



## Joint Board and Council Meeting Minutes

### Minutes of the Joint Board and Council Meeting held at 10am on 23 June 2024 Stirling Court Hotel

#### Present

Graeme Marchbank (GM)	Chair
Euan Lowe (EL)	Chief Executive
Andrew Dunlop (AD)	Board Director
Andy Figgins (AF)	Board Director
Caitlin McClatchey (CM)	Board Director
Gillian Strathearn	Board Director
Kieran Watt (KW)	Board Director
Jackie Davidson (JD)	Board Director
Fiona Crawford (FC)	President
Derek McGown (DM)	Vice President 1
Susan Liddle (SL)	East President
Bruce Renfrew (BR)	Midland Council Member
Kerry Christie (KC)	North President
Hazel Hastings (HH)	West President

#### In Attendance

Deborah McGinniss (DMcG)	Finance Manager/Company Secretary
Elaine Mackenzie (EM)	Director of Services
Sean Dawson (SD)	Safeguarding Manager
Gordon Hunter (GH)	Aquatics Partnerships Manager
Erin Cummins (EC)	Aquatics Development Manager - School Swimming
Blair Prentice (BP)	Chair Editorial Board
Deborah Rookes (DR)	Minute Taker (Harper MacLeod)

#### Item No.

#### Action

#### 1. Chair and President Address:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and updated Board and Council on activity since the last meeting. The Chair attended a celebration for the retirement of the Chair of **sportscotland**, Mel Young, who is being replaced by Maureen Campbell. He also attended the Commonwealth Games AGM where there was substantial discussion of the potential for Scotland to host in 2026.

The President thanked the districts for the useful discussions which were had during her recent visits and noted that having attended the Nationals, she was pleased to see how well run they were and this has been commented on more widely. The President reminded Council of the importance of outwardly supporting decisions which are made as a Board and/or Council and putting full backing behind any decisions made.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest:

None noted.

#### 3. Apologies for Absence:

Received from David Beattie, Phil Cartwright, Tony Dane, Jeremy Chittleburgh, Barry Cook, Stan Finlayson, Joanne Sayer and Ian Wright

#### 4. Minutes of Previous meetings:

The minutes of previous Board & Council Meetings:-

- Board meeting held on 8 May 2024 – taken as read and passed.
- Council Meeting held 18 February 2024 – taken as read and passed.

#### 5. Actions from previous meetings:

##### Board meeting held on 8 May 2024

EL provided an update and confirmed that all have been completed, except as set out below:

- 9.1 - Transgender policy – amendments are required in relation to medals, awards and trophies, so that there are no discrepancies for transgender athletes and their ability to win awards across the board.

- 1- Board recruitment exercise – action is ongoing in this regard and will be picked up in a later paper.
- 7.2 - Facilities – action ongoing.
- 7.3.3 – action ongoing; the Chair will action ahead of next meeting.
- 7.3.4 – appetite for risk – to be discussed at August meeting.

## **Council Meeting held 18 February 2024**

All actioned and discussed.

### **6. Wellbeing & Protection Update**

SD spoke to the paper and provided an update on all sections.

**Case Management** - 7 cases from the start of the year; 4 medium risk and 30 open cases.

**Compliance** - points can be taken as read in the paper - no concerns, things going well

**PVG processing contracts** - Currently have 32 clubs with no contracts in place, which means it is not possible to provide the PVG processing service until this is in place. This is also a concern around data protection etc., and that being the case a firmer email has been sent out.

Regional team going to pick up with these clubs and aiming for completion by the end of July. SD noted that the Clubs do not object to PVG requirements, it's just not been done as yet.

5 Clubs have one contract in place, 112 have both.

The President queried whether there was role for the Districts to play in reminding the Clubs of the need to comply, and it was agreed that this would absolutely be beneficial – SD to send Districts a list of Clubs who are non-compliant and this can be taken forward. **SD**

No time limit for sanctions being imposed presently but sanctions can be imposed immediately if there is ultimately a need to.

**PVG Renewal** - The Board previously agreed a 3 year renewal plan starting 1 April 2025, however a number of factors have developed since then; namely a better understanding of the legislation and the proposed introduction of a fee structure following the PVG fee consultation. The position re level of fees is not known at present, however there is a discount structure which is based on a recommended 5 year renewal plan, so looking at moving to this. Whilst 3 years is best practice from safeguarding perspective, however 5 years is acceptable and the better route in terms of fairness to members etc., at least in the first year – to be reviewed once further information is received.

