland)
	Kelly Aston (KA)	Director (Badminton Wales)
	Ken Nixon (KN)	Director (Badminton Ireland, Ulster Branch)
	Jon Austin (JA)	Ex Performance Director
Apologies:	Jonny Wynne (JW)	UK Sport – by invitation

Topic
<p>1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>1.1. SB welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2. SB welcomed PFB as interim CEO. Recruitment for CEO currently in progress and appointment is likely to be prior to Christmas.</p> <p>1.3. SB welcomed AF and confirmed AF will be taking over in minute taking.</p>
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</p> <p>2.1. DB confirmed involvement in Home Nations collaboration of events group working together to bid for 4 para-badminton events. MB raised potential overlap with proposed Technical Advisory Group for para-badminton. DB confirmed sharing of information and expertise would take place to avoid confusion. Action: DB to share draft information to MB.</p> <p>2.2. CB approached to take part in Badminton Wales disciplinary panel regarding a particular case. Badminton Scotland is aware.</p>
<p>3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</p> <p>3.1. Mins of 9 July: Additional insertions to minutes by DB as agreed at the last meeting and circulated. Approved by the Board.</p> <p>3.2. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 Sep 2021.</p> <p>For Accuracy:</p> <p>3.3. Page 3 – 4.11. CB request to change wording from “happy” to “has agreed” to the changes.</p> <p>3.4. Page 3 – 4.22. CB request to add in: coaches and “a player” were interviewed.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>3.5. Page 3 - MOU now confirmed by Scotland. Action: MoU to be circulated round home countries and GB Board for e-signatures. PFB/AF</p> <p>3.6. Page 4 - Point 4.6.9: oversight that review of jurisdiction issues not carried through to this agenda. Action: SB to carry forward to next meeting.</p>

	<p>3.7. Page 5 Para badminton home nations event. Work progressing that DB is involved in as mentioned in 2.1 above. UK Sport funding had been approved for Para-badminton home nations tournaments - but it was noted that no sanction requests for tournament dates had been received to date.</p>
	<p>4. PERFORMANCE Report from Tokyo Olympics.</p> <p>4.1. SB thanked JA for attending to provide an overview of the Tokyo Olympic experience. JA thanked Board for the opportunity as he felt it was important that the Board received a first-hand account of the lead up to and the campaign through the Olympic Games.</p> <p>4.1.1.Pre-Games: The selection of the mens doubles pairing for Tokyo and the appeals and arbitration that followed had a significant adverse effect on the final preparations, at the Games and has continued without a resolution. Three players Marcus Ellis (ME), Lauren Smith (LS) and Chloe Birch (CBi) who were selected for Tokyo and Chris Langridge (CL) who was not, chose to go public with their dissatisfaction about the selection questioning the integrity of the selection and appeals process, the selection panel and coaches, and also then went on to make significant accusations about the historical and current culture within the training environment. JA went on to say that the independent arbitration overseen by a QC appointed by Sport Resolutions upheld the original selection and quashed every aspect of the appellant's case. The decision of the Arbitrator did not bring the matter to a conclusion for the players [REDACTED] Upon notification to the views of the players, JA, in agreement with the then CEO, Adrian Christy (AC) and SB agreed to put in place a formal agreement with those players, agreeing to all of their demands on the basis that in the circumstances JA felt it important not to impose coaching and support onto players who felt that such support might adversely affect their performance. JA and [REDACTED] did not agree that what was put in place was optimal for the three players and also were concerned about the potential negative impact on the rest of the team, [REDACTED] who would lose their second coach [REDACTED] who would be moved to provide coaching for both the mixed and ladies doubles. Having formally agreed to the players demands the support team led by JA prepared the way for the team as best they could in highly challenging circumstances.</p> <p>4.1.2.Games time: The team dynamic throughout the Games was far below what JA would have wished, the team functioned but required continual management by PJ for all on court activity and also by JA behind the scenes. An example of a necessary change was to move the team room allocations in the two apartments allocated to badminton to ensure that where relationships were broken, the impact on the players was minimised. The resulting decisions unfortunately added to the disconnect with all the coaches [REDACTED] in one apartment and the rest of the team in the other. JA received reports that [REDACTED] were compiling a list of complaints that they were planning to share once they returned about the support the coaches and staff were providing, and within their apartment they were openly critical of the coaches and support staff with the exception of the physiotherapist [REDACTED] who was sharing their apartment. Despite provocation on a number of occasions the coaches and support staff remained professional and were impeccable throughout. Particular praise should be given to [REDACTED] who did an excellent job coaching the three players despite not wishing to do so. JA highlighted how tough he had found the whole experience and in particular trying to minimise the effect on those players not involved in the dispute.</p> <p>4.1.3.Players conduct: Kirsty Gilmour (KG) handled herself well and remained professional throughout, she was self-sufficient and fully engaged with coaching team. There was concern that [REDACTED], but KG remained focussed on her own preparations and performance on court. Similarly, Toby Plenty (TP) shut out the negative environment and gained significantly due to having PJ as his coach and TP was a shining light in how</p>

