

Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Partnerships National Board Held on Tuesday 21 Sept 2021 virtually by Teams

Member: Adam Walker (Chair), Adrian Leather, Sue Storey, Amanda Pearce Higgins, Ian Hacon, Dick Fedorcio, Mike Sandys

In attendance: Nigel Harrison (interim Chief Executive), Nicki Couzens (Business Support and comms)

1 Introduction

a. Welcome

Adam welcomed everyone to the meeting.

b Apologies & declaration of interests

- Apologies Ali Shipway and Eammon O'Rourke
- Adam declared interest with his executive chair role. Confirmed only needs to declare it once for the rest of the term.

c Minutes of previous meeting and matter arising

- realign minutes to ensure that all words on page
- Away date potentially late Nov- important to get into diary. Dependent on future development meeting
- Board position recently advertised with focus on diversity, but no applications received. May be further opportunities to develop this next year when more independent roles become available

Resolution: Minutes agreed as a true record

Action: Plan away day

d Conflicts of interest

- None raised by members

2 Member Engagement and Understanding

a Environmental Scanning

- Kent Sport Director just started part time and have had a good response to new board members, 50% split female / male. Background skills varied, interviewing 7 and may take on 5. Dick confirmed his term as Chair finishes in Summer 2022
- Mike reported LRS very positive, a lot of work on industrial strategy, looking at how they take work forward. Some board challenges with ensuring diversity. Appeared there was currently a lull with people now seeming to be looking at what next.
- Amanda reported that Active Oxon is having positive conversations on funding and the support for smaller Active partnerships.

- Ian reported he had seen Active Norfolk got good coverage on launch of new strategy. Not heard from Suffolk.
- Sue reported picking up optimistic feeling, future looking bright but tinged with what is happening with NT and SE funding and when will it be confirmed
- Ian asked the board if now there are fewer board members was there a need for Active Partnerships without a national board contact to be reallocated. Adam confirmed that we can't expect more from the board, but we would have contact with all Board Chairs through forthcoming webinars. Adam confirmed we need to keep as close as possible to Active Partnerships, the more effectively we listen the more likely we are to get the right answers.
- Summary- curious, positive, and optimistic is what is being felt around the network

b Active Partnerships Transition Phase

Nigel presented the work that has taken place to date and updated on the four strands of the work

1. Narrative for working together

Looking at what is the work of the Partnerships in the future. Not a sharp detour from the Primary role but taking on more of a connectivity and strategic role, although delivery of local and sometimes national programmes may be needed in some cases. Partnerships realigning teams to have strategic influencing role.

2. Investment

26 Active Partnerships are involved in track one and have undertaken their diagnostic. Nigel reported that it was an open and honest process, checking where the Partnership is against Uniting the Movement. Partnerships have now been given a maximum figure and will submit a business plan against this. The starting point is figure from previous year but with greater flexibility in how it is spent. 12 Partnership are involved in track 2.

Positive support being provided for smaller Partnerships to ensure they can sustain; SE undertook work to look at true cost of running a Partnership. Partnerships mindful that costs will grow over 5 years so need to look at other income streams or ways of reducing spending.

3. Measurement, evaluation, and learning

Ongoing piece of work, includes developing a learning culture as well as formal e.g., system leadership programme

4. Future support

Working group taking approach nothing on/off the table. Have held a couple of workshops to update people, need to ensure communications is kept going. Now at a stage where the group is looking at what the support needs of Active Partnerships are and who is best placed to do the work.

Nigel reported now more than ever there is a positive feeling within network, working as one and sharing work. Looking at national to local and vice versa – exploring how can we

advocate on behalf of physical activity and help ensure national policy informed by local practice.

Recognize there are different areas of thinking and not 100% consensus maybe achieved initially. Emphasized need to reinforce the scope of work which is helping Active Partnerships being the best they can be. Some perception that scope is bigger and looking at how we all work with system partners and how it looks in local place, but this is to follow.

Adam reported some Active Partnerships think we should do wider piece first, others think we need to focus, looking first at network needs and then broader environment. Agreement to continue with more focused approach. Important to ensure everyone involved but recognize may not get 100% consensus but need to ensure majority view supported not just most vocal.