The Board discussed the potential move to a 5 year structure and discussed resource and sustainability matters.

KC queried whether a move to 5 years would be consistent with the approach taken by other sports. SD noted that there are some sports (gymnastics, athletics etc) who are on 3 years, however there are many sports who are operating at the minimum 5 years.

**Case management support service** - Need for Board and Council learning to take place. There is a 3-part session required; one session from Children 1st, one session from Kyniska advocacy, and one internal training session on the case management. The full session likely to take 90 mins / 2 hours and SD sought to agree a suitable date. The Chair advised this can be revisited later.

#### **6.1 Safeguarding Operational Priorities Tracker (Formally Whyte Review Priorities)**

The plan has been widened to 15 points, rather than 12 points to incorporate matters relating to the Swim England Review and the rights of the Child.

The Chair opened for discussion and provided a comment on his views in ensuring that this stays high on the agenda and is embedded across governance.

SD noted that on low level concerns – he previously sought a policy template from Children 1st, however they have not been able to produce one that is suitable for our needs. SD speaking to other sports to get something in place.

### **7. LTS and School Swimming**

EC and GH presented the paper to the meeting.

Continuing to make good progress in relation to both Learn to Swim and School Swimming. There has been good progress in relation to the More Swimmers aim, and in particular in relation to inclusivity programs.

GH advised that he has attended the first LTS conference in Latvia and provided a summary of this. The European LTS framework was launched at this event. Currently not clear on how this will be rolled out, but there will be ongoing monitoring on this.

The Chair will link in with the European LTS program, rather than needing to go through Aquatics GB.

In relation to School Swimming, EC went through the various roll out phases which have been identified. Phase 2 has been ongoing with a pilot taking place and the implementation plan being developed. As of this week, phase 3 has commenced, and the framework has gone public. Now looking to assist local authorities with support and guidance and maintain the momentum with the early adopters and promote the good work which is taking place.

In the last academic year, there were 8 local authorities piloting the framework and awaiting the results from reporting at the end of the academic year, but early indications are that they are being pitched well.

The 3 CPDs created in phase 1 are now being rolled out and accessible to all taking part. Two digital certificates have been created, which relate to the content at stage 3 of the framework.

A survey was sent out to all primary school headteachers in Scotland. There were 436 responses. EC spoke through this feedback, in general there is very strong support and engagement from primary schools around school swimming and water safety.

EC explained that the group have mapped public schools, private schools and areas of deprivation. EC spoke through the headline stats from this mapping, in relation to distance to pools around rural areas and areas of deprivation. The main take away is that there is, generally, enough water space to deliver the aims of the school swimming framework (with a small number of exceptions).

EC also quickly recapped on the framework, the implementation plan was stalled at stage 2 due to a lack of funds, however this has now been rolled out. The framework is an inclusive and flexible 4 stage framework, which is directly linked to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes and areas of focus and about targeting those kids who need it most.

In May the framework was privately released to main stakeholders, and this was then publicly launched with press releases etc this week. There will then be a celebration event in September alongside Edinburgh Council.

GH then spoke to the future plans and the anticipated challenges and next steps. Financial backings and variation of financial models will remain a challenge, as will the education sector complexities. To progress this forward, the aim is to build on the momentum and push forward to engage with the right people and secure long-term investment.

The Chair opened for questions. DM queried whether education could be imbedded within the comprehension element of CoE. GH noted that this was a good suggestion and this could be taken forward.

AF noted he was heartened by the feedback on the polls and asked about feedback from those schools and local authorities who are not involved in the pilots around spending money to bring it into the curriculum. Whilst there is buy in for sure, the issue is funding. There is no longer the pot of money for Scottish Swimming/government to invest. There are quite a lot of local authorities which do not provide support, but individual schools fund this privately. Whilst this is great, it makes it very difficult to roll out consistently and fairly.

AD asked what level of funding would be effective to fill in gaps. GH noted that the initial ask was for £2mil, growing to £6mil per year.

It was queried whether School Swimming will be distributed to all schools or just mainstream – GH confirmed that it will be to all.

The Board discussed the paper at length and SL thanked EC for all of her work in this area, noting that it is clear that there has been a massive amount of work carried out.

