

## REGIONAL Sub-Group

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING 27th May 2018

#### Kettering

#### Conference call/virtual meeting

**In attendance:** Bryan Youlden (Chair), Dave Reece (SWest), John Biddiscombe (South East), Aneel Khanna (WMVA), Charlie Orton (London) , Tim Godson (Yorkshire), Phil Chanin (NWest), Frances Ba-laam (East), Janet Inman (Chief Executive VE), Sam Jamieson (VE)

Simon Griffiths (PR & Communications Director VE), Gillian Harrison (VE), Bertrand Ollie (VE) - Part

**Apologies:** Keith Sowden (NEVA), Richard Morten (Referees Sub-group Regional Representative)

#### 1. Minutes of Last Meeting:

Minutes of the March meeting were circulated. There were no amendments.

#### 2. Matters arising

- 2.1. All action points were discussed and Chairs advised that they had cascaded these on or responded where relevant. The request that activities are circulated to chairs by the HUB was reiterated so they are aware of what is being issued.
- 2.2. Under 14 Review – Bryan Youlden reported that he had reviewed some responses, but these were incomplete and he proposed to revisit this action.
- 2.3. Regions were reminded to supply VE with copies of key information such as minutes, accounts, etc. – especially as it is AGM time. Janet Inman requested dates for regional AGMs so a member of the HUB team can plan to attend.
- 2.4. Sponsorship – the concern over the type of sponsors was noted and it was clear that some did not favour accepting sponsorship from gambling or alcohol related sponsors. Janet Inman advised the group that investigations had shown that there were limited alternative options. A banking group was mentioned in discussion as one party who had shown interest in one area.
- 2.5. Coaching – It was reported that initial feedback to the new Level 1 coaching course had been positive and there was a request for more courses in the regions. There was some discussion over what experience should be expected before an individual attends a course as concern had been expressed that some student attendees were not engaging with the course and were simply regarding it as a tick box exercise. It was suggested that whereas this is unfortunate, we should be offering the course as widely as possible even if this does occur.

#### 3. Introduction and Welcome – Bryan Youlden

#### 4. Volleyball England Hub Update – Sam Jamieson

##### 4.1 Competitions

The most majority of activity has been in competitions with particular reference to the NVL, the under 15's and the calendar. In retrospect, some things could have been done better, but feedback is welcome. As an example, in response to comments, some of the Under 15 dates have

been moved back so the competition will start later than had originally been planned. It was noted that some individuals did not respond within the set time frames and had then complained once decisions were made that they did not agree with. It was requested that when a time frame is set, we should ask participants to respect the deadlines set as it otherwise causes additional work and frustration for all. Further, it was suggested that we need to promote a culture change such that those disaffected by a decision don't then publicise their disagreement vigorously via social media (see subsequent discussion on volleyball culture).

As previously suggested, it has been decided to run the NVL on a Conference system whereby every team plays everyone else once and then the league is split in half for the second part of the season with the more successful teams pooled together and the less successful similarly.

Super 8's – There was a question why the Super 8's could not be split North and South to reduce travel? The view was that if this was done, as the pinnacle of competitive play it would not truly be a national competition.

Beach – Following the meeting of interested parties including Denise Austin previously publicised further information on this with proposals will be announced in the coming days.

## **4.2 Volleyball Environment**

There is a focus to try and ensure that HEVOs and student players engage more with local clubs. In the past, HEVOs have disappeared from the sport and this is due in part to a lack of personal email addresses as they have often operated using specific university addresses which are closed when they complete their education. This should now have been resolved to ensure that we don't lose these valuable individuals from the sport.

## **4.3 Volleyball Culture**

There are two main elements to this, namely:

1. Club development and support; and
2. Conduct

It was noted that whereas there may be specific codes of conduct for officials or coaches, we don't have an overarching code of conduct or a consistent means to reward or impose sanctions. There is a need to start to take people to task for inappropriate language and comments. Further, such instances should be reported and collated.

