

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 6 February 2024

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

Present:

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
Ally White (AW)	Sport Development Director
Jon Glenn (JG)	Learn to Swim and Workforce Director

Staff:

Claire Coleman (CC)	Head of Development
Ali Sibcy-Allen (AS-A)	Operations Administration Manager
Helen Weeks (HW)	Sports Governance and Welfare Manager
Leanne Brace (LB)	Head of Membership Development

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairperson's welcome

Members were welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

Alex Harrison, Rebecca Cox.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

KM: Item 2.4

IM: Item 4

1.4 Declarations of AOB

None recorded.

1.5 Minutes from previous meetings:

28 November 2023: following amendment of the date and a change in terminology for item 5.8, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: AS-A to update the text and re-publish the minutes.

1.6 Actions from previous meetings:

17/01/23 23.01 1.7.3 Diving Leadership Group – JW had discussed this with AH, who had confirmed that, as this was a long term plan, the item should be removed from the Action Log.

1.6.1 23.15 – Risk Assessment Portal: delays in sending feedback requires access to be reset. AS-A had met with the insurers in January and has a further meeting in March.

2. **Update from the Sport Development Directorate**

The paper taken as read, with AW providing further details:

- Event content for the Summer Meet is amended with the SLG to publish information shortly. As a result of an extension of the competition days, a small increase in loss is forecast.
- Stretch funding for talent has been agreed with Sport England. In conjunction with British Swimming, a third national centre is to be established in Manchester, which will integrate Olympic swimming and Para swimming programmes. An additional level of capacity for the performance programme will be created, with a Head Coach to be recruited in the coming months.
- Successes at the World Championships were highlighted, including
 - The AS duet's silver medal success.
 - The women's Water Polo team qualifying to attend.
 - Olympic spots secured in the 10km open water events.

Internal discussions are reviewing the LTS and club links with the details provided during training courses but not necessarily conveyed further. The need to consider the needs of all disciplines, pool operators and clubs was noted. AB offered to assist with discussions over transition from LTS to an artistic section.

AW advised that a paper will be brought to a future meeting regarding improving the LTS/Club link incorporating communications and driving interest in the sports as well.

The work Swim England Qualifications (SEQ) are completing with Approved Training Centres (ATCs), including the IOS, to address the shortage of teachers was detailed. SEQ are meeting with ATCs to support them in increasing their course delivering, noting that pool access can be a limiting factor. JG confirmed that the Workforce Survey provide details of swimming teacher demographics. Agreed that SOC should receive a report on this issue at a future meeting.

Action: AS-A to include in Action Log and agree a suitable date for a report with JG and RC.

2.1 **Compliance**

HW advised that initial analysis of club and coach compliance had started to be completed however given the vast amount of data this needs to be tailored.

SOC preferences for the presentation of received data were advised. The need to provide a club details as a percentage for comparison reasons, due to the varying number of clubs across the regions, was noted.

HW is to update in due course with reporting likely to be on a quarterly basis.

2.2 **Working Together: A guide for coaches and committees**

CC provided a background of the initiative, formerly known as 'The Deal', highlighting the impact committee and coach relationships have for club members, especially where these are problematic.

Clubs and coaches have asked for support with the aim to help develop robust relationships, along with aiding parent interactions and educating around the sport.

The draft proposal outlines five key areas where clubs and coaches have identified struggles. Consultation will consist of discussion meetings, to ensure meaningful engagement, across a number of groups and all disciplines.

CC outlined the next steps, highlighting that some content is to be developed prior to, and during, consultation.

The guidance is due to be launched from Summer 2024 following input from clubs and regions as to how best to embed this within the clubs.

SOC members welcomed the initiative.

2.3 **Regional Chairs**

The SwimMark review, communications and collaborative working have been discussed with Regional Chairs. Regions have been invited to attend the Sport Development Directorate's planning day to provide feedback and input into the 2025 plan.

