MINUTES OF THE ACTIVE PARTERS TRUST (APT) BOARD MEETING Company limited by guarantee 10876876 Registered Charity 1180787			
Date:	18/03/2026 17:00-18:30	**Venue:**	Teams
In the chair:	Jane Laughton	**Minute recorder:**	Margaret Blount

	Working together, we will address inequality and empower everyone to be active in a way that works for them	
1	**Present** Jo Bishton (JB) Fiona Callaghan (FC) Garry Campbell (GC) Graham Feek (GF) Janak Gunatilleke (JG) Jane Laughton (JL) Rachel North (RN) Gemma Poulter (GP) Michael Rich (MR) Mark Shardlow (MS)	**In attendance** Ilana Freestone (IF) CEO Stuart Batchelor (SB) Strategic Director Kerryn Chamberlin (KRC) Strategic Director Michelle Skinner (MS) Strategic Director Margaret Blount (MBl) Ops Lead Tracey Bird (TB) Place Partnership Lead - Leamington Natalie Braisby (NB) Place Partnership Lead - Kirk Hallam Helen Davis (HD) Place Partnership Lead - Nottingham Karen Swan (KS) Place Partnership Lead - Derby
2	**Apologies** Adam Hill (AH) and Chris Hassell (CH)	
3	**Declarations of interest** No declarations of interest received relevant to the agenda items.	
4	**Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 December 2025** The minutes were approved as a true record, subject to a correction noted by MBl. The December 2025 minutes had been drafted from the previous AGM template and had incorrectly included Derek Higton, who had stood down at the previous year's AGM. This has been corrected on the file copy.	
5	**Introductions and matters arising** JL welcomed Garry Campbell and Janak Gunatilleke to their first board meeting as newly appointed trustees. **Resignations** JL advised the board that both Louise Bainbridge and Danny Bouckley had resigned from the board. JL noted their significant contributions: Danny Bouckley had played a key role in the People and Resources Committee; Louise Bainbridge had been a valued member of the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR). With the resignations noted above, the board now stands at 12 members, which is the target number.	

	MB to send a note of thanks to Louise Bainbridge and Danny Bouckley on behalf of the board.	MBI
6	**CEO's report** IF presented her CEO report, highlighting key developments since the last meeting. The main items are recorded below. **Staffing and workforce planning** Two new appointments have been made: a Marketing Lead and a Place and Communities Lead. The chosen candidate for the Place and Communities Lead has subsequently withdrawn her application. The Marketing Lead is now in post. Work has started at looking at the staff structure required going forward. It is complicated with two large funding awards coming our way, unknown total amounts, on different timescales and what is being funded is duplicated. Different scenarios are being developed around what we think we need and what we think we can afford, based on an assumed amount of funding to be received. An initial discussion with our HR consultant about the implications of the various scenarios has taken place. Once developed further, possible scenarios will be brought to the People and Resources Committee for more detailed discussion and guidance. **Board away day** Notes from the board away day have been circulated. IF thanked trustees for their input and for the quality of discussion. We are working through key themes. Board members to sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter (GDPR requirement) via Making our Move website (bottom of the page) or by email to MB. **Meeting with the Mayor (East Midlands Combined County Authority)** A positive meeting with the Mayor Claire Ward took place on 29 January. Key outcomes and follow-up actions from the meeting included: • The Mayor has agreed to open the afternoon session of the health event on 17 September. • She is keen to be involved in the Walk Notts work and is looking to us to support EMCCA on a more sports based campaign. • There are ongoing discussions about a potential joint role between APT and EMCCA. The conversation is continuing, but no agreed arrangement yet. • Allan Simpson, the EMCCA active travel ambassador, was unable to attend on 29th due to illness but a subsequent meeting has taken place. He has been invited to attend a future board meeting and this needs to be confirmed. IF explained that engagement with the Mayor is part of APT's longer-term stakeholder engagement plan. We are looking to develop a long-term relationship with EMCCA, especially where we are working in the same neighbourhoods. There are opportunities to align funds and amplify each other's campaigns. **Sport England update and targeted priorities** IF shared Sport England's updated priorities, noting that the wording is still evolving. Key points included: • Finalising the refresh of our Making Our Move strategy is on hold until the updated Sport England priorities are confirmed, to ensure they are incorporated in our strategy. APT expects to have to apply for SE system partner funding against these priorities. • Sport England's priorities are becoming more sharply focused:	IF/P&R comm All IF IF/KC

