

Chair Board Report

Board Meeting #94



Hello,

My name is Phil Veasey. In December, I was appointed to be the Chair of the BaseballSoftballUK Ltd Board of Directors. As an enthusiastic player, it is important to me to report on the great work of my colleagues on the Board and in the professional team in as accessible a fashion as possible.

Following my first meeting in the Chair, I have prepared the following summary of a productive, positive and informative forward-looking meeting.

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 carried out 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 we were pleased to see the 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 ever organisational turnover year for 2022/23, in part because of the much welcome 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 renowned 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 finalise 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 to embed this work.

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**.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Veasey

Chair, BaseballSoftballUK Ltd