

Annual Governance Statement, Sept 2022 - Aug 2023

Our strategy, launched in June 2023, commits us to the ambition of being ‘an outstanding performing organisation’. Good governance is a keystone of this.

As a charity and membership organisation we must have effective ways of working in place that enable us to be held to account. It’s really important to us that we do what we say and this Governance Statement is our opportunity to be transparent and reflect on our progress.

We have undergone a period of transformational change founded on a review of our organisation and achievement of Sport England System Partner status in 2022. The last 12 months have seen some significant milestones with refreshed board, team, strategy and processes. Headlines include:

1. Launch of national strategy, June 2023
2. People Plan developed, May 2023
3. Refreshed board
4. Comprehensive update of governing document, January 2023
5. Launch of national Opening Schools Facilities (OSF) programme

Launch of national strategy

In June 2023 we launched our [strategy for 2023-2027, ‘Creating Momentum’](#). This sets out our role as a national membership organisation and key partner in ‘Uniting the Movement’ to create conditions for an active nation. The strategy sits with three key plans ensuring that we focus on the actions needed to deliver:

- [People Plan](#) – sets out specific expectations for how we will work as a strong people focused organisation. This considers both the national team and the network of Active Partnerships.
- Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan – will be published once completed later in 2023.
- Operations Plan – this will track key actions and will be published later in 2023.

Refreshed board

We’re bold with our ambitions because we know our challenge is big. We recognise therefore we need a board with exceptional skills and qualities. We are committed to establishing a board which is diverse in thought, characteristics, backgrounds and perspectives. So, in the last 12 months we have strengthened and diversified our board with 8 appointments. We now have 10 trustees out of a maximum of 12.

We have introduced new board champions roles to provide cross-cutting focus:

Equality, diversity & inclusion: Dr Hanya Pielichaty

People: Ali Shipway

Environmental & social governance: Rob Purdie

Health & welfare: Born Barikor

Opening Schools Facilities programme: Mike Sandys

Our team and trustees work closely together through three highly focused permanent subcommittees each with a refreshed terms of reference so everyone is clear as to purpose and process. These are introduced below alongwith a summary of membership and attendance.

Finance and Risk Subcommittee ([Link to Terms of Reference](#))

This subcommittee has oversight and scrutiny of the organisation’s management of finances and risk management processes, making appropriate recommendations to the Board on these work areas. It was chaired by Amanda Pearce Higgins (chartered accountant) and met on 5 occasions Sept 22-Aug 23. We are committed to ensuring our obligations that at least one member has relevant financial experience.

People Development Subcommittee ([Link to Terms of Reference](#))



This group focuses on individual, team and organisational development, whilst also supporting the development of a strong people led approach across the Active Partnership network. It was chaired by Ali Shipway (Senior Independent Director) and met on 4 occasions Sept 22-Aug 23. Ali was instrumental in the development of our People Plan and the subcommittee will check and challenge progress.

Governance Subcommittee ([Link to Terms of Reference](#))

This subcommittee first met in Feb 2023 having formerly been a working group. They ensure compliance and have oversight of systems and process where this is not covered by the other subcommittees. They directly contribute to our ambition of being ‘an outstanding performing organisation’. It was chaired by Rob Purdie and met on 2 occasions Sept 22-Aug 23.

A Nominations Subcommittee is formed as needed to lead trustee and executive recruitment.

Trustee summary including board meeting attendance

	Subcommittees			Appointment	Attendance	
	People Dev.	Finance & Risk	Governance		Main Board	Sub-committee
		£				
Active trustees						
Dave Capper, Chair		Member		26 Jan 23-ongoing	4 of 4	4 of 4
Ali Shipway, SID*	Chair			Re-appointed 20 Sept 21	7 of 7	6 of 6
Dr Hanya Pielichaty**				20 Jan 23-ongoing	3 of 4	n/a
Dr Maxine Rhodes		Member		3 Oct 22-ongoing	4 of 7	5 of 5
Mike Sandys**	Member	Member		Re-appointed 12 Sept 22-ongoing	6 of 7	4 of 4
Rob Purdie**			Chair	3 Oct 22-ongoing	6 of 7	2 of 2
Born Barikor**				22 May 23-ongoing	1 of 2	n/a
Julie Amies	Member			22 May 23-ongoing	2 of 2	1 of 1
Jack Shakespeare				1 Jul 23-ongoing	2 of 2	n/a
Neil Fletcher		Chair		21 Aug 23-ongoing	1 of 1	1 of 1
Former trustees, active during this period						
Amanda Pearce Higgins		Chair		-22 Oct 23	7 of 7	5 of 5
Tom Douglas				-17 Apr 23	4 of 5	2 of 2
Adam Walker, Chair				1 Jul 2021-9 Sept 22	n/a	n/a
Richard Fedorcio OBE				-23 Nov 22	2 of 2	n/a
Ian Hacon				-9 Sep 22	n/a	n/a