	- Targeting people in the top 25% places of greatest need; - Older adults particularly those with long term health conditions and from lower socio-economic groups; - Children and young people particularly from low-affluence households; active environments with a focus on ageing and infrastructure; and data and insights. - Sport England's universal priorities are - Workforce - diversity, skills and experience - Aging/at risk infrastructure - Data, insight and digital enablement. - These generally aligned to where we focus our resources/activities already although we focus on top 10% of places. A potential difference is our work around active environments, which for us includes for us green, blue and grey spaces. The proposed Sport England priority seems to be focusing on grey spaces i.e. aging built facilities. - There is an increased emphasis on quantitative data and measurement from Sport England than in recent years. We are working on identifying what measures we have, working with other Active Partnerships on this. - Sport England has also signalled a sharper refocus on its statutory and essential functions and has returned to 'sport' language more explicitly than in recent years. We are monitoring any implications of this but still too early to say if this is a significant shift in focus for SE. - We are expecting to hear details of the application process for the next five-years of funding, April 2027-March 2032, during the summer and we are still waiting for a decision on school sport funding and whether Active Partnerships will have a funded role to play. **Place Partnership bids** Preparing four concurrent place partnership bids is a significant current workload for the team. The submission deadline is 7 April. **Place Universal Offer (PUO)** APT's approach to spending both PUO funding and our reserves is being implemented. Both county panels have been briefed on the process and panel representatives will be involved in checking and challenging bids before funding is awarded. **Board evaluation** IF confirmed an independent board evaluation is to be carried out later this year, allowing new trustees time to become established before the evaluation proceeds. An invitation to quote will be circulated to appoint a consultant to carry this out.	IF
7	**Finance, Audit and Risk Committee report** MR reported back on behalf of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The committee minutes had been circulated in the board papers. Key points from the meeting included: **Current year budget** FAR reviewed this year's budget and was satisfied with the detailed variance reporting provided by MBI, which clearly explains the reasons for variances.	

	Next year's budget and assumptions FAR discussed the budget for the coming year. Areas discussed included: ensuring the level of provision for potential pay awards is more realistic and prudent; moving away from budgeting at 100% staffing occupancy and instead incorporating a sensible vacancy allowance; and being realistic about slippage on project spend. Subject to these points, the committee was broadly happy with next year's budget. **Outlook beyond next year** The committee recognised that there is significant uncertainty beyond approximately 18 months. An outline budget and understanding of uncertainties is in place; the committee's view was that it is not the right time for extensive further work on a 2027-2028 budget given these uncertainties. **Benchmarking against other trusts** A national report on finance metrics across all Active Partnerships was reviewed. The committee was keen to understand where APT sits relative to comparators and to identify areas where targeted improvements could be considered, potentially including contact with other trusts. This is a longer-term piece of work. **Treasury management and cash investment** FAR noted that although APT holds significant cash, this is being actively and effectively managed. Good levels of return and interest are being achieved while maintaining access to funds and managing cash flow. **Vacancy on the FAR Committee** JL noted that with the resignation of Louise Bainbridge, there is now a vacancy on the FAR Committee. JL invited any trustee who would like to join the committee (which meets four times per year, three times online and once face to face with the auditors) to contact IF or MBI. **Discussion points raised** JL raised the question of the risk of holding large cash balances in a single bank account (approximately £900,000 in a Nationwide account), noting that only £120,000 is protected under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. MBI explained that the Insignis investment platform distributes funds across eight or nine different bank accounts with staggered terms (easy access, three months, six months, and one year), selecting only institutions with strong credit ratings (Moody's, Fitch or equivalent). However, the Nationwide account remains outside the Insignis platform as it has not been possible to identify sufficient suitable banks within the Insignis platform that meet APT's investment criteria. MBI agreed to review this at the next FAR meeting, with a possible option of splitting the balance into two banks.	All MBI
8	**Updates on the 4 Place Partnership places** IF introduced the item. At the board away day, the Place Partnership work had been discussed from the perspective of opportunity and risks in relation to the £5 million funding application. The Place Partnership leads were invited to bring the work to life, share what the work will deliver and what difference it will make. **Erewash / Kirk Hallam – Natalie Braisby** NB described the work in Kirk Hallam, a single MSOA area within Erewash with approximately 6,000 residents and an adult physical inactivity rate of around 31%. Our engagement work in the community, including engagement with local schools has identified four key areas of work:	

