

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 19 January 2021, via Zoom

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:	Neil Booth Joan Wheeler (JW) Ian Mackenzie (IM) Alex Harrison (AH) Jim Boucher (JB) Pippa Jones (PJ) John Hidle (JH) George Wood (GW) Jon Glenn (JG)	Chairman Swim England Board Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Regional Chairs Representative Sports Development Director Learn to Swim and Workforce Director
Staff:	Ali Sibcy-Allen (AS-A)	Operations Administration Manager
Invited:	Ben Gregory (BG) Kate Rudkin (KR)	Chair of Youth Advisory Panel Head of Communications and Partner Activation

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairman's welcome

The Chair welcomed all members.

1.2 Apologies

Emma Griffin (MARCOMS and Operations Director)

1.3 Declarations of Interest

None

1.4 Declarations of AoB

Jon Glenn – O/W

1.5 Minutes from previous meetings:

1.5.1 17 November 2020: The minutes were accepted.

1.5.2 15 December 2020: The minutes were accepted.

1.6 Actions from previous meetings

1.6.1 Financial Impact of SE Events: Discipline Leadership Groups are continuing to look at delivery until September and from September. Aspirations had slipped due to the latest lockdown. Agreed to leave on actions to review progress made.

1.6.2 Para swimming classification: Postponed until February meeting.

1.6.3 Reopening of pools: Geographical information will be sent when pools start to reopen and the information is current and available.

1.6.4 Membership information: An update on membership numbers will be circulated based upon the level of information agreed by the Board.

1.7 Leadership Group Updates

Club: Concentrating on the Stronger Affiliation process as well as advancing work on common affiliation process, to agree a standardised process across all Regions. Work is ongoing to finalise the club merger documentation for Regional Chair agreement. Requested for club merger documentation to be chased up.

Action: NB to chase up club merger documentation

Artistic Swimming: The format for Level X competitions has been defined and approved. Guidelines for completing virtual grade testing have been considered. There was disappointment expressed at the UK Sport funding decision.

Swimming: All return to competition is on hold. The TORs for the Master's working group required more work and an updated version is due to be presented at the next meeting.

Water Polo: The group chair has added an annual report to the hub and the leadership group are having monthly meetings. The Coaching Lead for the group has changed. A lot of activity is happening to develop the sport.

2. Items for Decision

2.1 Sport Operations Committee - TOR Review

Following the initial review of the TOR's it was agreed that they are still fit for purpose following some small amends.

It was proposed that Becky Cox (Business Engagement Director and IOS Managing Director) is invited to sit on SOC based on her role now incorporating the team engaging with operators and Local Authorities and also enables a crossover with teaching and coaching.

Action: NB to liaise with BC and propose the idea

Additional notable changes include enabling the formation of subgroups to complete project work and the inclusion of a representative from the YAP.

Following a final review, the TORs are to be circulated to SOC members for agreement before being presented to the Board for ratification.

Action: NB to review and circulate TORs to SOC before requesting Board agreement

2.2 Leadership Group TORs Review

The format and content of the Leadership Group TORs was deemed to be appropriate and are to be discussed with the Leadership Groups.

Action: NB to liaise with Leadership Group Chairs

2.3 Role of SOC Liaison to Leadership Groups

As an introduction it was noted that the Swim England members of SOC were recruited based on their knowledge of the processes and pathways within the organisation and were not allocated to Leadership Groups based upon their knowledge of the individual discipline but to provide governance guidance, ensure

the groups were on track and to provide a link between SOC and the Leadership Group.

An extensive discussion continued to consider the role and allocation of the liaisons and the interaction with the group chairs. It was agreed that a discussion on the role should be held with the Leadership Group chairs to determine the overarching requirements of it, following which the next steps would be determined.

As a starting point for the discussions, all SOC members were requested to review the role description and submit proposed amends by Tuesday 26 January with consideration to be given to how to make the relationship more productive and ensure people are comfortable with the roles.

Action: SOC members to review the Discipline Leadership Group Liaison role description and feedback to NB by 26 January

2.4 **Volunteer expenses offer**

A reminder that the review occurred due to the overspend at national events and the current financial position making this unviable. The policy has focussed on volunteer costs initially and refers to travel costs, accommodation, subsistence and how claims should be made.

It was agreed that that there would need to be some degree of flexibility within the policy but that this would be in exceptional circumstances following discussions with meet organisers. It was further advised that the current situation is likely to impact on some of the proposals in the short term.

The policy was agreed by SOC members, with the next steps for the policy to be passed through the required internal procedures before being revisited by SOC following this process.

Action: NB to progress

2.5 **Health and Safety Forum**

The background of the forum was presented and how this had changed since formation. It was proposed that a working group is formed to review the composition of the group along with their function. Richard Barnes (Director of Legal) and Richard Lamburn (Head of Facilities) will be invited to sit on the group, alongside AH, JH, NB and GW from SOC.

3. **Items for Discussion**

3.1 **Views on the role of Chair**

No responses received

3.2 **Aquatics competitions in school / exam time**

Following the advice from the SLG to avoid scheduling competitions during school time a discussion ensued to consider whether all disciplines should follow the same guidance and provide consistency across the NGB.

It was agreed that as the NGB guidance should be provided to all disciplines to request the avoidance of competitions during the week, and specifically examination periods, where possible.

Action: AH to look at guidance wording and circulate to SOC members

4. **Items to Note**

4.1 **Membership Progress**

Kate Rudkin (Head of Communications and Partnership Activation) was introduced to the meeting to provide an update and the comms and marketing activity deployed to support both clubs and the membership team through the renewals process.

The aim of the campaign is to ensure members know what has been delivered during 2020 as well as the importance of their membership. The key phases of the campaign were highlighted alongside example content for each. It was noted that in addition a toolkit has been created for clubs to support their efforts during this time.

There was agreement that there is a pressure to demonstrate the value of being a Cat 2 member at present. Highlighting the additional benefits of being a Cat 2, including the ability to compete in Level X across all disciplines, will be key, alongside exclusive content.

It is anticipated that initial 2021 membership figures will be known from the end of February and will be presented in the first instance to the Board with further information provided in due course.

4.2 **Stronger Affiliation**

Out of the initial 419 clubs needing to complete the process, 405 have engaged, 328 have completed and 36 have told us they will fold. There are 55 clubs currently outstanding, impacting 3,663 members, with 15 clubs having not responded to attempts to engage.

It was acknowledged that members of the clubs who do not engage will be contacted directly and advised of the situation while also being supplied with the details, and support, to find an alternative club if desired.

4.3 **UK Sport Funding Awards**

While the funding decisions from UK Sport for Artistic Swimming and Water Polo were extremely disappointing the feedback received was more positive and provides a platform for further discussions on accessing funding.

The Artistic Swimming programme received some additional funding to support the Duet's Olympic attendance and the remainder of 2021.

5. **AOB**

5.1 OW initiatives: Following the spike in OW during 2020, and the projected continuance of this, there is an opportunity to review the market with discussions ongoing with the RLSS, BTF and NOWCA. Further information will be provided at the next SOC meeting.

Action: Add OW to the February agenda, Gaby Hay to be invited to present

6. **2021 Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday 9 February
- Tuesday 16 March
- Tuesday 13 April
- Tuesday 18 May
- Tuesday 13 July
- Tuesday 14 September

- Tuesday 16 November