

# Swim England Sport Operations Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2024

### Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting

<b>Present:</b>	Joan Wheeler (JW)	Swim England Board Member (Chair)
	Neil Booth (NB)	Swim England Board Member
	Amy Bryant (AB)	Swim England Member
	Alex Harrison (AH)	Swim England Member
	Keith Munday (KM)	Swim England Member
	Richard Palmer-Jones (RPJ)	Swim England Member
	John Hidle (JH)	Regional Chairs Representative
	Ellie Conway (EC)	Youth Advisory Panel
	Ally White (AW)	Sport Development Director
<b>Staff:</b>	Claire Coleman (CC)	Head of Development
	Hannah Foster (HF)	Executive Operations Manager
	Helen Weeks (HW) <i>(item 5 only)</i>	Sport Governance & Welfare Manager

### Min No:

#### 1. Standing Items

##### 1.1 Chairperson's welcome

1.1.1 Members were welcomed to the virtual meeting. The Chair reported that Ali Sibcy-Allen who supported the Committee's administration has left Swim England. JW has written to thank her on behalf of the Committee.

##### 1.2 Apologies

1.2.1 Received from Rebecca Cox.

##### 1.3 Declarations of Interest

1.3.1 None recorded.

##### 1.4 Declarations of AOB

1.4.1 The epilepsy policy was noted as an AOB item.

1.4.2 Several members raised queries regarding the AGM, and it was agreed that these be discussed as AOB.

##### 1.5 Minutes from previous meetings (30 April 2024):

1.5.1 The minutes were agreed to reflect a true and accurate record.

##### 1.6 Actions from previous meetings:

1.6.1 24.09 – Members agreed to have Compliance Reporting relating to teachers & coaches as a quarterly agenda item as relevant to the Committee.

1.6.2 24.10 – Craig McCulloch (Head of Coaching) will return to the November meeting.

1.6.3 24.11 – The review of Leadership Groups will be covered during item 7.

## **2. Sport Development Directorate**

2.1 The report was taken as read.

2.2 It was confirmed that a project group has been set up for the learn to swim pathway review which is currently looking at the next steps to action. The listed support includes several operators to ensure strategic guidance is gained.

2.3 The sport was discussed with reference to the parliament stance on the benefit of swimming. A video has been launched to ensure a message is broadcasted on the health benefits of swimming as well as being a lifesaving skill, in collaboration with the Royal College of Nursing.

2.4 **Action: AW to circulate the video.**

2.5 Regarding the National Awards, it was noted that individual stories would be used to drive marketing to celebrate the success of the awards.

2.6 Members questioned the decision not to include 'Young Volunteer' as an award category for 2024. CC explained that this is due to the nomination figures being lower than expected and patchy across regions, for the previous National Awards. It was noted that several Regions still have a young volunteer award, even if not rewarded nationally.

2.7 The Chair concluded the need to include the issue in a review of this year's awards, in addition to ongoing consultation with the Regions to provide a consensus.

2.8 AW reported that the Coach mentoring programme is focused on the soft skills as a part of coach development. The aim is to broaden the programme across all the sports to increase the opportunity for coaches from all disciplines, using existing coaches that are trained to deliver the programme. AW stated that the coaching mentoring programme is currently being rebranded, and once complete, will then be communicated.

2.9 The capacity of the Events Team will be enhanced by the recruitment of an additional member of staff for a duration of 1 year.

## **3. Update on Roadshows so far**

3.1 It was highlighted that 11 out of 13 Roadshows have taken place thus far, taking an overall positive experience from the completed sessions.

3.2 Engagement and connectivity have been welcomed by the aquatics community, evidencing that attendees want to make a positive impact across the sport. Individual stories have been shared that are both encouraging and challenging.

3.3 The majority of attendees have been from a club background, in addition to several operators and learn to swim individuals. As Swim England consider it important to gain views from all stakeholders, CEO Andy Salmon will go through a similar exercise with operators at the National Operator's Day to source their input.

3.4 Themes that have arisen thus far from the Roadshows are the importance of working better together including better connectivity between clubs, counties,

regions and Swim England, and engagement with people across a variety of platforms including face-to-face.

- 3.5 Key messages from the Roadshows have included the desire for more people to be involved in the sport whilst also retaining lifelong participation.
- 3.6 The Insight team are collating the data from the Roadshows in order to condense and create the key themes, which will be shared with the Committee in due course.
- 3.7 It was reported that CEO Andy Salmon has been explicit during each Roadshow about his commitment to refresh the strategy and noted this rationale as a driver for the Roadshows. From the feedback of members, this was evidenced to provide encouragement and confidence. The refreshed strategy that is to be formed as a result of the Roadshows will demonstrate listening and commitment to a positive change.

#### **4. Regional Updates**

- 4.1 JH provided an update following a recent meeting of the Regional Chairs Group.
- 4.2 Following the annual change in Chair of the Regional Chairs Group, Simon Kirkland will be working with AW to review and update the TORs and determine where that group best fits within the organisation.
- 4.3 A safeguarding working group has been proposed with a view to this being finalised as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Regional Chairs were concerned about significant changes being made to the Swim England Summer Championships part way through the season.
- 4.5 Regional governance is being aimed to have been in order by end of September 2024. There is a target of 75% compliance rate for Counties to reach by the end of the year.

