

# Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 14 September 2021, via Zoom

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

**Present:**

Neil Booth	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
John Hidle (JH)	Regional Chairs Representative
Ben Gregory (BG)	Chair of Youth Advisory Panel
George Wood (GW)	Sports Development Director
Jon Glenn (JG)	Learn to Swim and Workforce Director
Rebecca Cox (RC)	Swim England Business Engagement Director & Institute of Swimming Managing Director

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

**Invited:**

**Min No:**

**1. Standing Items**

**1.1 Chairman's welcome**

The Chair welcomed all members.

**1.2 Apologies**

Alex Harrison (received post meeting - engaged in a workplace incident at the time)

**1.3 Declarations of Interest**

None recorded

**1.4 Minutes from previous meetings:**

1.4.1 13 July 2021: The minutes were accepted.

An update was provided on the inclusion panel and the next steps relating to governance. A focus group is meeting frequently to monitor progress with the plan to be brought to the November meeting.

Following the presentation on the proposed changes to the membership structure, Gaby Hay is to be asked to provide an update for the November meeting. The updated presentation was requested to be circulated.

**Action: Gaby Hay to be asked for membership structure proposal update.**

**Action: Updated membership presentation to be circulated.**

## 1.5 **Actions from previous meetings**

- 1.5.1 1.5.1 – Leadership Group Roles and TORs: Documents have been tweaked and are with Claire Coleman for review before circulation to liaison officers and Leadership Groups.
- 1.5.2 Volunteer expenses at national events: policy review was accepted at Board. Consideration now being given to extending across other activities with a proposal expected at the October Board meeting. SOC members conveyed a belief that this should be consistent across all volunteer roles.

## 1.6 **Leadership Group Updates**

**Club:** focusing on developments to the Stronger Affiliation process including amends to the timing of submissions and ensuring the reference to affiliation is correct alongside ongoing work to reinforce key messages. Club resources are being developed to support individuals who are running clubs but may have a lack of knowledge.

**Artistic Swimming:** Desire expressed for competition to return to 'normal' during 2022. Recognition to the capacities of both staff and the leadership group in being able to deliver all required elements across all disciplines was given. Success in the European Youth Championships with a bronze medal for the mixed duet.

**Water Polo:** There has been a return to competition with the NAGS and inter-regionals to follow later in the year. Progress is being made across the board. Delivery of talk by a referee who attended the Olympics to provide inspiration for domestic referees. Identification of engagement programme sitting outside of the NGB with highlights provided.

**Diving:** Level X was a big success and looking at the potential continuation for dryside. The competition pathway has been reviewed following challenges with understanding. Licensing of events being considered, which has also highlighted issues with the number of qualified Judge 2s.

**Swimming:** Level X has ended but could be reactivated if required. General return to 'normal' with more localised issues as pools and facilities consider their own ability to manage capacities. The level in which this may have an effect is currently unknown but it was recognised that competition needs to be delivered at all levels to maintain member retention.

**YAP:** Earlier meetings have been rescheduled however the retention project has commenced, notes are to be circulated including details of progress. Recruitment drive is expected to launch in the near future.

**Action: BG to circulate details of the retention project.**

Across the groups there were expressions of a lack of understanding in their purpose at the current time and whether the focus should be competition or participation. A meeting between the Leadership Group Chairs and liaisons along with NB and GW has been called to discuss the Leadership Groups role and their position in the structure. Following this meeting a report will be brought to the next SOC meeting.

**Action: NB to report back to November meeting.**

## **2. Items for Decision**

### **2.1 Model Constitution**

Following submission to the previous meeting, comments have been reviewed and addressed. Confirmation was requested to support the submission of the document to the SE Board, which was unanimously given.

Work is ongoing to provide documentation for other club types as well as on supporting documents.

## **3. Items for Discussion**

### **3.1 Water polo coach education availability and the impact upon stronger affiliation**

Details were provided relating to a lack of water polo coaches and difficulties in accessing training, both through course availability and the cost (time and money) to attend specifically in the South East although the question was posed as to whether this affected other Regions. The lack of qualified coaches is currently impacting on the ability of clubs to complete the affiliation process.

It was acknowledged that historically there have been issues with the delivery of the courses and delays were in place due to the revision of the courses to make sure they are fit for purpose. There are also additional tutors being recruited to deliver both at Level 1 and Level 2.

The number of learners who have commenced the online element over the past 18 months was noted to be 120. There are now challenges with the practical assessments given the geographical spread of candidates, and candidates not completing the practical pre-requisites before booking on to assessments. Methods to overcome the delays were outlined.

Note was given to work completed by Claire Coleman (Head of Sport Development) and Jenny Norvill (Head of IOS) with the regions to determine the demand for courses.

Discussion continued to consider the cost of the courses and how this could be perceived to be prohibitive. The impact of covid on the ability for bursaries from within the sport was highlighted as impacting accessibility of the courses.

**Action: JB to forward summary of issues to JG and RC.**

**Action: RC to review if course delivery is an issue nationally, with JN and CC.**

**Action: GW to identify if WP clubs are having difficulties re-affiliating.**

**Action: RC to share IOS plan for addressing backlog of practical assessments.**

**Action: RC to share cost breakdown to demonstrate courses are delivered at cost.**

### **3.2 Sport England Submission**

Details of the submission format for Sport England funding, along with how this differs from previous cycles, were provided. The initial phase requires demonstration of the organisations alignment to the Sport England vision and mission, focusing on 'Uniting the Movement'. A wide range of views from across the organisation as well as key volunteers has been collated in to the submission document.

The cost of participating across all levels from access to Learn to Swim, club fees and the talent programme was noted to be a significant barrier and needing inclusion in the submission.

It was acknowledged that the Swim England strategy has a number of parallels to that of Sport England. The potential to apply for additional funding was highlighted however it was accepted it would be unlikely that this would be granted.

Initial feedback on the submission has been gained from Sport England and recommended changes will be implemented. Further meetings have been scheduled to ensure the submission is strong.

**4. Items to Note**

None recorded

**5. AOB**

5.1 Circulation of 8 meeting dates for 2022 for members to confirm availability via doodle poll.

**Action: NB and AS-A to liaise on dates; AS-A to circulate doodle poll.**

**6. 2021 Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday 16 November; 1pm (**Please note change of meeting time**)