

Active Partnerships National Board meeting

Thursday 2nd May (online)

Present:

Trustees:

Chair: Dave Capper (DC), Alison Shipway (SID) (AS), Rob Purdie (RP), Julie Amies (JA), Neil Fletcher (NF), Dr Hanya Pielichaty (HP) (leaving @11am)

Co-opted member:

Ed Sandham (ES): Sport England (SE)

AP National Team:

Andy Taylor (AT): CEO, Graeme Sinnott (GS): Relationship Partner, Helen Pring (HP) Relationship Partner (left @10am), Nerys Lovell (NL) Finance Manager (left @10am)

Guests:

Sarah Clarke (SC): Sarah Clarke Consulting Ltd, Tom Beasley CEO & Emma Owen Chair Active Gloucestershire, Jackie Harrison (JH) J Harrison Associates (left @10:20am)

Secretariat:

Deborah Thorpe (DT)

Proposals accepted:

Approval to delegate recruitment of trustees to Nominations Committee.

Action Points:

Agenda Item	Date	Actions	By
5.2	02.05.24	Consider the internal application for the SID	DC
5.2	02.05.24	Convene a Nominations Committee (Noms Com) to discuss and finalise the broader recruitment strategy, focusing on health, education, CYP and related member roles	DC
5.2	02.05.24	Board member and CEO to propose recruitment approach for related board members to CEO Forum and to lead on recruitment.	AT/JA

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

Apologies: Jack Shakespeare (JS), Born Barikor (BB), Sarah Dickson (SD)

Dr Maxine Rhodes had left County Durham Sport and had therefore left the AP National board.

2. Conflicts of Interest

None.

3. Minutes and actions from 20th February 2024

Minutes accepted without amendment. Actions accepted without amendment.

4. Strategy & Strategic Projects

Over the last 9-12 months APNO had developed the detail behind the evidencing change strategic ambition. In place now, were the 2027 change statements and emerging processes for measuring progress over time. The 2025 priorities were aligned with the change statements and there was a new approach to reporting on progress and identifying key opportunities and challenges around achieving the 2027 change statements to inform board discussions.

The next phase was one of testing, learning, and adapting the approach through practical implementation. There was acknowledgement of current capacity limitations for developing detailed strategies. Reporting would become sharper, focusing on specific asks through the lens of change statements. Progress tracking would be more detailed and actionable.

Highlighted the importance of keeping ambitions at the forefront of discussions. Debate on whether to frame objectives as "change" or "progress" and to document the nuance of these. Emphasised the need to understand current status, develop baselines for change indicators and maturity matrices for each change statement, and interpret what progress meant for APNO.

Recognition of a resource gap, particularly in dedicated internal resources to support strategic goals. Need for potential reallocation of resources and further discussion on how to address capacity issues.

Importance of integrating the new strategic approach within existing frameworks and ensuring consistency in data collection and reporting with the network and external partners. Encouragement to maintain a balanced approach between qualitative insights and numerical measurements. Caution against reverting to heavy, paper-driven processes and instead continuing with creative and engaging reporting methods.

APNO would feedback the governance structure around the thematic work for the board members to engage with.

Highlighted the significance of communication and the impact of recent changes, such as place-based work, on the network's maturity and behaviour. Importance of listening to effectively represent and influence the network's voice and views, especially in the context of upcoming events like the general election. There had been collaborative round tables with national organisations and challenges were anticipated in relationships over the coming months. The need for the board to stay connected to the network and address the challenges experienced in recent months, especially the difficulties in communication and representation.

An annual calendar for the network was being finalised and would be shared with the board.

5. Governance

5.1 External board Evaluation

An executive summary had been provided (a condensed two-page document), outlining key findings and recommendations. Recommendations from a report done five years ago, noted significant progress but also highlighted areas for further refinement.

Through interviews with all board members, there was general satisfaction with the current structure and trust in subcommittees. The board was strong, with members having extensive experience on multiple boards. Mixed understanding among board members about the board's past journey and the current strategy and progress. Mixed ability to articulate the need of the AP network and poor connectivity into the network.

A need to address imminent recruitment requirements, especially since the forthcoming resignation of the SID and consensus was required on approach.

Recommendations regarding committee structure included maintaining the Finance and Risk Subcommittee, activating the Governance and Nominations Committee as needed, and considering the creation of special interest groups or communities of practice to simplify subcommittee structures. Inviting guest APs and specialist speakers.

Many recommendations given with the top three priorities being:

- Collective ability to talk about progress and what that means for the network.
- Build a sense of collective togetherness.
- Visibility, network building and learning for all.

Aim to reflect on the feedback and adopt a simple process to identify what to keep, improve, stop, and start doing, ensuring the board remains high-performing and responsive to its members' needs and perspectives.

5.2 For decision

Immediate need due to compliance for a Senior Independent Director (SID) as role was being vacated. Need to ensure connectivity between board and non-executive team. An internal member of the board had requested to be considered for the SID role.

Independent board member to focus on health. An advert was ready to go for this role.

Opportunity for more related board Member Positions. A need to fill these positions ensuring connectivity with the network, especially considering the upcoming changes and demands. Ensuring the EDI focus permeated through the board and its approach as much as the composition. Recruitment should align with the organisational strategy, addressing specific needs and gaps. Engagement with Youth and Older Workforce addressing the needs of both demographics and ensuring their voices were represented. Innovative Recruitment adopting non-traditional approaches to recruitment to bring diverse and effective board members.

