

# Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 18:30 – 20:00,

## Attendees:

Maria Ramos (MR)	Chair
Louise Ross (LR)	Coaching Lead
Hannah Secher (HS)	Workforce Lead
Ian Atkinson (IA)	Competition Lead
Karen Thorpe (KT)	Artistic Swimming Manager
Keith Munday (KM)	Sport Operations Committee Leadership Group Liaison
Richard Blackshaw (RB)	Swim England Head of Performance
Claire Coleman (CC)	Swim England Head of Development
Gareth Picken (GP)	Swim England Sport Development Administrator

## Apologies:

Ekaterina Boyd (EB)	Swim England Head of Events
Sarah Clarke (SC)	Athlete Reward and Recognition Lead

MINUTES	
1.	<b>Chairs welcome and Apologies</b>
	MR opened the meeting and thanked everyone for joining. Apologies received from EB & SC.
2.	<b>Action Log</b>
	MR suggested that the action log is reviewed and updated outside of the meeting.
3.	<b>The Depths Project</b>
	POSTPONED TO THE NEXT MEETING – MR advised the group that she would meet with Richard Lamburn, Head of Facilities, to understand the results of the research and how it was informing the proposal before bringing it to the group for consideration.  <b>Action: EB to coordinate meeting upon her return from leave.</b>
4.	<b>Communications:</b>
4.1	A formal update from CC about outcomes of the recent complaints from clubs via the Regional Chairs.
	CC had led an investigation following recent complaints from Club Chairs about the changes to the Grades on 1 January 2025.  A paper was circulated to the group summarising the issues and proposing actions for consideration, the paper summarised:  To agree a way forward to improve communication within the Artistic Swimming Community.  To understand how changes and ongoing development of coaches can be supported by resources  To understand how Swim England can further support the Artistic Swimming Community.

Following a detailed discussion the group agreed that:

Members of ASLG were concerned that the paper did not completely reflect the actions and communications around the changes but acknowledged that communications via the formal Swim England channels such as the Club Newsletter to deliver the messages direct to clubs, head coaches and if necessary, members.

The process for arranging communications was discussed and it was agreed that ASLG would specifically highlight the need for communications to EB/CC or KT who will take this to relevant internal teams and would be recorded in the minutes/action log. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering the context of the message being delivered.

The group recognised the strength of the Regional Managers channels and the Head coach What app group and would continue to use these as a 'fail safe' to other channels.

Where decisions require new or revised supporting resources such as videos, the group will engage with the Marketing & communications team to plan resource development to coincide with the message going live. This action will be led by a member of Swim England staff, and this will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering the resources required.

The group decide competition entry requirements annually each September / October and communicated via the annual conference and/or online meetings. The full conditions are published with the entry packs around 2 months before each competition.

The group discussed recommending regional competitions to do the same and would discuss this at the next Regional Managers meeting

The group discussed the value of a single national calendar covering all events, including competition and grade days. It is acknowledged that this information is only as good as what is received and for information not to change.

The group requested CC respond to those clubs who had taken the time to raise their concerns. The following was agreed.

#### **Actions**

- **CC to ensure that the Communications Team are briefed on the group's aim to utilise existing channels and to ensure the group is aware of timelines and process**
- **KT to ensure that the group is aware of Marketing timelines to aid future planning**
- **Once decisions have been made regarding competition entry criteria, the group to ensure this is activated to the Communications channel by informing Swim England staff on ASLG.**
- **MR to include competition discussion as part of the regional managers meeting agenda**
- **CC to investigate how other sports have organised and run a national calendar and report back to the group for further consideration.**
- **CC to draft a response for the group to feed back**
- **Once there is agreement on the response, CC to distribute the response to the relevant clubs.**

