



Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Board Meeting held at 6pm on 21 April 2021, Zoom

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
Ian Fleming (IF)	President
Colin Kennedy (CK)	Vice President

**In
Attendance**

Sharon MacDonald (SM)	Director of Development
Elaine Mackenzie (EM)	Director of Services
Deborah McGinniss (DM)	Finance Manager/Company Secretary
Ally White (AW)	Director of Performance
Deborah Alexander (DA)	Minute Taker
Barry Cook	sportscotland
Gordon Hunter	Participation Development Manager

Item No.

Action

1. **Chair's Address**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and noted that the papers for this meeting were very strategic and extremely strong. He thanked all team members for their input. The Chair remarked that it was timely to look given the partial reopening of pools on Monday and the general hopefulness from Government. The Chair thanked all members for their support at the EGM, both for the proposal and the evening itself, and to EM and DM for their presentations. The Chair also thanked IF for chairing the meeting.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
AF declared his interest as tutor and contributor to coaching framework.
3. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Helen Plank.
4. **Minutes of previous meetings: Board Meeting, 31 January 2021 and the 10th February 2021**
None.
5. **Actions of previous meetings: Board Meeting, 31 January 2021**
EL confirmed all previous actions have been addressed, and/or are covered in the current agenda, but noted that there is a piece of work required in relation to Birmingham 2022 in relation to consistency of language. The other point was around the wording regarding the objectives for the Games, and a need to ensure that the objective is not just about meeting qualifications, but more about ensuring delivery at the same level at the Games themselves, in order to ensure that the athletes are continuing to progress beyond the selection window.
6. **Facilities Presentation and Update**
GH presented the paper.

The purpose of the paper is to discuss and consider the role the Governing Body can play in relation to facilities and influence their impact. GH discussed the Framework for Aquatics which was created to support the delivery of quality environments.

The Paper includes a review of the previous strategy and an update on progress since then, that being providing a network of national resource training and competition facilitates as well as general support around the sharing of best practice, amongst other factors.

GH referred to the Ticking Time Bomb Report (2000) which concluded there was need for a change of landscape in how public pools operate. The cost of updating and maintaining the public pools was substantial, estimated at £40billion over 20 years. The conclusion of that report was that there was a need for a change of landscape, and the solutions identified included local authorities creating arm's-length external organisation (ALEOs) to operate and run leisure facilities. This would allow a focus on generating income through fitness and membership options, and the ability to work in partnership with the private sector. The Report also encouraged the moving of facilities to school sites, away from standalone public leisure facilities.

GH explained that many different local authorities have adopted different approaches, which created a cocktail across the sector. This makes it difficult to obtain a national picture across all areas.

Scottish Swimming gave a commitment to commission a review of Scotland's aging pools, which made reference to the Ticking Time Bomb report. This has not been completed but in the meantime, GH has sought to carry out an internal review.

GM explained that looking at a comparison between April 2000 and now, and there is a clear reduction in public pools, but an increase in Trusts/ALEOs. That said, there has been a definite shift in how they are operated and getting access to schools' estate and programs etc. has improved significantly.

There have been a number of pools built within schools, only 1 pool that has been built, which is not a school pool at Aberdeen Sports Village.

On refurbishment, the natural lifecycle of a pool is 30/35 years if well maintained, and with most of the pools built in 1970's and 1980's, it is unsurprising that refurbishment is needed across the board now.

The main areas of concern around aging lifecycle are Falkirk and Fife. In Falkirk, 2 of main public pools are at end of aging stock which could impact on accessibility, and in Fife, whilst flagship venues are all great, all school and local pools are at end of aging stock.

The creation and shift towards school pools is becoming a trend – whilst some areas do not have any school pools, there is a belief that this will become the preferred business model.

The impact that facilities have on the environment has not been considered previously, but it understood that this is a really important area, particularly in relation to older facilities, as they look to reduce their carbon footprint. Scottish Swimming must ensure that they are advocating this.

GH summarised the other factors to consider; the ultimate impact of Covid-19; cost of swimming (must get cheaper to avoid proving out); shift to school estate; access; environmental concerns; design (a clear opportunity to make sure we are at the forefront and influence to make sure right for sport); deep water and the challenges presented by aging stock to the disciplines; and events .

GH discussed the recommendations made as part of the internal review and advised that there should be a piece of work commissioned to ensure that **sportscotland** and Scottish Swimming are considered and consulted at an early stage of facility planning.