The Regional Agreements are being reworked to ensure that they are fit for purpose and will be brought to SOC for information following the Regional Chairs meeting in March.

2.4 **Wavepower**

The updated Wavepower document was published on 3 January and has received a large amount of interest. Clubs have been offered the opportunity to attend sessions to aid understanding of the changes, why these have been made and the associated impact.

AW advised that as a live document, amends are able to be made following the receipt of feedback. An index of changes will be included.

The associated messaging when documents such as Wavepower are circulated was discussed, highlighting that SE need to advise when changes are being driven by external organisations.

3. **SwimMark Review**

The shared paper provided an overview of the planned approach for the review, outlining the scope as well as timescales.

JH reported the Regional Chairs had expressed concerns about the lack of representation on the Project Group. CC advised that regions would very much be involved in the Review as would clubs and other significant stakeholders who would be involved via the focus and consultation groups.

After discussion, it was agreed that HW would update the paper to further clarify club consultation as well as outlining the involvement for each group.

Action: HW to update paper to clarify the extent of consultation and involvement for each stakeholder group.

4. **Membership**

LB was welcomed to the meeting, with the paper being taken as read. Two recommendations were included within the paper, which set out the current issues, summarised the proposed changes and highlighted the complexities of the affiliations.

Presenting the paper, LB explained that currently there are no mechanisms in place for confirming or changing affiliations. Additionally, national organisations are required to affiliate to a region, despite having limited access to regional services and no access to competitions. LB outlined how the categories could be adapted to be increase their suitability and enable better relationships to be developed. The report also considered the governance of the categories and the use of SE insurance, noting the potential risk for reputational damage due to a lack of checks.

Discussion considered whether national club members would be eligible for local events, noting this would be determined by the event conditions. National club members also have the opportunity to also join a local club to enable local event participation.

SOC members agreed the proposal was a positive step and emphasised the importance of ensuring standards are comparable to those in place for clubs.

SOC members approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

5. Health and Safety Forum Update

AW updated the Committee to advise that the Forum had acknowledged and further discussed the feedback SOC members had provided.

The current challenge is to determine what the Forum are looking for in the data provided by the insurers and how they want this presented to allow for interpretation. The opportunity for clubs to effectively report back to SOC was noted.

Following the requested updates, the TOR will be updated and returned to SOC for approval.

Action: AW to bring updated TORs to future SOC meeting.

6. Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone Policy

Following approval of the Policy at a previous meeting, discussion with consultation groups had resulted in further clarification in a number of areas. SOC members were provided with the updated policy for information.

SOC asked that further clarity regarding the qualifications required be added to the FAQs.

Action: HW to update FAQs to provide further clarity on required qualifications.

7. Leadership Group updates

7.1 Artistic Swimming

KM reported that the coach conference was well attended, with interesting presentations which were well received by the audience.

7.2 Clubs

SwimMark review was the key discussion at the most recent meeting.

7.3 Diving

AW reported that risks regarding 'Dive Recorder' have been identified and are being reviewed by a working group. A paper will come to SOC in due course.

A Competition Lead had been appointed to the DLG, with an additional appointment to the Group expected soon.

7.4 **Swimming**

Nothing further to add.

7.5 **Water Polo**

AW reported that following success at the recent European Championships, unprecedented for many years, the women's GB team are competing in the World Championships in Doha. Costs arising from this have been jointly funded by SE and British Swimming.

IM reported that the Inter Regional Championships and National Age Groups have started to be held.

7.6 **Youth Advisory Panel**

No updates to the minutes.

8. **AOB**

8.1 SOC vacancy is currently being advertised with applications due to close on 11 February. Interviews will be arranged in due course.

9. **2024 Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday 5 March, 10.30am, Zoom
- Tuesday 30 April, 10.30am, SportPark
- Tuesday 18 June, 10.30am, Zoom
- Tuesday 20 August, 10.30am, Zoom
- Tuesday 26 November, 10.30am, Zoom