



Minutes subject to approval at the next British Swimming Board Meeting

BRITISH SWIMMING BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th – 11th February 2023
Voco Oxford Thames, Oxford, OX4 4GX**

Present:	Karen Webb-Moss (KW)	Chair
	Ash Cox (AC)	Interim CEO
	Richard Hookway (RH)	Swim England (Saturday only via Zoom)
	Caroline Green (CG)	Swim England (Friday only via Zoom)
	Keith Ashton (KA)	Swim England
	Graeme Marchbank (GM)	Scottish Swimming
	Fergus Feeney (FF)	Swim Wales
	Adele Stach-Kevitz (AS)	Senior Independent Member
	Corinne Cunningham (CC)	Independent Member
	Aimee Booker (AB)	Athlete Representative
	Kathreen France (KF)	Head of Finance
	Wendy Lockton (WL)	Director of Corporate Strategy and Planning
	Sally Hancock (SH)	Friday only
	Matthew Osman (MO)	Friday only

Apologies:	David Carry (DC)	Independent Member
	Jane Nickerson (JN)	Swim England
	Caroline Green (CG)	Swim England (Saturday only)

19. Welcome and Apologies

19.1. KW welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received from JN and DC. KW informed the Board that RH would be attending the meeting on Saturday via Zoom on behalf of Swim England in JN's absence. It was noted that CG was dialling into the meeting via Zoom.

19.2. KW outlined that the Friday evening session would consist of a brand workshop with marketing experts, High Tide Leap, leading an interactive workshop.

20. Brand Workshop

20.1. AC updated the Board on the thorough tender process which has been undertaken to secure High Tide Leap to lead on this important area of work for British Swimming. AC outlined the tender brief to the Board and offered to share a copy of the brief with interested Board members.

20.2. AC reported that High Tide Leap had met with a number of stakeholders including members of the SMT. AB queried if any athletes had been consulted with to date.

AC responded that athletes are indeed on a list and are part of the process which includes an extensive list of stakeholders. AC said the target date for completion within the next three to four weeks. It was agreed that AB would lead and help direct High Tide Leap through the process with the athletes.

Action – AB to work with High Tide Leap through consultation with the athletes.

- 20.3. AC outlined that the brand workshop was an integral part of the overall strategic commercial process and would help to move phase 1 of the process forward.
- 20.4. KA raised a conflict of interest outlining that his wife SH works for High Tide Leap. KA stressed that he had not had any involvement in the tender process. This was confirmed by the Chair and by AC.
- 20.5. AC said that an additional £15k had been secured through the UK Sport NGB development Fund to help finance this piece of work. GM queried what the total cost of the project would be and AC outlined the costs for phase 1 of the project. The Board stressed the importance of keeping the process transparent and measurable moving forward and to be cautious of the various pricing points as the project moves through the phases.
- 20.6. Before welcoming MO and SH into the meeting, KW invited the Board to be as bold and open as they wished throughout the discussion.
- 20.7. MO and SH were welcomed into the meeting. They introduced themselves providing the Board with an overview of their backgrounds. The Board then introduced themselves. MO and SH thanked AC for his time and guidance in the process so far which had been invaluable.
- 20.8. MO and SH presented to the Board. The slide titles were:
- Who are we
 - What we have done
 - Our understanding of your needs. Your brief – to create a commercial strategy for British Swimming for the next three to five years.
 - Stage 1 specific tasks – understand brand, value and assets, positioning and identity
 - Our process for stage 1 – beginning of the process, here to listen and learn from the Board
 - Questions for today – Five questions
- 20.9. A detailed discussion took place considering the following specific questions:
1. Where are you now?
 2. What is amazing and unique about British Swimming?
 3. What are your commercial ambitions?
 4. What will it take to achieve them?
 5. 5. Should you change your name?

