

sportscotland

Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Board Meeting held at the **sportscotland** National Centre Glenmore Lodge on Tuesday 26 August at 09:00

Present

Members

Ms M Campbell, Chair
Mr A Bain
Ms M Connolly
Ms J Gotts
Mr A Kerr
Mr S Lindsay
Mr T McDaid
Mr T Mistry
Mr S Sweeney
Ms G Treasurer
Mr A Watt

In Attendance

Council Officers

Mr F Dunlop
Mr C Burn
Mr M Drummond
Ms F Wernham
Ms L Cook

Scottish Government

Minister for Drug and Alcohol Policy and Sport, Maree Todd
Mr A Sinclair
Ms A Robinson

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Business

1 Apologies for Absence

➤ *Ms H Ousta.*

2 Declarations of Interest

➤ *None.*

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 24 June 2025

➤ *The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.*

4 Matters Arising

None.

5 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to Glenmore Lodge and thanked the Minister for attending.

The Chair gave an overview of her attendance at the Island Games in Orkney, including engagements with the organising committee, Orkney Island Council and various discussions with volunteers involved with the Games. It was clear that the investment made by **sportscotland** and the input from our staff team had made a real difference to both the Games but also the long term infrastructure for sport in Orkney.

The Chair recognised the start of the Women's Rugby World Cup, the positive performance by the Scotland Team and also thanked the Minister and Ms Robinson for hosting the seminar held in Manchester profiling women's sport and leadership.

The Chair acknowledged that a number of staff had recently left **sportscotland** as part of the voluntary severance scheme, on behalf of the Board the Chair asked that a record of thanks to those staff was captured in the minutes, including wishing them every success in the future.

6 Minister for Drugs, Alcohol and Sport, Maree Todd

The Chair introduced Ms Todd, Minister for Drugs, Alcohol and Sport. Ms Todd thanked the Board for the invitation and the opportunity to spend time at Glenmore Lodge. The Minister welcomed the new Board members and also expressed her gratitude to the previous Board members who have recently left the Board.

The Minister noted that she attends regular meetings with the Chair and Mr Dunlop who keep her abreast of what is happening, the challenges faced by the sector but also the good work that is delivered. The Minister assured the Board that the impact and importance of sport was well understood across government ministers including the cabinet and that discussion will continue around the case for sport as part of the preventative agenda, as well as recognising the impact and importance of sport at a community level. The Minister also acknowledged the pressures on

Scottish Governing Bodies and referenced the recent meeting that she and the Cabinet Secretary had held with SGB representatives.

The Board asked the Minister about the Scottish Governments commitment to double the investment in sport and active living. The Minister reiterated the commitment to sport but also the tough financial climate which made for challenging and difficult decisions.

The Board discussed the wider impact of sport, citing a range of examples where sport has been the catalyst for significant changes to peoples' lives. The Minister acknowledged this and shared an example of falls prevention programmes and noted that GP referral programmes are all doing good work.

The Board raised with the Minister the need for prioritisation, particularly as flat budgets are now significantly less valuable in real terms. The Minister acknowledged this and agreed that community sport in particular must be supported.

The Chair thanked the Minister for the open discussion and agreed that through our regular meetings we will continue the conversations.

7 Executive Management Report

Mr Dunlop summarised the conversation with the Minister and the previous nights discussion around prioritisation and highlighted that we are still guilty of trying to do too much. He recognised that as the national agency for sport we have a wide responsibility, but we must continue to refine where we invest our people and financial resources. The Board discussed the need to stay close to the sector, to monitor carefully any changes that come from next years elections and to accept that public sector organisations are in a period of significant change and that we are part of that.

Mr Dunlop updated on the meeting with Neil Gray, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Maree Todd, Minister for Drug and Alcohol Policy and Sport and some SGBs which was mentioned during the June Board meeting. The SGBS have now submitted a paper to Active Scotland and a follow up meeting is scheduled for early November. The paper requests support to stabilise SGB staffing, to invest in club and community sport and for investment in facilities to make them more accessible and inclusive.

Mr Dunlop concluded with an update on the partnership with COSLA, reminding the Board that we are now one year into this two year agreement and that political and executive members from COSLA will join the Board for the October Board discussion session.

Mr Burn gave an updated on the Commonwealth Games, including support for Team Scotland, ticketing, Scotland House, Kings Baton relay and wider activation discussions with Glasgow and other partners. The Board discussed the political and partnership opportunities that the Games present and asked for further discussion and more details as plans develop.

Mr Burn provided an update on the sports facilities review which is expected to be finalised by the end of September. Consideration will be given to a Board presentation in advance of the full Board meeting in October.

Mr Burn updated that we have made a strategic commitment to Clackmannanshire Wellbeing Hub which is out with our standard investment, but we have made an in-principle commitment and formalised this last week. The Chair added that Lorraine Sanda, Strategic Director of People, Clackmannanshire Council, has asked to express her thanks as this is really important to them.

Mr Burn noted the following SGB updates; David Fallon has been appointed as the new CEO at Basketball Scotland. Badminton Scotland are currently recruiting for a new CEO. Kevin Pringle has been appointed as the interim CEO for Paddle Scotland. Neil Francis has been appointed as

the Chair for Scottish Hockey and Vikki Bunce, High Performance Manager, is on secondment there three days a week.

Mr Burn updated on wider discussions with SGBs and the SSA which focus on how the sector works closer together and creates more opportunity for collaboration.

➤ *The Board noted the Executive Management Report.*

For Discussion

8 Sport for Life: People

Ms Wernham presented an overview of the people strand of Sport for Life.

