

Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

20th November 2023 18:30 – 20:00, Zoom

Attendees:

Maria Ramos (MR) - Chair
Keith Munday (KM) - Sport Operations Committee Leadership Group Liaison
Louise Ross (LR) - Coaching Lead
Hannah Secher (HS) - Workforce Lead
Ian Atkinson (IA) – Competition Lead
Sarah Clarke (SC) - Athlete Reward and Recognition Lead
Karen Thorpe (KT) - Artistic Swimming Manager
Helen Weeks (HW) – Swim England Sport Governance and Welfare Manager
Gareth Picken (GP) – Swim England Sport Development Administrator

Additional:

Becky Walker (BW) - Club Growth & Programmes Manager (during items 1 and 2)

Apologies:

Ekaterina Boyd (EB) – Swim England Head of Events

Standing Items	
1.	Chairs welcome and Apologies
	MR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received by EB ahead of the meeting. MR mentioned that the actions from the action log will be addressed throughout.
2.	2023 Conference
	<p>BW began by updating the group on the progress made towards the Artistic Swimming conference taking place on the 2nd and 3rd December.</p> <p>BW reported that the majority of those who have booked onto the conference have paid, however there are a few remaining attendees yet to pay. BW agreed and an action noted for a follow up email to be sent to the people remaining.</p> <p>Action – BW to email any conference attendees yet to pay.</p> <p>BW mentioned that there would be around 95 attendees on the Saturday and 83 attendees for the Sunday with around 40 clubs being represented. The latest data shows that there are approximately 55 clubs registered with some known to be relatively inactive. .</p> <p>BW agreed to circulate a full list of attendees with club details, once all payments have been received. ASLG would review the list and approach any missing clubs directly to encourage attendance.</p> <p>Action – BW to share a full list of conference attendees with the ASLG.</p> <p>HS explained that following GP’s email regarding the attendees for the Judges courses that will take place on the Sunday, there were a couple of people who have since removed themselves for the courses due to ineligibility or misunderstanding of the course.</p>

Action – BW to investigate whether those initially booked onto the Saturday and Sunday have since been reimbursed due to not needing to attend the Sunday.

MR concluded that the conference content is coming together; the next step is for those who are presenting at the conference, to create their presentations and submit them to MR by 30 November

BW asked the group how they would like to collect feedback of the conference after the weekend.

The group mentioned that in the past they have had a QR code which led attendees to a survey to fill out.

BW agreed that if they group wanted to proceed with the survey, she would be happy to support with its creation, however the content would need to come from the group.

Following a discussion regarding whether there was a pro forma list of survey questions, MR agreed to formulate a list of questions which could then be sent to BW for the survey to be created.

Action – MR to create and send a list of survey questions to BW.

KM asked whether GoCardless would be attending the conference and promoting their work as payment method of choice for the conference.

BW replied that they wouldn't be this year as the conference is not a Swim England sponsored event but rather one developed and run by the Artistic Swimming Leadership Group.

MR explained that this is being branded Swim England and should be considered as such. But requested that if commercial sponsors allowed to promote their goods and services, suitable funding should be provided (eg through no payment fees). Anecdotal feedback was that the payment process was a big source of frustration. This was particularly the case for attendees banking with smaller banks who aren't linked with GoCardless.

SC suggested attendees should have the ability to submit questions ahead of the conference for the group to ensure they cover at the conference.

Whilst there was some concern it would divert the agenda, it was felt this would be a good opportunity to make sure big questions and concerns were addressed during the weekend.

MR followed asking whether BW could send out a reminder email to the attendees ahead of the conference in which an online survey would be added for questions to be asked.

BW agreed with the concept but couldn't commit to working through the responses gained through the survey; this would have to be done by the ASLG. SC recommended using Microsoft Forms to reduce the administration burden and would develop a form to be included.

Action – BW to send out a reminder email for the conference including a questions box.

Action – SC to create a survey question documents which BW can submit the questions onto.

Actions - GP to send the most up to date presentation format to the group.

