

MINUTES OF THE ACTIVE PARTERS TRUST (APT) BOARD MEETING

Company limited by guarantee 10876876 Registered Charity 1180787

Date:	23 June 2026	Venue:	Teams meeting
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

Present Jo Bishton (JB) Garry Campbell (GC) Fiona Callaghan (FC) Graham Feek (GF) Janak Gunatilleke (JG) Jane Laughton (JL) Gemma Poulter (GP) Rachel North (RN) Michael Rich (MR) Mark Shardlow (MS)		In attendance Ilana Freestone (IF) APT CEO Kerryn Chamberlin (KRC) Deputy CEO Stuart Batchelor (SB) Strategic Director Margaret Blount (MBI) Operations Lead Katie Crockett (KCr) Marketing & Ops Craig Homer (CHo) Comm & Finance
1	Apologies Received from Chris Hassell and Adam Hill	
2	Declarations of interest No declarations of interested were received.	
3	Minutes of the last meeting held on 18 March 2026 and matters arising The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Most actions from the previous meeting are being picked up in the agenda. The planned independent board evaluation is being progressed, with the intention to carry it out in the autumn, after new board members have had the chance to attend more face meetings. Janak Gunatilleke joined the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee at its last meeting, filling the vacancy on that committee.	
4	CEO's report IF presented her report, which had been circulated in advance, and highlighted several key points. Staffing and recruitment The two members of our Derby Place Partnership team are moving into place work in Nottingham. One internally to our Nottingham Place Partnership team and one moving externally to a Pride in Place role in Nottingham. Retention of place partnership staff is a challenge, not unique to APT. The skills required for place work are sought after within the system. We recruited for these place partnership	

	roles on the basis of relational and community-connecting skills, but we are finding that the work increasingly requires programme management and evaluation skills. This mismatch has contributed to some departures, as confirmed through exit interviews. Work is under way to address this going forward. Highlights Place Universal Offer (PUO) The allocation of this Sport England funding is progressing well. Nine of twelve awards have been agreed, with the remaining three due to go to panel for a decision in July. An evaluation report, covering the first six months of this work is being produced, ready to submit to Sport England by the end June. Walk Notts Festival This ran throughout May, celebrating walking and wheeling. It generated extensive social media engagement, case studies and community stories. The festival is designed to use walking as a hook to engage community groups and embed walking into their existing offers, rather than as a one-off event. An evaluation document will be shared once complete, including participant data. A Talking Space session is planned for July focusing on how walking and wheeling activities can sustain all through the year. As there is a strong history of walking festivals in Derbyshire, Walk Derbyshire does not need to fill such a gap and instead has had a sustained focus on supporting and promoting residents walking from their doorstep, through neighbourhood walks. It works with existing festivals to engage people who would not normally walk as a pastime. Walk Notts and Walk Derbyshire both tailor their approach to where the need is greatest locally in their respective counties. IF to share the Walk Notts Festival evaluation with the board once it is complete. Active Environment Network This continues to attract good attendance, with 67 people joining the most recent online session, which focused on children's literacy and play. East Midlands Moving Well event - 17 September 2026 We are organising this day in partnership with EMCCA and the Integrated Care Boards for Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. Mayor Claire will attend some of the day as will hopefully have a chance to meet Simon Hayes, the new CEO of Sport England. It is on same day and venue as the next board meeting so we hope you can book on to attend. EMCCA IF has met with Damien Dacey, Change Director of Place at EMCCA, to explore the potential of a joint role. There is support for this in EMCCA and a follow-up meeting is planned in two weeks to discuss various options in more detail. Key challenges and horizon items Place Partnership APT is still waiting on decisions from Sport England on our four Place Partnership full award applications. Decisions are expected imminently. If successful, these awards will have a start date of 1 October 2026. The 5th Place Partnership full award application for work in Bassetlaw is due to be submitted on 4 September 2026 and this is progressing well. System Partner funding	IF IF
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	Our current Sport England System Partner funding award, which covers APT's core staff and running costs, runs until the end of March 2027 and we are awaiting details of future funding. IF noted that while the funding may not continue under the same name and may require a slightly different focus, she is reasonably confident that what APT is setting out to achieve will continue to align with Sport England's requirements, as its overall strategy has not changed. School Sport funding DfE has announced significant new investment and is currently out to tender for a national delivery partner. The Active Partnerships network is exploring being part of a consortium, bidding for that work. IF noted that if the distribution model changes for young people programme funding, there is a risk to our roles and programmes as they are delivered currently. It was observed that, strategically, the announcement of this additional national investment in school sport is good news, even if it may carry a risk for APT organisationally.	
6	Finance report MR presented the report on behalf of the FAR Committee. He summarised the key points from the FAR minutes, which had been circulated in advance. The outturn for 2025/26 was noted as a good position, with expenditure slightly outstripping income and APT continuing to make progress in putting its reserves to productive use. For 2026/27 budget, the committee noted that more realistic assumptions agreed at previous FAR meetings have been incorporated. The budget assumptions are transparent enabling them to be kept under review throughout the year. However, given the significant sums that may come to APT in year and beyond, it does not make sense to do lots of granular detail work until there is more certainty. FAR can support the team answer any questions funders may have about policies, e.g. procurement policy, to underpin and secure the funding bids. FAR approved diversification of APT's investments across a wider range of banks and investment funds, while maintaining an appropriate attitude to risk and ensuring a minimum level of reserves remains accessible at short notice. Work on the revision of APT's risk appetite was reviewed at the meeting, in preparation for the board discussion to follow.	
7	Review of the board's Risk Appetite MR introduced the risk appetite discussion. APT's current risk appetite statements were drafted by a consultant in 2017 and, whilst approved annually, have never been substantively discussed by the board. Risk appetite is not only about threats but also about empowering the organisation to explore and exploit opportunities appropriately. It provides a guide against which decisions can be taken. Not explicitly setting out the board's agreed risk appetite statements can contribute to poor decision making and expose organisations either to threats or to missed opportunities. The distinction between risk appetite (a general attitude to the types and amounts of risk an organisation is willing to accept in pursuing its goals) and risk tolerance (how far the organisation might be willing to go outside that appetite at any given time, in a particular context) was explained. Once the risk appetite is agreed, the	