- 20.10. At the end of the workshop MO and SH provided the Board with a summary of the next steps and thanked the Board for the valuable contributions to the discussions which had involved passion and enthusiasm. MO and SH outlined they would pull together the comments and feedback and would aim to have completed phase 1 within 3 weeks which would then help guide phase 2.
- 20.11. It was agreed AC would share MO's and SH's contact details with the Board to allow the Board to send through any additional thoughts they may have post meeting.
Action – AC to share MO and SH details with the Board.
- 20.12. KW thanked the Board for their wonderful contributions to the discussion and the Board Strategic session for the Friday meeting was closed.
- 21. Saturday 11th February - Welcome and Apologies**
KW reopened the meeting on Saturday morning and welcomed everyone. KW thanked RH for attending the meeting via Zoom. KW thanked WL for her hard work planning the February Board meeting and for working with the Chair for the 2023 Board planning. Apologies were received from Jane Nickerson, David Carry and Caroline Green.
- 22. Declarations of Interest**
WL outlined that the Board had received a summary of the 2022 conflicts of interest along with conflicts of interest declaration form for 2023. WL thanked those Board members who had returned the form already and asked any outstanding Board members to return theirs at their earliest convenience. WL outlined that all sub-committee members would be asked to complete their conflicts of interest declarations also. CC highlighted the need to keep conflicts of interest on the register for a rolling year.
Action – WL to ensure all conflicts of interest declarations are completed and remain on the register for a year.
- 23. Minutes of meeting held 10th-11th November 2022**
- 23.1. AS stated how comprehensive the minutes were. WL and AC responded this was to reflect the UK Sport Governance Assessment requirement to provide more detail and context around discussions which take place at meetings.
- 23.2. Min 5 – KW updated the Board on the recruitment which is underway for a new Executive Officer who will be responsible for taking minutes at Board meetings to relieve WL of this duty.
- 23.3. Min 6.2.2 and 6.2.4 – KW outlined plans for a board evaluation and appraisals. KW mentioned she would elaborate on this during her Chairs report.

- 23.4. Min 6.2.6 – A 2023 Board meeting schedule, including a planned strategic focus for each meeting, had been circulated in advance of the meeting. KW welcomed feedback on this. It was agreed this matter would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.
- 23.5. Min 6.2.10.8 – The Board recognised that Executives Board papers were somewhat more succinct with a greater focus on strategic priorities. KA requested if file names for papers could be made shorter for future meetings. CC queried if it were possible for Executives to highlight urgent matters in reports for the Boards attention.
Action – WL to reduce length of file names on future Board papers. KW and WL to discuss formats.
Action – Executives to highlight urgent matters for the Board.
- 23.6. Min 9 – As outlined earlier in the meeting declarations of interest for 2022 had been circulated and 2023 declarations were being collated.
- 23.7. Min 11.1 – AC updated that he is still awaiting UK Sport to respond further with regards to co-funding.
- 23.8. Min 11.12 – AC reported that due to other priorities, the ethics policy had not been commenced.
- 23.9. Min 12.2.2 – KF updated that water polo figures had been provided. KF added that this remains an ongoing challenge however as she had again struggled to obtain figures from Water Polo for the February meeting.
- 23.10. Min 12.3 – KF reported that in relation to any development of an investment strategy, she had explored different Banking rates available. It was agreed that consideration should be given to determining how much money, if any, should be tied up in investments.
Action – KF to consider an investment strategy.
- 23.11.1. Min 14.4.1 – KA updated that he had had a productive meeting with Josh Rudd (JR) who had a wide EDI remit. AC updated that JR had met with several stakeholders and JR's work would be linked to UK Sport timeframes and priorities. A discussion took place regarding team travel and how this can be carbon etc. offset. AS mentioned that athletes are more aware of these matters and highlighted an example of an athlete withdrawing from a competition which involved a long haul flight. AB did not feel this was an imminent threat to British Swimming. The Board agreed they would welcome a presentation on initial thinking in this area. It was recognised that a few stories from the Commonwealth Games were focused on sustainability.
Action – A presentation on sustainability to take place to the Board at a relevant time.

