

Amateur Swimming Association (Swim England) Limited Board Minutes

Tuesday 11 December 2018

SportPark, Loughborough

Present:

Mike Farrar (Chair. Present until item 10.3)

Keith Ashton

Neil Booth

Ali Breadon

David Flack

Caroline Green

Brian Havill

Ian Mackenzie

Jane Nickerson

Bernard Simkins

Sarah Gregory

Officers in attendance:

Siân Breen - Senior Administration Officer

Mike Thompson – Chief Commercial and Marketing Officer (Item 9 only)

Marie Cooper – Head of People Development (Item 12 only)

Min No:

1. **Welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies**
Sue Smith and Richard Barnes
3. **Declarations of interest**
None declared.
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Amateur Swimming Association (Swim England) Limited**
 - 4.1 **Meeting held 11 September 2018**
The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
 - 4.2 **Meeting held 13 October 2018**
The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
5. **Actions arising from the meeting held on 11 September 2018**

Min 7: Office 365 found to be prohibitively expensive. Free system trialed for the Board papers was well received.

Min 10.1: The Remcom terms of reference were formally accepted.

Min 10.3: Members of the Commercial Working Group to be included in Charity training whenever organised for Board members.

6. **Confirmation of decisions made by email**
None

7. **Chairman's report**

7.1 **General report**

The Chairman drew attention to the £192,500 awarded to Artistic Swimming from the government's Aspiration fund since the composition of the report.

Website content was discussed and JMN explained that all published articles were being reviewed.

7.2 **Reflections and thoughts on the AGM / Council**

Opinion from the Regional Chairs was being sought, including the agreement to hold the event in May/June from 2020. If this was accepted, it would imply that the President inaugurated in October 2019 will consequently have an extended term.

The demographic of attendees was discussed and it was considered that a shorter event may be more attractive to younger members. The importance of increasing the diversity of those in governance positions was agreed and there was consideration of how this could be built into the Swim England standards.

7.3 **Water Polo**

The Board agreed to work on improving the overall relationship with the sport and improving transparency of Swim England's commitment to Water Polo was seen as crucial to helping the relationship move forward.

Action: NB and EG to explore the potential of discipline summits to ensure there are clear channels to raise concerns.

It was noted that funds had been secured to enable training in Manchester for all the teams but sustainability challenges remained, with all international competition parent-funded.

8. **CEO's report**

8.1 **General report**

Detail was provided on updates subsequent to the completion of the report:

- Brexit: minimal impact expected with any transfer of data overseas being in line with guidance, on which a paper can be circulated on request. Swim England currently employ few EU staff but communication is taking place with clubs to ensure understanding of any potential effect on EU coaches.
- Sport and Recreation Alliance: Chief Executive set to leave in March and the CEO noted the fantastic work accomplished.
- Sport England meeting: all KPIs green and stretch targets to be added. It was noted that achieving these would impact positively on future discussions. Two meetings per year to be held on core and mass and George Wood (GW - Sport Development Director) also pushed for a Talent meeting.
- Meeting with Tim Hollingsworth (new Sport England Chief Executive): demonstrated a willingness to determine how sport can support other agendas, such as health, with the appropriate reimbursement.
- Active Lives Children: the survey emphasised that although there has been success at Learn to Swim level, work is still required to guarantee an offer for children that do not engage with the club network. Operators will need to be involved with this.

- Restructuring within Swim England: Alison Clowes (Head of Media and Public Affairs) leaving at the end of March 2019 and the new recruit will report into Emma Griffin (EG, Operations Director). The Facilities team will move from EG to Damian Stevenson (Director of Insight) in January.

Further detail was also provided on the following items within the report:

- Swim Group: pushing for three strands of focus. Facility provision, health and wellbeing, curriculum swimming and extended swimming offer for primary school children.
- British Swimming/Home Countries Partnership:
Action: NB to liaise with EG regarding individuals for international influence roles.

8.1.2 It was noted KPI reporting would be slightly more complicated given Swim England's end of year was now different to Sport England. The CEO explained the red status on the para-swimming measures was a direct result of the change to the classification system, which had led to a shortage in the number of appropriately trained classifiers. Sport England are aware of this issue.