## **8. Items for Decision**

### **8.1 AGM**

#### **8.1.1 (a) Proposal Alterations to Governance Document (Council and Board)**

**CP1 – SL to propose / JC to second**

KW asked when the changes would take effect and it was confirmed that it would be from this September. If it was supported, then it would take effect straight away, though FC's term would not be extended.

**CP2** - DM to propose / SF to second

**PC1** – SL to propose / DM to second

Some concerns have been raised from the north, in that it was discussed that some clubs do not even know who their life members were, which suggests that they are not being used to the full potential and their expertise is not being fully utilised.

EM noted the importance of encouraging members and clubs to attend the AGM, particularly given it is in the north. The President noted that there is a role for districts to go back and encourage attendance by Clubs.

**PC2** - SL to propose / TD to second

**PC3** - DM to propose / GM to second

Board & Council discussed the proposal of having a young ambassador sit on Council and attend meetings. There was discussion about how this would work in practice (i.e. could it be a different person each time, could it be 2 individuals). It was agreed that given the wording used, it just has to be a representative, so no reason why this could not change each meeting, however it would be difficult to have 2 representatives due to them having voting rights – though no reason why a support person could not attend.

It was agreed a change of wording would be beneficial to ensure sustainability in the event that the Young Volunteer Program does not continue. The President will also sit down with the young person before a meeting to explain what to expect and ensure that they are comfortable with this and feel able to participate.

**PC4** - PC to propose / JC to second.

**PC5** - BR to propose / GS to second.

**PC6** – Nigel Scott to propose / Margaret Riach to second.

**RA1** – withdrawn.

**RA 2** - Les Rodger to propose / Jim Gallagher to second.

**PR1** - KW to propose/Colin Kennedy to second

**PR2** - Wendy Tubi to propose / Blair Prentice to second

**PR3** - DM to propose / Margaret Somerville

**PR4** – GS to propose / BR to second

#### **(b) Editorial Changes**

No questions with Board and Council agreeing to the questions.

#### **8.1.2 General Fees (Board)**

No questions – fees passed.

#### **8.1.3 Membership Proposal & Fees (Board)**

The Chair noted that this was discussed last week and that it is a really good paper with a good outline of the challenges being faced by the organisation. The Chair believes this will be a good starting point for the broader strategic changes needed to deal with pressures faced by the organisation due to static income and inflationary increases.

There are bits of work which are important, and support is needed implement this and the paper highlights the importance of.

It was noted by EL that Scottish Swimming is a membership organisation and essentially members benefit from the level of support they can provide. There simply needs to be investment from members for the organisation to operate. EL noted that everything which has been done over the years has been to try to balance budget and put as much as possible back into the sport. Difficult to find ways to generate income and therefore there is a need to make some tough decisions to continue to deliver the service with a balanced budget

EM noted that a membership structure review was attempted last year and there was simply no appetite for changing the structure. There therefore remains two categories – athlete and non-athlete. There is a need to deliver a strategic plan in relation to the organisation, whilst delivering on the global stage and have good governance. EM noted that staff are the biggest asset, and it is recognised that we have a lot of staff, but this is because there is a lot that we are trying to deliver, and they are all doing a really good job.

Previously looked at operating a 4-year membership cycle, which will allow for more long-term appointments (in terms of recruitment) and planning. This may be something to look at, however this

year the proposal is for one year with the need to review on a yearly basis. This will allow greater flexibility.

**sportscotland** funding helps but it is not rising with inflation and we need to find money from somewhere to continue to deliver what we are doing.

EM noted that it is a significant increase which is being asked for, however this is needed to ensure that the organisation can continue to operate at the level the Clubs are used to. That being the case, it is essential that communications are clear to the membership.

Two proposals on the table today for discussion and these are set out in the paper.

DMcG was clear to dispel the perception that **sportscotland** fund fully any posts – it's a contribution only. If we are to continue to deliver at this level, membership income really needs to match **sportscotland** investment – around 1.5 million. Communication must be clear to ensure members recognise this.

It was agreed that there was a clear need for honesty with the membership. They need to be informed that there will be increases and these will be substantial, but that they are necessary to continue delivering on welfare and protection, sustainability etc.

DMcG confirmed that based on proposed increase and using contingencies, a balanced budget can be reached. Going forward it is likely that efficiencies will be identified and increases in funding may be secured – that being the case, going for 1 year allows greater flexibility.

