

# MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING



**Meeting Title** OutdoorLads Board Meeting February 2025  
**Location:** Online via MS Teams  
**Date and Time** Wednesday, 26 February 2025 at 7:30pm

<b>Attendees</b>		Rob Mitchell (chair)
		Joe Bailey (vice-chair)
		Stu Innes (treasurer)
		Dan Blackwell
		Will Allaway
		Gavin Blackman
		Liam Russell
	A	Yvonne Goldsmith-Rybka
	A	Dan Byrnes

<b>1/25</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
	Apologies had been received from Yvonne Goldsmith-Rybka, and Dan Byrnes.  The apologies were accepted.	
<b>2/25</b>	<b>Declarations of conflict of interest</b>	
	There were no declarations of conflict of interest for items on the agenda.	
<b>3/25</b>	<b>Approval of previous minutes and matters arising</b>	
	Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2014 were approved.	
<b>4/25</b>	<b>Office Report</b>	
	The office report had been uploaded in advance for trustees to read. Liam provided a verbal update of the contents and updated on BIG Spring Camp, which is now live.	
<b>5/25</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	Stu gave an update on the finances, referring to the profit and loss report which had been provided in advance. There are no real surprises in the accounts, with the monthly profit lines increasing month by month. February is a big month for membership fees. The finances are looking good and on track for a similar outcome to last year.	

	Liam remarked that since the profit and loss report was done there has been a large expenditure on BIG Spring Camp, which may affect the final outcome.	
	There was a question on if the January big weekend saw an increase in membership. Liam responded to say that whilst there were lots of new members, there wasn't a lot of new paid memberships taken out, but that it wouldn't be expected anyway as members tend to be PAYG and use their vouchers for a while before taking out a paid membership.	
<b>6/25</b>	<b>AGM 2025 Location</b>	
	The results of the members survey on this were examined. In line with the suggested results, it was agreed that the AGM would once again be hybrid (in person and online) in Manchester, but would aim to start at 6pm and move swiftly on to the social – leaving more of the daytime free for activities.	
	The office team are to find a suitable venue.	<b>LR</b>
<b>7/25</b>	<b>Committees</b>	
	Rob referred to his paper on the future Committee structure and it was agreed that the approach outlined is what we will move towards – this being one “committee” but with individuals focussed on individual work streams.	
	It was agreed that we would go to the membership to ask for someone to come forward to chair the new committee – essentially this role is to manage the various projects. This will be discussed again at the Beverley Away Weekend, after which we will go out to find new recruits for the work streams.	<b>LR</b>
	Will reported that the delivery committee have not met recently as they have come to a natural stop gap in their work and are waiting for the Beverley Away weekend to outline their ongoing workstreams which will feed into that.	
	Joe reported for the Marketing & Communications committee. They have drafted some text for web pages which they will pass to the office.	<b>M&amp;C</b>
	They have done some work on Google AdWords to assist with understanding of incoming traffic, and have drawn up a rough draft for a remodelled event search page, to pass to the office for discussion.	
<b>8/25</b>	<b>Policies</b>	
	<i>Reserves Policy</i>	
	Stu has reviewed the reserves policy. There are very few real changes. There had been a lot of money put aside for a new website, however a	

	new website is not needed within the timescales originally thought, although the website does need some investment in new functionality. This element of the reserves has been slimmed down accordingly.	
	This means the overall reserves commitment has been reduced. There is still money sufficient in reserves for other ongoing needs.	
	Covid has allowed us to assess risk better than we had previously, in terms of the lived experience of the impact of the pandemic.  The Reserves Policy was <b>approved</b> .	
	<i>Equality, diversity and inclusion policy</i>	
	The EDI Policy has been reviewed. The previous version was lengthy and repetitive and now applies to everyone in ODL and not just volunteers. The policy is now more encompassing for everyone, and expects everyone to uphold the same values.	
	Duplication with the Code of Conduct was removed. The policy has been reviewed against the BMC and the Ramblers' policies and it is consistent with their approach.	
	There is a key line added in about a situation if someone missed an event directly due to a protected characteristic and how OutdoorLads can respond. Liam is to review the refund policy to also add this into there, and to make it clear that people should let us know in this situation if this applies to them. The updated refund policy will go for approval at the April meeting.  It was commented that work on website accessibility to make it clearer where events are more accessible should form part of the new work streams of the new committee.	<b>LR</b>
	The EDI policy was <b>approved</b> .	
	<i>Partnership events policy</i>	
	Dan spoke to the partnership events policy and outlined the requirements in that policy, which is for events we run jointly with other organisations.	
	This will be discussed with other groups who wish to run partnerships with us.	
	The partnership events policy was <b>approved</b> .	
	It was agreed that there will be a two year review period on each of these policies. Liam to ensure the approved policies are made available on the website.	<b>LR</b>
<b>9/25</b>	<b>MTB including risk assessments</b>	
	Dan will review the risk assessments and will circulate these with these by the end of the week.	<b>DB</b>