	• The importance and value of green and outdoor spaces to encourage active lifestyles. We are looking at how this funding can improve accessibility, safety and wider community use of these spaces, embedding active environment principles, and extending any learning from this across Erewash. • Influencing the early attitudes and behaviours towards movement of children, young people and their families, harnessing energy and enthusiasm from local primary and secondary schools, co-designing activities and leadership opportunities, and maximising the multi-generational potential, given that many families remain in Kirk Hallam long term. • Developing and empowering a community workforce – There is a strong sense of identify and community pride in the area yet there are currently no voluntary or community-led organisations. Plans include supporting local people to create their own health and wellbeing opportunities, building sustainable, community-led capacity that outlasts the funding period. • Long-term health conditions and SEND – Kirk Hallam has higher than regional and national rates of long-term health conditions and SEND in schools. Work will focus on improving doorstep access to health support and help remove barriers to activity of cost and travel. NB described the overall vision: to create a more active and connected Kirk Hallam by strengthening community capacity, empowering young people, activating spaces and building a coordinated system of partners that not only shapes local wellbeing but also supports wider system change across Erewash. Investment will support building capacity across key partners through new roles in the voluntary sector, local authority and schools who will focus on building skills and capacity within the local community. It will also fund pilots within Kirk Hallam with potential to extend learnings across Erewash; and strengthening leadership, collaboration and accountability across the sector. In response to a question about barriers to building community capacity, NB confirmed that a resident action group, set up during this development award stage, is growing in momentum, with more engagement at meetings from residents and five local councillors. It appears the main barrier to community involvement has been a lack of guidance and knowledge of where to start but this guidance is starting to be provided. **Ashfield / Leamington Estate – Tracey Bird** TB described the work in Leamington Estate, a single MSOA area in Ashfield with a population of approximately 5,000. Multiple strategic partners are working in this area and additional funding has been put into the area over recent years and yet problems remain. Key themes to be focused on with the full award, identified from the development work include: • A focus on children and young people - there is a lack of doorstep opportunities and limited voice within the system for children and young people. • Safety and perception – a high proportion of residents feel unsafe to go outdoors to be active due to antisocial behaviour and fear of crime. Work is taking place to change the narrative around deprivation, inequality and safety.	

