

Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

Tuesday 27th January 2026

18:30 – 20:00

Attendees:

Maria Ramos (MR)	Chair
Louise Ross (LR)	Coaching Lead
Hannah Secher (HS)	Workforce Lead
Ian Atkinson (IA)	Competition Lead
Sarah Clarke (SC)	Athlete Reward and Recognition Lead
Keith Munday (KM)	Sport Operations Committee Leadership Group Liaison
Richard Blackshaw (RB)	Head of Sport
Ekaterina Boyd (EB)	Swim England Head of Events
Claire Coleman (CC)	Swim England Head of Aquatic Clubs
Gareth Picken (GP)	Swim England Community and Stakeholder Officer

MINUTES

1.	<p>Chair’s Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>MR opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. CC noted that this meeting would be the first to trial AI-supported minute taking via meeting transcription, with GP and CC overseeing the process as part of Swim England’s restructure.</p> <p>GP confirmed he is now lead administrator for six leadership groups with support from CC. This administrative responsibility may be redistributed across the Operations team as the new structure is formalised.</p>
2.	<p>Action Log</p> <p>Depth Project – EB updated that a direct email request for incident context was sent to clubs’ coaches, secretaries & chairs to follow up on the previously anonymous survey; responses have been limited so far. A summary of the findings will be produced in time for the Health & Safety Forum on 2 March.</p> <p>MR stressed the need to clarify that the depth of guidance is intended to support training in shallower water, not to define minimum pool build depths.</p> <p>Action: The group to review the minimum depth guidance paper to ensure there can be no confusion.</p> <p>National Calendar – CC noted a central calendar exists on the Swim England’s website. Feedback was given that regions do not use it as they submit to the Regional Office, and this</p>

	<p>duplicates the work. A major website revamp is imminent so adding to it now may not be the most effective use of time.</p> <p>CC suggested several options such as listing regional pages centrally and redirecting users to regions, while the long-term plan is a new membership and event entry system that will generate a national calendar.</p> <p>Action – CC to engage regional staff and volunteers to shape the short-term approach and ensure representation of artistic events.</p> <p>Team Manager Training – TM1 (single-day) and TM2 (multi-day/international) remain generic across aquatic sports. Accreditation of purchase requires valid qualifications, safeguarding and DBS, ensuring compliance at national events. Officials performing hair/makeup behind the scenes must hold appropriate accreditation (e.g., chaperone with safeguarding/DBS and club endorsement).</p> <p>Action: Group members who are TM to reach out to support a review of the delivery to ensure it covers all sport duties</p>
3.	Update from each of the Leads:
3.1	Grades
	<p>Regional Inconsistency – SC reported concerns about one region’s unusual 100% pass rates and reports of procedures such as repeat tests which are contrary to Swim England protocols. Guidance will be reissued nationally with external senior judge oversight potentially considered for the region and support for local senior judges and ensure consistency between regions.</p> <p>CC suggested that concerns should be raised with the regional team as well as the regional manager.</p> <p>Action: SC to update regional team in relation to concerns</p> <p>National Grades Review – KT summarised feedback from the consultation with clubs showed there was broad support to keep the current framework but to fix inconsistencies, weightings and administrative burden. Access to constraints (pools, judges and travel, continue to be a barrier. Grades. Priorities should include consistent standards nationally, better alignment of competition judging, and reduced barriers for late starters to qualify for National Age Groups.</p> <p>The current plan is to publish proposals at National Age Groups for consultation with coaches, officials and swimmers, test changes, and target implementation from September.</p> <p>Action: KT to liaise with Insight (Kerry Watkiss) to ensure a robust consultation method that the sport can rely on when justifying changes.</p>
3.2	Coaching
	<p>New Coaching Certificates – LR updated the group that the programme has commenced, with a further working session scheduled in February half-term to define artistic technical content across all levels. The national framework is moving towards context-driven skill development with two principal stages: Session Coach (practical, poolside) and Coach Practitioner (CPD-based</p>