Steering group now having discussions with Extended workforce / Sport England / National Team to gather their views.

Key question being reviewed is - Do we need an independent membership body? Or can we do it a different way? If decided there is a need for a core team the diagnostic must be submitted by 12 November.

Adam/ Nigel confirmed they are working towards this but have not won the confidence across the whole of SE yet but are talking to different departments to see if the need is for 42 Active Partnerships and LDP as backbone to delivering United the Movement. SE also looking at LA and core cities but felt this can be coordinated with Partnerships. Some perceptions in SE that they don't have confidence in all Partnerships who are at different levels, need to go back and challenge misconceptions and work out with those that may need support. Nigel working with Local support directorate team, but slower progress.

Adrian asked the board to acknowledge the work of steering group who have been great at connecting the network.

Acknowledged the project has enabled and opened some good questions and discussions with SE.

Mike question why SE appeared to trust LA more than APs as there are issues within LAs e.g. in two tiers etc.

Adam outlined proposals to organise twilight workshops with chairs and separate session with directors. Aim to look to discuss some common questions which are also being discussed with LDPs/ Active Partnerships / SE and then discuss specific questions around the national body and what role should it play. Idea to split chairs and CEO so neither steers the views.

Adrian suggested some chairs prefer to attend with CEO and Amanda highlighted due to timescales and how busy people are might be easier to hold sessions together. Ian, Sue,

Dick ideally proposed to keep sessions separate but acknowledged it needs to be what works for Active Partnerships. Agreed need to create an environment where people can contribute to debate.

Action: Organise separate sessions for directors and Chairs but send out questions in advance so that CEO and chairs can discuss before meeting.

3 Partnerships & Stakeholders

A Approach to national influencing

Nigel reported that people (not just national team) were stepping forward to take leadership on specific areas. Positive direction of travel and feeling of strength and unity.

Nigel part of National Sectors Partners Group (NSPG). Group showing real connectivity between leaders and group looking to provide a single collective voice to government. Active Partnerships have a role to play around the table. In future Nigel to look at improving communication from meetings. Consider if a policy group of Active Partnership leaders is needed to help make informed decisions and help interpret future policies.

Action: Explore idea of establishing an Active Partnership policy group

b CEO and team update

Nigel reflected that national team are very small and cover a wide remit and should be credited for that. Need to be honest with Active Partnerships on resources available and focus areas.

- **Workplace Movement**

Have been paying £600 a day for support of a project manager. Propose that we continue to provide training through licensing agreement but pause manager role. Review to identify if there is an appetite for national programmes.

Ian reported HR officers/ managers see wellbeing as important but have not got the bandwidth to take on more work at present time. Amanda confirmed need to ensure we are representing value and that it is a pause not stop at that stage.

Sue raised issue that it is understood the NT are not spending at a particular level due to capacity and review, need to ensure the perception isn't that we do not need money in future.

Resolution: Pause Project Managers role whilst review underway.

- **Business Development**

Since officer left work stopped. Recommend that work continues to be paused whilst review underway.

Confirmed that Business development role was being underwritten by reserves, but aim was for it to bring in income to make itself sustaining. Mike asked if any Partnerships had bene successful in this? Adam confirmed that this work needs consistent focused effort and Partnerships Officers scope is often too broad and at a lower level.

Resolution: pause business development discussion until after the review when Partnerships will be asked for their view.

- **AGM**

The board were asked for the views on the AGM

-should it be virtual?

-should it be combined with other development workshops / sessions

Agreed it maybe too soon to organize a large gathering in Nov but need to check articles allow it to be virtual as it maybe need 14 people need to be in a room together. Dick proposed looking at making changes to articles to allow virtual AGM in the future.

Need to send out AGM papers 21 days prior to event. Also consider timing in relation to current review work.

Action: Seek legal advice to see if AGM can be held virtually. Consider postponing to Dec.

- **Convention**

The board were asked for the views on whether event should be face to face or virtual. This will also to be discussed at CEO forum.

Ian and Sue both proposed if appropriate in March it would be beneficial to meet face to face to show we are back on track and reenergized.