	• Broader community focus. Most of work happening already on the estate is focused mainly on older adults. The aim is to broaden the focus of the community work to a wider age range including younger adults and residents in recovery from addiction, recognising that specialist services are needed and that current commissioned provision can be difficult for residents to access e.g. located in Mansfield. • Workforce development – the voluntary and community sector in the area is very limited and focused mainly on older adults. Upskilling the voluntary and community sector and/or residents to work with a broader range of ages and to be able to engage with and feed into the broader system to bring about changes in the system. TB also described two facility developments in Leamington: • Willetts Court, a community facility that was effectively closed when the development award work began but which now hosts 10 different sessions (up from two). This facility, whilst limited, has been smartened up so that it can be used by more groups. • A potential new build 'active hub' on a large, underused site in the middle of the estate, that already includes football pitches and a planned play zone. Discussions have taken place with Sport England's capital team for funding towards this. TB confirmed this new build option has been discussed at district council level for some time and the opportunity is being taken now to proceed with local authority funding, other regeneration funding and hopefully SE funding. The need to influence change to the specialist and voluntary sector services currently commissioned was explored. The importance of clear data and evidence to make the case for this was stressed. TB confirmed that the key issue is around pre-contemplation – how to reach people who may not recognise they need support.	
	IF noted it would be helpful for FC to act as a sense-check on APT's approach to changing commissioning arrangements, not just in Leamington but across all places where this is being attempted.	IF/FC
	Nottingham City – Helen Davis HD described the work across Nottingham City's nine MSOAs, grouped into four cluster areas: Bilborough, Aspley, Broxtowe, Cinder Hill, Beechdale (north-west); Bulwell and Top Valley (north-east); St Ann's East; and Clifton South. Given the scale, the work is at a different stage of specificity compared with single-MSOA areas. A key finding from the system understanding work of the development stage,is that collaboration and connectivity are critical to enabling physical activity. We have therefore invested in anchor organisations – trusted, known organisations in each area – to understand their community needs and what it will take to enable collaboration. The anchor organisations have talked to the frontline workforce in each community to explore what they would want to work on together. Through this process, children, young people and families have consistently emerged as the priority focus, with mental health, isolation and aspirations as the underpinning themes. What we need to work on, in all of the 4 corners in Nottingham to enable residents to be more active, are: • Address the lack of safe places and spaces to be active. • Address the lack of provision for families, children and young people to connect and be part of something.	

- What we put in place to be offered in the right way, with the right workforce skills, drawing on learning from the This Girl Can programme to influence how we develop the local workforce.
- Help the system to understand our insight and use it to influence their investment/ provision.

HD described envisioning days being held with partners, at which partners are collaborating around what they can achieve with existing resources – a notable mindset shift, particularly from the voluntary sector. The work in the development award stage has focused on building the conditions to be able to work together (trust) so that once the full award comes through, partners understand what this takes and there is a momentum and commitment to move forward.

JL asked about Sport England's expectations given that Nottingham covers nine MSOAs compared with other areas that focus on one. IF acknowledged that the investment level is not proportionately different and that Sport England is using the different waves of place investment to test and learn about the right level of investment to achieve the desired change.

Derby City – Karen Swan

KS described the work across Derby City's five MSOA areas. The areas are highly diverse: Normanton Arboretum has approximately 54% South East Asian population, whereas other areas are predominantly White British (around 90%).

Key findings from the work include:

- A highly culturally specific and micro-level approach is required in each area. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work.
- Trust between communities and the system has been broken over time. Physical activity has proved to be an outcome of connection, not the starting point. Work by D23 Active in Normanton and Arboretum, focusing on the female Pakistani Muslim population, saw approximately 1,400 people engaged over 15 months, when connection was prioritised first.
- Community groups are active but massively under-resourced and under-supported. Where communities are empowered with leadership and the right conditions, they naturally step forward.

In Derby, a strong health focus has been developed. There isa significant appetite from the ICB, primary care networks and providers to work differently, to understand communities at the level of micro-neighbourhoods and achieve different outcomes through a bespoke approach.

Three areas of investment focus have been identified:

- locality-first leadership;
- asset-based community development; and
- supporting the system to recognise the importance of 'glue roles' that build relationships between organisations.

A question was asked about gender and faith engagement in Normanton. KS explained that the D23 Active work, which began with a broader Muslim community focus, quickly identified that its reach was specifically with the female Pakistani Muslim population. This became the organisation's USP and its model is now informing national policy and approaches in leisure centres across Derby.