* Senior Independent Director (acting Chair, 9 Sept 22-26 Jan 23)

** Board champion

Updates to governing document

We have updated our Articles to support greater connectivity with network membership organisations and to ensure they are fit for purpose for current and future ways of working. Hence changes included:

- Related trustee appointments ratified at AGM
- Extended normal maximum number of terms for trustees from 2x3 years to 3x3 years
- Remuneration of Chair of trustees role as approved by the Charity Commission. This decision was carefully considered by the board and a detailed case presented to the Charity Commission including:
 - Recognising the time commitment required by the role based directly on feedback from previous chairs
 - Benchmarking against similar roles with key partners
 - Commitment to attracting a diverse range of candidates
- AGM voting in person/electronic
- Giving members power to approve changes to Membership Fee

Launch of national Opening Schools Facilities (OSF) programme

When we signed the contract with the Department for Education on 20 January 2023 we fundamentally shifted the role of the Active Partnerships national organisation. We set up a dedicated team who worked at pace to enable schools and communities to benefit from the funding quickly. Over 1,465 schools are already participating. With both the number of schools and participants set to grow it is key that we have a clear and dynamic governance structure and effective reporting and sharing systems. We must listen, learn and share within the delivery teams and ensure the young people and communities have a voice.

Operational plan update

With the strategy set by the Board the staff team have worked collaboratively to define operational priorities. By March 2024 we aim to:

2027 ambition	Operational priorities - By March 2024
Outstanding organisation	Our organisation structures and processes are improving our efficiency.
Highly connected network	We have maintained and developed strong relationships which are enhancing our strategic ambitions.
	We have greater breadth, depth and diversity to our relationships that are enhancing connectivity in service of Uniting The Movement.
Evidence change	All work undertaken by the team is directly connected to achieving our vision and mission.
	We have a clear plan, including resources and staffing, for strengthening our approach to evidencing change.
Valued as leaders	There is consistency across the organisation in how we articulate our role.
	We are providing strong leadership in the delivery of opening school facilities, multi-sport and welfare officers initiatives.
	Our digital and communications approach and platforms are enhancing connectivity across the organisation, network and wider partners.

Board evaluation summary

An external board evaluation process is planned for later in 2023.

Internal processes introduced to ensure good governance

We are working hard to ensure robust processes are in place and embedded. In the last 12 months this has included:

1. **Board dashboard** – our board now has access to a live dashboard with four information zones:
 - ‘Board meeting toolkit’ – includes calendar, papers, terms of office, register of interest, terms of reference
 - ‘Strategy and operational plan’
 - ‘Risk and compliance tracking’ – includes risk register, policy and process status tracker
 - ‘Building insight’ – includes induction menu, governing document, impact report, links to guidance from Charities Commission
 - ‘Board profile’ – gives the board a live view of the strength of trustee skills across 25 topics so they know when to call upon the staff team or external support
2. **Updated governance annual schedule** – sets out the key responsibilities of the board and subcommittees. These requirements are nested into a calendar of board activity so that actions are not missed.
3. **Review and update of key policies** – we have updated the HR policy set and many of our core organisational policies.
4. **Timeline defined for providing supporting board events** to ensure timely distribution of papers before board meetings and prompt follow up
5. **Refreshed induction menu**

Key communications routes

Effective engagement with the network of Active Partnerships and wider system partners is a core focus. We are in the process of a communications review which will see us create a new intranet and website. We have a capacity gap in this area and are recruiting for a Strategic Lead for Communications (fixed term to 31 March 2024).

Code of Sports Governance

We believe we are largely compliant with the standards set by the Code of Sports Governance. We are working hard to fill the remaining gaps we have identified and look forward to the opportunity to finalise this action plan with Sport England later this year. Our targets include:

- Diversity Inclusion Action Plan by March 2024
- Core organisation policies fully revised, adopted and implemented including Business Continuity Plan, Data Security Policy, Succession Plan, Safeguarding – these are all going through approvals and implementation. Finance policies are also being reviewed and updated.
- Statement on environmental sustainability
- Staff survey
- Board evaluation by end of 2023