he embraced the experience. [REDACTED] had been drawn into the appeal process, which was very disappointing and stressful for them when they had done nothing wrong, and their selection should have been an extremely positive experience. [REDACTED] displayed a lot of frustration and anger about what had happened to them, which JA believed did affect the mens doubles pairs preparations and performances. [REDACTED] was the most disruptive during the Games, continually questioning and seeking to undermine and showed a lack of respect to members of the support team. The players were protected from the impact of the pandemic and what the organising committee required of Team GB as much as possible, this was intentional for the purpose of minimising distraction for the players. The issue with this approach was that whilst behind the scenes decisions about, transport, training times covid testing etc....were changing or being left to the eleventh hour, the three players believed that JA or the coaches were at fault. [REDACTED] was emotionally exhausted due to the constant negativity and criticism by the [REDACTED] players. JA offered to relocate [REDACTED] out of apartment, but [REDACTED] declined on the basis that that might further enflame the situation. JA then went on to state that he endeavoured throughout to provide all necessary support to the players but to minimise criticism maintained a lower profile in the training and competition environment, communication was transactional with [REDACTED] only speaking to JA if they wanted something. JA commented that the primary reason for the deterioration in players view of JA was that he had been the Chair of the Olympic Selection Panel.

Player performance:

- 4.1.4. **KG** won 1 group match. She had recovered from injury but had not been able to get the necessary volume of training pre-Games However, she was 100% fit and delivered a performance level we would have expected in the circumstance. KG has delivered excellent performances since Games.
- 4.1.5. **TP** delivered a number of excellent performances. Arguably produced his strongest ever result defeating a world ranked top 20 player and previous World Championship bronze medallist. Lost in last 16 to a world ranked top 4 player – when he lost, he lost to a better player. He took away lots of positives. He was the lowest ranked player in the team but reached the last 16, and achieved the second best result across the whole team.
- 4.1.6. **BL and SV** had an exceptionally difficult group, playing world ranked number 1 in group, the lowest ranked pair in the group were 11th at the time. On occasions they demonstrated strong performance level, [REDACTED] JA and players disappointed that they were not able to replicate the level delivered in the lead up to the Games.
- 4.1.7. **CBi and LS** had a difficult group also playing world ranked number 1. Competitive in matches at times but struggled to maintain high level throughout matches and failed to deliver at critical moments. The situation off court [REDACTED] may also have contributed to what was achieved on court.
- 4.1.8. **ME and LS** were excellent through the group stages. First match was a strong performance against a dangerous French pair. They produced arguably their best ever performance in their final group match defeating the world ranked number 2 pair. Sadly they could not replicate the same level in the quarter final. JA felt it was a missed opportunity and was not surprised that when they lost, they blamed the circumstances off court for what happened. JA added that it was frustrating to be sat next to [REDACTED] in the stands, regarded by the players as the best mixed doubles coach but the coach the players had refused to work with because he was a member of the Olympic Selection Panel.
- 4.1.9. **Personal Reflections by JA post Games:** since being appointed as Performance Director he has always wanted and took the greatest pleasure from everyone in the team, whether they be staff or players being successful. Sadly, the actions of the small group of players and the relentless criticism and lack of appreciation for all that has been done for them throughout their careers left JA feeling very differently. JA did not

want to feel this way and reflected that this feeling was not conducive to being an effective Performance Director moving forward.