	<p>progression). LR emphasised during meetings the need to retain sufficient sport-specific technical depth so as to reflect the discipline’s complexity.</p> <p>Coach Card e-Learning – A new module explaining coach card completion is almost ready for release. Small technical edits are being finalised with the digital team. Once complete, content will be promoted via club and coach newsletters and linked alongside the coach card information on the website to reduce queries and errors. ASLG thanks LR for the work done on this.</p> <p>Action: LR to work with Andrea Startin to finalize course and publish to the community</p> <p>CPD and External Resources – Neurodiversity CPD has been launched since the last meeting. LR has found Open University free online modules (female athlete health, menopause, mental health, neurodiversity) which the group agreed should be shared via community channels to support coach development.</p>
3.3	Officials
	<p>Workforce – HS explained that since the last meeting, GP has shared the regional breakdown of officials’ numbers. South West and East Midlands remain comparatively low. HS recently delivered an Introduction to Technical Controllers course in which there were 23 participants, a mix of judges, coaches, and parent helpers. Judge 1 training has shifted to a multi-session format aimed at better outcomes and reliability over speed of course. Annual judge CPD will run again in the Summer (July).</p>
3.4	SOC Update
	<p>KM reported that place-based working and strategic updates were provided at the last Sports Operations Committee meeting. A new membership system and Swim England website are expected towards the end of the year. Swim England Summit (10 March) is currently more sector-focused (operators, teaching providers). However, Artistic Swimming involvement is being explored, including a foyer dryland showcase.</p> <p>MR advised the ASLG was willing to support any need to provide support for a stand that helps ‘break down myths about AS’ but requested sufficient notice.</p>
3.5	Sport & Community Participation Health Update
	<p>CC mentioned that the Sport & Community Participation Health report was circulated to the group ahead of the meeting. There were no questions raised by the group.</p>
3.6	National Talent
	<p>Programmes – KT updated the group that the Pre-Christmas pool issues have now been resolved. A Boys’ Development Day was successfully delivered to 10 athletes; Ranjuo Tamblin provided inspiration and coaching support to Paola Basso</p> <p>Mixed duet will attend World Cup legs in Colombia in February and France in March. Youth squad selection will take place at National Age Groups with staff appointments underway. Newly appointed AS team members working with the DiSE programme are Rob Hopkins (assessor) and Louise Ross (coach), they will be working with the DiSE athletes during the season.</p>

	Staffing – KT will transfer to Aquatics GB on 1 February. Duties and close integration with Swim England pathway remain largely unchanged. Alignment with UK Sport may open opportunities for future performance support.
4.	New Structure
	<p>CC presented Swim England’s updated directorates. Key areas: Sport (remain largely stable for Artistic), Safe Aquatics (expanded from safeguarding and welfare), Community Participation & Health (new directorate focused on clubs, participation and health outcomes), and Operations/Comms/Insight/IT/Finance/Legal/HR. Email contact routes remain unchanged during the transition process.</p> <p>Regional ‘Squad’ Model – Four squads (North, East, West, South), each comprising Club & Community, Aquatics Competency, Safe Aquatics and Business Engagement leads. The aim is to reduce silo working, provide multi-disciplinary local support, and improve responsiveness to club needs (including operator engagement).</p>
5.	Officials Selection Proposals
	<p>New Central Recruitment process for the recruitment of officials – Events Team to lead national officials' recruitment using ALSG-agreed criteria; officials lead, HS, will participate in the selection. Initial criteria for judges at national events: minimum Level 3. Email distribution concerns were noted by EB (unsubscriptions, shared addresses, junk filtering).</p> <p>Transparency & Protection – To protect against perceived bias and to support development, ALSG will publish concise selection guidance covering minimum qualification; recent activity/engagement (grade days, regionals); regional representation; development/succession priorities; previous national appointments; behaviour/reliability. Digital ‘activity reporting’ is desired in future systems.</p> <p>Action: The group to agree the criteria for technical officials</p>
6.	Official Appointments of Key Officials for 2026 incl. Referee and Chief Recorders
	<p>Recommendations were made and agreed for key national events, based on the availability and experience needed at each event.</p> <p>Referees: MR to contact those proposed.</p> <p>Chief Recorders: The CR Group has submitted the names for 2026 events.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Max is available at all National Events and will continue to be mentored by Ian to cover the Producer role.</p> <p>International Appointments – Cal Howard added to the World Aquatics Technical Controller list. There has been one judge identified for the 2027 international pathway. The European TC course was completed by Zsofi Steingardt but this not yet recognised by World Aquatics</p> <p>HS & KT confirmed international judge appointments were in progress – balancing availability with the need to ensure correct activity levels for evaluations and progression.</p>