The Chair invited BC to comment from a **sportscotland** perspective. There is a similar conversation every 2 years regarding facilities, and it is essential to know where investment is going to come from. BC found the information provided in the paper helpful and would encourage ongoing dialogue with **sportscotland**.

IF noted that the coordination of access is essential when considering school estate. In West Lothian, there are clubs that are exclusively working out of school pools, and it remains entirely unclear when these clubs will be able to train again. Further, with the change of direction towards school pools, there is a need to ensure that there remain suitable locations for competitions.

KC agreed that the paper is excellent but also concerning, particularly in relation to aging estate (at 36%) and diving.

AD voiced a concern that there is a real lack of awareness of what the full picture is and highlighted that there will be a benefit in talking to partners at a local level and being transparent. In order to unlock investment, there needs to be a strategic conversation. The need for housebuilders to consider community benefit should be explored.

It was discussed that in order to grow membership, there is a requirement to have suitable capacity and access to water. AD believes there is an urgency behind trying to grow a partnership and work with government to get a common understanding of what the true position is and what practical implications might flow from that in relation to the governments' health ambitions and the sports growth and recovery from the pandemic.

AF echoed AD's view that central government need to be aware of the bigger picture around leisure access.

JD asked if there is a way of mapping out the usage of the current membership of pools at the moment, given there are already challenges. This might help to document the pressure which exists already and highlight additional pressure which will be created if pools were to close.

SM noted that information could be collated. She added additional points around the influence of the programming of a school facility/influencing when a community facility is being considered and built. This tends to involve different partners, where there is no strong relationship, and therefore got to work out how to better influence the right people at a strategic and an operational level.

SM also highlighted the need for work around equality. If there is a desire to address inequalities, then programming needs to improve and a greater involvement in planning processes.

CMcC asked whether there were figures for development in the pipeline, as she believes that this could help to influence the approach. GH confirmed these figures do exist, but often Scottish Swimming become involved at a later part of the process by which time it is too late. The challenge is ensuring involvement at the earliest stage.

The Chair explained that there is a desire from UK Sport to focus on the social impact of sport. There is a strong directive from UK Sport and there is a second conversation between UK Sport and **sportscotland** around diving. In conversations around this area there is a need to consider the logical circle between Scottish Swimming, UK Sport, British Swimming and **sportscotland**.

The Chair noted that this paper should be treated as a call to action to move forward with activity in this area and consider how to influence stakeholders in the most effective way. It was accepted that these conversations might be uncomfortable as there will be a number of sports challenging for limited investment, but as a result, this is a challenging but exciting time to try to influence government policy and have discussions with education, health service and the justice system.

It was agreed that there was a need for a plan for influencing activity over the next few months, even if that includes uncomfortable conversations with partners and the public.

BC agreed with the Chair's comments and noted that while the underlying message is the same as it was in 2000, this must be achieved in a different way.

EL accepted that there is a need to build a picture which backs up the narrative regarding access to the correct type of water space and noted that if there is a strong sense amongst Board that work is needed, this will take some resources which is not budgeted for.

AD noted that this would be high value and visible piece of work for membership, and the Chair remarked that there was a need make sure that all achievements are published and known about.

[The Board approved the Paper]

7. Items for Decision

7.1 EGM Draft Minutes / Debrief

EM noted that if the Board is happy with the Minutes, they would be put on the website in draft form. The Board were asked to provide any comments direct to Elaine before Friday when the minutes will be published subject to approval.

EM discussed the EGM, noting that 300 delegates joined. On voting, all but 6 people had voted by the time the voting was live for 50 seconds.

EM considered that the EGM was as close to the face to face meetings as possible, however if the AGM is to take place remotely in September, the intention is to close registration a day before, as there was a huge amount of work needed within an hour of the EGM starting which was difficult to manage.

7.2 Review of Board and Management Roles

EL introduced the Paper, and the Chair remarked that this paper is intended to see Scottish Swimming through the interim until the corporate plan is created. The Chair opened for questions.

There were no comments/questions from the Board and Chair highlighted the need to take a broader perspective on what communication means insofar as services and marketing communications are concerned.

[The Board approved the Paper]

7.3 Corporate Governance - AGM/Awards Dinner

The intention is to postpone any decision regarding the AGM in this regard until the June Board meeting, in order to have a clearer picture of the situation in terms of numbers that will be permitted.

It was also agreed that there should not be a delay in accepting applications for life members given it is not only about the preceding year. If applications are accepted, individuals can decide whether or not they want to accept it at a virtual AGM, or delay.