SL noted that the current fee is less than £1 per week per member and that this is really low compared to some other sports. Trying to get volunteers is very difficult, insurance costs have doubled etc. Need to be clear with members that this is what the money is paying for; insurance, implementing the outcomes of the Whyte review and staffing. It was acknowledged that there could be criticism around the number of new staff appointments, but it can be explained and justified in each case. It was noted that some of the newly filled posts have been vacant since Covid and not been filled to save money – but this can no longer be sustained.

It was agreed that communication is key and delivery of the proposals is vital. It should be stressed that the increase is not for staffing costs directly, but rather to deliver what needs to be delivered to ensure ongoing success in and out of the pool.

The focus needs to be on investment at Club level, not performance level, however whilst also realising that there are a lot of efficiencies and savings created by the relationship with the University, which would fall away without the performance level success – so it is very much a balancing exercise.

All about how it is presented because there is no alternative. KW noted that the paper details the predicament clearly and he fully endorses the plan.

Not a lot of choice, just have to push ahead and communicate it as clearly as possible and hope to achieve member and club support. Very much wish to avoid counter proposals being made on the day of the AGM.

BR noted that whilst he agrees with comments around communication etc., ultimately this comes down to affordability – it is a case of the organisation's hands are tied and there is a need to put the fees up otherwise we cannot continue to deliver at the level members and clubs are used to.

The Board agreed a further membership fee cycle of 1 year.

SL noted concerns around the non-athlete fee in that it has been held at £10 for very long time, now proposing to increase this to £12. SL worries about asking for an increase given the difficulties in recruiting volunteers. SL thinks if we can afford it, leave it as it for this year, as in an ideal world, there would be no volunteer fee at all.

Feeling is that this non-athlete fee is not sensitive enough; could there be subcategories within this wider category; this might be something to look at in the next year.

DMcG noted that if the decision is to leave the non-athlete fee at £10 – need to push towards the 15% for athlete fee.

The Board agreed that athlete fee should be increased by 15% (£55) and agreed that the non-athlete fee should go to £13.

#### **8.1.4 SASA Appointments 2024 (Board)**

Sought approval from the Board for Harper Macleod and Drummond Laurie to be reappointed. Agreed.

#### **8.1.5 SASA Life Membership Award (Council)**

The President reminded Council that eligibility for life membership is directly related to service to the governing body, not to do with input at club/district level.

Council discussed the applications, however as there were not enough Council members present to form a quorum this decision could not be reached whilst inquorate. It was agreed to pick this discussion up at a later date. FC to action.

**FC**

#### **8.1.6 Any other AGM Business – verbal**

None

### **8.2 Board Succession Planning**

The Chair provided an update and advised that a skills self-assessment template will be sent to members, in order to determine what the skills matrix will need to be in upcoming recruitment.

**ALL**

### **8.3 Annual Review of National Committee Regulations**

The Chair noted his view that when referring to the transgender policy, the full name is used (as opposed to be abbreviated to 'trans-policy' or similar). Abbreviations in policy titles is open to abuse and given it is an official document, it is reasonable to use the full title. There is a change required in relation to this paper therefore.

The Chair opened to the Board and Council for discussions, and there were no questions or comments the regulations were approved.

### **8.4 Financial Overview**

#### **8.4.1 Statement of Income & Expenditure**

Accepted as read.

#### **8.4.2 Finance Managers Draft Annual Report for AGM**

DM noted that the figures will change slightly because corporation tax will be slightly more.

Asked the Board to review the finance report and any feedback to be provided in advance of the AGM.

### **8.5 Board and ARC Reporting Timeline and Proposed Meeting Dates 2025**

The Chair explained that the paper was produced as a result of previous discussions around timings of meetings and there being time constraints particularly in relation to the January meeting. The proposal is to reduce the number of Board meetings by one to better accommodate the work which needs to be carried out in relation to the preparation of papers.

The Chair sought initial comments from the Board in relation to this proposal and this can then be looked at in more detail at a subsequent Board meetings, with a decision to be made at a future meeting.

It was agreed that RA1 would be removed to allow further discussions on this point.

Training day, it was agreed it was preferable to bolt this on to another meeting and looking for an in-person session before the end of the year to complete the training. It was agreed that the November and January meeting would be amalgamated to take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> December of this year at the short course and the training would take place in the afternoon. EM/SD to organise and all Board to attend.

