

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 11 October 2022, via Zoom

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:	Joan Wheeler (JW) Ian Mackenzie (IM) Ellie Conway (EC) Keith Munday (KM) John Hidle (JHi) George Wood (GW) Jon Glenn (JG) Rebecca Cox (RC)	Swim England Board Member (Interim Chair) Swim England Member Young Athletes Panel Swim England Member Regional Chairs Representative Sport Development Director Learn to Swim and Workforce Director Swim England Business Engagement Director & Institute of Swimming Managing Director
Staff:	Ali Sibcy-Allen (AS-A) Claire Coleman (CC) Sarah Green (SG)	Operations Administration Manager Head of Development Head of Educator Training (Item 4.1)

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairman's welcome

JW welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

John Hewitt, Neil Booth, Alex Harrison.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

None recorded.

1.4 Declarations of AOB

1.4.1 Update on Health and Safety forum.

1.5 Minutes from previous meetings:

1.5.1 13 September 2022: The minutes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting.

1.6 Actions from previous meetings

1.6.1 Ref 22.22 Risk Assessment Portal: Update received from insurers, key contact had been out of the business due to illness. Progress has been made. Update to be provided in November.

1.6.2 Ref 22.24 Code of Ethics: Progress made with three LG's, remaining should be completed before November meeting.

1.6.3 Ref 22.4 Supervision Ratios: Educational requirements have been identified across the disciplines. No issues with ratios, working on communication to community.

1.6.4 Ref 22.28 LG TORs: JW and CC to have catch up meeting to finalise.

1.6.5 Following discussion regarding the Insight team attending the January meeting to present LTS and Workforce audit results it was agreed to invite Insight to include the November meeting to update on [England] Swims data.

Action: Insight team to be invited to November meeting to present [England] Swims data.

1.7 **Leadership Group Updates**

1.7.1 Artistic Swimming: Lots of activity has been going on within AS, primarily around the FINA rule changes. Concerns over competitions and the availability of suitable pools. Two-day, in person, conference being held in December for coaches and officials with the focus on FINA rule changes.

1.7.2 Clubs: Nothing to update

1.7.3 Diving: AH was unable to attend the meeting so will circulate an update via email.

Action: AH to circulate update.

1.7.4 Swimming: Updates are being made to the J1 training to remove the need to attend L1 or L2 meets to qualify. Conversations are being held about the requirement to wear white for officiating. Conversations are ongoing regarding meet licensing for third party organisations.

1.7.5 Water Polo: BWPL will be reducing the number of divisions due to a lack of referees and table officials. There is a group scoping the possibility of a new conference league which will require a lower level of official. Consideration is also being given to developing a junior league. Judicial processes for Water Polo are being reviewed due to the current timescales in progressing matters. A proposal will be brought to SOC in due course. Recruitment for the group is ongoing.

1.8 **SE Board minutes** 14 September 2022
The minutes were noted.

2. **Items for Decision**

2.1 **Competitive Diving Depths**

JG provided an update on the current position with the insurance provider and the recommendation for a transition period for clubs until September 2023 after which all diving would need to be in to water 1.35m or deeper. During the interim period, the risk of diving into shallow water would be mitigated by limiting the height from which participants can dive into water that is 1m to 1.35m in depth and requiring relevant risk mitigations to be put in place as appropriate. Diving will not be permitted at all into water under 1m in depth. All swimmers would also be required to hold their Competitive Start Award.

Once the paper is finalised, following confirmation from the insurers that the mitigations would be acceptable, SLG will have a meeting to consider the proposal following which a final document will be brought back to SOC members to ratify. JG is to confirm if the SE Board also need to approve due to the changes in regulations and impact on insurance.

Members discussed concerns over the level of the Competitive Start Award. It was noted the LTS team have been tasked with producing resources to support the

clubs and highlight the importance of members completing the award properly. JG is to look into clubs declaring on OMS that swimmers have passed the award which will help to increase the profile and significance of the award.

The safety of turns in shallow water was raised. JG advised that this issue had been risk assessed and that further action was not considered to be necessary.

The new FINA depth requirements for AS will be looked at and appropriate action taken if deemed necessary.

Action: JG to:

- **Bring proposal back to SOC following agreement at SLG**
- **Investigate OMS recording for the Competitive Start Award.**
- **Check whether the proposal will need to go to Board.**

2.2 **Artistic Swimming rule change**

KM advised that FINA are introducing substantive changes to the structure of AS with routine difficulty being declared in advance by coaches and officials requiring further training.

SOC members were asked to consider the three proposals:

- Agree to adopt FINA changes from 1 January 2023.
- Recommend to the SE Board that the changes are adopted.
- Support the ASLG in implementing the changes using internal staff resources.

