

Meeting of the Sports Operations Committee (SOC)

Tuesday 27th January 2026 10:30am – 1pm

Venue: TEAMS

Members	Initials	Mtg 1 27.01.26	Mtg 2 03.03.26	Mtg 3 28.04.26	Mtg 4	Mtg 5
Joan Wheeler, Swim England Board Member (Chair)	JW	✓				
Neil Booth, Swim England Board Member	NB	A				
Amy Bryant, Swim England Member	AB	✓				
Ellie Conway, Youth Advisory Panel Representative	EC	X				
Alex Harrison, Swim England Member	AH	A				
John Hidle, Regional hairs Representative	JH	✓				
Keith Munday, Swim England Board Member	KM	✓				
Richard Palmer-Jones, Swim England Member	RPJ	✓				
Jo Sackett, Swim England Member	JS	✓				
Alex Williams, Swim England Member	AWi	✓				

Non-members in attendance on 27.01.2026:

Catherine Searcy (Minutes)	CS	✓
Claire Coleman	CC	✓
Helen Marney, Director of Community Participation & Health	HM	✓
Andy Salmon, CEO	AS	✓
Ally White, Director of Sports	AWh	✓
Item 3 only:		

Ekaterina Boyd,	EB	✓
Item 5 only:		
Richard Blackshaw	RB	✓

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

FINAL

STANDING ITEMS: ADMINISTRATION	
1.1 and 1.2	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies from Neil Booth and Alex Harrison. Ellie Conway was also absent. All other members were present.</p>
1.3	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>No declarations were made. Members were reminded to declare any arising conflicts.</p>
1.4	<p>Minutes of the SOC meeting held 09.12.2025</p> <p>Minutes approved, subject to one amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 6.2: Add '<i>volunteers</i>' to the list of groups affected by neurodiversity.
1.5	<p>Actions arising from the meeting held on 09.12.2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All items reviewed via the action log. • Artistic Swimming music licence query remains ongoing; Legal reviewing. • No additional matters raised. <p>Action: Weekly follow-up with Legal until resolved</p>
SECTION 2: STRATEGIC MATTERS	
2.	<p>CEO Update</p> <p>AS gave a verbal update: </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure largely complete; comms protocols to be refreshed. • Safeguarding reporting confusion being addressed; new comms plan due early February. • Digital transformation progressing (testing; website late 2026; finance system replacement imminent). • Governance Review entering consultation phase - Regional Chairs workshop taking place 19.02.2026. • Financial position outlined with a view to a balanced budget by 2028 • Swim Alliance: AS recently elected Chair. • Two-year reflection on Listening Report upcoming and thoughts about how to recognise this milestone. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate updated org chart & present at next SOC – AS • Provide SOC membership update following Keith Munday's election to Swim England Board - JW • Provide structural update at next CLG meeting - CC
3.	<p>National Events – Financial Review</p>

	<p>EB joined the meeting and presented an overview of National Event finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current programme is run at a deficit • Income avenues to explore include ticket pricing, entry fees, commercial partnerships. • Expenditure considerations to explore: volunteer expenses, sport presentation, venue hire, event dressing. • Medical & security placed as initially non-negotiable due to expected Martin's Law requirements; SOC requested risk-based review. • Strong emphasis on principles-led approach rather than forced break-even target. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce revised Volunteer Expenses Policy – EB/ AW • Bring discipline-specific entry fee/ticket proposals - EB / AW • Review medical & security costs safely - EB / AW • Provide streaming options paper (Q2) - EB / AW • Update on long-term venue hire contracts - AW • Communicate agreed local hospitality discounts for any Sheffield events - EB
4.	<p>Place-based Working</p> <p>HM gave a verbal overview of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major inequalities in swimming competency linked to deprivation & ethnicity • Sport England's post-2027 investment heavily focused on place • Place model = multi-directional engagement, trust-building, community-led design • Target: reduce longlist (42 local authorities) to 12–15 priority places • Building data overlays (clubs, operators, IMD, competency) • Expect 1 year of groundwork + multi-year engagement <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate slides and invite SOC members to join working group. – HM / SOC members
5.	<p>Commonwealth Games 2026 – Update</p> <p>RB joined the meeting with a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 178 days to go. • Approach aligned to values: collaboration, transparency, athlete experience • KPIs progressing well (54% new staff/athletes) • Challenges include Para-Europeans timing • Post-2030 Games outlook positive; likely India will host but expectation that swimming remains an anchor sport <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB to provide next Commonwealth Games update prior to the Games.

6.	Directorate Reports
	<p>Community, Participation & Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Water membership project is progressing - the working group reconvening and AWi will be joining the group on behalf of SOC. • Beyond Swim integration underway.
	<p>Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High operational load for January/February programme delivery. • Restructure bedding in; commitments met to date. <p>No questions beyond clarifications.</p>
7.	Scorecard 2025 and 2026
	<p>2025 Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of green/amber/red outcomes. • Junior Club Category delayed due to wider membership review. <p>2026 Scorecard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focused; clearer objectives. • Organisation will track three major “dials”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPS / Customer Satisfaction ○ Size of Swimming Community ○ Financial Performance • Safeguarding quality assurance included.
8.	Health and Safety Forum
	No formal update; next H&S meeting pending.
SECTION 3: COMMITTEE/LEADERSHIP GROUP REPORTS/MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST SOC MEETING	
(to be taken as read – questions only)	
9.1	Artistic Swimming LG
	No further update.
9.2	Club LG
	No further update.
9.3	Diving LG
	No further update.
9.4	Swimming LG
	No further update.
9.5	Water Polo LG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query regarding new league proposal; more info requested from proposer • SOC noted 60 day turnaround rule is impractical and requires review <p>Action: Review 60-day rule within governance processes. – CC</p>
9.6	Masters Swimming
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January meeting postponed; next meeting Thursday 29th January.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS informed the group that a British Masters fund (approximately £8k–£9k) has been transferred from Aquatics GB to Swim England to hold going forward. TOR to be refreshed.
9.7	Youth Advisory Panel
	No update available.
SECTION 4: CLOSE	
10.	Any other business
10.1	<p>Governance Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOC Terms of Reference circulated for awareness. Joan to discuss consultation route with Kirsten Fasey, Governance Lead, and update SOC – an additional one-item meeting may be needed. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify consultation route and next steps. Review circulation list for Regional Chairs; reinstate as appropriate.

Meeting closed.

Circulation List:

SOC members
Swim England Senior Leadership Team
Claire Coleman, Head of Aquatic Clubs
Regional Chairs
Leadership Group Chairs