	<p>After a prompt from KM< BW advised there was small overspend due to slightly fewer attendees signing up to offset the expenditure and agreement to keep the fees as £15 rather than £20 as approved by ASLG.</p> <p>MR thanked BW and GP for the administration support they have provided the group in the lead up to the conference.</p> <p>BW left the meeting at 19:10.</p>
3.	<p>2024 Competition Rules</p> <p>MR advised the Competition Rules updates were in progress and would be completed by end November for review and sign off.</p> <p>KM asked if the Group was confident that the preparations to introduce the new rules were at a suitable enough state for full rollout.</p> <p>The Group confirmed that it was confident that National Championship (Junior, Senior and Age Groups) would be run under the full Aquatics Rules. Some adaptations would be made for Regional, County and Open and Combo Cup with a hybrid solution. The aim remains for full roll out by 2025 but would be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient experience and volume of volunteers to run these successfully.</p> <p>In response to a question from KM about capacity and experience, the group agreed to keep monitoring to ensure training and chances to practice in a live environment takes place during 2024 and to adjust if necessary.</p> <p>Following MR's Competition Rules update, a discussion took place around the communication channels that are available for members of the Artistic Swimming community; particularly those who officiate at competitions but aren't a member of an artistic swimming club. (eg scorers) It was agreed that this would be reviewed at a later date.</p>
4.	<p>Updates from each of the Leads</p>
4.1	<p>Grades</p> <p>SC updates the group that there were a couple of administration tasks left to complete.</p> <p>HS asked SC to send through the list of grade days so that she could add these dates to the artistic swimming calendar.</p> <p>Action – SC to send through the dates of the grade days to HS.</p> <p>KT mentioned to the group that an issue had been raised to welfare about the process for measuring a land element at a grade day, Upon investigating with the Region, it was discovered an old version of the log book was still on the website and had been downloaded and used.</p> <p>SC has contacted the Region to inform them to use the correct forms. The outdated rules are to be removed from the website to avoid any confusion and the judge made aware that they followed the incorrect information.</p> <p>ASLG agreed this appeared to be an operational issue rather than a welfare issue but steps must be taken to ensure the updated guidance is communicated</p> <p>Action: SC to contact the senior judge involved and issue a reminder to all Regional Managers and Senior Judges about the process.</p>

	<p>HS suggested that a message should be sent out to all clubs explaining if at a grade day their athletes are being asked to do/wear something that doesn't seem correct, to voice their concern to the senior judges.</p> <p>As part of the new rule changes, SC highlighted that there is a need to update the routine grades content.</p> <p>It was agreed by the group that it would be too soon for the tables to be updated and implemented by the start of 2024, thus the start of 2025 would be more achievable.</p> <p>Action – The ASLG to create a working group who will support with the development of the routine grades throughout 2024.</p>
4.2	Coaching Programme
	<p>LR updated the group that she is has received requests from coaches asking for more education into acrobatics and how to coach them at their clubs within the pool.</p> <p>HS confirmed that on the 6th January there will be a Basic Acrobatics Connecting with Coaches course taking place.</p> <p>KT advised coaches continue to be invited to all sessions, and it was agreed that where possible dates for practical sessions could be agreed in advance and communicated within the community and direct to those coaches who request it.</p> <p>Action - KT to look into would look into running a few practical days for coaches that need further education for acrobatics.</p> <p>LR proposed that a guide be created to walk through the figures and how to perform them, which could be found on the website, as some of the resources currently available for coaches are not clear.</p> <p>MR agreed with the proposal by LR, asking the group whether there were any additional contacts, former coaches, who would be willing to support this development.</p> <p>HW made the point that she could speak with the Swim England Marketing and Communications team and Swim England Qualifications team to develop an up to date package of resources for the figures that could be referred to by all coaches.</p> <p>Action – HW to talk with the SE Marketing and Communication team and Swim England Qualifications team to update the resources offered on the website.</p> <p>MR asked LR to prepare a list of the key actions and moves that coaches need support with and from that the group can reach out to an external source to support.</p> <p>Action – LR to list the key movements that coaches are struggling with the most.</p> <p>MR proposed that at the Artistic Swimming conference, attendees should be asked which courses they require and how often. From the data collected, courses should be booked in accordingly and in a manageable process.</p>
4.3	Officials
	<p>HS updated the group that three upskilling officials' courses have taken place with a J1 online course due to take place on Tuesday 28th and Thursday 30th of November. J2, J3 and Technical Controllers course will all be taking place as part of the Artistic Swimming conference.</p>

