

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Board Meeting held at 10am on 22 August 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
Caitlin McClatchey (CM)	Board Director
Ian Fleming (IF)	President
Colin Kennedy (CK)	Vice President

In Attendance

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
Deborah Alexander (DA)	Minute Taker
Barry Cook (BC)	sportscotland Partnership Manager
Lindsay Booth	Safeguarding Officer

Item No.

Action

1. Chair's Address

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and started by welcoming both LB and BC to the meeting and congratulated AW in his new interim role as Director of Aquatics, effective from 1st September.

The Chair recognised that any period of operational review can be unsettling for staff members but highlighted that the purpose of the current review was not about cost savings, but rather about reorganisation to ensure the organisation are best placed to face any challenges presented by the post-lockdown world. Notwithstanding this, the Board do understand that it can be a challenging time.

The Chair highlighted that the Young Volunteer Programme weekend takes place in Larbert this year. Invites have gone out recently, and the Chair encourages Board members who are able to attend on the day to do so.

The Chair noted that he had looked through the Board profiles on the website this week and noted that some of these are out of date and asked that members liaise with the marketing team to have these refreshed.

HP

Whilst as a Board, there is a focus on more than performance outcomes, it would be wrong not to mention the Olympics and the forthcoming Paralympics, particularly the success of the Scottish swimmers. Huge achievement for Duncan and Kathleen in their successes in achieving the first gold medal for a woman in almost 100 years, and the most medals for any British athlete at the Olympic games. The Chair asked the Board to join him in sending congratulations to all athletes.

2. Declarations of Interest

AF – tutor and head coach of composite team.

3. Apologies for Absence

None.

4. Minutes of Previous meetings: Board & Council Meeting, 20 June 2021

Some minor typing errors were identified

5. Actions from previous meeting: Board & Council Meeting, 20 June 2021

EL spoke through the actions and noted that the first two are YVP related, which the Chair has already touched upon. Noted that there are still some future funding model considerations to come back to in a future board paper.

8.1.3 - regarding membership fees. This will be discussed during today's meeting, and membership fees and proposals for the future will be articulated today.

On the SASA membership point, EL noted that more information was required in regard to the citation. IF noted that EM had been working on this, and EM confirmed that this information had been collated and sent on to the appropriate person.

LB Presentation – Wellbeing and protections

LB explained that the direction of travel for the last two years has been ensuring compliance with **sportscotland's** safeguarding standards, however now we are compliant, the focus should be on how to stay compliant, and what can be done over and above the minimum standards.

LB suggested that a 3-year strategy is needed to allow direction, cohesion and for the organisation to be able to incorporate updated information regarding safeguarding in sport in general (i.e., the duty of care report, Whyte review from British Gymnastics, Sexual Abuse in Football report). These reports have implications for all sports, and we need to learn lessons from these serious cases.

LB suggested the creation of a safeguarding framework is needed to create the right culture. To have an effective culture, we need strong leadership, effective governance and empower everyone within the system to engage. The people who are supporting the culture need the skills and confidence to do so, and therefore require training and education which is bespoke to our needs as well as the general training provided by **sportscotland**. For aquatics, it is important to take a whole sport approach, so that Clubs or Districts are not left behind.

LB looked at the Scottish Gymnastics report as a case study, and also the Duty of Care Report for UK Government. These reports contained a recommendation to have athlete representatives as part of the safeguarding program, to ensure that the athlete voice isn't lost when the plans are created. In this regard, the suggestion would be to pilot this approach with the national programs in year one. review and develop this in year two, and then refine and roll out in year three.

It is vital to ensure that all staff members are on board with this approach. It may be possible to create a wellbeing and protection knowledge and skills matrix and carry out an analysis of all staff and volunteers to see which roles require which skills. This would allow a CPD program to be developed to effectively upskill and educate staff. This could also work at a Club level in a scaled down way to ensure it remains proportionate.

Coaches are the main vehicle for working with safeguarding and LB noted that historically safeguarding is a separate bolt-on to their training, moving forward LB suggest that this needs to be a core element. AW noted that this is really key to the new coaching framework.

LB noted that modern safeguarding, when done right, develops good communication, working in partnership and transparency, which assist in ensuring good coaching and better safeguarding.

In terms of next steps LB explained that she is looking for feedback on the proposed framework, the vision and general approach from the Board. She noted that it will be managed by a steering group comprised of the management team and CM has been invited to sit as a Board member and updates will be provided to the Board on a regular basis.