risk register can be revised. A red risk on the register may not necessarily be of concern, if for that category, an open appetite has been agreed. APT's risk appetite needs to be appropriate for a charity, a company limited by guarantee, and an organisation that is largely responsible for public money. Proposed risk categories MR proposed moving from the current six risk categories to eight. Key changes include: • Strategy (replacing Strategic) - new category description to make clear that this is explicitly focused on risks to the delivery of APT's strategy, covering risks that could stop APT doing what it is trying to do. • Governance - included as a distinct category given APT's obligations as a charity and the importance of good governance in unlocking and managing funding. • Reputational (replacing Political) - providing a clearer and broader framing than political. • Cyber Security - added as a new standalone category. Category description to refer to information security. The remaining four categories are: • Financial • Legal and Regulatory - category description to reference information security • People • Operational Key points raised in discussion: • Should generative AI be a 9th category or a sub-category of cyber security as the risks are potentially large? As APT already has policies in place to address these risks, it was suggested that making it a 9th category should be kept under review. There can/will be specific risks relating to generative AI listed on the risk register under the Cyber Security category. It was confirmed that the team do have cyber security training, but no training has ever been provided for board members. This could be included as a mitigating action on the revised risk register. Cyber security is included as a requirement in the new IT support procurement requirements which is currently out to market. • A synthesis of APT's full statutory responsibilities should be produced and held in one place for easy refence and updating. The board broadly agreed the proposed eight categories. Based on the useful comments received, MR/MB to unpack more what would be covered in each category, providing more clarity about each. MR then facilitated a discussion about what is the board appetite for each of the eight categories, based on the following scale: • Minimal (avoid) far left • Cautious	MB/KCr MR/MB
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• Moderate (balanced) • Open • Hungry (seek) far right As a starter for 10, based on the discussion at the recent FAR meeting, a suggested position on the scale was proposed for each category, with the caveat that changes to the scale description can be made to better reflect how the board wishes to describe their appetite. The decision is where on the left to right scale, does the board feel comfortable. The board reviewed and agreed their appetite for each category based on this scale. Strategy: The starter position of Open. To stay at Open was broadly supported. Financial: The starter position was Moderate. To stay at Moderate was broadly supported. MR confirmed that the category and scale descriptions for the Financial category would be revised to reflect the following points raised in the discussion below. • In the descriptions, as written, there is a tension between investment of reserves and spending to have an impact. • If APT's fundamental purpose is to make an impact through long-term investment of capacity and finance in a place, then perhaps the appetite should move more towards Open, taking advantage of the fact we do not have the same statutory and financial obligations as a local authority or NHS. • Equally the case was made for the appetite remaining Moderate as we are custodians of public money. MR clarified that a more Open appetite for investment should not be read as reducing APT's financial controls. MR/MB to revise category description and appetite scale descriptions to provide more clarity Legal and Regulatory: The starter position was Cautious. A move right to Moderate was broadly supported. The move to a Moderate position was based on the fact that APT's regulatory obligations are relatively limited compared to a public body. Governance: The starter position was Moderate. To stay at Moderate was broadly supported. MR confirmed that the category and scale descriptions for the Governance category would be revised to reflect the following points raised in the discussion below. • APT can make agile decisions, particularly where Sport England has agreed a plan therefore should this move to the right to Open.	
