

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 12 September 2023

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:

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| Joan Wheeler (JW) | Swim England Board Member (Chair) |
| Neil Booth (NB) | Swim England Board Member |
| Amy Bryant (AB) | Swim England Member |
| Ian Mackenzie (IM) | Swim England Member |
| Keith Munday (KM) | Swim England Member |
| John Hidle (JH) | Regional Chairs Representative |
| Ellie Conway (EC) | Youth Advisory Panel Representative |
| 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 |
| Helen Weeks (HW) | Sports Governance and Welfare Manager |
| Brian Havill (BWH) | Chief Financial Officer |
| Kerry Watkiss (KW) | Head of Insight |
| Kevin Suckling (KS) | Head of Safeguarding and Welfare |
| Leanne Brace (LB) | Head of Membership Development |
| Mike Hawkes (MH) | Head of Diversity and Inclusion |

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairperson's welcome

Members were welcomed to the meeting. JW reported that HW would be supporting the Committee while Claire Coleman was on maternity leave.

1.2 Apologies

Alex Harrison.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

None.

1.4 Declarations of AOB

JH wished to raise an issue arising from the Club Leadership Group Minutes.

1.5 Minutes from previous meetings:

27 June 2023: The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

1.6 Actions from previous meetings

1.6.1 23.12 – Trophies and Awards National Events Policy: to be added to November agenda.

1.6.2 23.13 – National Events Competition Plan: to be added to November agenda.

- 1.6.3 23.15 – Risk Assessment Portal: transferred to new platform, issues being corrected and access expected during September.
- 1.6.4 23.33 – WP regulation changes: IM to pick up with HW.

2. Items to Note

2.1 Club Junior Category

LB was welcomed to the meeting.

The circulated paper built on previous SOC discussions regarding the reduction in under 8 year's membership as well as incorporating SLT input regarding financial considerations. LB explained the proposal to create a new membership category to enable the communication of more tailored information and outlined the financial implications of the proposals regarding fees.

Following extensive discussion, suggestions for consideration included how to link into LTS programmes, introducing a nationwide price cap for the category and the implications for other categories of membership and for regions and counties.

It was agreed that further work on the proposal was required to reconsider financial aspects as well as the target audience.

Action: LB to return to a future meeting.

2.2 Update on Safeguarding

KS was welcomed to the meeting.

An overview of the current number of investigations in progress was given, confirming that numbers are comparable with other similarly sized NGBs.

Details of a recent survey that determined whether young people know whom to talk to if they have issues, alongside the likelihood of making disclosures were outlined. Responses indicated that the majority know who to talk to but that these disclosures were unlikely to be made to the club welfare officer, highlighting work to be completed.

KS provided updates on a number of areas the team have been working on, including:

- The CPSU interim audit for which the results are expected shortly.
- A tightening in terms of safeguarding requirements for the enhance swim school membership.
- Globocol case management pilot, which will help with reporting low-level concerns.
- Sport England welfare officers to provide help and support for club welfare officers.
- Swim England Talent and Events Welfare Officer has been interviewed for and will work in the talent space.
- Working with regions to enable them to be less reliant on volunteers.
- Tightening any safeguarding loopholes that are apparent.

Team capacity was questioned, noting the increase in cases. KS advised a business case for an additional Case Officer has been submitted.

The need for an independent club welfare officer was queried, noting that some athletes may feel more comfortable disclosing to an adult they are familiar with. KS advised this is in line with CPSU guidance and undertook to discuss this further with KM outside of the meeting. A suggestion was to run a campaign to increase awareness of the role of welfare officer.

2.3 **Listening Exercise**

KW was welcomed to the meeting.

KW explained that the Listening Programme originated from the Heart of Aquatics plan, to develop a culture of listening to the aquatics community across the country.

Independent experts, The Behavioural Architects (TBA), are undertaking the research to ensure the community feel comfortable to share independently. The programme will listen to current and past experiences along with hopes for the future via the use of guiding questions. The programme will evolve depending on responses received.

The reasoning behind the selecting TBA was provided, highlighting their previous experience and the on boarding of a clinical psychologist for the project.