As one step in this, it was suggested that perhaps the Regions should seek to apply more consistent standards. Dave Reece reported that the South West region regularly expels clubs from its competition where necessary and this has helped to maintain standards. The West Midlands also has a disciplinary panel for its competitions which has found the need to sanction players and coaches.

## **5. Club Survey and Insight – Simon Griffiths**

### **5.1 The Club Survey**

Simon explained that there has been gentle pressure from Sport England to undertake a survey. The purpose of this is to show that the governing body is in touch with its membership. As central funding declines, we need to establish what the membership requires of its national governing body.

The first stage has been to issue it to a limited audience i.e. our 450 club secretaries. A minimum 40% response rate is hoped for and Simon would urge Regional chairs to promote the survey as the intention is to build a suite of services which are more relevant to the membership. It will probably remain open for around three weeks and there will be further publicity including an interview with Bryan Youlden as Chair of the sub group. Once an initial review of responses has been undertaken, it is planned to try a different tack to increase the response level to make it as comprehensive as possible.

A further purpose is to feedback and to link activities with requirements better such that it can be shown that when something is requested, it has been acted upon and if not, why not. A recent example is the Grade 4 referees course which has been shortened or the Level 1 coaching course which now covers the 6 v 6 game.

## **5.2 The Annual Report**

Simon had identified that last year's report could be improved upon with better content. It is suggested that there should be a template to ensure consistent reporting across the Regions. Marketing and Communications Officer Mike Hallam will undertake interviews with Regional Chairs if that will help.

This will include questions on what you are most proud of from the work in the region over the year and why? Also, plans for the coming year.

N.B. Mike has also approached Bryan Youlden as Chair of the sub group to give a brief overview of the activity and role of the sub group over the year as an introduction to the regional reports.

The Volleyball England Annual General Meeting is to be at Loughborough on 21 July.

## **6. Volleyball Futures - Gillian Harrison and Bertrand Ollie**

Gillian explained that they had put together some initial thoughts on developing a framework to establish the best environment within which to develop talented young players. This should sit within the clubs and the regions.

Given the varying organisation and structure within the regions, it may need to be adapted with a different approach in different areas

Tim Godson commented that a concern in the past has been that it has been too ambitious a plan such that nothing of substance has been delivered. He suggested that it could be broken down into more bite sized projects where there would be more potential of achieving something tangible.

It was further suggested that we need to review the purpose of any activity so it can be targeted and organised more effectively. As an example, what is the purpose of the Inter regional championships currently underway?

The suggestion is that Gillian and Bertrand progress their work to develop a template or curriculum as a first stage which can then be implemented through coach development. Ultimately, this could lead to a consistent competitions structure across the country, but this would be the last stage in any implementation and is in the distant future.

They will be in contact in due course to identify regions and coaches who want to participate. The initial aim would be to initiate this around September.

## **6. The Future of the Regional Sub Group**

Chair Bryan Youlden had submitted some preliminary thoughts prior to the meeting which were reviewed. The primary function of the group was agreed as communication and the following Terms of reference were agreed following discussion:-

1. To provide an effective means of communication between the grass roots and the Volleyball England HUB.
2. To provide grass roots representation on Volleyball England working groups as and when required.
3. To promote and share best practice in volleyball across the country.
4. To seek to develop consistency of delivery across the country.
5. To develop and review a volunteer strategy
6. To promote club development.

Janet Inman asked the questions whether the group has lost its way and what can we do to make the group function more effectively. In response it was noted that the group was meeting regularly with some 3-4 meetings a year after some years where there was minimal activity. Further, all regions were now active and were usually represented on the group with 7 of the 9 regions in attendance at this meeting. As indicated in the new terms of reference communication from and to the grass roots and the centre was seen as the key function as well as sharing best practice to assist develop the sport. There is significantly more scope in this latter area and examples such as the Juvoto junior competitions format and the development of improved websites were cited as examples of this.

It was confirmed that 3-4 meetings a year was considered an appropriate format with 3 of the 4 by conference call and the fourth face to face. A representative from each region was required but this need not be the chair. Other expertise would be invited to attend as required.