If safeguarding is an important element to the organisation, this needs to be communicated upfront and clearly in the corporate plan. LB is working with EL to ensure the language around safeguarding is captured in a headline way. There is also a need to generate specific recommendations and incorporate these into individual areas and departmental plans. This step may involve the use of subgroups and this is being developed. The steering group will receive departmental operational plans, ensure they are incorporated in the strategic plans, with feedback pulled together into a single wellbeing and protection strategy.

LB moved on to discuss resources, but noted given the early planning stage, the specifics have yet to be defined. This should evolve as the departmental plans are created. The general approach will be to ensure that a system is created which avoids a single point of failure, so that the system works no matter what, and is not overly reliant on a single person.

EL

LB opened to the Board for questions.

JD noted her view that the paper sets out a good and realistic approach. In particular JD agrees with the joined-up approach with the involvement of athletes, parents and young people. AD agreed that it as a sensible approach and in particular the decision to put culture at the centre of the process is great. Providing training and support around how to challenge behaviour when it is witnessed, will be crucial. LB agreed that regular feedback is essential, and a key aim will be to normalise regular review, feedback and dialogue – making it happen regularly, rather than only discussing matters when something goes wrong.

On athlete reps, it was agreed that gender balance was important, as is adequate training.

AF noted that it is a great time to try to embed the enhanced focus on safeguarding in the education system and asked who would be responsible for developing the training in this regard. LB envisaged a joined up, partnership, approach. AF agreed and noted that Elaine Murdoch should be involved with this process.

The Chair noted that a change to paper 8.3 would be welcomed, in particular to the definitions around high, medium and low risk. The Chair did not agree that reputational risk should be a high risk. The only high risk should be about safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of athletes.

LB acknowledged the efforts that had been made from across the organisation; the RSDM's and business support.

On monitoring and measuring of this paper, JD noted that there was a need to set achievable targets year on year, so there can be measurement of progress. LB agreed that this was essential and commented that the recent investment into the safeguarding case management database will be invaluable and help inform the safeguarding approach moving forward. Currently in onboarding phase to upload everything onto the system, to run report and identify key themes over the last five years which will help inform the plan going forward.

EL

The Chair noted that a number of clubs now have two or three wellbeing and protection officers, however some clubs are the same size as small rural primary schools. An area of development in the future may be a minimum ratio of WPO to member, in the same way there is a coach to member ratio requirement.

LB left the meeting.

7. Items for Decision

7.1 Review of Annual Business Document & Annual Report

EM spoke to the paper and invited comments for the Board. The Annual Business Document will go out on 31 August ahead of the AGM and will be locked down so that everyone is working from the same document. The Open Water Report is still outstanding, but an extension has been agreed.

The membership fees proposal is to continue the status quo, however later in the meeting there will be a membership update and a review is proposed during the first quarter. The intention is to maintain the status quo (at £45/£10 this year), but likely there will need to be an update and increase the following year.

Members to send any amendments to EM by email by Thursday 26 August. DM noted she is keen for feedback on the finance report.

IF noted that the feedback that attendees felt isolated at the previous AGM and suggested that a list of delegates be circulated either at the AGM or in advance of it, so that attendees are aware of other individuals on the call. EM explained that this would be hard to manage in terms of GDPR and would not offer a solution to members feeling isolated and confirmed that it would not happen.

JD queried the travel costs contained within the finance report, noting that it appeared a large amount. If this is travel for performance teams and development teams, it may be worth making this clear to avoid any queries being raised given it is a large sum.

The Board approved the paper.

7.2 Staff Salary Paper

Staff members left meeting to allow Board members to discuss this paper.

EL, EM, DM, HP and AW left the room during the discussion on this item, which was minuted separately. EL, EM, DM, HP and AW returned to the room. The Chair advised the Meeting that the Board approved the paper as submitted.

7.3 Anti-Doping update

AW spoke to the paper and discussed the recent government consultation which reached out to 61 organisations seeking to understand how to implement government policy which fits around the world anti-doping policies. The Framework is about understanding how the ethos of 'clean sport' can be driven through all organisations from the top policy makers, right through to Club level.

The framework covered all areas within the paper and also asks for evidence for how each of the different areas is being handled well. The important aspect is about being able to evidence progression against the Framework.

