

Meeting of the Board of the Amateur Swimming Association (Swim England) Limited

20 May 2022

Via Zoom

Present:

Richard Hookway – RH (Chair)
Barry Saunders - BSa
Brian Havill - BH
Joan Wheeler – JW
Sarah Gregory - SG

Aysha Kidwai – AK
Raj Kumar – RK
Jane Nickerson – JMN
Bernard Simkins – BSi

Officers in attendance:

Lois Jarvis (LJ) – Director of Legal and Company Secretary
George Wood (GW) – Sport Development Director (Item 9 only)
Ali Noyce (AN) – Health & Wellbeing Manager (Item 10 only)
Andrew Power (AP) – Water Wellbeing Specialist (Item 10 only)
Rob Henderson (RMH) – Senior Administration Officer

1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair noted that apologies were received from Caroline Green, Neil Booth and Ali Breadon.

2. **Declarations of interest**

2.1 BSa is a Regional Director for the North East Region and declared an interest in item 8.1.

2.2 BSi is a Regional Director for the West Midlands Region and declared an interest in item 8.1.

2.3 The Chair resolved that both Members should be present for Item 8.1.

3. **Minutes of the board meeting of ASA (Swim England) Ltd – 16 March 2022**

3.1 It was clarified under Item 2 of the Minutes, that any ongoing declarations of interest will be noted in each set of Minutes.

4. **Actions arising from previous meetings – to note progress**

4.1 The Judicial Review has become more complex and we need to change our approach. We are recommending an independent review and are currently tendering alongside Sport England. Following this a new timetable will be established. The Board was given assurances that grassroots issues will still be given the appropriate emphasis.

4.2 JMN would welcome the Sport Operations Committee's, Sport Leadership Groups and Regional Chairs' thoughts on the current development of the Transgender Policy. It was agreed that the act of asking and listening,

particularly outside of our sport, is very important. There are other similar sports we are working in tandem with. We will continue working with a wide range of stakeholders throughout this development and will return to Board in the Autumn to discuss further.

- 4.3 The schedule of risks is now reported on a rotational basis, with the next Audit, Risk and Probity Committee (ARP) meeting on 5 July.
- 4.4 A draft of the Auditors' tender will be presented to ARP on 5 July, with a view to a decision in October.
- 4.5 A draft advert and job description for the ARP independent members is being prepared, with a view to completing recruitment by the end of 2022.

5. **Confirmation of decisions made by e-mail**
Decision: The 2021 accounts were agreed and signed off.

6. **Chair's report**

- 6.1 RH shared an update regarding the safeguarding issue that was discussed at the 16 March meeting. We are still receiving and responding to feedback from Members with strong feelings regarding the matter.
- 6.2 A dinner was hosted for Pool Operators, the main topic was energy cost inflation and supply chain tightness. A collaborative approach to lobbying was agreed and we are representing the industry's voice to government.
- 6.3 Our "England Swims" campaign and survey have been launched, with the objective to understand why people do or don't swim, as well as to identify barriers to aquatics participation.

7. **CEO's report**

- 7.1 The report was taken as read.
- 7.2 We are collecting data from Pool Operators prior to a meeting with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which is a longer process. Our lobbying presence is currently powerful, with regular regional and national media appearances.
- 7.3 Some pools are piloting a heat exchange system with a data server company, who cover the cost of energy which powers the servers. This is an exciting development for Pool Operators.
- 7.4 The factory which supplies many of the UK's pool chemicals is currently completely shut for a brief period and will then operate on limited capacity. It has affected some pools who have had to close temporarily. Most other Operators are saying they are ok until September.
- 7.5 JMN updated the Board that Ash Cox has been appointed interim CEO at British Swimming. British Swimming are also continuing to interview for a new Board Chair.
- 7.6 It was clarified that the Water Polo and Artistic Swimming performance programmes for GB are currently managed by Swim England.

8. **CFO's report**

- 8.0.1 The report was taken as read.