It was also pointed out that instead of delegating tasks to this core group, the grass roots representatives who attend on behalf of the majority of the membership should be engaged at an earlier stage so they can contribute more effectively.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **7.1 Referees Update**

Richard Morten had advised that three referees' courses are currently planned

- Northumbria University (North East region)
- Ashcombe (South East region)
- Calne (South West region)

## **7.2 Cup Finals Weekend**

The group was advised that James Murphy Chair of Competitions sub group had arranged a working party to review the format of the cup finals weekend. Charlie Orton was already engaged in this but anybody else who wished to participate from the regions was welcome although initial responses were required next week.

Options under discussion include:

- Reverting to the previous year's format where all Finals are played consecutively each day with a separate day for the Under 15 and sitting volleyball finals.
- Continuing as this year with the Sitting Final slotted into a gap on the Sunday between the U16 and U18 finals with the U15 not included.
- Move the age related (U15/16/18) finals to their own weekend with the sitting final. The Cup Finals would then be on a Saturday with the Shield Finals on a Sunday.

## **7.3 NVL Entries**

Dave Reece asked for views on the entry requirements for NVL competitions. In particular his South West region is unable to endorse a team that wants to enter the NVL as they have not entered the Regional league.

It was agreed that this was a difficult situation but in such circumstances where endorsement was not possible it should probably be for Competitions sub group to take a view based on the facts at their disposal. The meeting asked Bryan Youlden to consult further with Competitions Chair James Murphy over this.

## **7.4 International Transfer Regulations**

A question was asked whether the International Transfer policy applies to the regional leagues. Sam Jamieson undertook to find out.

## **7.5 Regional Champions Trophy**

A question was asked if there was any prospect of this being resurrected. It was thought that whereas it might be popular, with such limited resources at present, this was highly unlikely unless someone was able to take this on and it would also need to be on a self-funded basis.

## **7.5 Overseas Players**

Dave Reece advised the group that he monitors the number of overseas players playing in his leagues and for the first time in many years, he has seen a decline. Nobody else monitors this and it was therefore impossible to identify a trend.

## **7.6 Transgender Players**

Charlie Orton asked what the policy was for transgender players as there was evidence in London of some highly competitive teams including former men in women's teams. Sam Jamieson undertook to clarify the legal position.

## **7.7 Control of the Use of Social Media**

A question as raised as to how we can control comments on social media and what policy should be adopted to inappropriate comment. It was considered that this should be covered in the volleyball culture item previously discussed.

## 7.8 Use of Go To

It was confirmed that the GoTo facility could be used by Regions. Anyone interested should speak with Sam Jamieson who can supply the log on details.

## 8. Actions

1.	Undertake further review of Under 14 activity		Bryan Youlden
2.	Review how we can promote more consistent standards of behaviour across the regions	Future agenda item	Bryan Youlden/All
3.	Club survey	Promote completion by clubs	All
4.	Club survey	Interview with regional Sub Group lead (Complete)	Michael Hallam
5.	Annual Report	Issue standard template	Michael Hallam
6.	Annual Report	Foreword to Regional Report (Complete)	Bryan Youlden
7.	Volleyball Futures	Develop curriculum or template	Gillian Harrison/Bertrand Olley
8.	Volleyball Futures	Seek trial volunteer regions and coaches	Gillian Harrison/Bertrand Olley
9.	Sub Group Structure terms of reference	Agree terms and frequency of meeting (Complete)	All
10.	Cup Finals review	Volunteers required and to contact James Murphy	All
11.	NVL Entry Query	Establish what input is required from Regional Sub Group	Bryan Youlden
12.	International Transfer regulations	Query: Do these apply to regional transfers?	Sam Jamieson
13.	Transgender Policy	Establish legal position and circulate	Sam Jamieson
14.	Publicise the use of GoTo	Respond to requests as needed	Sam Jamieson

The meeting was closed at 2.55 pm.

Date of next meeting (Conference call) Monday September 3<sup>rd</sup>.