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• An alternative view was with significantly higher funding coming in for Place Partnerships and APT increasingly acting as a conduit for six-figure allocations to third-party organisations, there is a greater need for proportionate governance and due diligence, consistent with the Sports Governance Code. Reputational: The starter position was Open. The move left to Moderate was fully supported. The discussion that led to this move to the left included the following points. • It is important and helpful to consistently return to APT's mission for guidance on the stance APT takes on issues. • Contentious issues e.g. LGBTQ+ sport debates require APT to take a disciplined line: welcoming everyone to be physically active without taking sides or being drawn into debates not central to APT's purpose. • APT should continue to hold its values firmly but that APT's identity is as a convening organisation sitting between others, not in the foreground. • There is a distinction between being drawn into local disputes and contributing to broader public and policy discourse, where APT does have a legitimate role. People: The starter position was Moderate. To stay at Moderate was broadly supported. The category description to reflect the nuance of the discussion below. • Change, churn and restructuring is the norm in APT's organisational space yet the systems leadership skills required by APT are in short supply. • Ongoing change is inherent in the work, hence in the responsibilities of the team. This will be managed in a supportive way as effectively as possible. Operational: The starter position was Open. To stay at Open was broadly supported. Cyber Security: The starter position was Moderate. The move left to Cautious or Minimal was broadly supported. The following points were made when this category was discussed. • Cyber security and digital transformation are different so the scale descriptions do not work. • It is possible to pursue digital transformation while maintaining very low cyber security risk appetite. • The appetite should move to the left and APT works from there towards the right with confidence. MR thanked all who contributed and confirmed he will work with others to draft a set of eight revised risk appetite statements, capturing the nuance from this discussion, plus an overarching statement reflecting APT's independence, its access to significant resources, and its appetite to do more in pursuit of its goals. These risk appetite statements will be a guide for trustees to use when making future decisions. They are not laws to always be followed. The revised statements will be reviewed by the FAR Committee before being brought back to the full board at the September 2026 meeting.	MR/MB
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	JL thanked MR for a thorough and very accessible, thought-provoking session.	
8	People and Resources Committee report FC reported on the People and Resources Committee meeting held the previous week, which JB had attended for the first time. The committee reviewed progress against the People Plan for the first time since its introduction and welcomed a clear, more structured process for ongoing review and assurance. Good foundations were identified, particularly around the recruitment pipeline and team development. Areas for improvement were noted, in particular the drop-off of diverse candidates through the recruitment stages and the need for greater clarity around team engagement and line management. The committee reviewed the evolving workforce plan, recognising there is still much uncertainty around future funding as we await confirmation of the significant funding likely for Place Partnership work alongside the short-term uncertainty in other funding streams. The committee is keen for the board to be kept up to date on this work as it progresses. Two policies were presented for board approval: the Sexual Harassment Policy and the EDI Policy, both subject to minor refinements agreed at People and Resources committee. IF noted that a Reasonable Adjustments Policy was also reviewed at committee but requires further work and will be presented at the next meeting. Given that virtually all of APT's work is done with external partners, it was noted that the section covering third-party harassment in the Sexual Harassment Policy was legalistic and could be worded more positively, offering support to make improvements to their policies and processes. The board approved the Sexual Harassment Policy and the EDI Policy, subject to the revisions discussed. FC reported that the committee is overall assured that the key workforce risks are registered and are being actively managed by the management team.	MB MB
9	Stakeholder Engagement Analysis KCr presented an analysis of stakeholder engagement through APT's events over the past three years. She noted this is an events-based analysis, not a comprehensive organisational stakeholder analysis. The analysis arose from a request made at the Board Away Day for APT to raise its profile, and the question it posed: with whom do you want us to raise awareness? Key findings Historically strong engagement with local authorities and traditional sector partners (sport, leisure, national governing bodies) has been maintained. However, the analysis shows a clear shift towards broader engagement across sectors: Health engagement has broadened significantly from public health alone to consistent attendance from ICBs, PCNs and social prescribers, suggesting health partners increasingly see APT as a system partner. Local authority engagement has broadened beyond leisure and public health to include planning, transport, community safety and other functions.	