4 **Finance & Governance**

a. **Approval of 2020 / 2021 Accounts**

Amanda reported at the last Finance meeting the main item discussed was how much change has happened and therefore there was a need to take stock, look at where we are at and what is pot of money, we have that we can play with. Next meeting will look at new accounts.

Amanda reported the need when signing off accounts to formally note going concern- do we think we are going to keep going for next 12 months? Do we have enough money to sustain activity for 12 months? Why are we happy we are a going concern? Finance

committee have considered this and confident we are because of the longevity of the project.

Adam thanked Amanda for her work going through the accounts.

Resolution: 2020/21 Accounts Approved.

b. Finance-sub minutes

Amanda raised the issue of risk around financial control and ensuring organization is not leaking cash, looking at finance processes and control to ensure we are doing what we say we are doing. E.g., when we have large contracts broken into subcontracts are relevant processes in place?

c Approach to Risk

Amanda raised the issue that there isn't a process of how the Board looks and appraises risk. Need to ensure the Board sit and reflects on risk, look at what is out there that could cause issues, what opportunity.

Propose two stages

1. Nigel look at short term risks until March 22
2. Look at long term risk

Board asked if they were happy with the ratings presented and to identify if anything was missing?

- Dick reasonably comfortable that mitigations are there. Lack of board diversity struggling to make progress is a concern.
- Nigel reiterated the need to recognize that it does not show organization in a good light it does not bring down organization. There will be more opportunities to increase diversity when we look at independent vacancies.
- Amanda- EDA policy must be shown as part of SE Governance review.
- Mike- asked if there are external risks we need to capture? all current risks have an internal focus
- Adrian – does Active Partnership membership need to on register, need fees to be able to carry out role.
- Amanda – the finance sub meeting regularly looks at finance risk at needs to drive accountability.
- Team morale – should this be on it? Are people ok? need to ensure there are people left in organization. Nigel and Nicki reported a positive mood within team. Adam thanked the team and gave recognition that is has not taken its foot off the gas throughout the whole process

d Governance update

Nigel asked board to note the following in relation to terms of office

- 4 board members terms end in summer; Eammon, Adam, Sue, Adrian. Three independents, opportunity to use recruitment to look at diversity.

- Ali Shipways finishes term in summer but can be reelected. All agreed this they would like to propose Ali to continue for three years if she would like to continue to be involved.
- Dick steps down in summer from Chair of Kent so would need to become an independent if board would like him to continue.
- Ian - up for rotation in summer but has further terms

Amanda asked if there was a need a check and dirty health check on progression / successions planning etc.

Nigel reported Nicki is connected with Yorkshire Sport on Board Governance to work jointly through some issues.

Amanda proposed need to look at finance, Risk and Governance status and go through check list and RAG it. Agreed this was a good way forward

Resolution: Ali Shipway voted in for another term

Action: look at finance, Risk and Governance status and RAG items

e **Review of meeting**

Adam asked if meeting provided right level of discussions and debate, aim to progressively build on this. All agreed that it was the right structure and feeling created with people having opportunity to input.

5 **AOB**

Date of next meetings – to be circulated

Will send out details of forum

Board wished Amanda luck on her Channel swim.

Matters Arising and Future Action

Resolution or Action	Detail	Responsibility	Action Update
Resolution	Minutes agreed as a true record		
Action	Plan away day		Delayed due to restrictions
Action	Organise separate sessions for directors and Chairs but send out questions out in advance so that CEO and chairs can discuss before meeting.	NH / AW NC	Dates and times circulated to chairs and CEO
Action	Explore idea of establishing an Active Partnership policy group	NH	Small group of APs formed group

Resolution	Pause Workplace Movement Project Managers role whilst review underway.		
Resolution	Pause business development discussion until after the review when Partnerships will be asked for their view.		
Action	Seek legal advice to see if AGM can be held virtually. Consider postponing to Dec.	NH	Completed
Resolution	2020 / 2021 Accounts approved		
Resolution	Ali Shipway voted in for another term		
Action	look at finance, Risk and Governance status and RAG items	?	
Action	Circulate dates for next board meeting	AW/ NC	