

# Water Polo Leadership Group

Microsoft Teams

11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Time: 18:30 – 20:00

Attendees:

**Ian Mackenzie (IM)**

**Steve Kinloch (SK)**

**Chris Stephens (CS)**

**Mike Hesketh (MH)**

**Paul Metcalfe (PM)**

**Craig Figes (CF)**

**Ekaterina Boyd (EB)**

**Richard Blackshaw (RB)**

**Claire Coleman (CC)**

**Gareth Picken (GP)**

**Chair**

**Communications Lead**

**Officials Lead**

**Competition Lead**

**Co-opted Member**

**Swim England Water Polo Programme Lead**

**Swim England Head of Events**

**Swim England Head of Performance**

**Swim England Head of Development**

**Swim England Development Team Administrator**

Apologies:

**Tom Wall (TW)**

**Coaching Lead**

MINUTES	
<b>25.13</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
IM opened the meeting. TW sent his apologies ahead of the meeting.	
<b>25.14</b>	<b>Conflict of Interest</b>
There were no conflicts of interest.	
<b>25.15</b>	<b>Action Log</b>
All actions were reviewed; two actions were complete. One action 'The review of the Swim England content' is still in review due to changes in the Marcoms team.	
<b>25.16</b>	<b>SOC Update</b>
GP circulated the minutes from the last SOC meeting whilst CC provided an overview of the key items. Although recruitment for two new members for SOC was targeted at Water Polo, the appointed members are not from the community and therefore a review into how to better engage with the Water Polo community should take place for future recruitment campaigns.	
CC further mentioned that one of Swim England's Strategic goals, Stronger Clubs is directly influenced by the work the group and more details would be included in future meeting. In addition, a paper was submitted to the SOC regarding a governance review into when clubs are suspended for governance related breaches, this is an ongoing piece of work.	
<b>25.17</b>	<b>Sports Development Report</b>
The SD report was circulated ahead of the meeting with CC raising two items from the report. Firstly, the Learn to Swim to Clubs review has now been included in the wider Learn to Swim review currently taking place. The outcomes from the review should be ready to be circulated to all leadership groups by the September/October.	

Secondly, the Club Health Tracker is due to be reopened to affiliated clubs shortly. CC asked that the group supports with the publication of the Tracker throughout the Water Polo community as the data collected can influence the work that Swim England does and benefits the sport across the country.

<b>25.18</b>	<b>Water Polo update</b>
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CF presented to the group an update on the work of the Talent Centre and the Talent Games and the National Programmes.

CF raised his thanks for all volunteers who gave up their time over the past year.

Recruitment for volunteers for the Talent Centres for the next year are just about to start so CF asked the group if they could promote the recruitment campaign throughout the community.

<b>25.19</b>	<b>Summit</b>
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IM raised an upcoming Summit led by Ally Whike (Swim England Director of Sport) for all partners in Water Polo is taking place in Manchester. Some members of the WPLG are attending.

<b>25.20</b>	<b>Events Update - Event Volunteer Project</b>
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MH updated the group on the under 17's and under 19's National Age Groups took place earlier in the year. There was extra round made available for matches which was received well by those attending and was reflected in the positive feedback received following the competition.

Additionally, live scoreboard system was tested and reduced the amount of admin requires for competitions, benefiting the running of the event.

Under 15's National Age Groups are taking place later in the year.

Following on, EB explained that there is a joint proposal between Swim England and the British Water Polo League (BWPL) to link some of the competitions that are currently run individually with the aim of reducing the number of events in the Water Polo calendar and developing greater cohesion between SE and BWPL.

CC raised that when reaching out to the community with the change in competition structure, the language used needed to be clear and understandable for those who do not have a Water Polo background.

Overall, the group agreed with the proposal.

**Action – EB to progress with the proposal and create a consultation plan to reach out to the community.**

<b>25.21</b>	<b>Coaching update</b>
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Postponed to the next meeting due to TW's absence.

<b>25.22</b>	<b>Officials update</b>
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CS raised that World Aquatics with European Aquatics have agreed on some new rules for competitions. CS suggested that Swim England should adopt the new rule changes for all domestic competitions starting from July 2025.

Referee courses material and Table Officials course material have been updated and CS has written a summery email of the new rules is ready to be shared with all officials. An official document from World Aquatics is still in development but should have been published at the end of May.

CF asked whether the under 16's competitions which are taking place between the end of June and the beginning of July. MH answered that the plan is to use the new rules for both the under 16's boys' competition and the under 16's girls' competitions.

CC asked what the changes are and whether there is an 'easy to use' document of the changes to the rules. CS has written up a summary of the changes and agreed to circulate to the group.

Furthermore, CC raised that some clubs who compete in Swim England competitions are from Wales and Scotland which are uncontactable from the Swim England official communication channels. CS responded that he is working with the Home National group so all nations will be aware of the competitions.

CF suggested that an online session for referees should take place; this was agreed by CC.

The group agreed that the rules should be implemented shortly but appreciated that there needed to be a communications plan when announcing to the Water Polo community.

**Action - CC, CS, EB and RB to review how the rule changes will be communicated.**

CS further asked the group for approval for Trevor Jones to be appointed as a Volunteer Table Official course presenter. The group agreed with this appointment. CC suggested that CS speaks with

<b>25.23</b>	<b>AOB</b>
IM asked the group if they had any other items of business.	
CC raised and presented to the group a short PowerPoint title "Event Volunteer Succession Planning Project". The aim of this project is to identify which roles specific to Water Polo competitions are critical and if there is enough active volunteers currently trained in those roles. The at-risk roles for Water Polo are Championships Directors, Event Managers and Announcers.	
EB asked who in the group would like to work with CC and EB on the recruitment and training of potential volunteers for these roles. MH agreed to work alongside CC and EB.	
SK thanked Tom Hazelwood and the rest of the team for their work at the National Age Group Championships.	
<b>25.24</b>	<b>Dates of the next meeting</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	