- 23.11.2. AC updated the Board on a UK Sport (multi-partner) sustainability partner tender process. AC updated on the timeline for this process and will keep the Board updated accordingly.
Action – AC to keep the Board updated on funding bid.
- 23.12. Min 16.3 – KW updated that she had been set up with a britishswimming.org email address but had not yet had chance to set it up due to some issues with the access. KW asked that if Board members would like to receive a corporate email address, they are to contact WL.
- 23.13. With no further comments, the Minutes of the meeting held November 10-11, 2022 were approved.
- 24. Minutes of AGM held 11th November 2022**
- 24.1. No comments were received, and the minutes of the AGM held November 11, 2022 were approved.
- 25. Finance, Audit and Risk**
- 25.1. BS Management Accounts
- 25.1.1. KF reported a forecasted surplus of £15k for the end of year central accounts. KF highlighted this is due to the same level of Swim England home country contribution income as was the case pre-Covid which has contributed to the surplus situation.
- 25.1.2. FF queried if the Masters payment had been made yet and KF confirmed this payment had been made before Christmas. KW congratulated KF and AC on how they had handled this situation. KW expressed a desire to have a discussion regarding Masters. AS highlighted the need to identify someone on the Board to act as a connection point with the Masters community. AC outlined the need for a broader strategic decision for the Board to agree where Masters sits. FF urged the Board to revisit the governance report completed by David Meli which had been previously circulated.
Action – revisit governance report which looks at all sports.
- 25.2. World Class Management Accounts
- 25.2.1. KF reported an anticipated favourable variance of £453k. KF updated that the budget template for year 3 had been completed and work on the year 4 budgets is underway. KF updated that plans are in place for spending the underspend and that this will be closely monitored moving forward. GM raised a concern regarding the current underspend, in light of the January ARC minutes outlining the underspend would remain within the 5% allowance. KF reassured the Board that the underspend is due to the restructure and projects being put on hold. The Board encouraged AC and the SMT to keep a close eye on the underspend.
Action – KF and AC, in conjunction with the SMT, to keep a close eye on underspend and to keep the Board updated.

- 25.2.2. KF updated the Board on the additional awards which had recently been confirmed for Olympic Swimming, Diving, Para Swimming and Artistic Swimming. AC added that this is excellent news for all sports. The Board congratulated the team on their hard work securing these additional awards.
- 25.2.3. A discussion took place regarding the detailed budgets moving forward considering that Tina Ryan will be leaving British Swimming. KF updated that Adam Clarke provides detailed budgets for the 3 sports. GM queried if the detail includes phasing and KF confirmed it does not. It was agreed that KF would work closely with Adam Clarke to support him through this process. KF highlighted that every quarter herself and Adam Clarke meet with UK Sport to discuss variances. FF queried if there was any risk of any unspent money not being carried forward. KF reassured the Board that this is being managed to try and ensure no money is clawed back by UK Sport. **Action – KF to work closely with Adam Clarke on the detail and phasing of the world class budgets.**
- 25.3. 2023-2024 budget
- 25.3.1. FF raised a question regarding the timing of the next years' budget being brought to the Board, this usually taking place in April when the new financial year has commenced. KF responded that she had included an update on the budget in her Board report today to allow the Board to have a discussion prior to the April meeting. KF updated that the budget is currently showing a deficit position and outlined the principle reasons for this. FF highlighted that a productive discussion had taken place with the home nations regarding the MOU. KF outlined that appropriate figures from the home nations had been built into the budget.
- 25.3.2. AS queried if anything had been built into the budget with regards to the rising cost of living for staff. KF answered that a proposal had recently gone to the remuneration committee and this was included in the budget.
- 25.3.3. CC asked the Board if they were happy with the principle of a deficit budget. KA responded that this had happened before and a discussion regarding going concern had also previously taken place post-Covid. AC added that the purpose of the update and discussion was to highlight that a deficit budget for 2023-2024 is likely to be brought to the April 2023 Board meeting.
- 25.3.4. KA reminded the Board of the reserves policy for British Swimming highlighting that the current reserves level is higher than stated in the policy allowing some budget flexibility.
- 25.3.5. CC queried if a legal contingency had been built into the budget and KF confirmed it had.
- 25.4. ARC Minutes
- 25.4.1. CC updated the Board on the productive ARC meeting which had taken place in January. The Board had received a copy of the minutes of this meeting. CC asked

