

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of the Board Meeting held at 2pm on 25 January 2020  
Norton House Hotel, Edinburgh**

**Present**

Graeme Marchbank (GM)	Chair
Euan Lowe (EL)	Chief Executive
David Beattie (DB)	Board Director
Kerry Christie (KC)	Board Director
Jackie Davidson (JD)	Board Director
Andrew Dunlop (AD)	Board Director
Andy Figgins (AF)	Board Director
Caitlin McClatchey (CM)	Board Director
Moraig Macdonald (MM)	President
Ian Fleming (IF)	Vice President

**In Attendance**

Sharon MacDonald (SM)	Director of Development
Deborah McGinniss (DM)	Finance Manager/Company Secretary
Elaine Mackenzie (EM)	Director of Services
Ally White (AW)	Director of Performance
Helen Plank (HP)	Head of Marketing
Kirsten Phillips (KP)	Communications Manager
Kelly Fraser (KF)	Minute Taker

**Item No.**

**Action**

**1. Chair's Address**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and noted that the European Short Course Swimming Championships had taken place, which was well received following certain challenges being overcome. The Chair advised that British Swimming (BS) intends to pull back from hosting international events in the near future and there is growing interest surrounding ISL, and Glasgow Life remain interested in hosting major events. The Chair attended both the National Short Course Championships and the Scottish Diving Championships, which both ran very well and resulted in some incredible performances.

During the National Short Course Championships, the Chair confirmed his attendance at the Club Chairs event, which was also attended by the Young Ambassadors, and it was good to see input from a broad spectrum. The Chair concluded his address by confirming that the new Corporate Plan would be discussed this weekend and he hopes for a better session in order to agree core timings and get back on track to move forward with the new plan.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

The President declared an interest with her son being a member of the Scottish Swimming Senior Gold squad. The Chair advised of DB's interest in the University of Aberdeen.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from AW and DB who will be arriving later.

**4. Minutes of Previous meetings: Board and Council meeting 25 November 2019**

The minutes were agreed as a true record, subject to the following amendments:

- SM advised that the reference to the "National TOP UP programme" on page 2 should be amended to "proposal to the Scottish Government for school swimming"; and
- SM queried the wording regarding Council action item 15 and it was confirmed that this should be amended to confirm that there is nothing within the Learn to Swim Framework that requires Leisure Trusts to exclude private swim schools from using facilities and the reference to suspensions should be removed.

**5. Actions from previous meeting: 25 November 2019**

Item 6 – the Board agreed to delay the board paper until the June meeting.

Item 7 – the President requested clarification on progress and EL advised this had accelerated with the setting up of the YVP and EL will circulate an update early next week. EL confirmed that Children 1<sup>st</sup> has advised that no meeting will be required and the Chair advised that there will be a discussion under item 8.4.

**6. Marketing and Communications Plan and Presentation**

AD introduced the presentation noting the quality of the team's work and our strong position in comparison to other Scottish sports governing bodies (SGBs). In relation to the new Corporate Plan, AD expressed the view that we should continue to challenge ourselves in this area.

HP and KP presented the plan to the Meeting. HP commenced by thanking the Board and SMT for their input to date. The KPMG audit highlighted our marketing and communications as a strength and we have been asked to share this with other SGBs by **sportscotland**. HP advised that our Marketing Objectives are linked directly to the Corporate Objectives, which allows for a joined up overarching approach.

The Meeting was provided with an overview of:

- some of the recent changes with the introduction of podcasts and short-form news videos;
- highlights of "what has gone well?", including strengthened sponsor partnerships and use of new technology with our first 'noise letter' having an engagement rate of 38% compared to 12-15% engagement with our previous newsletters;
- our Twitter engagement rate of 3.5% (KP understood that the Board paper referred to 1.4%) but the industry standard is 1% and we are doing better than other SGBs with a larger membership; and
- the objectives within the plan regarding participation, membership and performance with the hope to achieve these creatively, innovatively and with equality in mind.

The Board were asked for feedback.

