



Hello again,
Phil Veasey here, providing my regular “update from the Chair” following our February BaseballSoftballUK Board Meeting.

We met this February, extending an ongoing invitation to Tom Thornhill, **BBF President**, our guest. It is a good indicator of relationship health with the British Baseball Federation that Tom is joining our meetings.

One of the most important decisions this year will be made by **the International Olympic Committee** about the future of baseball and softball as an Olympic sport. The Los Angeles 2028 host nation nominated sports will be announced at the turn of April. We have been proactive with the British Olympic Association and other countries with whom we work, pressing the importance of being Olympic to our sports. Should the IOC Board approve LA’s recommendation, the decision will go to the IOC 140th Congress in Mumbai in the autumn for ratification.

We celebrated the Annual Investment Review funding uplift announced by UK Sport recently: a vote of confidence in the Olympic programmes. With preparation well underway for the upcoming Women’s Fastpitch World Cup in Ireland in July, and having just returned from the World Baseball Classic in Phoenix, we continue to be confident about the teams’ chances to impress.

We were briefed on the plans for creating and leaving a lasting **participation legacy** from the **MLB London Series**. The project team includes MLB, the Mayor of London’s Office, the London Stadium, the promoters CSM and the NGBs. The programme pillars are: *Reach, Retain, Elite, Infrastructure* and *Event Integration*.

John Boyd, our CEO, outlined the **2023 Operational Plan**: proactive, enthusiastic, fast and helpful delivery against our “must do” actions. Being openly accountable.

The recent **WBSC Europe Congress** was reviewed and we are preparing to host the European board for their summer meeting during the MLB London Series.

We approved new **Financial Procedures** to allow better administration of national teams travelling abroad, reflecting our new responsibilities. We initiated the creation of a **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** and a baseball and softball **People Plan**, drawing input from across the baseball/softball communities. We received an update on the 25 clubs going through the **Development Charter Health Check**. We heard about the enthusiasm for the recent **Coach Summit** and **Coaching Awards** at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre.

2023 **Farnham Park** hire rates were approved. Batting cages, bullpens and fields for half a day can now be hired. We made the first increase in a few years: 8%. National teams will be able to book the fields free of charge. Farnham Park is a ring-fenced cost centre, returning any proceeds to its improvement. It continues to make a loss.

There are plans for a borehole field and irrigation system, as a part of a **sustainable, environmentally positive improvement plan** for Farnham Park and an indoor facility is being explored. Very important and exciting! We also heard of our increased management responsibilities at the lovely **Milton Keynes** facility at **Conniburrow**.

Safeguarding: we reviewed cases and noted that the BBF has appointed Earl Dix as their organisational lead. We took a collective commitment to undertake Board safeguarding training, for BSUK and for the NGBs.

We next meet on 22 May 2023.

Phil Veasey // Chair, BaseballSoftballUK Ltd

Previous Meetings

Board Meeting #97 – 7 Nov 2022

Of all the business conducted, the most significant was the calling of the BSUK Annual General Meeting for Monday 28 November 2022. The BSUK Board looks forward to presenting the Annual Review for 2021-22, appointing our auditors and insurers and concluding the last financial year.

We will also be marking the departure of some key Board Directors at this **AGM**. Matthew Knowles and Prashant Dave joined us two years ago and both have been strong advocates for our work. Jenny Fromer, whose resumé includes 13 years as Joint CEO of BSUK and a term of office as BSF President, will also be stepping down. All three have served with integrity, professionalism and pride. They have set a positive culture that future board directors are bound to follow.

Recruitment for their replacements will follow in the coming months, with a focus on talent development/ performance, major events, volunteering and facility projects. We'd also like to add audit and accountancy, project management and negotiating skills sets if we can.

BSUK's responsibilities to **safeguarding** continued to feature in the Board agenda. We received an update on a new system to monitor safeguarding called 'My Concern', which we've purchased. Our Governance Committee heard of our continued compliance with standards following our Child Protection in Sport Unit annual review. We have also implemented a Service Level Agreement with British American Football Association to provide them with professional safeguarding services.

The **cost of living** crisis was also discussed from two angles. Firstly, the impact this might have

on decisions taken by current and future players. Secondly, from a staff perspective. Our staff team derive their livelihoods from us and, in the context of a standstill and real-terms reduction in funding, we have some challenges to address. We also looked at improvements to performance management systems.

We enjoyed extended discussions on our **development** work, including the great news of funding from the Mayor of London's Office for London legacy work around the MLB London Series – coming up in June next year. These are funds that we will administer on behalf of the consortium of partners delivering the next years' Series in London and across the country.