The Board agreed to postpone the Awards Dinner for a further year, and we may look to do something digitally to recognise success within the sport. The Chair noted his alignment with the cancelling the awards dinner given the risk of planning, reputation management and the possibility that there will be a need to postpone in the autumn. Notwithstanding this, it was identified that there needs to be an opportunity to celebrate athletes in some way (social media/virtual awards).

It was agreed that the AGM and awards dinner will be postponed at the Museum for a year, but hold booking at university in the event that an AGM can be held in person. The Chair observed that a hybrid meeting is very difficult to run, and therefore efforts need to be made to ensure things are set up and technology is in place. KC noted her agreement to this position, better to be fully in person, or fully remote.

7.4 Interim Plan

EL introduced the paper and thanked the team for their input.

EL explained that the paper is essentially an evolution of previous plans and that they had gone out to three of the four districts for feedback. There was no sense from the districts that the plan was wrong or taking the wrong direction. At the East District meeting, there was discussion about looking at inequalities and requiring a focus during the rebuild to do all possible to make the sport accessible to all. EL invited comments from the Board.

The Chair noted that under Objective 1, there is a belief that there needs to be work around school pools in an operational sense. In terms of service priorities, the Chair believes that there has to be an emphasis on stability and an acknowledgement of the difficult times financially. On point 7, there needs to be a clear distinction between digital communications and the website.

JD queried whether the Clubs would be comfortable with the terminology of 'rebuilding'. EM provided an update on membership numbers. This time last year, membership was 16,758 members, as of today, that is 7103 members. Given this, EM believes that there is a rebuilding phase needed, but she is confident that numbers will increase dramatically as pools begin to open. GH confirmed the idea of rebuilding reflects the tone from Learn2Swim.

It was agreed to retain the rebuild terminology and review in the coming weeks.

CK noted his difficulty in obtaining perspective of what is happening across the country as there are no national events taking place, however in the East District, school pools are a key area of concern, as is access to deep water pools. CK's club exclusively uses school pools in West Lothian, and none of these will open on 26 April, and Clubs being allocated insufficient time at municipal pools. SM noted that a number of school pools will open on 26 September.

AF noted that feeling from members is very positive and he is confident that swimmers will be back over the coming weeks as pools reopen.

[The Board approved the paper]

7.5 Sponsorship Plan

The Chair remarked on the strength of the paper and identified sponsorship as a key area of success.

EL spoke to the paper and remarked that efforts in this regard have been well received and work with Scottish Water is going well. Sponsorship, even pre-pandemic for a sport of this level, is a difficult area to navigate and it is a challenge to compete with football/rugby.

The Chair opened to the Board for comments.

AD noted that from a cost/benefit point of view, there might be a benefit in focusing on a small number of bigger partners as this will be easier to manage, whilst being tactical with smaller opportunities which may arise. In terms of expectations, would be looking to really focus on this area and increase the level of sponsorship. Whilst the pandemic is a poor backdrop, and there is a view that the economy will bounce back and the businesses likely to benefit most from this would be health and lifestyle companies, who in turn would be good partners for Scottish Swimming. There might be a benefit in setting out a matrix detailing the assets and benefits that can be offered to potential sponsors, and what value can be attached to that.

The Chair noted that his agreement with AD's points regarding allocation of assets. As there is no commercial team, given the size of the organisation and the assets at our disposal, it is real testament to the success that sponsorship is a strong area.

8. Items for Information and Discussion

8.1 **Future of Leisure Trusts**

EL introduced the paper and noted the natural connection to the previous facilities paper. Both this paper and the facilities paper are for future discussion rather than definitive pieces.

EL invited comments/observations from the Board.

BC confirmed that the paper and the approach is consistent with his experience at a **sportscotland** level. EL is conscious of the need to have a much better working relationship with each of the Trusts at a senior level.

EL noted that he has had dialogue with **sportscotland** about future engagement and lobbying at a local level and nationally at government level. It is accepted that a national conversation is required around how to understand the spaces that are needed. Whilst this is becoming more closely aligned, work remains to be done.

AF asked whether the national strategic forum mentioned in section 3 had a timescale for providing the paper to go to Government, given there are key partners mentioned within this section which has already been discussed this evening in relation to pools etc. Will this be submitted with serious recommendations or will it be limited to Trusts?

