

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 12 July 2022, via Zoom

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:

Joan Wheeler (JW)	Swim England Board Member (Interim Chair)
Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Swim England Member
Alex Harrison (AH)	Swim England Member
John Hewitt (JHe)	Swim England Member (from item 4.1)
Keith Munday (KM)	Swim England Member
John Hidle (JHi)	Regional Chairs Representative
Ellie Conway (EC)	YAP Chair
George Wood (GW)	Sport 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
Claire Coleman (CC)	Head of Development
Helen Weeks (HW)	Club Governance and Standards Manager

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairman's welcome

JW welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

Neil Booth

1.3 Declarations of Interest

Alex Harrison, item 4.1

1.4 Minutes from previous meetings:

1.4.1 12 May 2020: The minutes were accepted.

1.5 Actions from previous meetings

1.5.1 Item 1.7.1: Risk assessment portal – Insurance broker followed up with, will continue to push for completion.

1.5.2 Item 1.7.2 – Fees for over 80's: GW to follow up with Gaby Hay and Emma Griffin for September meeting.

1.5.3 Item 2.2: Code of Ethics – CC to follow up to ensure circulation to DLGs prior to next meeting.

1.6 **Leadership Group Updates**

- 1.6.1 A link to the library of Leadership Group Minutes had been provided with the agenda. It was noted that agreed timescales are being missed and that not all relevant minutes were available. CC agreed to look at this issue.

Action: CC to look into Leadership Group minutes issues.

1.7 **SE Board minutes 20 May 2022**

The minutes were noted.

2. **Items for Decision**

2.1 **Supervision ratios**

Helen Weeks was welcomed to the meeting.

The proposal for supervision ratios has incorporated feedback from clubs and considers the supervisory team as both coaches and Team Managers (TM), with a minimum team of two (one male, one female) to reflect NSPCC guidance.

Clarification was provided to confirm the level of TM as well as the minimum ratios of TMs to athletes. For individuals entering an open meet independently they would become responsible for arranging their own poolside safeguarding provision.

While the TM system is well established in swimming this is not the case in the other disciplines and so a requirement for education, through the leadership groups, was noted.

The potential for a negative reception of the guidance by the aquatic community was queried. HW advised that no issues were foreseen as the guidance clarifies Wavepower requirements and will be simpler and easier for clubs to manage. Permits which have been granted under the old guidelines would need to be honoured but work would be done with membership to ensure that new applications are compliant.

Discussion considered the next steps. SOC members would not wish to approve the document immediately as Discipline Leadership Groups (DLGs) may highlight any issues. Noting that the TM numbers are good practice from the NSPCC it was recognised that the guidance should be implemented.

The term guidance was questioned, noting that it could be open to abuse. The importance of striking a balance was recognised, along with the 2023 review of Wavepower following which it would become a requirement.

Member agreed they were happy to approve the recommendation subject to any issues raised by DLGs. CC advised that each DLG would be contacted independently and any concerns relayed to SOC with the aim being to sign off the guidance via email.

Action: CC to liaise with DLGs and SOC via email to progress.

2.2 **Governance**

2.2.1 **Leadership Group liaison role**

The role description was outlined with approval to DLGs and Terms of Office provided.

The following appointments made by the Chairman, were ratified:

Artistic Swimming
Diving
Swimming
Water Polo

Keith Munday
Alex Harrison
John Hewitt
Ian Mackenzie

All appointments were for two years, until May 2024.

It was noted that the SOC Chairman was the liaison for the Club Leadership Group.

The role of substitute for the meetings was discussed and deemed unnecessary as CC will also be attending all of the DLG meetings and can provide continuity.

It was agreed that there had previously been a disconnect between SOC and the DLGs with the liaison role having been bypassed and resetting this will be beneficial for all.

The role description was approved.

2.2.2 Leadership Groups Terms of Reference annual review

The changes were outlined to members, predominantly focussed on wording clarification and highlighting:

- The Development Team representative for all disciplines will be CC.
- Where relevant items are on the agenda, the admin for the group will confirm the relevant staff members have been invited, e.g. Head of Events, Head of Coaching.
- The Chair of each group will have a vote as well as a second casting vote in the instance of a tie.
- Elements of the confidentiality clause have been removed to enable discussions which aid decision making.

It was noted that there is some tidying up still required but they are moving in right direction.

Action: CC and JW to continue review before liaising with DLGs.

3. Items for Discussion

3.1 Swim England Strategy

GW presented an update on the process and the progress made to date. Details of the consultation period were provided, highlighting areas that external stakeholders and SE team members had suggested as either ambitions for aquatics or areas to focus less on.

The next steps in terms of the process were outlined, advising an expectation that sign off by Board will take place during the final quarter of 2022.

An overview of the insight gained during the England Swims campaign was given

Discussion moved to consider two key questions:

How can our clubs be at the forefront of driving greater diversity and inclusion across our sports?

