Minutes of a meeting of the Swim England London Management Board

Held on Tuesday 26th April 2022
Via Zoom

Present

Voting Board Members

Jackie Bedford
Josh Devine
Angela Eguakhide
Diane Gamble
Stewart Nicklin
Alex Harrison
Michael Laniyan
Suzanne Philpot
Ralph Shortland
Alan Thurlow
Richard Whitehead

In attendance

John Handley	President
Brian Havill	Swim England CFO
Kelly Stannard	Regional Business Manager

Apologies

Flo Barnes

1. Welcome

The Chair, Alex Harrison, welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance. Special welcome was given to Michael Laniyan, who was newly elected to the Management Board following the ACM on the 26th of March.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Flo Barnes.

3. Declarations of Interest

Alex on Minute 7.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 15th March 2022

Amendments had been made following the initial issue of the minutes following queries raised by members. There were no other matters of accuracy raised in relation to the minutes for the meeting on the 15th March.

The Minutes were proposed and seconded as a true record and carried unanimously.

5. Decisions by correspondence

None.

6. Matters arising from the minutes and action points (not on the agenda)

Masters Chair – There had been no applicants for this so the exec sub and panel will pick this up.

Richard raised concerns that we are now in a position that Discipline Chairs are not members of the Board, so we would need to look at this working relationship going forward. *

London Swimming Ltd - Richard asked if we could change the contract to the new company for the lock up. Alex confirmed that this would not be an issue

7. Chairs Update

Alex gave an update.

8. Vice Chair (Finance) Report

8.1 Month End Accounts

The financial outcome to the end March 2022 is a deficit of £5,911.

Stewart confirmed that we had received circa £121k of membership income from Swim England following the renewals deadline of 28th of February. This was better than expected with levels on par with 2019 levels. The reasonable membership price increase has compensated for the loss in membership numbers which is was the reason behind increasing the cost. Brian commented that London levels are above average with other Regions seeing a reduction in membership income even with a similar fees increase.

Richard commented that at some point we should look to do a forecast to ensure we don't go below our minimum reserve levels. Stewart suggested that we would look to do this in the middle of the year once we know what is planned for the rest of the year. Suzanne confirmed that Kelly has set aside a week in May to work on a budget forecast. *

8.1 Swim England Loan

The Swim England Loan will remain as an agenda item for future meetings.

9. Regional Director’s Report

Suzanne Philpot (Regional Director) delivered her report to the Board.

Discipline Chairs Vacant posts – No applications or expressions of interest had been received for the Water Polo, Swimming and Masters Chair positions. *

10. Vice Chairman – Club / Affiliations Report

None.

11. Strategic Decisions

11.1 Network Authorisation Process

Suzanne confirmed that the region have been approached on several occasions with regards to our endorsement and support for clubs who wish to work collaboratively to provide training and development opportunities for their club volunteers, staff, officials, coaches and selected swimmers, thereby raising the standard of swimming in the local area.

Swim England National disbanded their SwimMark accreditation for Networks some time ago and apparently do not see this as a national priority work stream for them to review at this moment in time.

Therefore in order to support the London Clubs and provide advice and guidance on how to set up and effectively manage Network Training Programmes a suite of high level documents have been developed for our clubs to access should they wish to do so.

However currently the region do not have a formal procedure in place for clubs to follow and therefore we need to implement a clear and transparent process which will recognise an Aquatic Club Network in the region when a Statement of Intent (SOI) is submitted for our attention and feedback.

The following recommendations were made:

A Network Authorisation Committee shall be appointed by The Executive Sub Committee who will be responsible for overseeing all Network Statements of Intent (SOI) submitted for consideration. These committee members will be expected to;

Facilitate when required the working relationship between the Network of Clubs at designated meetings;

Provide information and support as is deemed necessary, to assist the XXXX Club Network;
Advise the Network on their Business and Development Plan.

This committee will be answerable to the Management Board and will be expected to provide regular updates through the Regional Director Reports.

The membership of the Network Authorisation Committee (NAC) committee shall be:

Regional Director (Operations) who shall Chair the group and be responsible for leading the committee on all areas of the network processes;

Regional Discipline Development Officer who shall support the Chair and provide relevant information on all club governance for the network;

Two Board Members who shall provide support, guidance and advice on all submitted documents and play an integral role in the decision and approval process.

Richard thanked Suzanne for doing such an excellent and comprehensive set of documents.

The documents have been added to the website for all Clubs to access.

Jackie asked if Crystal Palace Network should complete the documents. Suzanne suggested that this would be a good idea as they would then be able to access a suite of documents which would support them. They would not need to dissolve the network and reform.

Michael suggested that we should include a timeframe from submission to a formal response. *

Josh thanked Suzanne for her hard work on the documents and said that he would be willing to support if needed.

Richard suggested that the approval of a network should be made by the Management Board. Alex confirmed that Jackie would report of any network applications made during the Board meetings.

Alex suggested that we should amend the composition of the committee to include two board members (Josh and Angela) and the Vice Chair for Clubs (Jackie).