	Transport and planning engagement has grown through the Active Environment Network, suggesting APT's active environments agenda is gaining traction. Environment and nature partner engagement has grown consistently, particularly through the Active Environment Network. Engagement with culturally diverse community organisations has grown but remains low in absolute terms and requires further focused effort. Education partner engagement is not great in this events data (partly due to the exclusion of our education conferences (250 attendees) to avoid skewing the figures). APT is building relationships with a small number of new advocacy partners from the education sector. Voluntary sector engagement has grown beyond the larger established charities e.g. CVSs to include smaller community-based organisations attending for peer learning and networking. APT staff attendance at events has intentionally been limited to those in the team needed to facilitate conversations. Key points raised in the discussion: • Is there value in also analysing engagement with end users and citizens as well as organisation? KCr explained that APT's awareness-raising has traditionally focused on system and community partners, on the basis that people least likely to be active are not typically following organisations with Active in their name and are better reached through trusted community intermediaries. • This is a great analysis of the organisations we are engaging with, and hopefully influencing, in our role of system leader, coordinator and convenor. Most of our partners understand the idea of system leadership but actually working that way is proving very difficult. APT plays and increasing are seen to play a valuable role in helping to make that happen. The proposed joint role with EMCCA if it goes ahead will enhance our strategic profile further. • Adult social care and children's social care are not visible in the data. GP offered help to develop this. KCr explained adult social care had been coded within health and we can break this out in future analysis. GP's offer to widen and strengthen our links into adult and children's social care was welcomed. KRC to follow up with GP. • The shift in stakeholder types, illustrated by this analysis reflects APT's evolution from a physical activity and sport organisation to one that sees active movement as part of the social infrastructure, spanning health, place making, planning and education. The next phase should involve developing tailored, targeted approaches to the different audience groups with messaging suited to their specific interests and the influence they hold. • Some questions were posed. What level of influence do event attendees have? Which groups, networks, individuals are the most important for us to influence and are we around their tables? Which are most intransigent so perhaps not worth us focusing on currently? • A useful next step would be to identify two or three individuals with genuine influence within each sector bucket and to think tactically about how to get in front of them and what the pitch would be. • SB offered a perspective on the Active Environment Network specifically: although it engages service-level managers and front-line practitioners, when	KRC/GP
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	APT engages with strategic leaders, those leaders are already primed through their own staff. KCr confirmed that developing bespoke approaches and asks for key individuals is exactly where the stakeholder planning work will move next and that she will bring a more developed stakeholder plan back to the board in due course when she will likely ask for support from trustees to open doors where they can.	KCr
10	Future Workforce Planning IF presented the workforce planning proposals, which had also been discussed at the People and Resources Committee. She noted the proposals are not a fundamental restructure but a realignment to reflect current and future funding. She took the board through the context, proposals and next steps. Context Sport England's Uniting the Movement ten-year strategy, launched in January 2021, remains in place. Sport England is currently at its midway point and is revising its priorities. APT's system partner funding from Sport England (April 2022 to March 2027) is in its final nine months. This funding is approximately £1 million per year. Place Partnership funding is a significant new investment, providing greater capacity for our place work in certain areas. We have four places in wave one (Ashfield, Derby, Erewash and Nottingham), Bassetlaw in wave two, and a total of approximately £1.6 million available per place. This is a considerable increase to our current yearly income and expenditure and the Board have discussed previously the opportunity and risk that this brings. The full award for wave one places starts 1 October 2026 and runs to March 2028. The Sport England system partner funding from April 2027 onwards remains uncertain. IF expressed confidence that funding for APT's core work will be awarded (following an application process) as a four-year funding award but as Sport England revises its strategy, there may be changes to its requirements for active partnerships and to the amount of funding APT can apply for. As yet we have no indication of the likely amount, so have been working on the assumption that it will be a similar to what we currently receive. Structural challenges being addressed Our staffing structure has been adapted since 2017 in line with new funding but there has not been any fundamental changes, despite our significant growth. The addition of Place Partnership funding and the changes coming through local government reform require us to make some changes to be able to deliver against award conditions and to be on the front foot as local government changes are made. The main structural challenges are: • Overlap between roles: system partner funded Strategic Leads who are working the equivalent of one day per week in a district, are in some cases covering the same ground as Place Partnership roles in the same area. This needs to be resolved. • Skills requirements: job descriptions need updating. The emphasis in place roles needs to shift from relational skills alone to include programme management, evaluation and impact reporting.	

