

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the sixty-ninth meeting of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority Board, held on 18th March 2024 at 10 South Colonnade, London and via video conference

Present

Derek Wilson (Chair)
Martin Esom
Jil Matheson
Bradley Pritchard – via video conference
Jane Sawyers
Alex Lacey

In attendance

Ken Scott, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Gavin Jenkins, Head of Corporate Services
Andrea Jones, Head of Communications
Darren Whitehouse, Head of Strategy and Partnerships – via video conference
Mark Smith, SGSA Inspector
Jo Welford, SGSA Inspector
Martyn Henderson – via video conference
Frankie Broadbent, DCMS
Caroline Hayward, SIA Legal
Lauren Bard, SIA Legal

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

- 1.1 Derek Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 There were apologies for absence from Janet Johnson and Jon Sellins.
- 1.3 Derek declared the private work that he is doing for Luton Town FC, where he is advising the architect on improvements to their stadium. Having discussed the nature of the work, the Board agreed that there were no potential conflicts of interest with any of the agenda items.
- 1.4 The Board agreed the parameters of work that Derek may undertake for licensed grounds in order to prevent any conflicts of interest, either actual or perceived.

2. Minutes of the sixty-eighth meeting of the SGSA Board, including matters arising and action log SGSA24(10)

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting are to be amended to clarify that work undertaken by any Authority member or officer of the organisation in respect of a regulated ground, would be a conflict if that work impacts on a decision taken by the Authority.



- 2.2 Where a potential conflict of interest exists that Authority member of officer must excuse themselves from that part of the Board meeting where the decision is discussed.
- 2.3 Paragraph 9.1 of the minutes [Stewarding Reform] to be clarified that the Premier League has committed £600,000 *per season* to the stewarding reform budget.
- 2.4 Pending these clarifications, the Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Interim Chief Executive's Report SGSA24(11)

- 3.1 Ken Scott provided his update to the Board covering:
 - The recently newly launched SGSA website.
 - The SGSA's role in assisting the Premier League to deliver on their stewarding reform project.
 - Meetings with stakeholders including the DCMS minister Stewart Andrew and an upcoming meeting with the Security Industry Authority CEO Michelle Russell.
 - Progress on implementing the Carney Review into Women's football recommendations.
 - Updates on licence fee reform, the work with the VNL, UEFA Champions League final preparations and licensed standing.
- 3.2 Regarding licence fee reform, it was noted that the risk of non-payment is not reflected in the corporate risk register along with the mitigating actions.
- 3.3 The Board noted the intention for Green Guide 7 to also encompass the changing demographics of spectators, particularly in the women's game, in the design of football stadia. Discussions have started internally on the evidence required for this.
- 3.4 The analysis of injury data by NatCen continues to be problematic. An update will be provided at the next Board meeting.

4. Head of Inspectorate's Report – Dashboard SGSA24(12)

- 4.1 Ken Scott introduced the latest version of the dashboard report.
- 4.2 Although licensed standing areas have been a step forward in improving the safety of spectators, there has been a noticeable downturn in the behaviour of certain spectators which has increased the risk of serious injury both to them and others.
- 4.3 We are actively engaging with the clubs where this is an issue and also raising the awareness of the problem through Safety Committee.

5. Working with local government SGSA24(13)

- 5.1 Mark Smith provided the Board with a presentation on how the SGSA works with Local Authorities.



- 5.2 He noted the legislation that supports the local authority role and how that relates to the SGSA's own legislative requirement to oversee local authorities in their safety certification role.
- 5.3 The Board noted the increasing pressures that are being placed on already stretched local authorities due to funding issues and the new Building Safety Act consuming resources.
- 5.4 Other regulators that rely on local authorities are considering in consultation with the Department for Levelling up and Communities how they can still carry out the legal duties without them.
- 5.5 The Board agreed that the SGSA should also consider this in the development of the new strategy and also update the corporate risk register to reflect the risk of local authorities increasingly not undertaking their safety certification duties correctly.

[Mark Smith left the meeting]

6. Near Misses SGSA24(14)

- 6.1 Ken Scott provided an update to the Board on what the organisation is doing to record and monitor near misses at football grounds.
- 6.2 Although ground management are required to report near misses to their local SAGs, there is no formal requirement to also report to the SGSA.

7. Finance Update SGSA24(15)

- 7.1 The Board noted the forecast outturn for the financial year 2023-24, and approval was sought on the 2024-25 budget.
- 7.2 On the budget the Board questioned the large increase in the travel budget from the previous year once exceptional items had been removed. Gavin Jenkins responded that there has been a general increase in travel costs, inspector travelling is at its highest level since the pandemic started and there are projected to be an increased number of inspectors in the next financial year.
- 7.3 An error was noted on the external audit budget as the 2023-24 forecast cost of external audit was understated. This will be corrected in the version of the 2024-25 budget that will be reported at the May Board meeting.

8. Board member payments SGSA24(16)

- 8.1 The Board agreed the policy of fee payments for various Board member duties.

9. Annual Report and Accounts SGSA24(17)

- 9.1 The Board noted the proposed areas to be covered in the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023-24.

10. Business Plan 2024-25 SGSA24(18)

- 10.1 The Board approved the Business Plan for 2024-25.



11. Independent Regulator for Football (Verbal Update)

11.1 Martyn Henderson updated the Board on progress in creating a shadow regulator, now officially termed the 'Independent Football Regulator', the 'IFR'.

12. AOB

12.1 Derek Wilson updated the Board on the process to recruit new Board members.

12.2 Jil Matheson thanked the Board for their suggestions on how to improve Board induction.

12.3 There were no other items of business.

Gavin Jenkins
March 2024