From a **performance** perspective, we've had GB's best summer ever. The Women's Fastpitch team secured an incredible silver medal in Barcelona. GB Baseball's World Baseball Classic Qualifier performance left us all in tears, and is followed by a March Classic opener against Team USA that will make all of our eyes' water with pride. We heard about our agreement to use the MLB Jackie Robinson Facility in Vero Beach, Florida, and received an update on the recruitment of the GB Women's Fastpitch Head Coach.

We recently celebrated a wonderful summer of **Great Britain** success with the leaders of each of the programmes at Passyunk Avenue, Waterloo, just before the opening game of the MLB World Series. It was an incredible evening, bringing together British baseball and softball's most influential people, alongside the incredible fan base that is taking shape in this country.

Board Meeting #96 – 5 September 2022

The latest BaseballSoftballUK Board meeting was held on September 5th. It was well attended, including a chance to meet with two of our **Silver Medal** winning European Women's

Fastpitch athletes **Amy Moore** and **Morgan Salmon**. They talked about the incredible first step taken by the team on their journey to qualify for the LA Olympics in 2028 this year. Buoyed by the first preparation camp held on these shores in programme history, based between the historic National Sports Centre at **Bisham Abbey** and our national complex at **Farnham Park**, the athletes felt super prepared and well supported. The players both noted the positive contribution made by Gary Anderson, the relatively new Head of Performance Systems.

A special note of appreciation was expressed by all – players and board members - for the contribution of **Rachael Watkeys**, who recently stepped down as Head Coach.

We were also joined by **GB Baseball** Head Coach Drew Spencer, who talked about the programme's preparation for the exciting World Baseball Classic qualification campaign that starts with the qualifying round in Germany later this month. Similarly, **GB Baseball** was grateful for the financial support provided to the programme by **UK Sport**, which has funded preparations.

The Board went on to consider and approve the financial year 2021-23 Audited Accounts, a set of revised internal policies and procedures, business from our committees for Development and Fundraising, Governance, Finance and Remuneration and Employment, the CEO Report and risk register. There was also an update from Head of Performance Systems Gary Anderson on the formation of a Performance Team. The team will be implementing a new Academy programme this off-season closely aligned to the national team programmes for baseball and fastpitch.

The Board also received updates on the Executive Team's performance against this year's Operational Plan and heard about the progress BSUK is making with **Major League**

Baseball and the **Mayor of London's Office** to execute a comprehensive legacy programme from future **MLB London Series**.

As per normal, we also had a brief presentation from Ieuan Gale, President of the **British Softball Federation** updating the Board on our member's activity and season.

As you can see, a productive and positive meeting. I will continue to provide these summaries in the future, should they continue to be helpful and informative.

Board Meeting #95 - 6 June 2022

The first part of this year has already been a remarkable and positive one for our sports. In one week at the end of May, several exciting announcements were made relating to future MLB London Series, long term investment into our sports from Sport England and the launch of a new elite women's fastpitch league.

It is important to us as the Board to engage in the great work that the executive team is undertaking. We had just that opportunity at this meeting.

In May, MLB announced the years for future **MLB London Series** in 2023, 2024 and 2026. MLB named BSUK as the lead organisation for their London Legacy work. We will coordinate this through a Legacy Steering Group, involving the Federations, the Mayor of London's Office, the event promoter and the London Stadium.

We are so excited to be working closely with MLB London Series partners to build a meaningful legacy from the Games, in London and across the country. MLB has involved us in their events this year, specifically for a kids Play Ball Festival in London in early June and the [MLB HRDX](#) event in Crystal Palace in July.

It was great to hear about the completion of upgrades of **Farnham Park**, building a 5th field, skinning of the infield of Softball 2, installing a

mobile office unit and several groundworks upgrades. We were only able to fund this work thanks to our sports' use of Farnham Park.

We have taken on the running of the National Softball League, two new slowpitch "Cups" and a new semi-professional women's Fastpitch League, for the BSF. The revenue from these **events** will be used to further underpin our development work.

On 31 March, we signed a formal agreement with the BBF, confirming collaboration over **GB Baseball's** performance plan, funded by UK Sport's National Squads Support Funding through BSUK. The Board heard about preparations for the **Women's Fastpitch** Europeans Championship campaign. It is exciting that the team will be based in the UK for their pre-Euros camp, using Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre and Farnham Park.

We also had an update on the exciting work to develop **girls' fastpitch** through a comprehensive schools programme.

UK Sport has also made **International Relations** funding available through a coordinated approach of the two sports, which is being coordinated and strategically steered by BSUK.

On behalf of both sports, BSUK has successfully passed the **UK Anti-Doping** Protocols required of all funded sports.

I'd like to highlight the good work of the team to deliver a new mobile-friendly **website**, with HubSpot CRM integration that will help improve our understanding of our customer's needs and habits.