Utilising various groups and touchpoints within the network to foster connectivity and gather input. Emphasising the importance of related members, particularly CEOs, in maintaining strong connections with the network. Combining targeted recruitment for specific roles (e.g., health and education) with an open process for broader engagement. Considering blind recruitment and other innovative approaches to attract a diverse candidate pool. Ensure transparency and openness in the recruitment process. Involve board members, particularly those with strong network connections.

Proposal:

Approval to delegate recruitment of trustees to Nominations Committee.

Agreed

Actions:

- Consider the internal application for the SID (DC)
- Convene a Nominations Committee (Noms Com) to discuss and finalise the broader recruitment strategy, focusing on health, education, CYP and related member roles. (DC).
- Board member and CEO to propose recruitment approach for related board members to CEO Forum and deliver against agreed process.

5.3 For information (Papers)

The Governance Subcommittee had been effective in overseeing compliance, though there was a need to reflect and review it moving forward. Governance Action Plan was submitted at the end of March. The actions required were minimal, focusing on documentation and compliance aspects.

There was acknowledgment that certain areas of the Environmental Policy needed development, particularly considering Sport England's strategy launch in May.

Awaiting response on compliance submissions for the DIAP on 16th May. The submitted DIAP received a "good" rating from independent assessors, though there were mixed feelings about the process and its effectiveness. The emphasis was on continuous improvement rather than treating the compliance process as a periodic task. The need for better coordination and shared learning within the network was highlighted.

6. Sport England Review

Intention was to share the review with network, at present document was still a draft. The review aimed to assess progress, identify gaps, and mitigate risks in the support for Active Partnerships. Emphasis on the strong trust and effective collaboration between Sport England and Active Partnerships, highlighting positive connectivity and progress in, for example, connecting with health and well-being. Need for better coordination and forward planning to manage the volume of work and communication and to better understand the performance, progress and impact of Active Partnerships. Gaps in collective knowledge and clarity on goals, requiring a focused effort to understand and support Active Partnerships needs. Evolving roles necessitated skill development, which was currently patchy and needed a more structured improvement program. Need to model and reinforce desired behaviours and ways of working between Sport England and Active Partnerships.

Need to form an action plan, improve role clarity, and better utilisation of existing resources and support systems. A reorganisation within Sport England's Partnerships Directorate was presently ongoing.

Need for a stronger emphasis on people and leadership development, addressing capacity, skills, and organisational culture explicitly.

There was a need for clarity on expectations from Sport England regarding local influence, particularly with regional mayors and policy at high levels. Sport England expected Active Partnerships to advocate and influence policy effectively at both local and high levels. There was a concern regarding leadership development support for this work. There was also a recognition that building influential relationships was complex and varied across different regions. Active partnerships were expected to connect and influence both bottom-up and top-down. Sport England acknowledged that this process was not straightforward and varied by location.

Suggestions for follow-up actions, such as discussing these expectations further in future board meetings and potentially developing improvement tools to define and support leaders influencing this level change feeding into the outcomes of the review.

7. People development

The last People Subcommittee meeting was postponed due to the lack of quorum and the need for a new lead.

Attendance at the Stronger People Group meeting, highlighted discussions on the People Survey report and local Active Partnerships' consideration of trends in people data. More would be coming on people webinars and board induction sessions would be run in July.

An update on the team structure and executive roles was given, emphasising efforts to strengthen relationships within the team. HR policies were undergoing an update, and a new staff handbook would be completed soon. This would be shared with the network once completed. The website would be live at the end of the month which would also be shared with the network.

The Haynes Watts review acknowledged effective controls implemented in response to changes in the OSF contract. Thanks were given to the Finance Manager.

8. Finance & Risk

Update on reviewing the strategy through a financial lens. No additional requests for the board presently. The year-end draft results indicated a deficit of £68,000, which had been agreed upon. Discussion on releasing reserves and noted no concerns over controls, expressing satisfaction with the evidence provided. Finance Team planned to share a summary with Sport England.

Work on risk management was praised, with plans for a risk handbook for staff.

Budget approval was confirmed, and auditors were scheduled for the first week of June.

9. A.O.B.

Alison Shipways (SID) last meeting. APNO board thanked Ali for all her work and commitment to Active Partnerships.

AGM 5th December for all Chairs and CEOs to come together with National Team.

Guest TB thanked National Team for continued support and leadership.

Chair to share at future meeting work being done in South Yorkshire inspired by being part of the board for AP. Innovative way of bringing public, private and academic people together in place around health and equalities and physical activity at the heart. Money would be invested.








10. Date of Next Meeting

18th July 2024 10:30-15:30 NCVO London (in person).

Suggestion to meet the night before.

11. Appendix 1

Information supplied before meeting

Agenda Item	File name
0 Agenda:	0 Agenda, 02.05.24.pdf
3 Minutes and actions update:	 03 APNT board Meeting Action Log.pdf  03 APNT board Meeting Minutes 20-02-24.pdf
4 Strategy & Strategic Projects:	 04 Change statements approach video  04 Change statements approach video explainer slides.pptx  04 Change Statements Report.pdf  04 Strategy update report.pdf
5 Governance	05 INED Advert 2024.pdf 05 Active Partnerships - 2023 Assessment GAP - v3.pdf  05 DIAP action plan Feb24 Final Draft V2.pdf 05 DIAP and ESG board Paper.pdf
6 Sport England Review	06 SE Review of AP - final report DRAFT v3.pdf