for questions or comments. A discussion took place regarding rising energy costs and the potential facilities closures. It was agreed that consistent messaging across the home nations is paramount.

- 25.4.2. CC updated the Board that a replacement for KA on the ARC would be required once KA's term on the Board, and subsequently ARC, comes to an end. It was agreed this would be considered throughout the process for the recruitment of an Independent Director.
- 25.5. **Risk Register**
- 25.5.1. KF updated the Board on the updates, including timelines, which had been made to the risk register since the previous meeting. KF highlighted that due to timing the actions identified at the recent ARC meeting had not yet been overtaken.
- 25.5.2. A detailed discussion took place regarding safeguarding in relation to whether the score for this risk should remain the same considering evolving expectations in this area. RH provided an update from a Swim England perspective. AC highlighted that all British Swimming staff recently undertook safeguarding training.
- 25.5.3. GM queried if AC discusses risks with the home nation CEOs at an operational level as this could help with identifying any gaps and mitigations which could prove effective. GM suggested a discussion for the future could be centralised roles which could be shared between British Swimming and the home nations to create highly skilled safeguarding personnel to support all.
- 25.5.4. It was agreed that any comments or thoughts on the risk register should be sent through to KF.
- 25.5.5. **ARC Terms of Reference (TOR)**
The TOR had been shared with the Board in advance of the meeting and the Board were asked to approve them. FF suggested that all references to Chairman are amended to Chair in the ARC TOR and all other sub Committee TOR's. AC responded that neutralising all references is forming part of the ongoing broad policy review. The Board approved the ARC TOR.
- 25.5.6. KW thanked KF and CC for their updates.
- 26. Chairs Report**
- 26.1. KW opened her report by recognising the significant and much-deserved farewell dinner for AS who is stepping down from the Board after nine years of outstanding contribution. KW stated that AS has offered to continue to support the Board on a few matters, including the appointments of vacant Board roles (SID / INED) as well as the development of a proposal on the matter of a British Swimming Alumni programme to include past athletes and Board members.

- 26.2.1. KW said that, following her presentation and the discussion at the November 2022 Board she continues to ensure the focus of the Board is to drive forward and advise on focus on strategic matters. The commercial workshop which had taken place the previous evening had been part of this and is a paramount piece of work in terms of helping to understand British Swimming's values and assets. KW said she had enjoyed working with AC on this and applauded AC for engaging external expertise. KW thanked the Board for their passionate input into the workshop and opened the discussion for Board feedback.
- 26.2.2. AS felt the workshop was extremely timely. FF added he had found the workshop very refreshing and had provided a lot of thoughts for consideration. KW asked Board members to send through any follow-up thoughts. KW said that the agency would reach out to those Board members who had not been present during the Board workshop.
- 26.2.3. FF stressed the need for a thorough consultation with all stakeholders. AC responded that careful consideration had been given to this and it was felt all key stakeholders, including athletes, would be engaged with.
- 26.3. Board planning 2023
- 26.3.1. A plan for the 2023 meetings had been circulated in advance of the meeting. KW added that the overall aim of this exercise is to ensure strategic focus for each meeting along with the provision of presentations and attendance from home nations and experts. KW highlighted there would also be high performance focus at each meeting with the Performance Director attending as many meetings as possible. KW welcomed feedback on this from the Board. GM would like to see a wider number of staff presenting to the Board which will help relieve pressure on the Performance Director and also form a part of succession planning.
- 26.3.2. KW went through the strategic areas of focus for the remaining year. KW suggested that where possible Board meetings should and could take place around events.
- 26.3.3. KW addressed the matter of Board evaluation which is underway and informed the Board that the Board skills matrix will be circulated to new Board members to complete. Understanding of the skills has been critical to the Brief for the vacant Senior Independent Director and Independent Director roles. KW outlined the recruitment process and timeline. GM offered to assist with this process and KW thanked GM for his offer. AB requested that the candidate pack is made accessible for candidates applying with disabilities. AC confirmed this has been done previously and will ensure this is put in place.
Action – AC to ensure accessible application packs are made available.
- 26.3.4. KW updated that she is still awaiting thoughts from the Performance Director on Board Liaison roles moving forward. This will be brought to a future meeting.