EL noted that there have been recommendations drafted and groups being developed. The initial ambition was to have recommendations lodged by January, but this has slipped. In any event, not just about local trusts, but rather universities and education, schools etc. One of the proposed working groups include a 'communities group' in which governing bodies will be a key driver in providing input to the wider forum.

8.2 **Annual Plan Progress**

8.2.1 **Annual Targets – 12 Months' Progress Report**

The Chair introduced the paper, noting that it is essential to consider the progress against the plan as a narrative piece. There is an enormous amount to be positive about, notwithstanding the pandemic. All of the work carried out over the last 12 months should be celebrated.

EL commented that whilst the internal recognition is appreciated, it is the sport that has delivered much of the success. The year-end report is not necessarily reflective of the progress made on the four-year plan. There is a piece in this paper around how to report on achievements in the last 4 years, and how this can be best be achieved. Targets for next year have to be adjusted in light of **sportscotland** processes.

BC noted that the given the recent push in Governing Bodies around target setting protocols, it follows on that this is how governing bodies are assessed and reviewed.

BC view is that in terms of target setting, while membership will always be relevant, it is likely now to be more about demographic of membership/equality. **Sportscotland** want to move towards a recognition of governing bodies and trusting that they know their sport best. BC hoping for a mindset shift and for governing bodies to show that they can report in an achievable and measurable.

DB noted is pride in the achievements of the sport and believes that the organisation should be publishing this to members and ensuring open and transparent reporting. If targets are set, the progress against them should be published.

JD agreed with the importance of celebrating success recognising when targets are not met. Allowing the membership see progress helps to tell a story of where money has gone, which will be of benefit in that it provides context for members.

CK highlighted the importance of celebrating success at all level of sports (i.e. what has been done at grass route and age group levels), and transparency and educating the Clubs and members.

The Chair summarised the discussion by stating that his agreement in moving away from a matrix based system, to a more narrative approach – but it is vital to ensure that the balance is right and the impact of activity needs to be clear.

8.2.2 Strategy End of Year Progress Report

8.3 Wellbeing and Protection Update

EL introduced the paper and noted that efforts have been made to make progress where possible by looking externally to ascertain where improvements can be made.

Looking at reports from other governing bodies (including the gymnastics report) which cover a whole number of wellbeing and safeguarding issues. Whilst details not fully published, these are expected at the end of August.

A new case management system is being created to improve efficiency and use of information. As a Board, there is also a need to engage in training. This has been updated by **sportscotland** and a suitable date will be arranged for this.

CMC noted that it is encouraging the number of Wellbeing Protection Officers is increasing.

BC noted his view that things have progressed in this area significantly over the last 2 years.

The Chair enquired if there was any feedback from the STO meeting around PVG requirements for STO's. EL informed that there was a fact-finding mission ongoing to consider whether a PVG is required or not, this is being progressed but essentially a decision will be reached based on the basis of the information available.

EM noted that the first of the mental health webinars was being delivered to WPO's tomorrow and have been well subscribed.

The Chair noted the importance of looking for outside sport for benchmarking, into education and social services, and it was agreed that this was a sensible approach. In terms of case management and investigating concerns, it is essential to make it as independent as possible to ensure that the focus is the wellbeing of the individuals.

8.4 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes

DB introduced the paper and invited questions from the Board.

AF found the meeting extremely positive and noted his desire to attend the next meeting.

IF highlighted the section on events linked to the Clubs' sustainability. It is clear that Clubs' rely on events for income, and it is important to keep on top of this and/or create a financial model for clubs. There have been concerns raised at Chairs' meetings that some Clubs might not survive, and they are looking to Scottish Swimming for guidance in this regard (i.e. what they can do, and what other clubs are doing successfully).

The Chair noted his view that it is crucial to be aware when the impact of Covid is at its worst and set that point as a baseline. Depending on the situations, this may be at the next Board meeting, or the one after.

9. Reports from the Company

EM explained that she has been having meetings with the university regarding returning to workplace. The university are hoping to begin reopening (i.e. opening the pool and library) from Monday 26th April.

All furniture is due to be delivered in coming weeks, and got a team ready to help move, and then a risk assessment will be carried out. The working from home policy has also been updated and formalized and may have to look at equipment if moving towards a permanent blend of home and office working. Most staff are continuing to operate and work well from home but understand that staff are beginning to miss interaction. A key strength of the organisation is the culture and this is encouraged by all being together, so will look to encourage this going forward. It was agreed that a gradual move back to the office is preferable, working to August/September time is the best approach.