	<p>To adapt to the changes between scoring figures and scoring routines, the scorers' course has been split between face-to-face and online. The face-to-face element will be targeted at new scorers wanting to assist with scoring figures. The online element will be targeted at national scorers and those who want to assist in the scoring of routines. This will run from January 2024.</p> <p>In respect of international judges, HS is waiting on the international calendar which will outline dates of the international judging courses.</p> <p>It was agreed that the current list would remain and no changes required for 2024, but further discussions need to be held about the process of reviewing the list and inviting new candidates for consideration.</p> <p>All agreed the process must be open and transparent and would be approved by ASLG.</p> <p>A discussion developed about whether there were enough scorers in England and whether there need to be a recruitment drive to engage future scorers.</p>
4.4	<p>Development</p>
	<p>HW begin by requesting that the group promotes the Club Health Tracker (CHT) amongst the wider community.</p> <p>HW advised that this is a yearly programme, although clubs can start at any time, after which they can monitor their progress and compare their results to other clubs in their region and nationally.</p> <p>MR confirmed she has received slides from Alice Fairhall regarding the CHT which she is going to use at the Artistic Swimming conference.</p> <p>Additionally, HW updated the group that during 2024, the growth team will be developing and implementing a growth toolkit to develop the individual disciplines and the link between Learn to Swim and Clubs. The feedback acquired through the Sporting Frameworks pilot will be used to support the development of this toolkit.</p> <p>Action – HW to send GP the key projects documents which GP will distribute to all attendees.</p> <p>HS identified the need for an 'Introduction to Judging' online programme. Would this be something that Swim England could support this?</p> <p>HW agreed this could be looked into, asking KT whether anything was added into the implementation plan.</p> <p>KT explained that there is clearly a need for the discipline to have a development officer but currently there is not the resources available for this to progress.</p> <p>HS wondered whether this would be better suited under the volunteering team within the Swim England Development team.</p> <p>HW recommended that HS formulated a document that outlines the requirements, whilst HW speaks with Lisa Whyte, Volunteering Manager.</p>

	<p>Action – HS to create a plan detailing the content of the ‘Introduction to Judging’ online programme. HW to discuss capacity with Lisa Whyte, Volunteering Manager.</p> <p>MR highlighted that she has been advised of three artistic swimming clubs, who have been part of multi discipline clubs, now being told that they need to disassociate and create new standalone clubs with unrealistic deadlines.</p> <p>MR provided the names of the three clubs involved for HW to investigate further and to report back to ASLG</p> <p>KM advised the new Sport Development Director Ally Whike was now in post and should be introduced to the group.</p> <p>KT informed the group that Ally is well known to Artistic Swimming through his Scottish connections.</p> <p>Action – MR and Ally Whike to meet ahead of the next meeting.</p> <p>Action – GP to invite Ally Whike to the next ASLG meeting.</p>
5	<p>2024 meeting calendar</p>
	<p>GP provided the group with the provisional ASLG meeting calendar for the duration of 2024.</p> <p>These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -19th February - 19th March (Regional Managers Meeting) - 8th April - 3rd June - 2nd October (Regional managers Meeting) - 14th October - 18th November - The 2024 Artistic Swimming conference was proposed for the 7th/8th December. <p>Action – GP to send out invites to the 2024 meetings.</p> <p>HW left the meeting at 20:30</p>
6.	<p>AOB</p>
	<p>KT updated the group that artistic swimming has been successful in their application for an uplift from UK Sport which will support the Senior duet progress to Paris. The athletes have been awarded an APA which will be backdated to October.</p> <p>14 places have been offered in TASS which will support the athletes. There are also 13 athletes on DISE. 47 athletes who have been selected onto the national programme which will be supported by 9 staff, some of whom are former international athletes.</p> <p>KT advised of a successful bid to the International Olympic Committee to provide funding to develop new coaches on the national programme.</p> <p>Analysis for 2023 shows over 250 training days for all of the national squads throughout the season.</p> <p>Currently only one region has submitted their regional competition dates so KT will be following up with the remaining regions.</p>

	KT confirmed there is now a new coach card which presented at the conference and uploaded to the website.
7.	Close of meeting
	MR thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting at 20:37