

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 16 March 2021, via Zoom

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:

Neil Booth (NB)	Chairman
Joan Wheeler (JW)	Swim England Board Member
Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Swim England Member
Jim Boucher (JB)	Swim England Member
Pippa Jones (PJ)	Swim England Member
Alex Harrison (AH)	Swim England Member
John Hidle (JH)	Regional Chairs Representative
George Wood (GW)	Sports Development Director
Jon Glenn (JG)	Learn to Swim and Workforce Director
Rebecca Cox (BC)	Swim England Business Engagement Director & Institute of Swimming Managing Director

Staff: Ali Sibcy-Allen (AS-A) Operations Administration Manager

Invited:

Ben Gregory (BG)	Chair of Youth Advisory Panel
Gaby Hay	Head of Membership Development
Ekaterina Boyd (EB)	Head of Events
Claire Coleman (CC)	Head of Development
Jodie Adams (JA)	Senior Engagement Manager

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairman's welcome

The Chair welcomed all members, introducing Rebecca Cox to the committee.

1.2 Apologies

Emma Griffin (MARCOMS and Operations Director)

1.3 Declarations of Interest

None recorded.

1.4 Declarations of AoB

1.4.1 None recorded.

1.5 Actions from previous meetings

1.5.1 3.2 Para Swimming classification: Swim England are working with British Swimming to progress and create an action plan.

1.5.2 Further details of membership income were provided to advise that worst-case predictions had been surpassed. It is hoped that there will be further Cat 2 conversions as pools open and Level X competition for swimming returns and is implemented for other disciplines.

1.6 Leadership Group Updates

Club: Associate group set up to review the model constitution. This is a considerable piece of work to ensure it is fit for purpose now and futureproof.

Artistic Swimming: Group administration is now understood and dates for 2021 meetings have been confirmed. The duet is preparing well for Tokyo and several judges have been involved in FINA competitions.

Water Polo: Keen to establish implementation plan for 2021 and 2022, GW to follow up pro-forma document with CC. Regional Manager meeting to be held in addition to scheduled WPLG meetings. Increased communication from SE to squads has been well received, even though the situation with pools closed is disappointing. BWP Championships expected to be held in Cheltenham in July.

Action: GW to follow up pro-forma implementation plan document with CC.

Diving: Group have three members coming to the end of their tenure. Agreement that it would be best to stagger departures to enable adequate handovers. Noted that TORs allow for a transition period and actively managing this would be best for the sport.

Swimming: Competition has been the huge focus of recent meetings and work. Meeting to be held following DCMS update to review plan for holding regional and club competitions during the summer. Weekly online engagement sessions are being held by the talent team for members.

YAP: Focus of upcoming meeting will be retention of athletes and barriers to this. Panel recruitment is being delayed to identify skill sets and enable recruitment to fit needs.

2. Items for Decision

2.1 Harold Fern and A.H. Turner Award Winners

Following a ballot, the committee determined the nominations to be submitted to the SE Board for confirmation.

Action: NB to submit names for confirmation

2.2 Developing Aquatics around Birmingham 2022

Jodi Adams was introduced to the meeting, providing an overview of the background of the Birmingham 2022 development plan and associated activity.

The plan has been in development for 18-24 months and is based around the aquatics centre being built for the Games and working with local partners. The aim is to look at opportunities and enhancing relationships while improving aquatic provision in the area. Work is being completed alongside the local council and facility operator, incorporating their aspirations, ideas and legacy plans.

Further information on the six key objectives were highlighted, identifying how SE's role will predominantly be that of guidance and support, helping the operator meet the needs of clubs and the local community. SE will use the strategy to align with local partner goals and available opportunities.

The legacy of Manchester 2002 was discussed along with the lessons that can be learned. Further clarifications were provided on elements of the report and the importance of relating activity to young people.

Consensus was given in supporting the objectives and progressing the plan to the next stage.

2.3 **Virtual Awards 2021**

Ekaterina Boyd was welcomed to the meeting.

Details of work completed to date were provided and attention drawn to the proposed categories. It was advised these categories were selected to meet the needs of the current climate and reflect previous years.

Agreement was given that the categories are appropriate.

The next step will be to review timescales for delivery and the format for the presentation of awards.

Action: EB to return to future meeting to provide further details of the awards.