- 4.1.10. **Post competition:** required to leave Tokyo within 48 hrs of last GB player in the competition finishing. JA informed players that they would be leaving, and instantly received WhatsApp message [REDACTED] challenging JA and the lack of notice for the travel plan quoting the briefing information provided by JA prior to departure to Tokyo which was different to what was now happening, JA advised that the situation was continually changing due to Covid, and we had to adapt, be prepared for change and abide by instructions given by Team GB. [REDACTED]
- 4.1.11. **Flight home** – With Covid protocols in place e.g., no standing. [REDACTED].
- 4.1.12. **Post Games:** Without being able to take a break from the Olympic Games JA was expected to deal with everything that had unfolded over recent months and effectively re-establish the WCP from beginning of September. JA fully consulted with AC and a way forward was agreed. JA wrote to all those players nominated to be members of the WCP with an offer letter which outlined the funding, services and people who would be available to the players should they wish to take up the offer. This letter was particularly relevant to [REDACTED] as an interim agreement had been put in place for the Games and it was important for everyone to be aware that there would be a reset for the future. Having sent the letter [REDACTED] contacted the Chair of Badminton England (BE) during a Board meeting (JA was present at the Board meeting) to express their concern about the content of the letter, the Board were concerned that such a letter had been sent. [REDACTED] returned to training, no conversation took place with them or the coaching staff about the letter or the programmes expectations of them and to this day no such conversation has happened.
- 4.1.13. SB requested clarity regarding the letter to players that had led to tension between JA, AC and Badminton England Board. JA confirmed that the letter setting out the offer for returning to the training environment went to all nominated WCP [REDACTED], it confirmed the whole range of support that would be offered to players including the coaches all of whom were in the environment prior to the Games. JA reiterated that he consulted fully with AC and he approved the letter before it was sent. JA still believed based on everything that had gone before that sending the letter was the correct approach, however the BE Board had a different view and that the [REDACTED].
- 4.1.14. PFB confirmed he was not CEO at the time, but a BE Board member. He explained that the BE Board felt that mediation should have been offered prior to the letter being sent. [REDACTED]. PFB confirmed plans to mediate are now in place.
- 4.1.15. SB confirmed that prior to the GB Board meeting, PFB had been clear that the decision for JA to step down was 100% JA's decision and that PFB and the BE Chair had not wanted him to do so, however, JA felt his position had become untenable, as the BE Board had not supported him in dealing with the situation and undermined him by opening separate channels of communication with the players identified above.
- 4.1.16. SF congratulated JA for his professional conduct and candid report. SF hoped that staff are OK and wished JA all the best.
- 4.1.17. DB raised if BGB should take disciplinary action against players, [REDACTED]. It was confirmed that BE has taken action [REDACTED]. PFB confirmed a thorough process has been undertaken and has now been concluded.
- 4.1.18. PG requested confirmation at which point it had been agreed that the disciplinary process should be handled by BE rather than GB. JA confirmed he approached BOA regarding the team members agreement with reference to behaviour and consequences. JA raised with AC who then spoke with BOA legal team to request guidance. Outcome was AC was advised that the BE route was the route to go down. Regarding athlete agreements, due to UK Sport agreements not being available prior to the Olympic Games athletes had not signed a UK Sport agreement, so the disciplinary procedures used were BE's. [REDACTED]. SF and JA agreed that the BOA Team Member

Agreement (TMA) did not have a disciplinary procedure in place or the ability to sanction.

- 4.1.19. KN requested the need to look forward to future and get paperwork right going forward. KN requested information on outcome of the disciplinary process as relevant to setting future processes
- 4.1.20. CB confirmed this cannot be allowed to happen again. Code of conducts and Agreements needs to be looked at and asked if they might be any funding impact. MB confirmed WCP commenced 1 April, and athlete agreements were still not finalised by UK Sport (across all sports, not just Badminton). UK Sport currently still in the process of getting these signed off. So, the recent months has been a period where no formal UK Sport Player Agreement in place with those players.
- 4.1.21. SF questioned disciplinary outcome and requested for Board to be made aware of the outcome. SB confirmed that there are no GB disciplinary procedures in place. DB confirmed that this needs addressing. DB confirmed the BE disciplinary committee has met and a decision has been reached [REDACTED].
- 4.1.22.** SB stated clarity needed on GB and home nation jurisdiction and requested that GB Board should have sight of the disciplinary outcome. PFB was not sure he had the authority to circulate this information but would check. **Action: PFB to circulate outcome of the disciplinary panel [REDACTED].**
- 4.1.23. JA reflections:**
- 4.1.23.1. Role of a Performance Director (PD) needs to be more clearly defined and more widely communicated and understood. Currently the expectations of the role are too great and the structure to support the role is not in place.
- 4.1.23.2. Increased understanding of the significance of an Olympic and Paralympic Games by the wider sport needs to take place, for the purpose of giving time for those involved to recover and reset for the next cycle.
- 4.1.23.3. Player relationships need consideration – what is the professional relationship with the players and their influence on who provides support and services to them and what are the players responsibilities to the WCP and the people within it.
- 4.1.23.4. Selection processes – need review. The Tokyo Games was an exceptional circumstance due to the delay and also the pandemic, but it would be wise to learn and adapt the policies to account for the recent experiences.
- 4.1.23.5. SB thanked JA. PG expressed sadness that both JA and the team have had to go through what they have, and thanked JA for acting professionally and commended JA for his conduct. PG asked for clarification on reasons why JA has departed. JA stated the privilege and passion he had felt as PD over 8 years but said that that it had been incredibly challenging over the past 6 years in particular following the loss of UK Sport funding, he had given everything to keep the programme going, to push people forward and provide players with opportunities. The never-ending battle had taken its toll on him, the lack of appreciation of the sacrifices the organisation and the people within it had made to allow players to pursue their dreams and the fact that to return knowing that the agreed approach had been undermined led JA to the decision he had reached.
- 4.1.23.6. GF requested clarity on UK Sport perspective. PFB confirmed UK Sport has delivered a Culture Health Check and are aware of the current situation and offering guidance as to the way forward. GF requested if this could impact funding decision going forward. PFB said UKS are confident in the plan going forward.
- 4.1.23.7. PG requested clarity on the disciplinary process for the [REDACTED] players that have caused disruption – PFB confirmed no action has been taken yet players feel their behaviour is not relating to the selection issue but to failings in the performance environment. PFB taking a neutral position to not impact the