8.1.2 The Board asked whether action taken to secure contracts for the training of swimming teachers and coaches was likely to combat the loss of operators to competition. The current position with larger operators and the need to focus on the small businesses was outlined. The Board requested updates on the position at future meetings.

8.2 **Property update**

MF thanked the CEO for her work on extending the buy-back clause with the university.

The CFO explained that the long term loan could be refinanced and it was agreed to ascertain whether the deal would be better if the loan was kept in the old company or transferred to the new company.

Confirmation was provided that the Trustees were protected (in the event that SportPark was kept in the old company) as the bank has first charge on SportPark and all current accounts. The individuals are being kept up to date of the current position and were comfortable with the action being taken.

After discussion the Board agreed to the following action:

- Negotiate new banking arrangements using both company scenarios. The board accepted that the risks associated with the process were relatively low on the day of decision.
- Determine the transfer value of the lease to the new company taking into consideration dilapidation costs. Timing to depend on banking arrangements.
- Determine transfer date to the new company either immediately or at March 2021 (subject to banking arrangements). It was agreed that a transfer would not be desirable before the book value reached the buyback less dilapidation value, unless an outstanding deal was offered by a bank.
- Continue to source alternative premises to further inform the value of the building and to ascertain if better options are available.

The CFO confirmed that where accounts existed in the old company they would need formal review and agreement annually. An ACM and AGM would therefore be required until such point as the old entity was fully shut down.

8.3 **Container pools**

The CEO explained that attaining partners for the full programme would involve a great deal of work and thus support of the Board was necessary before this was undertaken.

KA provided caution on costings, highlighting the need for utility connections and the requirement for building and planning permission.

Commercial prospects were discussed and the Board agreed the purchase as outlined in the paper in principle, subject to further due diligence on the build and securing partnerships to run the programme etc.

Action: Jon Glenn to work with the Facilities Working Group on the due diligence.

9. **Committee/Working Group Reports**

9.1 **Commercial Working Group**

BS explained that Membership had been a major discussion, with an update from GW. Lesley Hill (Strategic Partnerships) also delivered an excellent presentation.

9.2 **Swimming Times**

The current position of the magazine was summarised, with no decrease in losses despite the change from 12 to six issues annually. The desire from readers to access instant, digital information combined with results from the Institute of Swimming member's survey (the magazine was seen as the least important benefit of membership) highlighted that ending print of the magazine would be the best commercial, and environmental, decision. IM confirmed that this decision was unanimously supported by the Institute of Swimming Board.

The impact of closure on people resource and subscriptions was discussed and overall effect on the budget was outlined.

The Board agreed to support the change to digital.

9.3 **Events and Sponsorship**

Confirmation was provided that individual events had specific budgets. No profit is generated as national level events are held at the most expensive pools in the country and the level of presentation, raised when Swim England had a major sponsor, has been maintained.

9.4 **Sport Operations Committee**

NB introduced the minutes from the latest meeting, explaining that the review of the Certificate of Swimming Disability had arisen out of a trans-gender case. A paper will be prepared in conjunction with the medical officer and reported to the Board as necessary.

The Board agreed to the proposal to change the relevant regulation in order to discontinue the Long Service Awards in their present state. NB stated that Claire Coleman (Head of Volunteering and Pathways) would be looking at reward and recognition for volunteers.

Action: EG to confirm whether SGB representatives on discipline management committees had been contacted to thank them for their service in these roles.

A question was raised on the introduction of high diving to the Olympics and the stance of British Swimming, to convert existing platform divers – thus involving older athletes, was noted. Swim England are producing a CPD for coaches approved by

British Swimming. Dennis Freeman-Wright (Head of Facilities) will be completing a document relating to Health and Safety in high diving.

9.5 **Institute of Swimming**

IM provided the following updates from the subsidiary:

- Competition being seen as a major threat, with focused action to counteract.
- Staffing review created a more efficient and focused team.
- New website set for launch in January.
- 2019 budget includes a planned increase in membership of 100 every month.
- Wales will be running their own courses in 2019 and will need to either buy course material from the Institute of Swimming or write their own.
- Great interest generated in the pilot teacher recruitment academy.