- 26.3.5. KW informed the Board that a discussion had taken place regarding Board remuneration outlining that an increased fee for all is not possible this year due to tight budgets. However, KW was pleased to report that some progress had been made in line with strategic priorities and a per-diem fee for all members will be introduced moving forward to reflect time spent by some on sub committees. RH responded that as Swim England is a charity Swim England representatives will not be able to accept the fee. RH to make Caroline Green aware of this. FF stressed that whilst the CEO of Swim Wales currently sits on the Board as ex officio it should not be assumed this will always be the case moving forward. KW expressed a wish for CG to attend meetings in person where possible, as KW and newer Board members had not yet formally met her.
- 26.3.6. KW informed the Board on meetings she had attended with UK Sport since the previous Board meeting outlining that British Swimming's relationship with UK Sport remains extremely positive.
- 26.3.7. KW updated the Board on the Chairs meeting which had taken place in November 2022 outlining that strategic priorities and concerns across British Swimming and the home nations had been shared.
- 26.3.8. KW informed the Board that she had recently attended the National Diving Championships in Edinburgh which she had thoroughly enjoyed. KW highlighted her desire to attend events and centres without distracting from performance.
- 26.3.9. KW provided an update on current and potential future partners and suggested BS holds a marketing workshop on activation ideas for partners. KW also advised on the value in taking potential partners to events or on site visits to meet athletes and stressed the need to think about induction and education programmes for future partners.
- 26.3.10. AS commented on the pace KW has hit the ground running and how quickly KW has identified strategic priorities since taking on the Chairs role. AS added that KW has already built up credibility with key stakeholders. KW responded that she is thoroughly enjoying the role and thanked the Board for their support and energy.
- 27. CEO Report**
- 27.1. AC updated the Board on initial discussions which have taken place with Australian Swimming with regards to an 'Ashes' type event which would include all six disciplines.
- 27.2. Following on from the discussion which had taken place the previous evening AC updated the Board on the successful application as part of the UK Sport NGB Development Fund for the purpose of brand, value and asset valuation which had significantly helped. AC added that governance requirements are becoming more resource heavy.