**EM/  
SD –  
ALL**

The President noted that the October Council meeting is taking place 2 weeks later than originally diarised, to avoid the school holidays.

## **9. Items for Discussion**

### **9.1 Aquatics Plan Update**

EL summarised the plans progress noting there has been some impact on progress delivery due to long term absence within the business.

The Chair opened for discussion – no questions.

### **9.2 Management Report**

The districts have agreed to support the Young Volunteer Programme for 1 year, not the 3 years that was tabled at the moment. EL will look at this.

### **9.3 Mental Wellbeing Update**

CM thanked EM and the team for their work in this area. EM spoke to the paper noting that this is an area of work which continues to be championed throughout the organisation, particularly following a number of high level mental health challenges despite a relatively small staffing group. Work continues across this area and great importance is placed on this and it is opened out to clubs and athletes etc.

EM attended a SAMH and **sportscotland** event and spoke about what Scottish Swimming had put in place to support mental wellbeing. This has to be commended, because there is buy in from a top level. This is a challenge that many organisations face. The priority for Scottish Swimming is to keep conversations open and continue to support. Ongoing and regular staff training is important. EM noted that the biggest challenge is that when any member of staff is off long term, we as a team really do feel the impact – because the programmes are so heavily weighted.

Opened to the Board for questions – there were no questions.

### **9.4 EDI – Moving to Inclusion Framework – *verbal***

EL spoke to this and asked that this be placed on all future agendas, and he would provide an update. This was agreed.

Our continues with an inclusive focus however making progress against the new framework is taking time while we await the appointment of a mentor to finalise the onboarding process.

## **10. Management Team Report from the Company**

Taken as read with Board to pick up any questions with the individual SMT directly.

## **11. Directors Report**

None.

## **12. Aquatics GB Update**

The Chair provided an update noting that a new Director been appointed to AquaticsGB. At the last board meeting, the Board reviewed Drew Barrand's appointment following 1 year in post and this was very positive. At the last board meeting discussions were focused on the lead up to the Olympic Games and the great opportunities that this provides.

On European Aquatics, the Chair noted that he has just got back from Belgrade, AquaticsGB took a development squad with them and achieved golds in artistic swimming and diving. Piers Martin has been appointed to water polo committee, meaning that GB is represented on all the committees – which is really positive.

## **13. Council Business**

### **12.1 Business in accordance with Paragraph C.7.1.3 of the Constitution**

None.

#### **12.1.1 Approval of club constitutions by the Districts**

None.

## 14. AOCB

### Additional paper

Historically there have been two CEO of the Home Countries sat on the board for AquaticsGB as a nominated volunteer, there is discussions about the appropriateness (or otherwise) of this person being a CEO of a national governing body. This is still under wider debate, however looking to establish a policy to determine how the nominated person will be appointed. The proposal is for the policy to state that the nominated person should not be the CEO. This was agreed

FC thanked Council and Scottish Swimming for their support, with this being the last official Council meeting she will attend as President.

SL raised a query around associate memberships and whether the criteria for this needs to be reviewed in an attempt to make it more resilient and define exactly what it means. Nothing which says what they have to have in place to get associate membership, no criteria in there and this is a problem. The idea is that this has to be given on an ad hoc basis to allow people to join events in an ad hoc way as a one off, without the full governance issues needing to be addressed. Despite this, Scottish schools get it annually, and the implication is that Scottish Swimming are involved in it. There are no criteria stating what an organisation needs to have in place to get associate membership, there needs to be resilience built in. It was agreed that this would be brought back to Board as a standalone paper.

DM asked if the AGM and awards dinner will take place together in 2025, or if they were being split. It was agreed that this would be discussed in detail at the August meeting. EM to bring a paper to the August Board. **EM**

In relation to this year's AGM, EM noted the hope that the membership fees piece will encourage membership attendance, however asked Districts to encourage attendance at the dinner and to do this wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. **ALL**

The Chair closed by thanking FC for her support as Council President and personally and remarked on the huge amount of diligence shown over the last year.

## 15. Date of Next Meeting(s):

**Board:** 25 August 2024  
**AGM:** 21 September 2024  
**Council:** 20 October 2024

**Cc** Board & Council  
Barry Cook ([sportscotland](mailto:sportscotland))

Editorial Board  
Harper Macleod

National Chairs  
District Secretaries