There was a detailed discussion around content, particularly regarding the balance between relatable and performance content. The general consensus was that we should continue to promote both with the suggestion of considering how we can engage further with those out with the swimming community. There was also a discussion around having content creators but ensuring that we maintain a high level of quality, as well as a clear purpose / strategy and the input of the YVP was highlighted.

In relation to the new Corporate Plan, AD suggested considering what other sponsorship opportunities might be available and undertaking research in relation to how our marketing communications are viewed in order to consider how this might have an effect on membership and clubs, particularly in relation to capacity. HP

Further, there was a suggestion from AF regarding looking at athlete journeys and progression and there was a discussion regarding using this at District level.

The Chair commented on the maturity of our marketing message, which underpins all of our content and is really positive, but we need to ensure that we maintain focus on the purpose of content rather than overly concentrating on the number of views.

EL picked up on the engagement levels with regards to resources available within the team and thought it was important to highlight resource considerations in advance of the new Corporate Plan discussion. The Chair agreed that prioritisation will hopefully provide direction for the team with regards to marketing and communications. HP confirmed that the team is discussing a structure for different posts with regular slots for different types of content.

The Board thanked HP and KP for their presentation.

## 7. Items for Decision

### 7.1 **2020 – 21 Annual Targets**

[AW joined the meeting]

EL introduced the paper and advised the Meeting that there are some concerns regarding the KPIs – in particular, the membership target which has wider financial implications currently being considered by the Development Team.

Further, the SwiMark and SwiMark Plus are challenging targets in relation to turnover of club committees', and the advanced equalities standard will not be met this year. However, this is due to seeking to embed equality across our sport, rather than simply meeting the criteria to meet the standard. EM confirmed that further consideration is given in relation to our RSDMs and the additional work required for them, for example, in relation to data collection. EM also highlighted the need to complete equality impact assessments.

The Chair advised that the equality standard will be discussed with regards to the new Corporate Plan and whether the focus should be on work across the organisation, although there may need to be discussions with **sportscotland** in relation to our Investment Agreement outcomes.

[DB joined the Meeting]

There was a discussion around the performance KPIs, particularly in relation to the difficulties in predicting these, with AW providing some context for the Meeting and advising that KPI 3.6 should be green. The President noted that the performance targets being reliant on coaches putting athletes in the teams rather than being the responsibility of AW and his team.

There was a discussion on the membership KPI in relation to balancing retention of current members and increasing new members following a query from the President in relation the number we have set, as well as assessing the data available against this KPI.

The Chair expressed concern regarding the red KPIs and wants to ensure that work is still ongoing to achieve these KPIs, rather than these being pushed back in the new Corporate Plan. The Chair also commented on the performance KPIs being green and noted AW's comments on this point. SM confirmed that the message to continue efforts regarding KPIs was fed back to the staff team recently.

The Board approved the paper.

## **7.2 Discipline Investment**

SM advised that the investment for disciplines has not greatly changed over the last five years but wanted to highlight the content within the paper regarding the recruitment of a development officer for water polo and the challenges across disciplines in relation to development. SM advised that consideration needs to be given to the role that disciplines can play in increasing membership numbers.

The President asked about diving's investment and AW advised that there is more understanding now as we have encouraged further consideration in this area which has resulted in diving providing us with a detailed financial budget. Accordingly, AW believes that there may be a request for an increased amount next year.

AF queried if the extra £2.5k referred to within the paper will cover two people for FINA referee school and SM confirmed that this is correct.

The Chair commented on the paper regarding long-term development considering the role that the disciplines can play and what funding will be required. With regards to synchro, the Chair asked if we have spoken to SwimEngland and SM advised not to date and with regards to water polo, SM confirmed that DCI application is due to be submitted shortly.

## **7.3 Staff Salary Paper**

Dealt with after item 6.

EL, EM, DM, SM, HP and KP left the room during the discussion on this item, which was minuted separately.

EL, EM, DM, SM, HP and KP returned to the room.

The Chair advised the Meeting that the Board approved the paper as submitted.