facts being worked through and the Walk the Floor report. SF stated that misconduct needs to be followed up and asked if further analysis of conduct will take place. PFB confirmed flight incident dealt with and concluded. No other incidents raised that would be a disciplinary procedure. [REDACTED] No issues or complaints have been raised to the knowledge of PFB.

4.1.23.8. SF said the UK Sport Walk the Floor report should review the conduct and hoped that disciplinary processes and consequences could emerge to give confidence to players and staff. He asked if more of a review should take place about the issues pre-Games. PFB confirmed walk the floor will cover this. PFB confirmed if subsequent investigations need to take place, then they will.

4.1.23.9. SB said that there appears to be a tendency to appease the players. He agreed that a pragmatic solution to compete at the Games had had to be taken e.g., allowing players to not be coached by coaches. However, since then the England Board have been appeasing the players further and have not yet taken any action against what is in the public domain. He said the GB Board are seeking a firmer response [REDACTED]. **Action: message from discussion should be taken back to the England Board.**

4.1.23.10. PFB confirmed that there will be further media coverage and, PFB is managing this with players to not go public until the Walk the Floor process is complete, but it is in a fragile position.

4.1.23.11. PG requested that the GB Board is involved in drafting appropriate communications.

4.1.23.12. SB confirmed reflection time needed to confirm home nation responsibility and clarity needed on roles and responsibilities and what is delegated. We need to learn lessons around communications, disciplinary and roles and responsibilities.

4.1.23.13. KN concerned about it being a GB process. Need to be careful and must move on. SB confirmed GB not taking any disciplinary action, but appropriate that GB is involved in the Walk the Floor and any subsequent implications for the WCPs.

4.1.23.14. UK Sport Player agreement – GF expectation that players could decide not to sign it going forward. PFB confirmed a code of conduct will be developed, which will reflect a legal agreement. Should a player not sign up, clearly there would be a consequence as they would be actively rejecting the WCP. MB confirmed no funding would then be available. **Action: PFB agreement to share codes of conduct.**

4.1.23.15. SB thanks JA for his points, and sorry to see JA go, but pleased JA is staying on to support Badminton England over the next 8 months and wished him all the best in the future

4.2. **Para player review: Action: MB to circulate presentation and review.** Agreed to have been a complete success. Presentation contains information on the formal review with staff and players that had taken place. **Action: Board to feed any questions back to MB.** Paperwork is being worked through with UK Sport ready for player review in December.