#### **5. Compliance Reporting**

- 5.1 HW provided an update on compliance reporting for coaches & teachers and presented to Committee members.
- 5.2 It was noted that the update contains live data from 17 June for DBS & safeguarding training for Coaches and Teachers, and Club Chair and Welfare Officer data.
- 5.3 The DBS national compliance was presented at 95.5%. A safeguarding training overview for Coaches and Teachers showed a national figure of 88.1% compliance rate, with data split regionally. London presented as significantly lower than other regions.
- 5.4 Across all 933 clubs listed, 46 are not displaying a Chairperson under the organisation. Members discussed the education needed for clubs to ensure there is a marked Chairperson under the organisational banner. HW confirmed that collaboration is currently taking place with Regional Officers to aid that education.
- 5.5 Regarding the Welfare Officer role, there are 214 clubs showing as without the role under the organisational banner. HW stated work is taking place with the regions to enhance this and reminded the Committee that Masters clubs had previously not been required to have this role. As of 1 August 2024, there has to be a specific

Welfare role listed for all clubs as a designated point of contact. HW confirmed there is additional data that can be used to prioritise clubs that do not currently have a designated contact.

- 5.6 At present a skeleton framework has been developed after meeting with Regional Managers across all 8 regions to target clubs for those who are missing components of compliance. Following the Regional Chairs' meeting next steps were identified:
- Identify patterns and 'hot spots' – work with clubs and give them a period to change
  - Agree action plans with each region to improve compliance where necessary
  - Agree timelines for action
  - Agree acceptable % level of compliance
- 5.7 The Committee thanked HW for her time and welcomed her back quarterly to present updates and compliance trends.

## **6. Membership Fees**

6.1 The report was taken as read.

6.2 A recommendation was proposed to the Committee, to have a 3.8% increase for the 2025 membership fees in line with inflation.

6.3 Members deliberated the recommendation and the rationale of the increase. It was agreed that the membership fees should be reflective of the long-term plan, in addition to being mindful of how it should be communicated to members.

6.4 The Committee noted that the Board had removed the regulation requiring the approval of the Members Forum to approve fee increases above inflation. SOC members agreed that the committee would require more detailed information on proposed expenditure and predicted income streams if it were to be asked to comment on any proposals to make more significant changes to membership fees to deliver a revised strategy.

6.5 **Decision: That the proposed increases to membership fees, as set out in the report, be recommended to the Swim England Board for approval.**

## **7. Leadership Group updates**

7.0 JW confirmed the Leadership Review Group will first meet on 2 July to progress the project.

### **7.1 Minutes of Leadership Group meetings**

#### **7.1.1 Artistic Swimming**

The draft meeting minutes were noted.

A question was raised on preferred dates for the conference as regions would need to be made aware in order to move competitions if applicable.

**Action: CC to provide update on the preferred dates for the conference.**

#### **7.1.2 Clubs**

The minutes from the 1 May meeting were taken as read.

A discussion arose on club suspensions and failure to meet affiliations standards. Members agreed that they are collectively satisfied that Swim England are protecting members through the appropriate compliance standards.

#### 7.1.3 **Diving**

The minutes from the 28 May meeting were taken as read.

There were no questions from the Committee.

#### 7.1.4 **Swimming**

The minutes from the 16 May meeting were taken as read.

- 7.1.4.i. A member asked whether, given the shortage in swimming referees, the requirement for referee training should be based on competency rather than time passed since qualifying as a J2s.

**Action: Request that SLG ask the Swimming Officials Group to consider whether eligibility for referee training should be based on time lapsed or experience in terms of hours on poolside.**

- 7.1.4.ii. The transparency of the selection for talent programmes was also discussed.

**Action: Ensure the list of selections from the Swim England talent programme are accessible for everyone.**

#### 7.1.5 **Water Polo**

The draft meeting minutes from the 5 June were noted.

There were no questions from the Committee.

#### 7.1.6 **Youth Advisory Panel**

EC provided a brief verbal update as no meetings have taken place since the last Sport Operations Committee meeting.

A meeting is to be arranged in due course.

### 7.2 **Health and Safety Forum**

AW provided a verbal update. The TORs have been completed with the group as a collective. The role of the Chair has been agreed and will be advertised accordingly.

**Action: AW to circulate the Health and Safety Forum minutes.**

## 8. **AOB**

8.1 Epilepsy Policy – For information.

8.1.1 Members listed several concerns regarding the policy which included:

- Referring to other organisations
- Medical terminology and wording used
- Being easily recognisable by wearing a prominent coloured hat, as having a disability is a protected characteristic this raises attention, with the potential to be singled out
- Needs better clarity on whether it is guidance or policy
- No signposting listed in the document to support clubs

8.1.2 **Action: AW to work with policy writers and refresh the policy.**

8.2 AGM

8.2.1 Members raised several points on the AGM, which was agreed to be covered during the next Committee meeting.

8.2.2 **Action: HF to circulate the AGM papers, with the item included on the agenda for the next meeting.**

9. **2024 Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday 20 August, 10.30am, Zoom
- Tuesday 26 November, 10.30am, Zoom