AW noted there is a fairly tight timeline to provide evidence. AW noted that the organisation can currently evidence around 75% of what it needs to, but there remains work to be done, cannot simply rely on the work of British Swimming in this regard.

EL noted that progress under this paper will represent a large shift and work will be required by the Board in order to move this forward in an adequate way.

7.4 Staff Structure Review

The Chair commented the potential need to review the organisation of the structure was identified last year, particularly as we emerge from the pandemic.

EL noted his thanks for KC and JD, for helping to support this paper, and for BC for his input.

EL considered that the way of working over the last 16 months has highlighted a strong need for a shift to ensure all strategic areas are better connected. He explained that the review is not about looking at headcount, but rather, looking at the structure and considering how best to support all of the membership. Vital to adopt a joined-up system with performance, participation and development area. AW will take up the Director of Aquatics role to oversee this as we move forward.

As result a shift of functions within the team is required to support this new role, which has meant a change in responsibility for some, and for others to take on extra responsibility. This is an essential first step to provide support for the Director of Aquatics role, and the focus is very much getting the right person in the right role.

The paper highlights the key changes to individual roles, but further work is needed to embed the growth aspect around the shape. The review is a growth opportunity to provide greater support to the membership. The suggestion is to come back to Board in Quarter 2 (end of October) with any further adjustments or support requirements.

The Board were supportive of the proposed joined up approach, but it was highlighted that in making the changes, care needs to be taken not to lose focus on individual aspects of the plan. EL confirmed that this is very much on their radar and the proposal is not simply the mashing together of two roles.

BC confirmed that the proposed approach is consistent with what he is seeing across other governing bodies. It was suggested that Scottish Cycling had recently gone through a similar process and there may be a benefit in having a discussion with a representative in this regard.

AF reiterated that messaging is really important. Staff should be reassured that there is a strong belief that this is the right way forward. Club and coach development is integral and doing the basics right is key – this needs to be implicit in the communication around this.

7.5 Statutory Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2021

DB thanked DM for drafting the paper and drew the Boards attention to the statement of ongoing concern and the letter of representation which the Chair will be required to sign.

7.5.1 Statutory Accounts

DM explained that in terms of finances, the surplus was higher than expected, but this is generally as a result of timing - for example, the website has been delayed and is still to be paid for. This has had a positive impact on reserves which are at £383,000. The accounts continue to look good.

7.5.2 Letter of Representation

The aim of this letter is to provide assurance that all of the information has been provided, and it is accurate and complete. The last ARC meeting was spent predominantly looking at these papers, and ARC are content to recommend that this is signed off by the Chair.

7.5.3 Review of our Accounting Policies

There has been no change to the policies from last year, and ARC are content with this.

If Board are content to approve the reports, DM and the Chair will sign these and lodge with Companies House. The accounts will also be available to members.

The Board approved the papers.

7.6 Appointment of the Editorial Board

AD noted that the paper strikes a good balance between growth and moving forward, but also providing

continuity – which is essential.

EM noted that Fiona Crawford has come on as a full editorial board member in support of succession planning should the chair step down at a future date. EM noting that whilst there is a full complement in the editorial board until September 2022, there will be a need to start recruiting to ensure the work of the Editorial Board is continued.

The Chair agreed with EM regarding the limit to length of term for the Chair of the Editorial Board as a point of governance. In addition, there may be a place on the Editorial Board for past presidents in order to allow for greater continuity and allow former presidents to retain an interest and influence going forward.

7.7 Approval of Discipline Fees

EM noted that there are two disciplines who are looking to change their fees:

STO want to slightly increase their fees to bring these in line with British Swimming, and Water Polo are looking to reduce their league fees to recognise that they are unlikely to be able to run a full league this year.

AF queried the price of Masters entries, and why it was cheaper than for children to enter. EM agreed that she will look into this and confirm that it is correct. This does not need to be confirmed before the AGM. IF noted that the Masters Committee will likely have a budget, and it may just be that this is affordable for them.

The Board approved the Paper, with the exception of the Master's fee, which EM will confirm to the Board by email.

EM

7.8 Approval of Co-opted members

EM introduced the paper as read, and **the Board approved the Paper.**

7.9 Swimming Regulation Changes

AW introduced the paper and thanks Lynn Alderton and Margaret Somerville on the Editorial Board for their work in relation to this paper.

