

Meeting of the Water Polo Regional Managers

Wednesday 16th April 2026 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Venue: In person/TEAMS

Members	Initials	Mtg 1 16.04.26	Mtg 2	Mtg 3	Mtg 4
Ian Mackenzie, Chair	IM	✓			
Craig Figes, Swim England Water Polo Lead	CF	A			
Mike Hesketh, Competition Lead	MH	✓			
Steve Kinloch, Communications Lead	SK	✓			
Paul Metcalfe, Co-opted Member	PM	✓			
Chris Stephens, Officials Lead	CS	✓			
Tom Wall, Coaching Lead	TW	✓			
Grant Peters, North East	GP	✓			
Steve Williams, South West	SW	✓			
Kate Hutchinson, South East	KH	✓			
Sarah Purslow, South West	SP	✓			
David Parry, North East	DP	✓			
Gabby Williams, North East	GW	✓			
Adrian Wood, London	AW	A			

Non-members in attendance on 15.04.2026:

Claire Coleman, Head of Aquatics Clubs	CC	✓
Richard Blackshaw, Head of Sport	RB	A

Ekaterina Boyd, Head of Events	EK	✓
Catherine Searcy (Minutes post meeting)	CS	X

Key: ✓= Present, A = Apologies given, P = Partial attendance, X = Non-attendance

STANDING ITEMS: ADMINISTRATION	
1.	Chairs Welcome
	IM welcomed all to the meeting.
2.	Apologies
	Apologies were received from CF and AW. Apologies sent from RB during the meeting due to internet issues whilst at AGB Champs, meaning he was unable to join the meeting.
3.	Declarations of interest
	No changes or conflicts of interest were reported by any member present.
4.	Minutes of the Water Polo Swimming Leadership Group meeting held 8th October 2025
	The minutes of the meeting on 8.10.2025 were approved as correct.
5.	Matters arising
	None.
SECTION 2: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION	
6.	Talent/Development Centre position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates paused due to reduced capacity following recent changes at Swim England • Work has commenced with the Southwest Region and this may form future blueprint. • RB is now the lead on this piece of work.
7.	Regional Round-up
	<p>North East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent centres active • Second stage of regional referee training taking place in May • Noted that two local clubs are struggling to access suitable water time with their local pool operators – Region is supporting them with this • GW noted that the girls sessions are on track to complete 10 in 2026 and numbers are beginning to pick back up, particularly from the younger age groups. • There was something here about the inter-regional not being confirmed • GP confirmed that approximately 60 male players across the age groups are registered for the academy. Training hasn't yet begun as have struggled to get all the venues in the first quarter of the year but some booked in May and a number up until the end of August 2026. • Some training planned against Scottish teams • Expecting clashes for events across a number of age groups <p>North West</p>

- Provided update that the Inter-Regional has been confirmed

East Midlands

- TW has made contact with some coaches and has reached out to the Region for support
- Frustration due to lack of response from the region
- Developing a plan currently focusing on a bottom-up age group academy rebuild
- Working collaboratively with two clubs as the two biggest junior clubs in the Region
- Intention is to focus on 2011 age group and after the competition, drop a few age groups where numbers are very low.
- Nottinghamshire League is back up and running after a year of uncertainty.
- Improvements in number of female participants can be seen and hoping to enter a 2011 age group team in the inter-regionals.
- Junior tournaments scheduled for Grantham, Matlock, Hucknall, Nottingham Leander, and South Derbyshire.
- Looking to put individual coaching session on that work with the local league and Region
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Action: CC to connect TW to East Midlands regional chair and support discussions if necessary.

South East

- Over past 12 months have tried to engage and put on a senior league, raising engagement with senior players. Unfortunately, didn't get the buy in from clubs to make it feasible, though we did have a very proactive volunteer who led on it.
- Concentrating now on grassroots in 2026
- Splash ball activities and partnership work are in development with the Region collaborating with clubs.
- Developing making use of active partnerships to raise awareness, getting into schools and encouraging younger age groups to 'have a go'
- Have a new club within the Region which is very positive
- Regional training is going well, led by local volunteers
- Have struggled with junior teams being able to field teams due to a lack of players, impacting gameplay opportunities

South West

- Regional Academy is going well, with approximately 60-70 boys and 40-50 girls registered for regional training camps this weekend
- Concentrating currently on 2011 age group as we have inter-Regions coming up soon but numbers are increasing with the lower age groups too.
- A number of clubs are re-establishing such as Tiverton
- Bristol and West League and Devon League are both going well with lots of members
- Aiming to reach out to clubs and coaches to get them more involved in how the coaching at regional training camp is done and aim to get some continuity between talent centres, regional training and clubs
- Big focus on upskilling coaches and improving support at club level upwards – lots of proactive work taking place.

8.	Club Development & Support																		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent Swim England restructure has led to some team changes – what was the Development Team is now the Aquatic Clubs team and we now have some field-based staff out on the ground who work alongside our Regional colleagues. Insight undertaken with clubs about generic queries which led to work with Regional and National teams about what a support and development framework could/should look like. Feedback had an emphasis on support and user-friendly processes, with in-person contact New Club Support & Development Framework, supported by existing and new toolkits for individuals, clubs, coaches, volunteers and parents Funding available for Club Links to support Learn to Swim to Water Polo pathways. Restarting the National Club Forums Action: CC to speak with North Club & Community lead about club links 																		
9.	Calendar																		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a discussion that identified key event dates but these are being inconsistently recorded on the Swim England calendar. Confirmed Inter-Regional dates are: <table border="1" data-bbox="350 999 1403 1192"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age group</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Category</th> <th>Venue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">U16</td> <td>27/28 June</td> <td>Open</td> <td>Venue TBA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4/5 July</td> <td>Female</td> <td>Liverpool</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">U14</td> <td>28/29 November</td> <td></td> <td>Walsall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5/6 December</td> <td></td> <td>Walsall</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Action: EB to clarify Swim England calendar ownership</p> <p>Action: MH to forward missing event dates</p>	Age group	Date	Category	Venue	U16	27/28 June	Open	Venue TBA	4/5 July	Female	Liverpool	U14	28/29 November		Walsall	5/6 December		Walsall
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10.	Officials – update																		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Regions want a referee course or a table official course, please can you contact CS in the first instance. Tutor now available in the Northeast Region An online Table Official course has been launched as a way of getting volunteers started, with a tutor-led classroom course offered for those wanting to progress on from there. 																		
SECTION 3: CLOSE																			
11.	Any other business																		
	<p>Coaches training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action: requested by IM for all to send to relevant Regional Reps the name, contact info etc of individuals that require the Assistant Coach course and Coach course to ensure a clear overview of requirements. Regional staff will then forward to the Institute of Swimming. IoS contact: abi.jones@swimming.org 																		

	<p>Talent Games 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MH asked if a Talent Games is being ran in June –• Action: EB to confirm with the team <p>Admin concerns</p> <p>Action: IM will raise concerns of the sport with AW, and RB over lack of SE support to grow the sport and communication.</p>
12.	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 16TH September 2026 6:30pm – 7:30pm Via Microsoft TEAMS</p>

Meeting closed.