3. **Items for Discussion**

3.1 **TOR Review**

The key amendments to the TOR were outlined, specifically the addition of Rebecca Cox and Ben Gregory to the committee membership while Emma Griffin would no longer be a committee member.

The SOC membership were comfortable with the committee membership changes.

Conversation moved to discuss the frequency of the meetings with a number of suggestions tabled. It was suggested an annual timetable is to be put together for meeting contents to include invitations to Leadership Group chairs as well as standing items. NB to develop and circulate.

Action: NB to develop annual timetable and circulate to SOC members.

4. **Items to Note**

4.1 **Open water membership update**

Gaby Hay was introduced to the meeting to talk through the open water proposition.

As a result of the pandemic, the organisation's membership plans had altered to survival with the priority focus being the retention of members. As part of the recovery, and re-emergence, of SE there is a need to diversify for growth with open water a market that has seen considerable growth over a number of years, especially during 2020.

The overall membership look and feel has been refreshed, with the website landing page being clearer and, for open water, currently geared around gaining data to enable communication.

The importance of recognising that SE have not been a prominent figure in open water swimming thus far was highlighted along with how this influences the approach to be taken. A significant amount of research has been undertaken both internally and by partners which will hopefully help to ensure the marketing is appropriate for the target audience.

The MARCOMS timeline for the launch of the proposition was detailed with the approach and dates outlined.

The inclusion of young people was confirmed to be part of phase two of the project and the currently signposting available on the website was noted.

The cost of the development of the proposition was queried as, while there are minimal additional costs, the outlay of staff time should be considered within this. It was advised the main priority of the project will be data collection as this could open potential valuable opportunities. It was also noted that it is expected that addressing Open Water will be a key area in the next bid for Sport England funding.

4.2 **Competition Re-emergence**

Swimming: Series two of Level X will resume for all strokes from 12 April through to 23 July. Infrastructure is in place to extend programme after July. Mindful of different training restart dates for members over and under 18 years.

Water Polo: Level X separated into over and under 18 years. Competition starts 12 April and will be skills based within club training environment. Points attributed to skills and best team score submitted. Monthly and weekly leader boards to enable clubs to join as they gain water access.

Artistic Swimming: Level X will restart on 17 May for all age groups. Will be based on grading system with coaches determining the grade the swimmer enters at. Leader boards will be done on a monthly basis until August.

Diving: Phase one of the dryland Level X Games is drawing to a close. Series two dryland will start on 1 April with new skills and will run until June when it will be replaced by pool based competition.

Webinars will be held for each discipline prior to their Level X series to explain the concept.

Details of the roadmap have been communicated along with hoped timescales for returning to competition. It was noted that all disciplines have differing return to competition dates and there is likely to be a mix of face-to-face and virtual competitions across the disciplines.

4.3 **Stronger affiliation summary**

Currently 25 clubs who have not completed the requirements. Clubs have been notified of likely suspensions following the CLG meeting at the end of March and the action being taken by Regions.

As year one is drawing to a close, plans for year two are now starting to be considered with this to be discussed at the CLG meeting.

The importance of supporting displaced members from suspended clubs in finding new opportunities was highlighted. It is anticipated up to 1300 SE members could be affected.

5. **AOB**

5.1 Membership: Following on from the recent communications to members detailing the benefits they are receiving it was questioned as to whether the membership structure should be reconsidered. The rationale provided highlighted the need to support all disciplines, while also noting that some members receive significantly

more for their membership than others based on their progress up the talent pathway.

It was suggested that the membership offers could be tailored to reflect participation level and cover from entry level upwards. Restructuring the fees could also enable less reliance on claiming grants and funding as well as reducing the funding gaps in some disciplines.

SOC members supported the view and requested that the SE Board representatives to propose the review to the Board.

Action: NB and JW to raise with the SE Board

- 5.2 International Permits: Current work on the Team Manager 2 course has identified an updating issue with the International Permits form with details not being updated. It was requested that SOC supported the review and update of this form, which was agreed. NB will liaise with Emma Langham to make the amendments.

Action: NB to liaise with EL to make amendments.

6. 2021 Meeting Dates

- Tuesday 13 April subject to confirmation
- Tuesday 18 May
- Tuesday 13 July
- Tuesday 14 September
- Tuesday 16 November