

Swim England Swimming Leadership Group

Minutes of the meeting held 10th April 2025

Present:	Tom Baster	Chairperson
	Joan Wheeler	SOC Liaison
	Danielle Brayson	National Technical Lead (Swimming)
	Barry Saunders	Competitions Lead
	Kevin Brooks	Coaching Lead
	Mark Davies	Technical Officials Lead
	John Hidle	Licensing Lead – joined at 25/21
	Ian Mackenzie	Specialist Member (League Swimming) – left at 25/18
	Claire Coleman	Head of Development
	Ekaterina Boyd	Head of Events
	Helen Akers	Group Administrator

Min No:

25/13

Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Blackshaw.

25/14

Update

25/14.a TB apologised for the postponement of the planned March meeting.

25/14.b Following his appointment to a senior role with Aquatics GB, Euan Dale has tendered his resignation from this group. A vote of thanks from the group was recorded.

TB outlined the plan for recruiting a replacement member

Action – TB/CC/HA to initiate the recruitment process.

25/15

Action Log

25/5 – Details of DiSE athletes received. DB advised that both recent overseas trips were successful.

25/6.b – CC advised that, following an online vote, the paper had been approved.

Other items considered prior to the meeting:

Open Water National Age Group Event Conditions

- circulated by email with no comments received. A discussion took place regarding condition 7 and the position should any of the qualifying open water events be cancelled. It was felt that this was an exceptional circumstance that would be considered should it arise. The conditions were agreed, with an action to review the qualification processes for the 2026 event
- EB advised that the conditions will not be added to the Swim England Handbook, which is undergoing a full review, (cont.)

but that the Legal team were happy that a statement in the conditions of any deviation from World Aquatics rules was sufficient.

Event Fines

- TB informed the group of guidance produced following a recent incident and following consultation. Event organisers are to be urged to consider the reason for a withdrawal/no-show before levying a fine. Full wording to be circulated to the group for approval.
- A wider conversation around training for Event Promoters and channels used for disseminating information took place. It was suggested that this is likely to be a multi-discipline issue.

Action – TB to circulate suggested wording for guidance regarding fines

Action – CC/EB to clarify communication channels used for event information to meet organisers

25/16 SOC Update

25/16.a The minutes of the last meeting have not yet been published.

25/16.b JW advised that as part of an overall sport budget conversation, the SLG were asked to consider the exceptional cost of holding the National County Teams Championships and ways of reducing it.

EB gave some background to the ethos of the event and the reasons for the costs involved. A significant element is the subsidy offered to counties towards the cost of attending the event and several ways of reducing this were presented for consideration. EB confirmed that the subsidy amount was included in the figures submitted for the 2025 Events budget.

It was agreed that perception of the event is generally positive, particularly amongst the athletes and spectators, although there are ways that the event could be improved from a coaching perspective. It also provides development experiences for a wider range of athletes and coaches than the standard national events.

The group also noted that a proposal to remove the event subsidy as part of a post-Covid review of events did not seem to have been progressed.

The group agreed to remove the automatic subsidy for counties to attend the National County Team Championships. Subsidy will be awarded on a case-by-case basis, subject to the lack of it being an impediment to a team being able to attend.

It was confirmed that the subsidy is only available to English Counties.

25/17 Sport Development Update

- 25/17.a A written update was circulated prior to the meeting. CC gave an update on items that have since progressed:
- The Directors of Finance and Community Participation and Health have taken up their roles
 - The appointment of the Director of Safe Sport and Welfare will be confirmed shortly
 - The LTS to Club review is now at the review stage with recommendations to follow
 - The Coach and Committee Working Together toolkit has been expanded to include information for parents
 - The Coaching Strategy Co-creation workshops are ongoing – group members reported positive feedback from those who have attended so far

25/18 Talent Team Update

- 25/18.a DB gave an update:
- National Talent Officer roles and their key priorities have been redefined, with work now being specific and focussed on those priorities
 - The review of the national talent programme is ongoing, with a data driven approach. Outcomes will be published and available to all.
 - A review of selection policies is under way to try and address anomalies in the current system and to ensure that all appropriate athletes are incorporated
 - An update on planning for the 2026 Commonwealth Games
- 25/18.b A member queries whether the recent announcement of the inclusion of form 50m events in the 2028 Olympic Games would require a change of approach. DB and KB agreed that the current position of limiting early specialisation would remain valid. Further discussion between SE and AGB is expected.
- 25/18.c A request was made for a list of suggested overseas meets suitable for Regional teams to attend. KB gave his experience of taking a team to the Edinburgh International Meet

Action – DB to draw up a list of suggested meets, with the perceived opportunities afforded by each.

25/19 Competition Planning

Meets for the remainder of 2025 are now planned, with the exception of the Winter Championships which requires a follow up meeting of the competition sub-group. Publication of event information is scheduled for early June, after the summer event entries are open.

25/20 Coaching

- 25/20.a A Commonwealth Games Coaching Consultation group has been established, with a view to promoting communication and transparency around the selection processes.
- 25/20.b A “long list” of potential CWG athletes, comprising those currently inside the commonwealth top 12 times, those just outside but within the national top 15 in 2024-25 plus all athletes on the Youth and Senior Performance Squads, plus their coaches have been invited to (cont.)

an online gathering on 29th April. The aim is to educate and inspire those with potential for selection in 2026 and 2030.

25/21 Officials

25/21.a A proposal to reform the structure and purpose of the Swimming Officials group had been circulated prior to the meeting. TB gave some background for the reasons and some of the points considered. One group will take a strategic role and report into the SLG, whilst the other will be an operational forum with matters escalated to the SLG as necessary.

Following some discussion the proposal was agreed.

25/21.b As the new structure will involve regular meetings with Regional representatives, it was questioned whether similar forums should be in place for other roles such as Regional Swimming Managers. The date of 8th June is earmarked for an online meeting, although a one-day face-to-face conference for various subjects is planned and budgeted for, and could be expanded include this subject area.

25/22 Meet Licensing

Nothing to report.

25/23 Leagues

It was noted that from 2026 the National Arena Swimming League national finals weekend will move to Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

25/24 Any Other Business

25/24.a It was reported that the historic County Competition Pathway guidance document, which was recently republished in error, continues to cause issues. RLOs have been made aware of the error and any queries raised by them should be directed to JH. The interdependence of guidance for each level during any review process was noted, along with the need for any future guidance to allow a sufficient lead in time for implementation to be possible.

25/24.b Martyn's Law, officially known as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, has been passed and received Royal Assent. There is expected to be an implementation period of two years with guidance being written by the Sport & Recreation Alliance, on which SE has representation. It expected that the majority of the requirements will fall on the premises owner, but there will be a combination of responsibility with the event holder for larger events.

25/24.c Given the agreement to dissolve the Swimming Officials Group in its current format, it was noted that two members of the current group hold specialist roles and will not therefore form part of the proposed regional forum. Bob Outtram and Paul Kendal have given many years' service to the group and a vote of thanks to them was noted. Similarly Mark Davies's role as Chair of the group for eleven years and membership of the SLG as the Technical Officials Lead will now end and similarly a vote of thanks was recorded.

25/25 Date of Next Meeting

- Thursday 15th May