- 8.0.2 Q1 actual income was either at budgeted levels or slightly below. This is good news overall as 2019 levels were used as the base. Our expenditure is well down so we are in a good financial position. These savings include where vacancies have not been filled, so not necessarily a positive outcome for the whole organisation.
- 8.0.3 All areas of the organisation are showing an upward trend for their income. The only area of concern is the Institute of Swimming, who have identified some key areas to concentrate on and are beginning to implement plans.
- 8.0.4 The sale of SportPark floors one and two to Loughborough University will be completed in May.
- 8.0.5 Publically we would like to keep reserves of 4-8 months as the true balance will fluctuate throughout the year. The expectation is to sit comfortably within this range. Careful consideration needs to be given to prudence and cash liquidity, particularly as inflation approaches double-digits.
- 8.1 **Loans and Reserves**
- 8.1.1 BWH formally requested to repay the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan. All were in agreement.
- 8.1.2 **Decision: The Board gave approval for the repayment of the CBIL.**
- 8.1.3 BWH formally requested, once the funds from the sale of SportPark floors one and two have been received, to repay the loans to the Regions from Swimming Enterprises.
- 8.1.4 **Decision: Board gave approval for the repayment of loans from the Regions, upon receipt of the funds from the sale of SportPark floors one and two.**
- 9 **Strategy Update**
- 9.1 GW joined the meeting and delivered a presentation, updating the Board on the process of creating the new strategy.
- 9.2 **Process**
It was outlined that data collection and validation would take place between April and July, with continuous analysis throughout. An update would then be provided to Board at the 13 July meeting, as a part of stakeholder validation throughout July. The objective is for Board to consider the first draft of the Strategy at the 14 September meeting. The earliest possible sign-off would therefore be October 2022.
- 9.3 **Risks**
The risks presented were considered to be focused around organisational capacity, delays in data collection (particularly the “England Swims” campaign) and the need to ensure stakeholders are convinced with the direction of the strategy.
- 9.4 **Data Analysis**
Up until now, we have undertaken a review of the previous strategy as well as analysing the insight available to us and undertaking a stakeholder consultation.
- 9.5 Nigel Kippax, our external facilitator, has been consulting with key stakeholders on our behalf. This has been extremely useful for open and honest conversations. Nigel is keeping focused notes from his conversations, as are

Heads of Service. Key messages are being distilled on a regular basis, including re-analysis of previous conversations where necessary.

9.6 **Data Collected**

Broadly speaking, the data we have currently collected includes our vision for the next ten years of aquatics and the direction and challenges we will face in achieving this. We have also asked key stakeholders about the role of Swim England and any other thoughts or messages they may have.

9.7 **Next steps**

Swim England should be prepared to think creatively and be clear on what success looks like. We will perform a stop, start, continue exercise prior to writing up the strategy.

9.8 A number of questions were raised and clarifications requested by the Board.

9.9 The ten-year length of the strategy was identified as a challenge, owing to the rapid pace of change the world continues to witness. There is a caution about creating a strategy that can be made irrelevant more quickly than anticipated. Much of this is out of our direct control – including Local Authority funding, which could be addressed in the strategy.

9.10 JMN clarified that whilst the methods of strategic delivery may change over the next ten years, the vision and ambition should not. This is the difference between strategy and implementation. RK recommended GW to speak with industries who have experience of planning over multiple decades to ascertain their methods.

9.11 GW clarified that the strategy was aiming to cover the broad spectrum of swimmers, including grassroots, whilst also aligning with Sport England's own ten-year strategy.

9.12 AK put forward the need for awareness of our confirmation bias, stating the importance of remaining open to all identified challenges and choices. There is a further drive to understand the insight from those that aren't involved in aquatics, as well as those that are. It was agreed that this process should consult with all demographics, identifying barriers to participation. Furthermore, we need to be thorough during the analysis and distillation, ensuring no vital information is left behind.

9.13 It was requested that the strategy includes a specific section on Swim England Trading and the income generation expectations and opportunities for the future.

9.14 The Chair requested continued engagement with this piece of work so that it would be an enduring strategy. GW offered his time to the Board should any Board Members wish to discuss the strategy on an individual basis.

9.15 **Action: RH to distribute Strategy Process presentation alongside Minutes.**

9.16 GW left the meeting.

10. **Water Wellbeing**

10.1 AN and AP joined the meeting.

10.2 RH introduced the area of work as being a special piece of work that is welcomed by the Board. AN, with a swimming and teaching background, and