Key points raised in the wider discussion of the work in all four areas:

	• The common theme across all four areas is building leadership capacity, yet putting a value or metric on this is very difficult, and funders increasingly require hard metrics. • There is also a common theme emerging across all places around community sector infrastructure (lack of), what is needed for change, and context-specific differences. • IF clarified the point on metrics. With the place partnership bids, submissions will include delivery plans, governance structures, stories of place and theories of change along with in-depth evaluation and learning plans which will include quantitative and qualitative measures. We are also looking at what measures will be individual to a place and what we can measure collectively across all places hence gaining some efficiencies and comparisons. • System change, which Sport England and we believe delivers the greatest long-term impact on tackling inequalities, is often most effective at a larger geographical scale, even where the community activity itself is highly localised. Sport England is deliberately funding work in different sized areas to test the approach. • Whilst all four communities are different, the passion, capability and understanding of communities all four PP leads have, is evident in all the presentations. This will give confidence to communities to participate and take risks.	
9	**Reports from the county panels** **Active Notts** GF reported that the second panel meeting, held in the community, had taken place at the Warsop Health Hub with Vibrant Warsop. The visit generated considerable discussion and learning, with most of the meeting time spent on the Vibrant Warsop presentation and discussion. Key points included: • The naming of the venue as a 'Health Hub' rather than a sports centre was deliberate, to make it less threatening to people who would not normally access a sports centre. An example was given of an agoraphobic resident who, after attending the Hub, became a fully engaged member participating in a wide range of activities. • The importance of putting what communities actually want into a community, rather than what others assume they need, was underlined – for instance, the Warsop Health Hub was built in response to residents wanting a swimming pool. • The meeting was very well attended and the quality of discussion benefitted from the community setting. Other items discussed at the Active Notts Panel included: • Place Universal Offer – the process for approving allocations was discussed, with the aim of ensuring clear criteria while retaining space for panel input rather than a rubber-stamp exercise. • A debate around the balance of funding between supporting partnerships and leadership development versus direct programme spend. We did not reach a firm conclusion and may be no single answer. Possibly a discussion at future board meeting. **Active Derbyshire** SB reported on the Active Derbyshire Panel meeting, held at Infinite Wellbeing, a CIC in Heanor focused on alternative education and providing a community hub, particularly for families. Key points included: • The organisation introduced two apprentices who had chosen a sport and health apprenticeship in a community charity setting rather than a traditional leisure centre route, motivated by a desire to make a real difference. • The meeting highlighted the importance of the voluntary and community sector, but also the significant personal burden carried by those running such organisations	

	(for example, the main person running the CIC described working 20 hours a day on fundraising and networking). • Attendance was strong – approximately 12-14 panel members, the best attendance to date, with seven or eight attending for only their first or second meeting. The cross-system representation is generating richer discussion. • Discussion on stakeholder mapping, recognising that new partner organisations are now being encountered that are outside APT's traditional network. • An update on Place Universal Offer potential in Amber Valley, linked to a community wellbeing approach and parks activation, which gave panel members a sense of what bids might look like when they are involved in assessment. Key points raised in discussion: • The quality of both panel meetings appears to be linked to meeting out in the community. • The attendance and engagement have both improved significantly in the last two meetings. The community organisations also value the opportunity to showcase their work. • The influx of new panel members interested in potentially joining the board has created a 'pipeline' of engaged individuals with relevant experience.	
10	**AOB** An updated trustee succession plan to be circulated. All board members to complete ID verification on the Companies House website by July and share ID number with MB. GC to arrange an introductory meeting about stakeholder engagement with KC.	 MB All GC
	Dates of future meetings Tuesday 23 June 2026 5 - 7.45pm Thursday 17 September 2026 5 – 7.45pm Wednesday 9 December 2026 5 – 7.45pm Tuesday 16 March 2026 5 – 7.45pm	