Discussion considered the feasibility of the timescales in delivering the changes for 1 January 2023, noting that this would be ambitious. It was agreed that support would likely be available but the proposed plan would need to be elaborated to determine the skills and resource needed to drive delivery forward. The scope of the changes will be wide-ranging and will require input from numerous teams who will need to factor this into their work programmes as well as arranging for upskilling of the wider workforce.

SOC members agreed that further details are required to understand the resourcing implications, from both staffing and financial perspectives. There is a requirement for GW to spend time understanding the changes to assess the requirement of his team.

There is an understanding for the need to bring the rules in for international competition but time can be taken to ensure a structure framework and phased introduction to the clubs within agreed timescales. It was agreed that the enthusiasm from the ASLG is welcomed but the internal management of resources needs to be considered within the plan.

SOC members agreed with concerns over the speed of implementation but were supportive of delivering the changes within realistic timescales. GW advised that he will meet with CC and Karen Thorpe (Artistic Swimming Programmes Lead) to define how a project plan can be outlined and bring this back to the November SOC meeting.

Action: GW to meet with CC and KT to develop plan.

SOC thanked the ASLG for their work so far on this issue, and the future work on it that they will complete.

3. Items for Discussion
3.1 Strategy discussion

GW advised members that the strategy paper was the same as the SE Board had received. The Board have requested small amendments but are happy with the 'direction of travel' of the document and a high level implementation plan will be presented to them on 14 December. The paper has also been shared with the Regional Chairs who are supportive.

Moving forwards, the way of working will be moving towards a more collaborative approach with an even greater focus on learning. Members agreed it is important to increase both access to and the desirability of aquatics for all and this should be reflected in the wording.

Once finalised, the aim will be to communicate the strategy as widely as possible and it will be made public. Engaging with stakeholders to implement the strategy and co-create solutions will be key.

The importance of improving diversity and inclusion was recognised with members noting that Swim England will need to lead from the front to drive changes.

At the face-to-face meeting in January it is proposed that time will be spent looking at the elements of the strategy which are most relevant for SOC members. The meeting will consider how the strategy can be most effectively brought to life through the sports and for example any requirements to develop discipline specific strategies to ensure alignment and working together to achieve a common goal.

Action: Strategy discussion to be added to January meeting agenda.

4. Items to Note
4.1 Business Engagement update

RC introduced an overview of her directorate advising more focussed sessions can be delivered in future if required.

The Business Engagement (BE) Team are responsible for collaboratively driving income across multiple business areas and are usually the first port of call for people wanting support.

The key areas of the BE team were outlined as:

- Working with Operators
- Train the workforce
- Support the provision of sustainable facilities

The BE Team work with operators to promote links from LTS, school swimming and clubs in conjunction with other departments. SOC members suggested more could be done to promote the pathways, potentially becoming a core education piece for parents.

A further key area of work for the BE team is the network meetings that are held. The pool owner and operator meetings that were established during COVID are well attended with high engagement levels.

RC continued to provide details of Business Solutions which was launched in 2019 and provides an assessment of centres to offer tailored recommendations for improvement and maximisation of the aquatic offer.

The Water Wellbeing Accreditation was highlighted, which supports facilities to become a health hub. There will be 48 sites added by early 2023 with another 150 sites anticipated by the end of 2024.

Sarah Green was welcomed to the meeting to share the coach education pathway and structure. SG started by outlining the key departments involved in the pathway and their roles, including the Institute of Swimming and the technical expertise across the organisation, highlighting the collaborative process involved in developing the qualifications.

Members queried the potential to incorporate a greater focus on the soft skills of coaching in addition to the technical element. SG agreed more could be done but this would increase the length of the course, an alternative possibility of developing as a CPD was noted.

SG advised that she will liaise with the team regarding plans for upskilling individuals who have completed previous iterations of the coaching courses to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date.

SG was thanked for attending.

5. AOB

- 5.1 **Health and Safety Forum:** GW reported that Lois Jarvis (Director of Legal) has led an open recruitment process which has identified a strong candidate for the Chair role with relevant experience. Following agreement on the final details GW will circulate a proposal via email to SOC members for their approval.

Action: GW to circulate proposal re: Health and Safety Forum Chair role.

- 5.2 **2023 meeting dates:** the dates proposed to enable alignment to SE Board were agreed.

- 5.3 **Energy prices and pool viability:** KM suggested promoting simple hygiene practices to members could help operators reduce the frequency of energy consuming activities (e.g. backwashing). RC confirmed that this has already been promoted to operators but it could be revisited and circulated to clubs as well.

6. Future Meeting Dates (all online unless stated otherwise)

- Tuesday 22 November 2022, 10am
- Tuesday 17 January 2023, 11am – in-person at SportPark
- Tuesday 28 February 2023, 10am
- Tuesday 2 May 2023, 10am
- Tuesday 27 June 2023, 10am
- Tuesday 12 September 2023, 10am
- Tuesday 28 November 2023, 10am,