

# Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group

Minutes of the Meeting held 20 November 2019, SportPark, Loughborough

**Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting**

**Present:** Ian Mackenzie - IM (Interim Chair)

**Staff:** Andy Fuller - AF (Water Polo Development Manager)  
Norman Leighton - NL (Water Polo Talent Officer)  
Siân Breen - SB (Senior Administration Officer)

1. **Introductions and Apologies**

2. **Chair's Welcome**

IM confirmed that an advert had been released for a new Chair of the Leadership Group. The closing date for applications is Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December and interviews are due to be held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

The resignation of Ian Elliot, Sarah Dunsbee and Eamonn O'Rourke was noted and IM thanked them for their service and their contributions to the Water Polo community over several years.

It was noted that although the meeting was not quorate, the minutes would be issued to SOC for ratification.

3. **Minutes from meeting held 11 June 2019**

No queries were raised and the Terms of Reference were adopted.

4. **Actions and matters arising**

It was agreed that progress on many of the matters arising were now dependant on the work being undertaken by the consultant David Meli.

The apprenticeship programme is considered to currently be running at capacity with 26 individuals. Geographical spread of these individuals was considered, given that financial contribution may be requested from the Regions as we look to move to a new model.

5. **General update**

IM thanked NL and AF for their hard work over the past year and noted how the community was looking to take the sport forward. The work being undertaken with David Meli will help enable this and the upcoming regional meetings are a perfect opportunity to discuss positive change.

The online calendar is being updated to be searchable. AF and Nicola Ross (NR - England Talent & World Class Admin) will be undertaking training to ensure the new version can be constantly updated.

NL explained that although coaching standards were available to access online, there was great variation in levels across clubs. Utilisation of the Coaching and Teaching register was proposed a way to ensure all Water Polo coaches were aware of where the standards could be accessed.

**ACTION 1:** AF to liaise with Lisa Berry (Programme Manager – Clubs Team) to obtain water polo coach information.

**ACTION 2:** AF to ensure that Swim England Board directors are invited to Water Polo Events.

## 6. **Talent Development Officer update**

Updates were provided on:

- Regional Academies through to National Academy.
- National Academy staffing: potential new Assistant Coaches have been observed at NAGs. These individuals have excellent credence having competed at international level.
- Academy 03 squads: a large number of the squad's players took part in an ESSA funded trip to compete in the Szentes tournament – a world class venue, with a good level of competition.
- Entry to the EU Nations to be signed off and the deposit paid by Swim England for the 03 and U19 squads.

**ACTION 3:** NL to confirm entries with the EU Nations

- Wider support: testing protocols for players being advanced to become more objective skills tests.
- U19 squads: due to the number of team entries the girls will not have to complete a qualification tournament for the EU nations.
- Senior Squads: there was discussion on the vacant head coach position and a process was agreed to assess the suitability of Nick Buller.

A paper was also presented on 'The Sports Office' Software. NL outlined that the system is utilised by football premier league and premier rugby union teams as a 'one stop shop' for all player and coach information and statistics. The 03 players are currently undertaking user testing and the company's support team have been very efficient in responding to and resolving queries that have arisen. The quoted price for the package would remain the same regardless of any increase in the number of players using the system, ensuring it could be a key component for the national programme. It will enable player tracking from National Programme entry through to senior level, providing long term data for comparison going forward. NL identified Data protection on the system has historically been assessed with the IT department and a new contract is with Swim England legal for review, in conjunction with IT. It is hoped that full roll out of to the rest of the national squads will take place in January. NL and NR will have administration access, with Coaches only able to retrieve their squad's data. It was noted that further discussions will be needed with individuals outside England – such as Great Britain coaches – and user agreement contracts may be required.

It was agreed that the proposal should be undertaken subject to agreement from IT and Legal

7. **Development Manager update**

AF provided further detail on the following:

- **START Grants:** those received in 2019 were graded on a traffic light system by a committee including AF, the National Masters and Open Water Officer and the National Synchronised Swimming Development Officer. The process has highlighted the need for a club education programme to demonstrate how they can generate funding from other sources. The next START iteration will launch in early 2020, with standardised application forms across the disciplines to enable consistent reporting.
- **BUCS Grants:** positive relationships have been built with BUCS and universities and the process has been very efficient. This will, however, change next year as there will be a more specific focus on workforce.
- **Collegiate Tyre Polo:** hats have been purchased for this programme and will be managed by the Swim England Events Team. The quote for inner tubes from a Canadian company leaves sufficient budget for pool hire and college support. It is intended that the tubes would be located at a facility provider, to be utilised by colleges in the proximity. An initial pilot is required to assess the potential market and discussion will take place with AOC Sport to establish the most appropriate time to roll this out.

8. **National Age Group update**

The U15 NAGs in Sunderland were celebrated as being a fantastic event, with two superb matches finishing both days. The work of Rhiannon Williams, supported by Sophie Byrne, from Swim England Events was commended

The majority of facilities have been booked for 2020 and details will be released as soon as the final arrangements are confirmed. It was suggested that once the Leadership Group is up to its full complement, venues should be booked potentially up to three years in advance.

Delivery of the inter region competition was discussed and it was agreed that clarity was required on the purpose of the competition, its ownership and delivery. The Group considered that this could be raised at the upcoming regional meetings with David Meli and NL highlighted the competition benefits in providing a good filtering system for national squads.

9. **National Academy – where are we?**

A paper was presented on the 2020 National Academy Training Programme and Eger, Hungary was agreed as the most suitable location. Full price information will be obtained then provided to parents prior to booking in January. This will enable the commencement of payment instalments a good deal prior to the event.

10. **National Programme – where are we?**

Covered under item 6.

11. **Outcome of 2019 Budget & Development plans**

Reviewing the figures, the budget will be fully utilised for 2019. The surplus from the squads budget will be used to pay the deposit for the EU Nations event, which needs paying before the year end.

12. **2020 Budget & Development Plan**

AF outlined the three main areas of expenditure and the areas covered by these:

- Talent – including Manchester facilities
- Leadership Group
- Development

It was considered that membership income was, as a minimum, invested back into the sport, with further analysis required to establish whether the discipline is actually a loss leader. The inclusion of staffing costs would likely take the Swim England monetary input to quarter of a million pounds.

ACTION 4: AF to review current squad expenditure.

13. **International Transfer update**

AF stated that all possible steps have been taken to mitigate the risk against the organisation with regards to the International Transfer Process (ITP). At point of joining and renewal individuals are now required to declare that the ITP Guidance has been read and understood. LEN will be informed that the process and policy is in place.

There was discussion on the complications involved with fines to British Swimming and it was noted that this can depend on how the offence is framed. The matter will be an item for discussion at the Home Nations Water Polo meeting taking place at the end of November.

14. **Judicial cases**

A number of confidential items were discussed and it was confirmed that, with regards to outstanding debt, it was for the company to decide what action was necessary.

ACTION 5: AF to liaise with Brian Havill (CEO) regarding outstanding debts to clarify the position.

15. **Website**

Discussed in previous agenda item.

16. **Any other business**

No matters raised.

17. **Meeting dates for 2020 – 29th January; 28th April; 8th July; 6th October**