- AP, with a physical activity project management background, introduced themselves and delivered a presentation.
- 10.3 There have been twelve years of development to reach the point where we are now, with three key publications and reports over this period. These have highlighted the potential of aquatic activity to prevent and manage a range of long term health conditions.
- 10.4 In 2018 the Water Wellbeing model was created. A three stage process ensuring the environment is accessible, inclusive and welcoming; there are appropriate personalised opportunities and a demonstrating impact. A nationwide community of practice has been developed with an accreditation at its base.
- 10.5 **Stage 1: Accessible and Inclusive**
Review site opportunities; environmental audit and site improvement plan; inclusive customer experience training; inclusive marketing materials; basic data collection. All of the above have excellent benchmarks and feedback from participants.
- 10.6 **Stage 2: Personalised Aquatic Offers**
Exercise Referral Delivery; Aquatic Activity for Health qualification; Learn to Swim for targeted health needs. We have recently developed a “supporting swimmers with long-term health conditions” CPD. Good Boost is a social enterprise who we have worked with to develop a rehabilitation app. Patients can be given electronic devices with the app pre-installed to take home to continue their rehabilitation.
- 10.7 **Stage 3: Demonstrating Impact**
Recruitment targets meet; evidence of change and impact through data collection; case study development. AN fed back that there are some impactful stories of patients no longer requiring surgery due to the impact of being in the water.
- 10.8 These accreditations are suitable for all pools; many of the accredited pools are older facilities. We are discussing with many other Operators to expand the accreditation, it is open to all who wish to join us on the journey.
- 10.9 Congratulations were offered by the Board to AN and AP for their excellent work.
- 10.10 It was clarified that this project and the Business Solutions work have similar target markets, there is excellent collaboration between the two teams with Business Solutions introducing operators to the Water Wellbeing programme.
- 10.11 Incentivising the programme is not necessary at this point, as the current incentives for Operators include procuring better local relationships, accessing new funding opportunities and good news stories.
- 10.12 There is an openness to discussing the extension of this programme; including HR interventions and larger Operator companies.
- 10.13 **Action: RH to distribute Water Wellbeing presentation alongside Minutes.**
11. **Committee / Working Group reports – meetings held since last meeting**
- 11.1 **Sport Operations Committee held 29 March 2022 and 12 May 2022**
- 11.1.1 The Minutes from March were taken as read and no questions were raised.

- Addendum* The Board would like to give their condolences to Pippa Jones' family and friends following her recent passing. Pippa had a four-year term on the Sport Operations Committee that ended earlier this year. Pippa will be deeply missed by them all and everyone at Swim England who had the privilege to work alongside her.
- 11.1.2 A verbal report was given from the 12 May meeting. Two new member elected members attended, replacing Pippa Jones and Jim Boucher. There will also be a new member from the Youth Advisory Panel starting formally at the July meeting.
- 11.1.3 Items for discussion included 2023 membership fees, with a proposal being submitted to the 13 July Board meeting. There was also an update of temporary membership conditions, closing a current loophole regarding testing.
- 11.1.4 The issues regarding minimum water depths and diving starts continue to be dealt with. Guidance will be withdrawn on a temporary basis to allow for further consultation over the next four weeks.
- 11.1.5 **Harold Fern and A.H. Turner Awards**
Decision: The Board approved the Sport Operations Committee's recommendations for the winners of the Harold Fern Award and the A.H. Turner Award.
- 11.2 **Swim England Qualifications Board held 1 April 2022**
- 11.2.1 The Minutes were taken as read and no questions were raised.
- 11.2.2 We are compliant with Ofqual and have completed a number of external consultations.
- 11.2.3 Course signups are trending upwards and the financial overview is currently doing well.
- 11.3 **Trading Board held 3 May 2022**
- 11.3.1 The Minutes were taken as read. Our customers have reacted well to the price increases which has resulted in a positive variance financially.
- 11.3.2 Business Solutions uses current resource to generate income for the organisation. As it grows we would need to recruit to support any increase of the income generation. The offer shows our value to Operators in terms of knowledge, insight and expertise.
12. **Dates for next meetings**
Monday 4 July, AGM, 7.30pm (Zoom)
Wednesday 13 July, 10am (SportPark, Loughborough)
Wednesday 14 September, 10am (SportPark, Loughborough)
Wednesday 14 December, 1pm (Zoom)
13. **Any other business**
It is with regret that SG has elected to step down from the Board later this year. SG shared the hope that her contributions will last and expressed positivity that a new perspective will join the group.

Summary of Decisions made

Minute	Item	Decision
5.1	Confirmation of decisions made by e-mail	The 2021 accounts were agreed and signed off.
8.1.2	Loans and reserves	The Board gave approval for the repayment of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan.
8.1.4	Loans and reserves	The Board gave approval for the repayment of loans from the Regions, upon receipt of the funds from the sale of SportPark floors one and two.
11.1.1	Harold Fern and A.H. Turner Awards	The Board approved the Sport Operations Committee's recommendations for the winners of the Harold Fern Award and the A.H. Turner Award.