The paper translates what was previously put to the Board in terms of intention to introduce a new level 4 competition license and to ensure that the technical suits are recognised. The timeline for technical suits implementation was 1st January 2022 alongside the full implementation of the competition framework. The aim is to allow enough time to embed and implement the policy across the Clubs and Districts in terms of making people aware this is coming to prevent members spending on suits when they may not be worn.

It was also discussed that there was a need to clarify what 'short duration meets' are. AW noted that whilst he can try to tidy up the language, the concept of short duration meets are defined by the regulations.

7.10 STO Regulations

The STO convener contacted CK recently, asking for the paper to be presented at the Board meeting. The STO are content to proceed with reinstating the STO regulations at end of September as planned, however some minor changes requested to bring in line with Scottish Swimming Regulations, particularly in relation to level 4 meets.

Under uniform, there is a request for the regulations to be amended to apply to all Level 1 and 2 competitions, with uniform requirements amended for Level 3 competitions, and no uniform requirements needed for Level 4 competitions.

On appointment of qualified officials, the request was for there to be no requirement for qualified officials at a Level 4 events, which would assist with the rural clubs in particular.

CK asked the Board to approve the proposed changes. The Chair noted that this should go to the Editorial Committee for their recommendation and come back to the Board after that, however opened to the Board for comments.

A query was raised as to who would be responsible for the health and safety of competitors if there is no qualified official. AW noted that the responsibility would rest with the meet organiser.

The Chair commented that any measure which allows meets to be put on more easily should be welcomed and seen as a positive.

It was agreed that EM would put the STO changes through the fast-track process for approval.

EM

8. Items for Decision

8.1 Finance Report (Quarter 1)

DB noted that it is heartening to see that management are continuing to consider what can be done to cut spending and noted that it would be good to hear how membership numbers have moved recently.

DM presented the paper as read and noted that there is a commitment to bring the deficit down to £300,000. The reason the deficit has gone up was because of the Young Leaders Programme and the allocation of the cost of this.

DM noted that the paper is lengthy as the scenario planning paper has been incorporated into this paper. At the end of the first quarter membership numbers are comforting, around 88% to target.

At the end of June membership figures are at around 16,647. Whilst figures haven't gone up much to the end of July, however it is usual to see a drop off in growth over the summer months. As a management team, happy with the current membership position.

In relation to the education program, the number of courses delivered has not surged as was hoped, the income is down around £50,000. DM will review and report regularly on this.

EM noted that in relation to membership fees, proposing a continuation of the current level (£45/£10), however EM acknowledged that there is a need to be prepared for this not being approved given there has not yet been a full return to the water/competition. IF explained he has been receiving feedback from clubs that they are not getting back into the full training facilities, and it is likely to be mid-October before there is a return to full training normality, however he has had no direct discussion about membership fees specifically. CK reiterated IF's position – the membership fees have generally been accepted by the Clubs.

The Chair agreed that cautious communication in the lead up to the AGM will be vital, however hopefully the work in the lead up of the EGM will stand the organisation in good stead for this.

8.2 ARC minutes

DB invited questions or comments from the Board on the Minutes.

The Chair noted that there are some errors in terms of timings for succession planning. EM has shared timings on a document which has been circulated separately. No Board members are in their final year. That said, succession planning must be carefully monitored.

8.3 Wellbeing & Protection update

EL noted that there has been a few updates since the paper was issued – there is an ongoing piece of work around PVGs. EL advised the organisation had to issue a precautionary suspension to a member – this is not needed often but making Board aware that this will be done when required.

8.4 Scottish Swimming Lease Agreement

EM explained that there has been a positive meeting with the Director of Property Management at the University. Heads of terms were received on Friday, however EM and DM have not fully reviewed these yet. In any event, everything will go through Harper Macleod to ensure all is favourable, before bringing this back to Board.

The Chair noted the lower rent, higher service fee this time and suggested that there is an opportunity to develop good service level agreements, particularly around IT, to benefit the organisation. DM explained that a separate agreement has been entered into around this, with a payment for the year already been made.

The Board Approved the paper.

8.5 Back to Water Progress update

AW spoke to the paper and explained that the RSDMs and development team have been doing a significant amount of work in this area. There are challenges around increasing access to pools around the country and in particular there is a need to increase the capacity, particularly in the West and Midlands. Feeling is positive and the school estate is gradually opening up again too. AW invited questions from the Board.

