

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 15 February 2022, 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
	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 (RC)	Swim England Business Engagement Director & Institute of Swimming Managing Director

Staff:	Ali Sibcy-Allen (AS-A)	Operations Administration Manager
	Emma Griffin (EG)	Marcoms and Operations Director
	Gaby Hay (GH)	Head of Membership
	Lindsay Trimmings (LT)	Coach Development Manager

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairman's welcome

Members were welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

Pippa Jones

1.3 Declarations of any other business

Ian Mackenzie and Jim Boucher: Item 3.1

All members have an interest in membership

1.4 Minutes from previous meetings:

1.4.1 18 January 2022: The minutes were accepted.

1.5 Actions from previous meetings

1.5.1 3.3: SOC membership – NB to discuss with PJ when appropriate.

1.5.2 3.5: Head of Facilities – RL to be invited to March meeting.

1.6 Leadership Group Updates

Club: SwimMark and Club Affiliations were completed in January with the vast majority of clubs completing and passing and six currently being suspended until the appropriate documentation has been provided. Work is ongoing with Everyone Active to launch 'Club Link' to create a facility link to clubs to help transfer swimmers from their LTS programme into club sessions. Club governance

sessions have taken place to support committee members, with an aim to have regional delivery assuming consistency in delivery and messages can be maintained. Work is ongoing with the Teaching and Coaching Register to ratify and reduce the number of qualifications listed on Integra to help improve accuracy and understanding of the workforce.

Artistic Swimming: The first face-to-face competitions for two years have been arranged with the NAGs due to be held in April, with displays from the GB and England teams. Entries are expected to be lower due to a lack of opportunities to recruit in younger age groups. A number of FINA updates are expected to be announced and require implementing throughout the year.

Water Polo: The programme lead role has been offered and will be announced when arrangements are finalised. The NAGs and inter regionals competitions have been set up. A video to promote WP has been produced which will be released shortly and has been supported by the Swimming Trust.

Diving: An update was unavailable at the meeting, with IM agreeing to be interim liaison.

Swimming: The discipline nomination for the CWG baton relay has been selected. Concerns over what will happen following the temporary guidance for officials being removed from 22 March were noted with AH to request an update. Updated competition guidance was confirmed to have been provided and agreed based upon Government changes.

YAP: The replacement chair has been appointed with timescales for changeover being discussed. Recruitment for the four available slots on the Panel has been completed with the new members joining the next meeting in March. Work on the regional youth panels is ongoing as is the retention project.

2. Items for Decision

2.1 Review of fees for SE appeals

GH reminded members of the background for the review, both in terms of the fee along with the associated process noting that escalation to Sports Resolutions is costly and possibly excessive for events delivered by Swim England other than the CWG and major LEN or FINA senior competitions.

It was proposed that a panel with Board representation and an independent Chair would be more appropriate for all other events, with an opportunity to escalate to Sports Resolutions for the CWG and major LEN or FINA senior competitions only. The associated fees are also proposed to be reduced to make the process more accessible.

SOC members approved the recommendations. GW confirmed the next steps would be to take the proposal to British Swimming for discussion where these relate to British Teams managed by Swim England.

2.2 Considering Regulation 6.8

Regulation 6.8 is currently included within the Swim England company regulations but is not frequently used and is difficult to police with the potential to exclude members for a prolonged period of time while in dispute.

Currently, under the regulation, disputes regarding non-payment of fees have been referred to SLT staff with members being barred until the situation is resolved. It is proposed that these instances should be managed through the club

Internal Dispute procedure.

It was agreed that there needs to be a mechanism in place to address issues on non-payment and avoid members having debts at multiple clubs. Regional arbitration was discussed recognising that the participant still needs to be supported and not barred during the process.

Members approved the recommendation noting that relevant documentation, such as the model constitution, will need to be updated to reflect the changes in process.

3. Items for Discussion

3.1 Recognition of RPL for coaching programmes

Lindsay Trimmings was welcomed to meeting.

Clarifications on the paper were provided, highlighting the historical reasoning behind offering RPL and the comparable costs for completing the full SE qualifications.

Confirmation was given that those who have acquired RPL status would retain this and those that have started the process can continue it.

The policy was endorsed and implementation will begin.

3.2 Skills based member recruitment

The role description was determined to be current and so the recruitment process will be initiated with PJ and JB's replacements ideally being in role for the May meeting.

Following discussion some suggestions to update the Leadership Group liaison aspect of the role were made with a request for these to be sent to NB following the meeting.

Action: proposed amends to the Leadership Group liaison role description to be emailed to NB

3.3 Terms of Reference

Recommendation to review annually and make sure they deliver what is wanted / needed.

A request was made for comments and suggested amends to be forwarded to NB by Monday 21 February.

Action: forward comments / amends to NB for Monday 28th February.

4. Items to Note

4.1 Membership Working Group (MWG)

GH and EG were welcomed to the meeting. EG advised feedback has been taken on board since the last update and the papers provided updated details with this update focused on the next steps.

The key focus during the pandemic was on retention and growing the outdoor swimming audience with significant amounts of work being completed on the digital platform and marketing to achieve this. Overall retention levels during the pandemic have remained higher than anticipated. There is a desire to tackle the trend of declining Cat 1 (Train) memberships, with more work being completed to identify key issues and how these can be addressed.

A phased approach is being implemented based upon available data, time and resource:

- Phase 1: Develop club membership category for LTS audience, to be tackled as a priority alongside of the coach membership offer. To be presented to the 2022 AGM.
- Phase 2: pricing review of club membership, to be proposed to 2023 AGM.
- Phase 3: wider membership framework for new audiences, to be developed around the digital platform.

Discussion considered whether the request from SOC was being addressed by the MWG. Acknowledgement was given that the pricing review was not completed as quickly as desired, noting the reduction in staffing alongside team members being on furlough for much of the previous two years. To enable an effective review to be presented to the Members Forum it needs to be thoroughly worked out over the next 12 months.

Further details of the coaching membership were provided in terms of what coaches are likely to be provided with as well as confirming the additional cost is not solely for increased insurance cover. The membership will be priced comparatively to other NGBs and alternative offers that are available.

The constitution of the working groups was discussed noting they are swimming heavy currently. It was confirmed that other disciplines will be involved as there is a desire to ensure the correct cross-section is involved alongside the inclusion of a YAP member.

Retention and drop off were recognised to be a significant issue for swimming, with the opportunity for appropriate competition perceived as a potential issue. Making the sport more attractive for young people is a key consideration alongside retaining members who are wanting to stay in the sport as a non-competitive participant recognising there are challenges with water access.

The infrastructure challenges associated with direct membership were discussed. It is something that is not being looked at as a priority. The wider implications with regional and country fees were also highlighted.

Independent direct membership was confirmed to remain within the scope of the work noting that this could also benefit university students who do not want to be linked to a club but are still looking to compete.

Further updates on work currently in progress will be provided in due course.

4.2 **Minimum depth update**

The reasoning behind the document updates was provide as well as advising health and safety information had been incorporated.

The most notable change was to amend the minimum diving depth. Discussion highlighted challenges with the proposal with JG to take away and review before returning to the next meeting.

Action: JG to review documentation and return to March meeting.

6. **2022 Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday 29 March, 10am
- Tuesday 24 May, 10am
- Tuesday 12 July, 10am
- Tuesday 13 September, 10am
- Tuesday 11 October, 10am
- Tuesday 22 November, 10am