The value of swimming and a potential lack of awareness of this was raised with a need to ensure benefits are understood by community leaders and that they are

able to promote these. The collaboration between SE and the clubs to raise awareness was highlighted, recognising that collateral and orchestrated campaigns would need to be developed nationally while the clubs would be more likely to have local influence.

A need to provide councils with greater information to initiate discussion regarding poor facilities alongside the benefits of improving and replacing them when required was highlighted.

It was noted that clubs haven't been fully taken on the journey and so may not see diversity and inclusion as being important for them. Education to outline the issue and the benefits of being more inclusive could encourage clubs to be part of the journey to change. A mind-set shift may be required to ensure it becomes a priority which is something that needs to be driven by SE and the regions. It was noted that the benefits of diversity need to be highlighted, to ensure it remains on the agenda and doesn't become a tick box exercise.

The relationship between clubs and school swimming was considered with the potential for school's galas to generate more inclusivity. The challenge of club volunteers being unavailable during the day was identified as a potential barrier.

Efficient use of water is going to be important. How can our club / sport structure use water space more efficiently and effectively?

During the consultation, feedback has been received that SE should work with clubs and pools so there is one club using one pool, or club networks established to use multiple pools. There was a view that multiple clubs using one pool is not the most efficient way of operating. The group was asked to consider this matter.

It was suggested that communications to clubs regarding recommended sessions and their pool time requirements could be made stronger as some clubs have unrealistic expectations which are incompatible with the recommendations. The club-operator toolkit has proved beneficial but needs to be more embedded in the relationships with increased awareness from both sides. It was suggested that clubs owning their own pools could help to relieve issues.

The importance of operators holding sessions for inclusivity reasons was noted, with the example of women's only session being provided where there would be fewer people in the water but people who would not ordinarily access the water would be included. The question was raised as to whether operators would be prepared to accept the lower revenue that these sessions would generate in the interest of driving greater inclusion?

Discussion considered whether SE should instigate a merger pathway programme. It was agreed that in terms of pool space it could be beneficial but it may not be practically achievable. Previous unsuccessful club merger attempts were highlighted and it was agreed that different cultures and atmospheres in clubs will appeal to different people. A future requirement to merge to ensure longevity of the sport may need to be implemented but this would potentially be a final measure.

3.2 Artistic Swimming updated policy

CC reported that, following recent competitions, a number of athletes received higher grade scores than those attained during grading events. Additionally, there is a gap in the grading for routines as this was suspended during the pandemic. The proposal is to update the policy so that where scores in competition are higher than an athlete's current grade they will be promoted to the higher grade.

SOC members were advised that following discussion with the Chair of the ASLG, a proposed clause penalising clubs for their athletes falling below their allocated grade in competition had been removed, as had one for payments received as a result of the fines to be ring-fenced for future AS spend. SOC members supported this intervention and agreed that education as opposed to fining clubs would be a preferred course of action.

It was suggested that the Chairs of the AS and Diving Leadership Groups are put in contact as athletes being entered at the incorrect standard has historically been an issue in diving but has now been addressed.

Action: CC to liaise between AS and Diving LGs.

4. Items to Note

4.1 Minimum Depths

A revised paper is being taken to the SLG for discussion following which further updates may be made. Although it was hoped to be able to implement changes from September, mitigations for the affected clubs will need to be considered.

JG advised the paper would be brought back to SOC for review after discussion with the SLG. It was noted that it may be necessary to arrange an additional meeting, rather than wait for the next normal meeting.

Action: JG to bring an updated paper back to SOC when appropriate.

4.2 Sport Development Update

GW provided an update on the paper relating to the delivery of a Commonwealth Games WP tournament. He advised that it had not proved feasible to organise the tournament during 2022 which had caused disappointment within the WP community. Discussion is ongoing with the Home Nations WP group regarding hosting in 2023, however this needs to align with their aims to have senior teams in LEN European competition.

SOC members agreed the update from Sport Development was beneficial and would welcome relevant updates from other departments which fit within the SOC TORs. GW to liaise with SLT members to arrange for the next meeting.

Action: GW to liaise with SLT for next meeting

5. AOB

5.1 With energy prices rising, the committee asked what actions are being taken by SE whether there had been engagement with Government.

Members were advised that the CEO is doing numerous interviews to highlight the issue alongside work with Sport England. Work is also ongoing with chemical providers regarding the chemical shortages. External stakeholders within the industry see SE as the organisation highlighting issues.

It was suggested clubs are unaware of the lobbying work being completed and agreed that information in the next members' email would be welcomed.

Action: JG / RC to investigate adding to member email and speak to Head of Public Affairs re: monthly updates.

- 5.2 GW reported that the appointment for the CWG legacy role had been made. The appointee will be invited to a future meeting to report on the role.
- 5.3 RC reported that the content of the coach education certificates are being reviewed, which is expected to be completed for the start of 2023.
6. **2022 Meeting Dates**
- Tuesday 13 September, 10am
 - Tuesday 11 October, 10am
 - Tuesday 22 November, 10am