It has indeed been a busy and exciting time for the sports and all of us here at BaseballSoftballUK.

Board Meeting #94 - 28 February 2022

The meeting had several key decisions to make. It was a full meeting, typical of the first meeting

of a calendar year. Although our Financial Year is 1 April, we have aligned our operations to the calendar year to allow for planning, in-season delivery and after season debrief.

The most significant business transacted was the approval of the **2022 Operational Plan** and the **2022/23 Budget**. The Board felt it important that the Operational Plan fully aligns with our four-year rolling strategy and were pleased to see that strategy being brought to life at every level of the organisation. The Senior Leadership Team has made a particular effort to ensure that the goals of the Board align all the way through the organisation, using a 'golden thread' of cascading objectives.

In financial terms, we are budgeting for the largest organisational turnover year for 2022/23, in part because of the addition of UK Sport investment into the Olympic Programmes for both baseball and softball, but also because we have an ambitious and carefully planned events, partnerships and fundraising plan in place.

We had a **report from BSF President Ieuan Gale** about the recent BSF AGM and League Heads Forum and plans for the season ahead. We are very grateful to the British softball community for your support of our exciting **events programme** that includes two BSUK Cup tournaments, building on our award winning inaugural tournament last year; the operation of the National Softball League events over three weekends; two new slowpitch cups in May and June; a new Fastpitch All-Stars event series; an international series between Sweden and GB in men's fastpitch; and an incredible GB Women's Fastpitch preparation camp on our shores. These events are prime examples of how our National Baseball and Softball Complex at Farnham Park supports the sports' at every level of play. It is, of course, a softball *and* baseball facility and we look forward to landing further activity for the GB Baseball and British Baseball leagues at Farnham Park as soon as the baseball community is ready to do so.

Last year, we announced that BSUK, together with the British Baseball Federation and British Softball Federation, was able to secure investment into the Olympic programmes via **UK Sport's National Squad Support Funding**. Our new Head of Performance Systems – Performance Director, if you like – Gary Anderson attended the Board Meeting. It was the first chance for many of us to meet him and hear about the support he is providing to and receiving from the Olympic Programmes. The **GB Women's Fastpitch Team** held a successful camp in Florida in January and plans are well underway for their European Championship campaign in July this year. The first step towards qualifying for LA 2028 has been a confident one, without a doubt. We are lucky to have someone as experienced, skilled and decorated as Gary.

Work with the **GB Baseball** programme has also been progressing. Through the application process, the alignment between Olympic and World Baseball Classic performances was clearly established. Success in one leads to success in the other. As GB Baseball prepares for its WBC qualification competition, likely in Germany (Regensburg) in September, we look forward to playing a formative and impactful role supporting GB Baseball. BSUK's Code of Sports Governance Compliance and corporate financial processes mean that UK Sport deems us to be the appropriate body for the receipt of public and Lottery funding. We are hopeful that in the coming weeks we can put into place appropriate measures with the **British Baseball Federation** to allow GB Baseball to access funds set aside by UK Sport on our collective bidding. We are grateful to the detailed and thorough work of colleagues on the BBF Board and look forward to a swift and speedy conclusion to our formal agreements.

The **British Baseball Federation** elected a new board in November last year. We have welcomed the opportunity to extend our Development Charter, Safeguarding and more

recently event coordinating and national team support services to the NGB for baseball. We have been in regular discussions with almost all the new BBF board members and look forward to initiatives in the coming weeks to coordinate our efforts so that our sports present a united front.

Our role coordinating safeguarding standards and good practice is well known. We play a similar role with **anti-doping**. For both Sport England and UK Sport, BSUK plays a coordinating role across education and prevention of doping in our sports. A baseball/softball policy has been submitted to UK Anti-Doping, based on the World Baseball and Softball Confederation's regulations. We are in the process of finalising a robust athlete and coach education system.

We are proud to operate the National Baseball and Softball Complex at Farnham Park. With the hopeful return to a full season of events, we have embarked on several improvements to the site. We are upgrading infields to flatten grass lips; fully skinning the infield of softball 2; building a new fifth field; installing an on-site office; and creating social grassy banks for game viewing.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion work is a key value of our work. This year, we will be creating a DE&I Strategy. It will be established by a new working group across our board and staff team. A part of this will be to work through Sporting Equals Charter.

Each meeting, we also receive an update from our CEO, John Boyd, and discuss matters arising from each of our sub-committees. Of note was an update on our **funding application to Sport England** for ongoing investment between 2022-2027. The final application has been submitted and we expect to hear the outcome of this in the coming few weeks.

The board also reviewed and refreshed several **policies** and **contracts**, including ratifying



decisions taken off-line between meetings. We also reviewed and updated our ***Risk Register***.

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