- Pay benchmarking: a pay review and benchmarking exercise is proposed for the summer, against the revised job descriptions.
- Vacancy management: HR advice is to offer emerging Place Partnership roles to existing system partner funded staff whose posts are at risk. Where this creates a vacancy in a system partner role, with fewer than six months remaining, it is not possible to recruit to it. APT will therefore carry some vacancies in the final period of system partner funding, which will make delivery challenging, particularly given the relational nature of the work. This has been discussed with Sport England.

Proposed structure

The proposed structure keeps the team working in place and with districts but reorganises colleagues into four geographic clusters: Derbyshire North, Derbyshire South, Notts North and Notts South. This proactively aligns the team with the likely local government reorganisation (LGR) unitary authority structure.

MB's current role will be split into two posts from October 2026: an Operations Lead and a Finance Lead, each funded by both Place Partnership and system partner funding. Recruitment to these roles will be internal in the first instance.

Phased approach and next steps

Phase one:

- Recruit to the Operations Lead, Finance Lead and vacant Place Partnership roles by 1 October 2026. These roles will be advertised internally first, open to all, going external if no suitable internal candidate found.
- Re-align the team geographically
- Complete Place Partnership recruitment

Phase two:

- Once the system partner funding settlement is known, agree roles of current team members within the revised structure. Likely to be updated duties/JDs and titles
- Recruit to fill any vacancies to the system partner funded roles.
- Programme funded roles will also need review once clarity on future funding is available.

Proposed timetable:

- IF and KRC to hold informal one-to-ones with all staff over the summer;
- Recruit to Finance and Operations lead roles in July;
- Carry out a pay review and benchmarking July to August;
- Finalise Place Partnership recruitment, filling current vacancies and recruiting to new roles August/September;
- Review remaining gaps and revise structure and job descriptions once the financial envelope for system partner funding is known.
- Application window for system partner funding (2027 to 2031/32) is expected to be from early September to mid-October.