## **7.4 Charitable Status**

DB introduced the paper and expressed the view that we should not lose sight of this option for the future and DM advised that more time is needed in relation to the new Corporate Plan. SM advised that if we do consider this in the future then we would need extra resource to do this and AD agreed with balancing the benefit against the cost of resource.

The Board approved the paper.

## **7.5 Swim England County Team Championships**

AW introduced the paper advising that there is full support across the swimming community in relation to the request. However, there are contrary interpretations of whether this is allowed in terms of our rules, as set out in the paper.

Following a discussion in which the Chair recommend that the Board follow the Editorial Board's interpretation, the Board agreed with the interpretation of the Editorial Board set out in the paper but confirmed that it would fully support a proposal to the AGM for approval to change the rules.

There was a discussion around the practicalities of approving the change and the merits of each argument put forward. The Board noted that preparations may commence in order to allow enough time on the basis that the proposal is approved and the new regulations will be written in conjunction with the Swim Committee. AW to feedback to Lynn Alderton.

AW

## **8. Items for Information and Discussion**

### **8.1 Development Team Staffing**

JD introduced the paper and advised the Board that SM has put a lot of work into this with consideration of the SMT and JD firmly supports the proposals set out in the paper.

SM highlighted some of the future considerations set out in the paper, including the role of RSDMs which has been in place for 10-11 years and the increased remit of this role. For example, RSDMs now have additional responsibilities in relation to equalities and data protection, and so the landscape is changing and we need to ensure that we have the right structure in place to support clubs.

The Chair also commented on the quality on the paper but felt that more time is needed for the Board to consider the proposals and any potential impact on our resources, which will be addressed in the new Corporate Plan discussion. The President commented on the potential impact on clubs with

regards to any changes and so the Council will likely have a challenge in this area but she felt the proposals were good.

There was a discussion regarding measuring impact on clubs in comparison with other SGBs. SM also advised that 12 applications have been received for the role referred to within the paper.

## 8.2 Management Accounts (Qtr 3)

DB advised that a lot of work from DM has gone into the accounts and it appears as though we are on target. DM referred to her comments within item 9 (management team report) and welcomed comments from the Board regarding the challenges faced regarding timings with the festive break and alternative options.

There was a discussion around pushing the January Board meeting back to allow more time to prepare the figures. The Board agreed that different dates could be considered in order to push back the date by around a week and a paper should be brought back to the Board with a proposal. **EM**

AD queried the reduction in the SSTQ budget and SM advised that the cause of this is unknown, it could have been the change in dates / timings or cost. However, SM confirmed that this is being monitored closely with a review undertaken in December and a further review due in April.

The Chair clarified that a paper will be brought to the Board in April regarding the reduction in awards income. **SM**

### 8.2.1 Financial Projections for 2020-21

DB advised that the new Corporate Plan could potentially have an impact but considered that we should undertake some longer term financial planning beyond one year. DB highlighted some concerns, for example, we do not have a balanced budget at this stage. DM concurred with DB's comments and advised that the figures reflect everything that is requested and there is a process for the SMT to consider what falls within our budget.

DM advised that the financial plan will be emailed to the Board for approval in advance of the end of the financial year. The Chair queried if departments will take into account a potential cut in budget and DM confirmed that this is the case and there is a discussion around this in every quarter. DM also confirmed that the SMT receives a more detailed set of accounts. **DM**

The Chair commented on the biggest risk being around **sportscotland** funding, although we have been given indicative figures and DM attended an investment workshop in which it was indicated that no cuts are expected. AW also commented on BS's investment request going to UK Sport this year, which could have an impact.

The Chair queried the Scottish Water figures and HP advised that the contracts are being finalised between the legal teams so she believes the figures will not change. The Chair also requested consideration to be given to the deferred income in the future. **DM**

## 8.3 Audit & Risk Committee

DB advised the Meeting that there had been a good discussion with Lindsay Thomson regarding the complaints and appeals panel with positive comments regarding training. Further, DB advised that there was a review and discussion regarding the risk of members' dissatisfaction.

## 8.4 Wellbeing & Protection Update

EL introduced the paper and focused on the case management content within the paper with reference to the amount of time involved in each case.