The project commenced in March with TBA immersing themselves into aquatics to gain an understanding of the community. An initial survey is currently being analysed prior to a qualitative deep dive where digital platforms will be used to record information alongside interviews with the aquatics community being completed.

The findings of the survey will be shared via an interim report with the Oversight Committee to review in October, with the final report to be produced following the remainder of the research. It is planned to publish the report on the website shortly after receipt.

2.4 **Strategy Update**

RC provided an update on the SE Strategy. Metrics and KPIs are being agreed to provide targets to work towards for all priority areas.

A strategic implementation group has been formed with Heads of Service from relevant areas and SLT members. The group will determine the key focus areas for the organisation and develop action plans to support their delivery.

2.5 **Transgender verification process**

MH was welcomed to the meeting.

The process for referees to report individuals who may not be competing in the correct category was detailed. Referees will not be required to investigate but may be contacted for further information.

MH confirmed that the result would stand for the event and any changes are to be managed retrospectively.

Officials across all disciplines will receive details for their discipline and a link to the reporting form by the end of the month.

2.6 **Budget 2023 mid-year update**

BWH was welcomed to the meeting.

An overview of income and expenditure was provided, detailing that 90% of income results from Awards, IOS and membership, supported by Sport England funding. During 2023, both the IOS and Awards have had very strong years while membership is expected to achieve 2019 income by year end. BWH outlined the changes to Sport England funding since the pandemic as well as highlighting some projects that receive ring-fenced funding. Details of other income streams were also shared.

BWH outlined focus areas of spend, requesting input from SOC as to areas of interest. This was confirmed to be the proportion across the disciplines and ensuring members are fairly represented as well as expenditure by activity.

Discussion considered variance across the disciplines and where SE contributions and Sport England contributions differ.

Prior to returning to the November meeting, BWH and JW will discuss what is to be included in the report.

Action: BWH and JW to discuss November report.

3. Items for Decision

3.1 Harold Fern and A. H. Turner Awards

As previously agreed by SOC, JW, AH and Claire Coleman met to discuss how to improve nomination levels for the awards.

The group had concluded that there continued to be a demand for these awards for exceptional long service, but that changes should be made to the timescales and scope for nomination. The funding, which had originally paid for the awards, had been used some years ago.

Key recommendations were outlined as:

- Update the timescales to link in with the National Awards ceremony in November.
- Circulating timescales to Regional Chairs and the offices.
- Including Discipline Leadership Groups to enable national nominations.
- Remove the financial award.
- Review the certificate.

The Committee agreed the recommendations to be implemented from 2024. It was noted that the changes would require a change both to the 2024 Handbook and to a policy document.

Action: JW would establish whether the changes needed Board approval and progress Handbook and policy changes.

3.2 Updated affiliation criteria for third party organisations

HW introduced the report by explaining the need to strengthen SE's commitment to safeguarding and welfare across all the sports in affiliated third party organisations. The initial focus had been on boarding schools and specific school clubs, and the report before the committee detailed the additional evidence that will be required from affiliated clubs in this category. HW proposed that implementation would begin from 1 October 2023 with new clubs having to agree and existing organisations having six months to provide details.

The Committee approved the proposal with HW to discuss with the Director of Legal to clarify whether SE Board approval is required before implementation.

4. Leadership Group updates

4.1 Artistic Swimming

No update.

4.2 Clubs

Discussion considered the suspension of clubs when affiliation requirements had not been met alongside the impact on members. The provision of insurance and safeguarding athletes at events were taken into consideration in addition to ensuring members are not penalised.

HW was asked to clarify the member insurance provision and provide details to SOC members via email so that a decision could be made

Action: HW to clarify insurance provision and update SOC members.

4.3 Diving

No update. The minutes were noted and attention was drawn to the Chair planning to step down. JW is to discuss with them.

4.4 Swimming

No meeting held since last SOC meeting.

4.5 Water Polo

The minutes were noted.

5. AOB

None recorded

6. 2023 Meeting Dates

- Tuesday 28 November 2023, 10am.

Proposed 2024 meeting dates to be circulated following agreement of the SE Board dates.