Key points raised in discussion:

- IF confirmed that a full financial impact analysis has not yet been done, as many roles are directly funded through the Place Partnership awards and the system partner funding settlement is as yet unknown. Phase one is progressing

	as we know we do have this funding. She confirmed a phase two financial analysis will be brought to the board alongside the phase two proposals. • During this period of uncertainty/transition are there are specific roles or teams where the risk of losing people could present a business risk? IF explained that she does not expect redundancies and that there are more vacancies than people at risk. This message has been shared to the team. However, the vacancy/role needed may not be exactly the same as their current role. • Consider using APT's reserves to bridge any gap between the end of funding and confirmation of successor funding to avoid the need to put people on notice of redundancy, in circumstances where continuation is likely. MB confirmed that the board can authorise use of reserves for this purpose. The board was supportive of this approach. The board expressed support for the overall direction and agreed that IF and the team should proceed with the phased approach as presented. IF confirmed she will bring a revised structure with fuller financial analysis to the September 2026 board meeting.	IF
11	Joint County Panel report GF reported verbally on the joint Active Derbyshire and Active Notts panel meeting held on 8 June 2026 at Parkside High CIC, just outside Ilkeston. Around 13 panel members attended. GP also added her reflections. It was the third time the Notts panel has met in a community location, with a similar record for Derbyshire. Both GF and GP reflected that meeting in community settings reinforces the purpose of the work and is energising. Four main topics were covered at the panel meeting: • EDI in the current political and community context. Discussion acknowledged the increased challenges but also noted real positivity about things happening in communities and the inroads being made in working with different groups. The panel's reflection was that it is easy to talk this agenda down, but there is much to celebrate and positive stories to share. • Stakeholder engagement analysis. KC presented the analysis, covering similar ground to the board discussion in item 9 above. • The annual review. There was a frank discussion about the purpose and value of the document. The conclusion was that it remains worth doing, and the group discussed how best to use it to reach the widest possible audience and generate interest in APT's work. • Panel member experience. Discussion explored what panel members are getting out of their membership and what more they would like from it. GF's personal reflection was that visiting community settings reinforces that APT is investing in people in a place rather than just places, and that there remains much to do in areas not yet at the stage of somewhere like Parkside High. GP echoed this and highlighted the credibility and pulling power of community leaders in their local areas. JL confirmed that the intention is to hold joint panel meetings approximately once a year.	
12	APT Environmental Sustainability Statement and Action Plan	

	MB tabled the updated Environmental Sustainability Action Plan for the board's information. This is the second version of the plan, developed with reference to Sport England's own environmental sustainability plan, APT's internal sustainability working group and Adam Hill (board champion for environmental sustainability), who has also reviewed the document. The plan has been shared with Sport England's relevant lead, who responded positively commenting on the clarity of the actions. MB confirmed that APT will not achieve everything in the plan, but these are the actions it will work towards. The accompanying APT Environmental Sustainability statement is more forceful in its language than the previous version. MB asked if board members had any comments on the statement to feedback to her.	All
13	AOB Board member profiles MB noted that Rachel Burton Dyer, who leads on the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan work, is producing a series of social media features on board members. The first, featuring GC, has already been prepared. The content draws on information already publicly available on the APT website. MB asked board members to notify her if they are not comfortable being featured. Safeguarding training MB noted that one of APT's requirements for Sport England system partner funding is to ensure the board has safeguarding training. This has not been delivered which has not been done for some time. Given the number of new board members, it is timely to address this. Previous sessions delivered by NSPCC and the Ann Craft Trust have not always landed well as they have been very sport club/NGB focused. Options to be explored include individual online sessions, a group online session, or a combination of the two with a subsequent discussion. JL noted the importance of the discussion element, particularly around how safeguarding obligations apply to APT's commissioned work and the organisations it funds. It was agreed that MB, GF (as board safeguarding champion) and IF will meet to identify the most appropriate format and provider for board safeguarding training, taking into account suggestions from board members.	All MB/IF/ GF
	Dates of future meetings 17 September 2026, 17:00-19:45, Jubilee Conference Centre, Nottingham 9 December 2026, 17:00-19:45, Dryden Enterprise Centre, Nottingham 16 March 2027, 17:00-19:45, Northern Gateway, Chesterfield	