7.	<p>World Aquatics Scoring Updates – recommendations from Chief Recorders Group</p>																																																								
	<p>Following World Aquatics rule changes the following amendments were agreed for National level events: Factoring – NAGs and Championships will adopt World Aquatics factoring as updated on in late 2025. Combo Cup (non-WA format) will following key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat 12U and 15U both Div 1 and 2 as 12U in World Aquatics • Treat 13-15, 15+ and 13-18 as Youth in World Aquatics • Base marks are different in Combo Cup, with acros at 1.0 and hybrids at 1.5 <table border="1" data-bbox="145 607 1401 965"> <thead> <tr> <th>Aspect</th> <th>12U CC</th> <th>13-15 CC</th> <th>15U CC</th> <th>15+ CC</th> <th>13-18 CC</th> <th>Note</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>AI: Choreo+Music</td> <td>1.8</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.8</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>AI: Performance</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>No changes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AI: Transitions</td> <td>1.8</td> <td>2.6</td> <td>1.8</td> <td>2.6</td> <td>2.6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acrobatics: Div 1</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>0.4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acrobatics: Div 2</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>0.7</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>0.4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hybrids: Div 1</td> <td>0.6</td> <td>0.2</td> <td>0.6</td> <td>0.2</td> <td>0.2</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hybrids: Div 2</td> <td>0.6</td> <td>0.2</td> <td>0.6</td> <td>0.2</td> <td>0.2</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(changes in red)</p> <p>Rule 18.10.20</p> <p>in the latest rules (but also previously) for free combo routines states: “A half (0.5) point penalty shall be deducted from the total score for each athlete less than ten (10) (see Part Seven, Article 13.3).”</p> <p>It was agreed this would apply to the National Age Groups/Youth Championships but NOT Combo Cup - where the purpose of the competition remains to encourage smaller clubs to participate in a nationally organised event.</p> <p>Action: MR and EB to highlight this within the Confirmation pack for NAGS MR to confirm to Chief Recorders Subgroup</p>	Aspect	12U CC	13-15 CC	15U CC	15+ CC	13-18 CC	Note	AI: Choreo+Music	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6		AI: Performance	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	No changes	AI: Transitions	1.8	2.6	1.8	2.6	2.6		Acrobatics: Div 1	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.4		Acrobatics: Div 2	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.4		Hybrids: Div 1	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2		Hybrids: Div 2	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2	
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8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Club Closure – Bedford Artistic Swimming Club was reported as likely to fold due to coach retirement and no replacement. The club appears to be unaffiliated.</p> <p>Action – CC through the East region lead to reach out and offer support/transition pathways for swimmers.</p> <p>New Club Enquiries – Clubs wishing to start artistic swimming should contact Club & Community Development Leads, who will coordinate technical and operator support, and connect with Regional Artistic Managers for mentoring and pathway setup.</p>																																																								

Revised factors for Combo Cup

	Music Licensing - A request from a club asking about the latest guidance for music licensing was noted. SE Legal team to provide updates and make sure guidance is available for all.
9.	Close of meeting
	There was no further business. MR thanked the group for attending and closed the meeting. The next meeting will take place on 17 th March.