There was a discussion on WPO training and PVG numbers with regards to the impact on resource and developing a system for analysis. EL also commented on setting up a wellbeing and protection working group to discuss these issues and review policies, practices and systems in this area.

The President queried if we know that bigger clubs need two WPOs and EL thought that it would be useful to consider this and the President reiterated her concern around WPOs not being trained and opined that having a WPO needs to be made important at the inception of a new club.

The Board agreed for a working group to be formed and a meeting held prior to the April Board meeting and EM asked for a Board champion. **EL**

## 9. Management Team Report

**Services** - EM advised that there is a Board meeting on the evening of 22 April 2020 and there is mental health and wellbeing training on same date. EM also highlighted the details of our office move contained in the report and assured the Board that there is a succession plan in place for the Editorial Board as referenced in the report. The Chair thanked EM for bringing a plan around editorial board succession, as this is an important aspect to our governance.

**Finance** - Dealt with under item 8.2.

**Marketing and Communications** - HP commented on increased support for events that are not National Championship events and wanted to flag this with regards to the impact on the team.

**Development** - SM advised that there is a date in diary for the West and Midlands young leaders programme in Inverclyde in March and she is awaiting dates for East and North – we have four young people for the technical official and events programme in the West. SM is still working with the young ambassadors to implement their suggestions. Further, the coaching review is well underway and SM hopes to complete this by the end of August when we have the coach's symposium.

The President commented on the importance of emphasising the level of support that we want to provide to the young ambassadors whilst managing expectations and the Board agreed for SM to implement a plan of action setting out what suggestions we are able to take forward.

The President also advised the Meeting that she had received positive feedback from a number of clubs following the Chairs event at the National Short Course Championships.

**SM**

**Performance** - AW provided an update on engagement with para, swimming and diving in relation to investment and noted how highly Paul Wilson is regarded across the sport. There was a discussion regarding DRP development following a query from AF regarding a longer term plan with AW advising that there is an annual review. AW also confirmed his understanding that the number of para events in Birmingham will be wider and there is a proposal to change the eligibility rules to include those with Scottish grandparents and those who have lived in Scotland for three years.

The Chair queried BS recognition for work in Stirling and confirmed that the programme is run by the University of Stirling and supported by us and AW highlighted the partnership with BS. AW has a meeting on 17 February and this will be discussed, particularly around investment challenges.

EM raised a query that had been raised previously regarding adopting generic Board Member email addresses. Her understanding is that the University will not set up a user ID for someone who is not an employee but DM will clarify if this is the same for email addresses.

KF provided some further context around the recommendation to have generic Board Member email addresses in relation to (1) data subject access requests under the GDPR and (2) retention of personal data. KF explained that there is a risk to Scottish Swimming in relation to Board Members using personal email addresses to process personal data. There was a discussion around options for managing Board information and access, including use of online document management systems.

**DM**

**10. Directors' Reports – verbal**

None.

**11. British Swimming Update – verbal**

The Chair advised that the next BS Board meeting is in two weeks and the first draft of a report on the future of BS has been circulated for discussion at this meeting. The Chair highlighted three particular areas on which he would seek to input: maximizing benefits for all Home Countries; ensuring no encroachment on the roles of all Home Countries; and ensuring that our representative groups (Board and Council) are fully consulted. The Chair advised that the review is good and important to determine the role of BS and the challenges around this.

In relation to investment, the Chair advised that nothing official has been confirmed regarding BS funding but the first stage application was submitted before Christmas with positive feedback from UK Sport so far, particularly around para swimming. UK Sport has requested a lot of information and the stage 2 application is due in February.

**12. AOCB**

None.

**13. Date of Next Meeting(s):**

Council Meeting, Sunday 9 February, 10.30am, Stirling Court Hotel  
Board Meeting, Wednesday 22 April, 6.00-9.00pm, Stirling Court Hotel

**cc** Board & Council  
Barry Cook, [sportscotland](mailto:sportscotland) Editorial Board  
National Chairs Harper Macleod  
Kevin Reynard