4.3. **Para review meeting** – MB has put in an application for additional funding. **Action: MB to report funding application outcome in January**

4.4. **Operation plan** – confusion over timescales as Board Members felt this was presented back in May and feedback was expected by May but JW had not appeared to have seen the plan. MB confirmed the plan is currently with JW for review and needed to be updated with outcome from walk the floor. CB confirmed that requests for changes were made at May Board meeting on the understanding the plan was due for submission in December and that comments need to be sought from the TAG. **Action: MB to follow up with JW to confirm timescales, the template, and ensure feedback from the Board could be incorporated including alignment to the pathway of the MoU, coaching structures, pathway prospectus and outcomes from walk the floor.** MB confirmed there will be a technical meeting for

	<p>player review and that priority needs to be looking at the 2022-2023 plan. Action: Board members to send through any requested changes to MB. Action: MB to check minutes from the May meeting.</p> <p>4.5. Pathway prospectus: MB confirmed 3 weeks out from being circulated. Few points of clarification required from UK Sport plus capacity issue to complete. Action: MB to circulate by the end of November for comment prior to submission to UK Sport in December</p>
	<p>5. GOVERNANCE</p> <p>5.1. Walk the Floor: now completed. 7 individuals from UK Sport completed process with over 70 individuals interviewed. Draft report produced that SB, Chair of Badminton England and PFB has seen. SB said report is vague and while there are concerns raised and areas for improvements, there is no 'smoking gun'. Due to be circulated to the Board in early December and to those that participated in it. PFB to ensure the report goes out in a co-ordinated fashion. PFB discussing report with staff, who will sign NDAs. Action: PFB to share timeline of report comms for clarity and will include mediation process and dates</p> <p>5.2. Selection Policies: SF confirmed he has all information needed and will provide an update at the next meeting</p> <p>5.3. Key Metrics: PG gave context on high level governance perspective. MB produced metric document which can evolve and change but provides a great starting point going forward. MB added frequencies to keep Board informed outside of the meeting. MB welcomed requests on metrics to be reported on. SB mindful of team being able to report on and provide support to MB where needed.</p> <p>5.4. Risk Register: updated following last meeting with new/changed risks shown. Main changes are covid mitigation and concern at going through winter period. Will maintain testing x 3 times a week, players are aware of responsibilities and maintaining elite status to protect the environment. Action: Lead Home Nation risk to be changed following electronic signing. Board agreed that the risk register needed revisiting to reflect where the sport is currently at at GB level. Action: PG, SB and GF to review with MB in preparation for the next meeting.</p>
6	<p>6. FINANCE</p> <p>6.1. MB confirmed underspend due to 2 planned camps prior to Tokyo did not take place. Underspend looking to carry over with full BWF calendar for next year. Underspend needs to be presented in early Jan for sign off with UK Sport. Action: MB to present next year's forecast in advance of January meeting</p> <p>6.1.1. GF asked for picture of Q2 results. MB confirmed saving 12-13k against forecast due to domestic training. MB not able to print off until confirmed by UK Sport as sits on their portal. Action: MB to circulate Q2 figures asap once provided by UK Sport</p> <p>6.1.2. DB requested if any funding provision in place for classifier training. MB confirmed this is in the SE funding application as not eligible for UK Sport funding. Sinead from para programme keen to be involved.</p> <p>6.2. Nat west and electronic payments: SF worked out online banking with Nat West. The Board formally approved to move to online banking. Action: SB to action online banking</p>
7.	<p>7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:</p> <p>7.1. CB and KA not able to access SharePoint. Action: MB to follow up</p> <p>7.2. World University Games: MB confirmed that GB Badminton have been invited to put 2 players forward and need to circulate selection policy to Board for comment and sign off. Action: comments and feedback requested by Board on selection policy by Monday. MB confirmed costs to be met by home nation or individual players.</p> <p>7.3. Youth Olympics Festival next year. BOA keen that selection policies are tighter as selections to date have not resulted in a player going on to compete at an Olympic Games.</p> <p>7.4. Athlete agreement: Action: PG to add in comments to MB</p>
8	<p>8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:</p> <p>8.1. SB proposed go back to quarterly meetings: March, June, Sep and Dec.</p> <p>8.2. PG requested extraordinary meeting may be required to focus on current priorities. Action: SB to agree dates for mid-Dec for walk the floor meeting and funding meeting w/c 8th Jan</p>

	<p>8.3. CB requested clarification on podium funding for Chris and Gabby Adcock in terms of 4 allocations on podium. MB confirmed formal proposal went to UK Sport for 9 players to allocate across 3 areas. UK Sport also recommended to complete player review first</p> <p>8.4. SB thanked everyone for attending</p>
9.	<p>9. ITEMS TO CARRY FORWARD</p> <p>TAG – para badminton</p> <p>Review of Diversity Action Plan</p> <p>Scope of Chair’s role</p> <p>IPC Athlete Classification</p> <p>Review of selection policies and jurisdiction issues</p>