The Chair noted the increased percentage of young volunteers and asked if we are creating a new generation leaders. Ms Wernham responded by recognising all the work in this area, from Young Peoples Sports Panel, Young Ambassadors, Fit for Girls and that through our leadership we now see local partners running their own young leader programmes. Ms Wernham went on to explain the latest coaching qualification for young people and the growth in demand for the qualification.

The Board commented on the challenges with the professionalisation of coaching and asked if there is anything we could do to strengthen coaching as a potential career option for people with CIMSPA? Ms Wernham responded that CIMSPA have been getting stronger and have developed standards and are aligned with our qualification but there remains a challenge around retention without a paid structure.

The Board discussed the broad partnerships and opportunities for education and CPD through SAMH, Enable, SDS, Sporting Equals. Ms Wernham agreed that all of these partnerships are important in ensuring coaches and volunteers feel confident and competent dealing with a range of complex issues. Mr Dunlop added that there has been some excellent work done over the years making clubs and community groups more accessible and more inclusive and that we must build on this work with our club and community focus.

Ms Wernham gave more information on Bright Space which is an open learning platform where resources are kept and can be accessed by coaches and volunteers. The platform fits with our move towards digital transformation but does need continued investment to update and develop new resources.

The Board noted that reducing resources and doing more needs to be reconciled and we need to be clear around our priorities. Ms Wernham responded by noting the clear direction around club and community sport, removing barriers to volunteering and supporting clubs and coaches to be more inclusive and more accessible.

The Chair concluded the discussion emphasising the importance of club and community sport, recognising it is locally driven by volunteers and the significant role and difference that a coach makes.

The Chair thanked Ms Wernham for the presentation.

➤ *The Board noted the Sport for Life: People presentation.*

9 National Lottery Balance

Mr Drummond introduced the paper and highlighted that it recaps on the previous Board discussion and clarified that the underpin is not £24 million but £27 million and we will make sure that we reconfirm the amount on an annual basis. The purpose of the review is to refine the scope

under which we would seek to utilise the underpin and the money from the National Lottery balance and reconfirm the difference between National Lottery and Scottish Government expenditure. We will bring this into our planning assumptions for next year and beyond to be able to draw down up to £5 million over five years to support club and community sport.

The Board discussed the potential to use more than £5 million over five years and whether we should accept greater risk given the strength of the underpin. It was agreed that this could be considered as part of the Lottery balance policy and the medium term financial planning work that continues. Mr Drummond added that over this period of time and as part of medium term financial planning we will see any results from the changes Allywn are making. Mr Lindsay reminded the Board of the need to have a clear longer term plan around capital investment required at the national centres, this work has been discussed but not started.

The Chair suggested that the Board agree to £5 million and that if it can be invested quicker we should consider that. The detail of what and how this would be used will be built into Business Planning and so will come back to the Board at a later date. The Audit and Risk Committee will also continue to develop the Lottery balance policy and the medium term financial planning work.

➤ *The Board approved the National Lottery Balance presentation.*

For Decision

Finance:

- 10 sportscotland Management Accounts 2024-25 Out-turn**
 - 10.1 Consolidation Summary and Reconciliation of Management Accounts to Financial Statements 2024-25**
- 11 sportscotland Group Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025**
- 12 sportscotland Group Draft Auditors' Report and Letter of Representation**
- 13 sportscotland Lottery Fund Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025**
- 14 sportscotland Lottery Fund Draft Auditors' Report and Letter of Representation**

Mr Drummond introduced the papers and provided an overview of the financial statements, management accounts and audit reports. Mr Drummond explained that all papers and reports have been reviewed in detail by the Audit and Risk Committee. He added, that the Trust Company Board met yesterday and approved the statements in relation to the Trust Company.

Mr Lindsay, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, explained to the Board a number of issues which were highlighted through the audit process. These included a change in approach to the valuation of assets which has been used for the last five years and the change and turnover in staff in the finance team has also presented challenges to this years process. Mr Lindsay went on to explain that despite this Mr Drummond and his team have done a good job and maintained a healthy working relationship with the auditors, taking learning from this years process and building it into next years planning.

The Chair asked if Board are happy to accept and approve. The Board approved.

The Chair acknowledged the work carried out by Mr Lindsay, Mr Drummond and the Audit and Risk Committee recognising the accounts are increasingly complex and suggesting further training and time should be offered to Board members for future years.

The Board welcomed the explanation from Mr Lindsay and Mr Drummond, agreed that further training and explanation would be beneficial and that those that had attended the open session the previous week had found it very helpful.

➤ *The Board approved the finance papers.*

For Information

15 sportscotland Group and Lottery: Audit Scotland Annual Report to the Board and the Auditor General for Scotland for the year ended 31 March 2025

Noted and taken as read.

16 The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

Noted and taken as read.

17 The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company Wylie & Bisset Audit Findings for the year ended 31 March 2025

Noted and taken as read.

18 Playing our Part 2024-25: Summary of progress – annual review

Noted and taken as read.

19 Quarter 1: 2025-2026 progress report

Mr Drummond introduced the report and reflected on the continuity from last night's conversation. The structure template from June has now been brought to life and will be refined during this year until a new template is finalised through the This is Milk work.

Noted and taken as read.

20 Audit and Risk Committee draft minutes

Noted and taken as read.

21 People Development Committee draft minutes

Noted and taken as read.

22 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, in particular Mr Lindsay and Mr Drummond for all the work associated with the Annual Report and accounts.

23 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 October 2025 (Inverclyde)

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.