EM noted that Moraig Macdonald has stepped down from the Editorial Board and we are looking to appoint Liz Stewart in her place. Colin will be stepping down in September when he takes up the President role and will require formal approval of Fiona Crawford at that time. EM sought approval from Board on these appointments which was granted.

EM and DM looking to go through the organisation's 3rd full audit this year. KMPG carrying this out and this is welcomed in order to ensure that standards do not drop as a result of lockdown.

JD referred to cyber-insurance and enquired whether there was any cybersecurity training offered to staff. DM noted that she attended cyber training for governing bodies, which was informative. DM confident that training can be arranged for wider staff group, and BC noted that **sportscotland** could facilitate.

DM noted that in recent years, the insurance company have been trying to encourage the organisation to take out cyber insurance, however the University believe that there is a need to focus on technical control instead. As a result, a focus group has been created to gain an understanding of data; where it is held, how it is held and what is the risk if there was to be a security breach. The group is considering appointing a consultant into look at what is done, and what more needs to be done to ensure compliance.

DM referred to her report in relation to the University's tenancy agreement, and bringing the IT support in house, which is a huge benefit to the organisation. The University have suggested a collaborative approach to cyber-insurance.

DM noted that she has only received 3 notice of interest in relation to the invitation to tender, and as such she has extended the date and plans to speak to other governing bodies. This will come through the Board meeting in June.

SM noted that on development, there has been a good period of engagement, with more trust staff coming back from furlough, and pool operators' sessions and framework session with partners being held. The regional team are busy with the Clubs trying to ensure a smooth return.

On performance, AW noted that work is ongoing with Glasgow Life regarding the running of an event as part of the Olympic selection process. This has unfortunately been a complicated process. AW noting that the longer this goes on, there is a small risk that it becomes too challenging to get meets in place.

There have been a couple of trial meets on over the last couple of weeks and British Swimming has done great arranging these. Whilst the atmosphere was not always great in the pool, the live stream was good and the overall standard across all meets was excellent.

From a Scottish Swimming perspective, all performances were generally positive, in particular the number of positive female performances in the last week was a real positive.

From Paralympic perspective – 4 athletes standing with standards and 3 more going to the

Euros. Stephen Cleggs' world record, a fantastic swim.

4 Scottish Swimmers made the individual standards for the Olympics, and the selection processes continue. In addition to the Olympic athletes, 5 other swimmers added to the European team, meaning an overall representation of 9 Scottish Swimmers.

Scotland had 25% of the entries in London, which is testament to the approach during the pandemic.

The Board agreed with the suspension of the swimming regulations until the end of June.

The Board remarked that the live stream was very enjoyable, and the commentators etc. were all very positive, and welcomed comments from AW regarding who should attend meets in Manchester. Would also like an update around performance centers, and how they are performing in relation to the expectation of Scottish Swimming. It was agreed that this would be helpful.

EM confirmed that a small group has been setup to take forward the transgender policy. Two elements of this policy – participation/supporting club, and the performance side. Need to drive this forward as a sport. BC advised there is a currently a review of the equality standard for sport, but this is delayed and not likely to be ready until the end of the year. It is a fairly significant change, and this will take time, but governing bodies and clubs should make a start internally if cannot wait.

9.1 Letter of Engagement

Audit is going to start on 17 May, and this is scope of work for approval.

9.2 Legal Items

None.

10. Directors' Reports

None.

11. British Swimming Update

Board meeting last weekend and it was discussed that there has been a significant reduction in UK Sport investment for para-cycle swimming and para-swimming. British Swimming lodged an appeal with UK Sport panel, but this was unsuccessful. Diving fared better, and district swimming got something, as did polo. Generally, disappointment with the level of funding, however looking to move on and work out how to invest and manage the situation.

There had been progress and greater flexibility with the carry over period and funding across programs.

UK Sport are looking for broader social impact of sports, and swimming has a great story to tell, given the pathway is the same for everyone and the same quality of training.

There was also a discussion around Rule 50 – prohibition around protest at the Olympic Games, given the US Olympic Association has said that they will not sanction their athletes. The question was then that that means for British Swimming. Looking to avoid a situation of double standards.

Peter Littlewood has missed a number of Board meetings, and the view is that there will be a discussion as to whether he will be able to continue.

12. AOB

None

13. Next Meeting:

cc	Board & Council Barry Cook, sport scotland	Editorial Board National Chairs	Harper Macleod Kevin Reynard
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