	It is proposed that there will be clear levels of cycling events and leaders, to provide greater clarity on which level each event is.	
	It was agreed that the risk assessments can be approved via e-mail to trustees, to expediate the signing off of these before the next board meeting.	<b>DB</b>
<b>10/25</b>	<b>Leader support plans including feedback from South Leaders Meeting</b>	
	<p>Gavin gave an update on what he's been doing with leaders. He has been messaging leaders of OutdoorLads in turn, to thank them and invite them to feedback on any issues.</p> <p>There seems to be a good response back so far.</p> <p>The responses will be collated and shared with trustees to identify key findings.</p>	<b>GB</b>
	One of the findings is that there are key geographical areas that require additional support to develop more of an offering of events in those areas.	
<b>11/25</b>	<b>Website Update</b>	
	<i>CookieBot Proposal</i>	
	Liam provided an update on the CookieBot proposal. This is now being implemented using support hours rather than at additional cost, saving around £3k. It is expected to go live next week.	
	<i>RSS Feeds</i>	
	This is on hold whilst the cookie and participation work proceeds first, but is a positive solution to act as a replacement service to get notifications of events going live. This will commence again once the other two items are in place.	
	<i>Participation Statements</i>	
	<p>Liam outlined the requirements that are needed to incorporate this into the website, as the existing system is no longer fit for purpose. When launched, it will require everyone to complete a new participation statement at first sign-in, and a record of the date stamp and signature of the participation statement will be kept on file. The cycling and general ones will be amalgamated into one statement now.</p> <p>Liam highlighted that this is a critical piece of work which is required. The work is bespoke coding for OutdoorLads and not an existing piece of software that is bolted on.</p> <p>The quote for this work of £6480 including VAT was <b>approved</b>.</p>	
	Liam agreed to ask Adaptive if this can also be used for the volunteer agreements in due course and will feed back to trustees on this.	<b>LR</b>

<b>12/25</b>	<b>Annual Members Survey</b>	
	Will reported that he and Dan Byrnes are currently working on this, using the previous years as a template and to send out accompanying comms, which will come from Will.	
	This will be scheduled to go out shortly after BIG Spring Camp and results followed up at the AGM in a "You said... We did..." style format.	
<b>13/25</b>	<b>Extreme day and foreign events</b>	
	<p>Trustees discussed the increase in requests from leaders to run events abroad. This was especially in light of the recent extreme day event to Ireland and a number of other requests that have come through.</p> <p>There was a robust discussion on this, including the benefits, the potential issues, environmental impact, and reputation of the group. The fit with our core purpose was also discussed.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All events outside the UK to come to the office for approval.</li> <li>• Events should have a core OutdoorLads offer and meet our aims – so a hike, cycle, etc.</li> <li>• Proposals that are a city break, cultural and heritage, or social / drinking event will not form part of the offer. This isn't our focus and strays too close to package holidays, which is a regulated activity.</li> <li>• Reputation of the group is a key consideration, including environmental impact and choice of destination. Consideration of that potential risk is key.</li> <li>• Proposed events should have some itinerary from the leader and be well planned, to ensure inclusivity.</li> </ul>	
<b>14/25</b>	<b>Unit Quartermaster Role</b>	
	The Unit Quartermaster Role was <b>approved</b> and authority given to Liam to now commence the recruitment process.	<b>LR</b>
<b>15/25</b>	<b>Round table for each trustee to give feedback updates or ideas on whatever they are up to</b>	
	<p>Rob said that he has been busy personally with a upcoming house move. He will soon let the membership know that he intends to step down at the AGM as a result of changes afforded by his relocation to the Highlands.</p> <p>He won't be able to come to the Beverley away weekend due to an urgent medical operation, and is unlikely to be able to make the North Leaders weekend either as a result.</p>	

	Joe said his main objective is to get an better understanding of the work of the office team, and use Beverley to set objectives for the organisation and staff.	
	Dan updated trustees on some statistics for the current performance of the organisation as follows:	
	<p>OutdoorLads is seeing strong growth, with increases in both events and attendance across the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Events:</b> January 2025 saw <b>135 events</b> (+6.3% vs Jan 2024), and February 2025 has <b>137 events</b> (+1.5% vs Feb 2024).</li> <li>• <b>Bookings:</b> January 2025 had <b>1,607 spaces booked</b> (+10.2% vs Jan 2024), and February 2025 reached <b>1,621</b> (+9.5% vs Feb 2024).</li> </ul> <p><b>Yearly Growth:</b> Total booked spaces in <b>2024</b> hit <b>20,637</b>, up <b>2.1%</b> from <b>20,219</b> in 2023.</p>	
	<p>He has worked with NW leaders to develop a camping planner and they are looking to fill with some smaller paid camping events in the North West.</p> <p>We have received a positive response from Kendal Mountain Festival regarding a presentation in Sheffield in May.</p>	
	Gavin said he had covered his updates earlier in the meeting, as has Will, but the work on the April #GetOutMore weekend was noted.	
	Stu is working on BIG Spring Climb for May, and is looking to keep the event small and manageable. Stu and Will are also in discussion over the delivery of the event.	
<b>16/25</b>	<b>Confirmation of Dates</b>	
	<p>Trustees agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 8th April, 7:30pm, online</li> <li>• Saturday 7 June 2025, face to face in Sheffield</li> <li>• Tuesday 5th August, 7:30pm, online</li> <li>• AGM – Saturday 20th September, face to face &amp; online (Manchester)</li> <li>• Monday 3rd November, 7.30pm, online</li> </ul>	
<b>17/25</b>	<b>The meeting closed at 8:45pm.</b>	