BC passed on his formal thanks to the staff group and in particular the RSDMs for the huge amount of work that has been done. Messaging has been consistent and this is entirely welcomed. IF echoed these points.

The Board approved the paper.

9. Reports from the Company

9.1

EM explained that return to work interviews have been taking place with staff members and have all been fairly positive – most people are looking forward to getting back into some level of hybrid working. The management team have made sure to speak to each member of staff to understand if there are any anxieties and a full risk assessment has been carried.

The Castle has been packed up, and EM and others will move equipment down to new facilities this week, however until the lease is drawn up and signed the University does not want the facility occupied. This may result in a couple of weeks of a delay, but we will be pushing this forward.

On the award ceremony, EM noted that the Board had previously decided that the AGM was to run virtually, and we would cancel the awards dinner for this year. It was felt that this was not the right thing for the sport at that point. EM explained that the Board now have to decide if the organisation is going to ask for award nominations at all this year. EM has written out to all disciplines, however no feedback as yet. That said, EM keen to recognise success.

EM explained that this would likely need to take place virtually, however suggested a hybrid approach, potentially with award winners and a plus one invited to a dinner, with the event live streamed out to members. If the Board are in agreement, EM will put communication out to the disciplines and seek nominations by the end of September.

The Chair noted that in terms of the delivery of the awards dinner/event, need to be careful given the financial position of the organisation and the fact that cannot offer a reduction of fees for members.

It was agreed that nominations would be sought by 23 September, but no commitment made as to how awards will be presented. A further short Board meeting will be arranged for a discussion as to how the event will operate.

On marketing and communications, HP explained that there is a media call with Duncan Scott which may lead to some coverage. He is covering a Learn to Swim event on Tuesday at the Commonwealth pool. This is a nice link up between performance and participation.

AW discussed the development report and noted that there is an addition around the education section. Elaine Murdoch has been working hard around the coaching framework and qualifications. The first year of this project is just being concluded. AW explained that the presentation by Doug Macdonald outlining the programme was recorded and AW will share the link.

AW went on to discuss the Paralympics and noted that there is an excitement about that. He noted there have been challenges around COVID etc., however the Games are about to start and hopeful that athletes will do a great job. This is being covered by Channel 4. The festival of swimming took place and was delivered extremely well and safety with positive feedback.

In terms of the Olympics, AW has reflected on the results, and when considered from a Scottish perspective, the vast majority of all medalists are training in Scotland and this is testament of the work by coaches, athletes and family members. Next year is a big year for sport, and there is a massive challenge. There is a need to be aware that there will be a huge challenge at the Commonwealth Games to deliver medals, and the focus is very much on Paris 2024.

9.2 Legal Items - None

10. Directors' Reports – *verbal*

None.

11. British Swimming Update – *verbal*

The Chair recognised the sad passing of Maurice Watkins, the Chair of British Swimming, and it was agreed that a donation or flowers should be made as deemed appropriate by the family. Maurice was a huge personality and will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

From a practical point of view, Adele Stach-Kevitz will step into the Chair's role on an interim basis but does not want this role on a permanent basis. Peter Littlewood is unwell and will be announcing his resignation at the next Board meeting, which means that British Swimming will need to elect a new Chair and a new seated independent director in short order. Given the crucial time in terms of Government funding, it is vital to be aware of the risks in having an inexperienced Chair and a vacant seated independent director.

On a positive note, there is a huge reason for celebration as a result of the success of Tokyo. Most successful

games ever, and it is hopeful that on the back of this performance British Swimming will be in a good position in terms of additional funding into sport and will hopefully be one of the biggest recipients.

12. AOCB

The Chair noted that this is IF's last Board meeting as President. Whilst it had not been the Presidency he expected, it has been an incredible success in such a difficult time. The Chair reiterated that his performance and contributions at Board meetings have been invaluable.

IF reflected on his presidency and noted that the Chair's meetings have been a great success, everyone has adapted well to the challenges of COVID, he has really enjoyed his Presidency and thanked everyone for their support. He is very content to leave the organisation in capable hands.

The Board discussed the possibility of an in-person Board meeting and whether it would be useful to move the meeting to the Sunday to make travelling easier. Agreed to move to Sunday 21st November in Stirling. EM to organise.

Date of Next Meeting(s):

AGM – 25 September 2021

Sunday 21 November 2021 – Board meeting, 10am Stirling Court Hotel

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