

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the seventy-seventh meeting of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority Board, held on 8th July 2025 at 10 South Colonnade and via video conference

Present

Derek Wilson
Jil Matheson
Martin Esom
Jane Sawyers
Jon Sellins

In attendance

Giles Smith, Chief Executive Officer
Ken Scott, Head of Inspectorate (via video conference)
Andrea Jones, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
Paul McCormack, Head of Regulatory Policy
David Balbi, Football Licensing and Data Manager (via video conference)
Monica Gameiro, Deputy Communications Manager
Sarah Hannaford, DCMS
James Andrews, Board Apprentice (via video conference)

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

- 1.1 Derek welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 There were apologies for absence from Bradley Pritchard and Gavin Jenkins. There were no declarations of interest given, other than Derek's ongoing work with Luton FC.

2. Minutes of the seventy-sixth meeting of the SGSA Board, including matters arising and action log SGSA25(28)

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting. All actions had been completed.
- 2.2 A question was raised in relation to the changing approach from the internal auditors. Martin Esom confirmed that this is still to be confirmed and an update will be provided at the next Audit and Risk Committee.
- 2.3 The Board discussed the ongoing issues in relation to Board recruitment processes, which were particularly critical, given the upcoming vacancies from December 2025 and that the recruitment exercise for these had yet to commence. The Board also raised concerns about the delay of finalising the current Board appointment process. The Board agreed that the Chair write formally to DCMS about the problems and the significant risk in relation to the next Board appointments.



3. Chief Executive's Report SGSA25(29)

3.1 Giles Smith provided his report to the Board highlighting:

- The Spending Review and ALB reform programme currently in train.
- The publication of the SGSA's Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.
- An overview of the SGSA licensing process, including a verbal update in relation to Hillsborough Stadium.
- The work taking place in relation to Martyn's Law implementation.
- The current position on our engagement with the WSL .
- SGSA's involvement in devolved administrations.
- The successful delivery of the SGSA Conference 2025.

3.2 An update on the international activities taking place, in particular the recent visits to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to support CAF in the planning for CHAN tournament taking place in August 2025. The Board was grateful for the update and requested Giles consider how this international work can be used more strategically with DCMS.

4. Head of Inspectorate's report SGSA25(30)

4.1 Ken Scott provided the end of season report to the Board, outlining the Match Day Inspections, Ground Assessments and Local Authority Audits, reporting that there were no new issues of concern.

4.2 Ken outlined the preparations taking place during the close season ahead of the start of the next season in August. This included significant progress on the number of licensed standing clubs and the progress in implementing recommendations to reduce persistent standing . The Board requested ongoing updates at a future meeting in relation to emerging risks.

5. Licensing 2025-26 SGSA25(31)

5.1 Dave Balbi and Andrea Jones provided an update on the licensing process for 2025-26. This included:

- An update on the licence fee payment process, and the approach being undertaken to collect the final few fees to be paid.
- Updates on licensing issues of note and how these were being addressed.

5.2 The positive progress being undertaken in relation to the roll out of licenced standing.

5.3 The Board was informed that the licences would be issued in the week commencing 14 July, and that once the season commences, a review would be conducted in order to refine processes ahead of the 2026-27 licensing period.



6. Finance update SGSA25(32)

- 6.1 Giles Smith provided an update on the finance and the forecasts for 2025-26.
- 6.2 In noting the report, the Board raised a question about the cost of the office space for the SGSA and whether this offered value for money. Giles confirmed this was part of a long-term contract with GPA.

7. Licensed standing review SGSA25(33)

- 7.1 Paul McCormack presented the report on the internal review he had conducted on the licensed standing and persistent standing .
- 7.2 The Board welcomed the report and congratulated Paul on the excellent and comprehensive report produced. In noting the contents, the Board were pleased with the level of internal engagement that had been conducted in order to develop the change recommendations.

8. Communications update SGSA25(34)

- 8.1 Andrea Jones presented the draft approach planned for the new Communications Strategy, which aims to support the organisation's Strategy 2030. The Board noted the approach and requested further consideration be made to promote SGSA's international activities and reach.

9. Board Awayday SGSA25(35)

- 9.1 The Board discussed the arrangements for the upcoming Board Awayday to take place in Brentford's GTech Community Stadium at the start of September. This included the planned agenda items around risk appetite and the wider regulatory landscape.

10. Joint Meeting SGSA25(36)

- 10.1 Giles Smith provided an overview of the plan for the Joint Meeting to take place in November 2025 in Edinburgh, as part of our commitment to reinforcing our partnership work with Scotland.

11. AOB

- 11.1 The Board noted the other 'For Information' papers.
- 11.2 There were no other items of business.

Andrea Jones

July 2025