4.2	Communications review, roles, responsibilities, process and how to improve to all key stakeholders.
	<p>The discussion around communication continued. IA asked about the AS content currently on the SE website and its location/ ease of access and whether this could be made easier. CC explained that the SE website is currently being reviewed and whilst content can be updated easily, the general function of the website cannot currently be altered. It was agreed that KT would continue to update the website</p> <p>MR raised how hard is it for new members of the community to find the information they need about Artistic Swimming. CC explained that this is an ongoing challenge however there is a project underway to update the Club Hub and the associated Club Resource Box. If the group could support with creating a 'quick' guide to Artistic Swimming, this could be uploaded to the Club Resource Box. KT explained that the SE don't currently own the AS videos which were on the website, this was a contract which was set up through Siobhan Cooke (SE Marketing manager).</p> <p><b>Action – KT to speak with Siobhan Cooke regarding the AS video contracts.</b></p> <p><b>Action: KT to liaise with Comms to ensure website remains up to date.</b>  <b>Action: All to contribute to the "Quick guide to Artistic Swimming".</b></p>
5.	<b>Key Activities for ASLG for 2025 and 2026, including budget and resourcing required from Swim England departments.</b>
	<p>MR highlighted the need to annual planning so that everyone understood the priorities and actions needed each year. There was a lack of clarity around the process and the role of ASLG to input.</p> <p>KT and RB explained that the implementation plan has recently evolved into the action plan.</p> <p>CC explained ASLG members feed into an operational plan particularly around technical official. This is the first year of the new action plan and hopefully 2026 planning will have more time for better consultation with all groups. It was noted that HS was due to meet with Andrea Starting to finalise the Introduction to Judging and LR had recently completed the work around Poolside Helper – Artistic Swimming which is now live and free to access.</p>
6.	<b>Update on the Digital Transformation workstream, including shared drive for scorers, as requested to Andy Salmon &amp; Ally Whike, March 2024.</b>
	<p>MR asked for an update on the O365 subscriptions agreed by AS &amp; AW to store useful documents and complex data requirements, especially by Chief Recorders.</p> <p>IA summarised the 365 project which has been developed to review the current online document platforms and their useability. Feedback to be gathered after the National Age Groups.</p> <p>Keith and Claire left the meeting at 20:09 and 20:16 respectively.</p>
7.	<b>Updates from each of the Leads:</b>
7.1	Grades
	SC provided a written update on grades ahead of the meeting. The grading days that have taken place since the start of the year have all gone well and the resources on the website are now live.

7.2	Coaching
	<p>LR has written a draft of the new Club Helper course which has been passed to Andrea in the SE Sport Development team.</p> <p>There is currently a technical review of coaching taking place which will feed into the wider review which Craig McCulloch (SE Head of Coaching) is leading on.</p> <p>RB explained that from the initial responses gained through the 'Co-creation of Coaching Programme' survey, Artistic Swimming is shown in a good light with a strong number of responses.</p> <p>LR has recently been selected to be part of the 'Developing Coach development programme' within Swim England. The group congratulated LR on her appointment.</p>
7.3	Officials
	<p>HS provided a written update ahead of the meeting – which ASLG thanked her for.</p> <p>MR confirmed that 13 candidates from all regions were on the recent Assistant Chief Recorder course. MR thanked the chief recorder working group for identifying the gap in training and then designing, identifying candidates and delivering courses.</p>
7.4	SOC Update
	The minutes of the last SOC meeting were circulated to the group ahead of the meeting.
7.5	Development Update
	The current Development report was circulated to the group ahead of the meeting.
7.6	National Talent
	<p>KT updated the group that the Senior team building camp has recently taken place at the Mendip Activity Centre with athletes engaging in a range of sports and activities.</p> <p>Additionally, the first leg of the World Cup takes place next week in France which KT will be attending.</p> <p>Grades have now been uploaded to the website with videos soon to be hyperlinked to each grade.</p> <p>There are a few regional activities taking place with the national team with three regions engaging within the Olympic engagement project.</p> <p>Aquatics GB will be managing Artistic Swimming in the near future and therefore KT will be working for Aquatics GB.</p> <p>HS raised a concern that after KT's transition to Aquatic's GB, there will not be a specific AS paid member of staff within SE.</p> <p>MR concluded that there needs to be a clear understanding of KT's roles and responsibilities, and which areas of work are specific to Aquatics GB and which area of work are under SE. MR offered the support of the group with any future work that KT undertakes.</p>
8.	<b>NAGs &amp; Champs Planning</b>

	<p>MR explained that entries for the National Age Groups close next week with most clubs already entered. The final confirmation pack is ready to be distributed as soon as the draw has been made.</p> <p>IA asked that more time is provided for the Technical Controller briefing so that there is a clear and consistent approach when clubs ask for feedback. HS agreed that this would be implemented.</p>
9.	<p><b>Meetings for 2025 (varied days of week)</b></p>
	<p>MR requested a review of the scheduled dates for ASLG meetings to accommodate the different needs of the group. New dates for 2025 were proposed and agreed.</p> <p><b>Action – GP to change the current meeting diary holds to the newly agreed dates.</b></p>
10.	<p><b>Competition dates for 2026</b></p>
	<p><b>POSTPONED TO THE NEXT MEETING</b></p>
11.	<p><b>Music Licensing</b></p>
	<p><b>POSTPONED TO A FUTURE MEETING</b></p>
12.	<p><b>AOB</b></p>
	<p>IA asked about the regional Artistic Swimming committee meeting minutes and where they are held and the right to reply process.</p> <p><b>Action – GP to pass on IA’s comments to CC for further detail.</b></p> <p>KT praised the work that HS provided for the development of the discipline as she had recently had to cover additional work, the group agreed and thanked HS her ongoing commitment.</p> <p>There were no other items of business to be discussed by the group.</p>
13.	<p><b>Close of meeting and date of next meeting</b></p>
	<p>MR thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed the meeting. The next meeting will be on the 1st April.</p>