

Swim England Sport Operations Committee

Minutes of the meeting held 4 March 2025

Present:	Joan Wheeler (JW) Neil Booth (NB) Amy Bryant (AB) Alex Harrison (AH) Keith Munday (KM) Richard Palmer Jones John Hidle (JH) Ally Whike (AW)	Swim England Board Member (Chair) Swim England Board Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Swim England Member Regional Chairs Representative Sport Development Director
Staff:	Andy Salmon (AS) Claire Coleman (CC) Andrea Startin (minutes) Zoe Mitchell (ZM) Alex Barratt (ABa) Andy Jack (AJ) Alice Fairhall (AF)	CEO Head of Development Volunteering Head of Commercial (item 3) Learn to Swim (item 5) Club and Operator Relationship Manager (item 6) Club Development Project Officer (item 6)

Min No:

1. Standing Items

1.1 Chairperson's welcome

1.1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

1.2.1 Received from Ellie Conway (EC)

1.3 Declarations of Interest

1.3.1 John Hidle as a County Chair raised a conflict when discussing Swim England Inter-counties team competition.

1.3.2 Alex Harrison raised a conflict when discussing the Learn to Swim Review as he is an employee of a national operator.

1.4 Minutes of previous meeting

Some amendments were requested to the use of language and definitions of timescales. Once actioned the minutes will be approved.

Action: AS to share amendments with CC for minutes to be adapted before being shared with JW for final review

1.5 **Actions from the Previous Meeting**

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and updated. Regarding recruitment to the SOC, the advert for two new members is due to go live and will be included in Club News. It is hoped that those recruited will attend the next SOC meeting which is in person in SportPark.

1.6 **AOB**

None declared

2. Sport Development Directorate

2.1. A report from the Sport Development Directorate had been circulated with the agenda. Presenting the report, AW reported that:

2.2 Initial discussions have been had around budget with the Board. More work is required by the senior leadership team, with the Board to agree the budget in early April. AW will report on the budget to the next SOC meeting.

2.3 Sport England system funding for the previous cycle has been agreed and work has started on the next cycle goals and objectives, linked to the Swim England strategy.

2.4 Regarding events, AW reported that expenditure on events was increasing due to escalating costs, particularly in relation to venue hire and accommodation. Consequently, AW highlighted that the events team are looking at ways to both raise income and reduce expenditure. Potential increases to entry fees will be considered as part of the mix.

2.5 AW raised the issue of the purpose and cost of the County Team Competition, noting that Swim England cover the majority of the costs for running the meet and provide accommodation subsidy for some counties (£16k). It was agreed that the Swimming Leadership Group should be asked to consider this issue and report back with recommendations for reducing the cost to Swim England.

2.6 **Action: The SLG to discuss future arrangements for the County Team Competition, and to recommend options for reducing costs to Swim England.**

2.7 Swim England has recently had the opportunity to change their Sport England objectives to align with the Swim England strategy. This has led to a single set of reporting and moving in the same direction.

2.8 AW will look at the circulation of the policies on Hardship and Head Injury.

2.9 The next meeting of the G9 will take place on 5 March. The group are currently culture building and agreeing processes.

2.10 Discussions are in progress with AGB regarding the use of World Class funding for Water Polo and Artistic Swimming, with a further meeting planned for the end of March.

3. Commercial Approach

- 3.1 ZM gave an overview of her role as Head of Commercial, and what she has learnt so far about the organisation, potential opportunities and her initial plans.
- 3.2 ZM reported that changes to the commercial landscape with different audiences bring different expectations. New ideas need to be futureproof and sustainable. ZM asked the group to consider the biggest opportunities and barriers based on their knowledge and experience. CC to share these questions and collate responses.
- 3.3 **Action: CC to share these questions and collate responses.**

4. One Swim England

- 4.1 AS gave an update, noting the strategy has landed well.
- 4.2 A report will be presented to the Board on the Scorecard for Quarter 1. This will be shared with SOC in due course
- 4.3 Current focus is on the eight 2025 priorities and underpinning the strategy with individual components and professionalised processes.
- 4.4 There was some discussion on communication of the objectives with organisations and within Swim England with an emphasis on getting this right.

5. A Review of the Learn to Swim Framework

- 5.1 A paper was shared prior to the meeting and ABa delivered a presentation.
- 5.2 Currently the project is in the listen and review phase with 7 areas identified for review.
- 5.3 ABa asked the SOC to consider 3 questions:
 - 1. Initial thoughts on the approach and methodology?
 - 2. How and when do you think we inform the sector?
 - 3. What does effective learn to swim mean to you?
- 5.4 There was active discussion about the review particularly around whether the outputs would be inclusive and fit for all and the importance of the teacher / coach in the learn to swim journey.
- 5.5 **Action: CC to circulate the questions to SOC members and collate answers to these questions when consideration has been given.**

6. Working Together: coaches, committees and parents

- 6.1 A presentation by AF and AJ was shared to detail the project.
- 6.2 Consultation and collaboration have been the key to the project leading to rich and robust opportunities. A key point of note was the inclusion of parents and guidance on supporting children in sport.

- 6.3 A programme of support is being developed and will be available on launch.
- 6.4 A forum is being held on 17 March which will be interactive and feature interview panels. Slides and a recording are hoped to be available afterwards. The SOC will supply any dilemmas they feel may be suitable for the panel to discuss. AJ will share a link to the recording if successful with SOC.

6.5 **Action: SOC members to send dilemmas through to CC**

7. Minutes of Leadership Group meetings and any reports from SOC Liaison

7.1 Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

Issues had been raised around whose role it is to deal with complaints. It was agreed that this should be a collaborative effort considering the pressure of expectations on volunteers. It was also felt the sport would benefit from a development plan.

7.2 Club Leadership Group

No additional updates.

7.3. Diving Leadership Group

No additional update.

7.4 Swimming Leadership Group

No additional update.

7.5 Water Polo Leadership Group

The next meeting is soon.

7.6 Masters Leadership Group

Next meeting 10.3.2025. NB raised some concerns that the agenda focused on competition, which he will address in the meeting.

7.7 Youth Advisory Panel

CC and the volunteering team representative are to meet with EC on 6.3.25. An update will be provided at the next SOC meeting.

7.8 Health and Safety Forum

The new chair is reviewing the workings of the group and engaging with other sports. Recent discussions have involved Martin's Law and its impact on the sport particularly, because the spectator level is set 200. Any concerns regarding specific events should be addressed to KM.

Action: SOC members to raise with Leadership Groups to feed back to KM

8. Regional update

8.1 A Regional Chairs meeting was held 3.3.25 at which Kirsten Fasey, Interim Director of Safe Aquatics, Legal and Governance was introduced.

8.2 The meeting discussed the Governance Review, the Safeguarding & Welfare group and the G9.

8.3 Support for officials of all disciplines was discussed. CC / AW are to provide a position statement.

9. **AOB**

None.