Suzanne confirmed that we had received an application. Alex confirmed that we should have the committee agree the application before approval is given. *

11.2 The future of SwimMark accreditation in London

Formerly called Swim21, SwimMark accreditation is Swim England's quality standard for clubs. It recognises high standards of governance, sustainability and effectiveness. Any affiliated Swim England club can apply for the accreditation.

The current benefits for achieving SwimMark accreditation are as follows:

All clubs who obtain SwimMark get a £100 voucher to spend with IOS yearly

No current financial benefits from a regional perspective

The SwimMark Accreditation process has historically always been the responsibility of the National Club Development Officer covering London who was employed nationally with only limited support provided by the regions professional staff and volunteer workforce in the form of a regional panel.

The region currently has 50 clubs with Swim Mark Accreditation.

Everyone Active a main partner with Swim England now require all clubs hiring their facilities to be Swim Mark accredited and this also applies to the new initiative for the set up and support with talent/link lanes.

As a direct result of a Swim England staff restructure in the summer of 2020 the clubs team were disbanded and Yvonne Stead (National Club Development Officer for London) transferred across to SE London and continued to lead on SM. In 2021 SE London completed a staff restructure which reduced the development officer roles by 50% Yvonne Stead took voluntary redundancy.

James Warrener was appointed as the Regional Discipline Development Officer (RDDO) with a new JD agreed by the Board which includes Stronger Affiliation administration ensuring that our clubs are implementing the appropriate governance and meeting the minimum operating standards. The RDDO role also includes organisation and delivery of the quarterly regional SwimMark webinars but nothing further, although we do positively promote this accreditation to all our clubs as an effective club development tool.

Therefore it was agreed with Swim England National after Yvonne left the organisation that a member of their staff would support London with the SwimMark Administration liaising with our clubs and the RDDO would be responsible for Stronger Affiliation (SA) now known as Club Affiliation (CA).

Unfortunately it now appears that the admin support previously supplied by Swim England National for SwimMark is not sustainable moving forwards and therefore the region needs to determine its stance and priority for the future of SwimMark accreditation and look at some potential options;

The recommendation is for the management board to discuss and consider some potential alternative solutions.

Question
Should the Region as an Independent Incorporated Organisation determine the accreditation requirements for our clubs if we are to be solely responsible for it?
What is the stance in the other 7 Regions?

Options to consider
1. Push back to National as it is their reporting KPI to Sport England– and it is not currently a strategic priority for the region, only Club Affiliation.

Potential Risks
Some operators may require all clubs hiring their facilities to be Swim Mark accredited.
Are the board satisfied that the 5 CA elements are sufficient for good club governance?
What communications would we send to our clubs?
What happens if clubs still wish to go through SM Accreditation?

2. The professional staff share the role between them as current staff workloads would become unmanageable and work-life balance severely affected if Swimmark in its entirety was embedded into any one person's work stream and becomes their sole responsibility.

Potential Risks
There is not one point of contact to keep continuity and provide a high level of service as this option does not offer that stability.
All staff would be taking on additional work which could have the ability to impact on their current support and service provided to the region in other areas of the business.

3. Appoint a willing volunteer to lead on Swim Mark supported by the professional staff. This could be an existing board member with a strong knowledge of SwimMark or another person.

Risk – Management of their workloads to achieve "work-life-volunteering balance".

4. Buy in external Admin Resource (or source this staffing need through Swim England National), the minimum requirement would be approximately two days per quarter, eight days per year. (Admin rate in UK is £12 per hour – total cost per year £672 without on costs).

Risk- This will Impact on the regions financial position whilst in Covid recovery phase.

Discussions took place on all the options presented.

Jackie suggested that we should find out how the other Region's cover SwimMark and also to possibly look for a volunteer who would be willing to support, if we are to continue to pick this piece of work up.

Stewart suggested that we could look to charge for those clubs who require further assistance with the SwimMark process.

Richard asked if the issue is when the information has been uploaded then who would be checking this. As a Region we have a responsibility to check this and should not be charging Clubs to support this.

Alex suggested that SwimMark forms part of the Regional agreement. Suzanne confirmed that Claire Coleman had agreed to a caveat in the agreement that if we had a restructure we could then review what the Region could deliver. Alex asked what the time element for the SwimMark process is. Suzanne and Jackie confirmed that this varies each quarter, but also on the experience of the Club staff who are completing the submission.

Alex raised concerns that if the suggestion is that it will too onerous for the staff team to pick up then there would be no way a volunteer could do so.

Jackie will find out from the Club leadership group what the other Region's do. *

Richard confirmed that as a Region we should support SwimMark as it is a national standard so should not been seen to be at odds with the process.

Brian confirmed that we should check what the other Regions do and also how many SwimMark clubs we have compared to them too. We need to ensure that the best service is provided to our Clubs.

Suzanne and Jackie will meet with Alex, once Jackie has liaised with the CLG and Suzanne has liaised with colleagues in other Regions. This will then be discussed at the next Management Board meeting on the 7th of June. *

12. Information Reports

None.

13. Any Other Business

LAC Meeting – Suzanne confirmed that her and James would be meeting with the LAC staff on the 9th of May. Angela asked if Suzanne could discuss the catering commission which GLL are receiving from the catering company for our Regional events. *

Next meeting – Tuesday 7th June 2022 at 6:30pm via Zoom

***please refer to the action point document.**