9.6 **Swim England Trading**

An awards sales project is ongoing to determine the operators not making the requisite sales to achieve pre-agreed discount.

The budget for 2019 was expected to be challenging and risk would be monitored throughout the year to manage this. The warehouse would be involved with the distribution and storage of Swim Safe kit and a digital app for Learn to Swim was planned for promotion in May.

DF emphasised the superb business model which brought in 3 million pounds annually.

9.7 **ARP**

The 2019 budget was reviewed in detail before EG joined the meeting to present on the Operations department, focusing on Health and Safety with a brief review of insurance cover.

Changes to the code of corporate governance will be picked up by the committee and the ToR will be reviewed again with this in mind.

AB also updated the Board on the position of Swim England Qualifications (SEQs) whereby further work is required to ensure the quality systems are in place to be fully compliant with OFQUAL. Further assistance may be requested from the consultant SEQs are working with on apprenticeships.

9.8 **Partnerships Group**

Work has been undertaken on Awards sales to improve reporting, enabling better management of customers and easy assessment against targets. Engagement with the cities that make up CLOA, the core cities partnership, is also ongoing.

10. **CFO's report**

10.1 **September management accounts**

The CFO noted that October management accounts had been completed and contained nothing hugely different to the information in the September accounts.

Underspend on Sport England funding was explained as a consequence of delayed replacement of staff and project phasing, meaning the allocation would be spent later in the cycle.

10.2 **Forecast to December 2019**

The Institute of Swimming is expected to have a favourable final three months of 2018, thus decreasing the end of year variable from the September figure.

Conversely Swim England Trading will be incurring costs causing the variance to increase.

10.3 2019 budget

The CFO stated that the higher loss figure compared to the 2018 budget was not a major concern given the level of reserves and the history of underspending in certain areas. The aim for the reserves was explained – to put Swim England in a position at the time of the 2021 budget where the reserves would be enough to continue supporting programmes lacking confirmation on continued Sport England funding. This in turn would facilitate a managed plan to any changes.

The Board agreed that the budget would be accepted, following the amendments required as a result of the decision on Swimming Times.

Chairing of the meeting was passed to Caroline Green at this point.

10.4 Longer term planning

The paper was noted with agreement that, given the size of the subject, a session would be required for review. It was agreed any discussion on the contribution to British Swimming would be led by MF given that JMN was on the British Swimming Board.

The CFO explained his view that the next strategic plan would be led by a review of the current plan, in conjunction with assessment of the subsidiary companies and membership income.

11. Advanced Equality Standard

11.1 Panel meeting update

The Sports Council Equality Group were impressed with the honesty of the submission and the intended future position. Work will continue in this area to ensure it is automatically part of everything done by the organisation, not an 'add on'.

Contact has been made by other sports for advice and a workshop will consequently be ran to provide insight on the work undertaken.

12. Induction Programme

12.1 People Development

The Head of People Development introduced her team's structure, purpose and the ways in which they support the organisation. The commitment to internal recruitment was explained, highlighting how this enables progression, development and better skilled employees. The comparatively low staff turnover of 1.5% over nine months was noted, along with the investigations into this. The geographical spread of employees was outlined and it was noted that there are more homebased staff than ever before.

The team were very proud of the results from the 2018 staff survey, which achieved a 93% response rate and green markers in every area for the first time in eight years.

Other highlights of 2018 were introduced, as were the key projects for 2019.

The development of a people matrix, containing statistics on diversity, turnover and formal cases was discussed and it was agreed that this would be beneficial for consideration by ARP.

Following a question from the Board on sickness levels it was noted that, although this is below national average, the difference between SportPark and homebased figures demonstrates a need for further analysis.

The competency framework was explained, aimed at creating a clearer pay structure, bringing together the expected behaviour, knowledge and skills of each position. Training is expected to be required in certain areas to ensure consistency across the levels.

13. **Any other business**

In relation to a mention of safeguarding within the Chairman's report it was noted that an annual report is delivered to the Board on this matter.

14. **Dates of future meetings**

Wednesday 30 January 2019

Tuesday 26 March 2019

Tuesday 21 May 2019

Tuesday 23 July 2019

Tuesday 10 September 2019

Tuesday 10 December 2019