- 27.3. AC updated on his visits to Bristol, Edinburgh and forthcoming visits in the diary in order to increase CEO connectivity and visibility with the sports.
- 27.4. AC updated the Board on ongoing discussions with a potential data company.
- 27.5. The Board had been sent a copy of UK Sport and Sport England's Policy Response to the Whyte Review and a further discussion took place regarding safeguarding. It was agreed the CEOs would welcome an opportunity to discuss this together and KW added she would also raise this at the next Chairs meeting. RH updated the Board on plans Swim England have in place to make positive progress in this area. It was agreed that an action plan showing progress to date should be brought to the June Board meeting.
Action – AC to arrange meeting with home nation CEOs to discuss this matter.
Action – KW to add to agenda for next Chairs meeting.
Action – Action Plan to be brought to the June Board meeting currently outlining policies and gaps.
- 27.6. AC updated that Josh Rudd (JR) is unfortunately unavailable to attend the April Board meeting to present on EDI. It was agreed consideration would be given to alternative presentations or an update from JR being provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.
- 28. Points Arising for Executive Reports**
- 28.1. A point was raised with regards to the low response to the culture survey. AC responded that he and the Performance Director are picking this up with UK Sport in terms of it being fit for purpose and to ensure engagement with the athletes is taking place in the best way.
- 28.2. GM raised several concerns in relation to the staff survey, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, mainly regarding a disconnect between the Board and SMT. KA added that there were some positive responses also and highlighted the limited resource within the organisation which the Board should remain conscious of. AC responded that the SMT need to digest the survey results and confirmed that an action report will be brought back to the Board at a later date, likely to be June 2023.
Action – Staff Survey Action Plan to be brought to the June 2023 Board meeting.
- 28.3. AC updated that feedback following the Aquatics Conference had been collated. It was agreed that this feedback would be circulated to the Board.
Action – Circulate Aquatics Conference feedback to the Board.
- 28.4. AS highlighted the need to appoint a director to take a Board lead in welfare and safety work, as identified in point 8 of the UK Sport and Sport England's Policy Response to the Whyte Review. It was agreed this would be picked up as part of

the review of the Board liaison roles. AB offered to take on the Board lead role for anti-doping. This offer was well received and it was agreed that AB would take on this role.

Action – AC/WL to inform anti-doping lead that AB will be taking on this role.

- 28.5. The Board highlighted that 2 divers were missing from the tracking spreadsheet.
Action – AC to follow up with the performance team why these athletes are missing and update the Board accordingly.
- 28.6. The Board thanked all for the Executive Reports recognising the reports were more succinct and encouraged all Executives to continue to concentrate on strategic matters in future reports.
- 29. International Influence Update**
- 29.1. GM updated the Board on the work which is underway in LEN in the commercial space.
- 29.2. GM updated on conversations which are taking place within LEN regarding sustainability outlining a webinar has been scheduled and the home nations invited.
- 29.3. GM provided the Board with an update on the recent FINA Congress, the main news coming out of this being the change to World Aquatics.
- 29.4. A discussion took place regarding the international influence group potentially attending a Friday evening session. It was agreed consideration would be given to this.
Action – Consider invitation for the international influence group to attend a Board meeting in 2023.
- 29.5. GM queried the timeline for British Swimming creating a transgender policy. AC updated that work is underway on an inclusive policy with a meeting with Swim England scheduled for March. AC updated that the draft policy will be sent to the Board ahead of the April 2023 meeting.
Action – Send Board a copy of the transgender policy in advance of the April 2023 meeting.
- 29.6. GM outlined to the Board LEN and IPC current views on Russian and Belarussian athletes competing in Paris 2024.
- 29.7. KW thanked GM for the informative update.
- 30. Commercial Update**
- 30.1 AC updated that a lot of positive work is taking place in the commercial area. This includes activation planning with Speedo which is exciting.

- 30.2. KA raised a concern with regards to the use of TikTok as outlined in the Director of Events and Marcomms Report and a discussion took place regarding the appropriate use of social media and digital security. It was agreed that a note should go back to the Director of Events and Marcomms highlighting the need for caution when looking to use TikTok.
Action – AC to advise Director of Events and Marcomms to be cautious regarding the use of Tik Tok.
- 31. Board Liaison Updates**
- 31.1. AS updated the Board that the high volume of talent coming through the diving platform was very apparent at the recent National Diving Cup in Edinburgh.
- 31.2. It was agreed further discussion with Chris Spice is required to ensure the effectiveness of the Board Liaison roles moving forward.
- 32. AOB**
- 32.1. AB updated the Board on her recent meeting with Chris Spice and Tim Jones regarding the Athlete leadership group. AB outlined the philosophy behind the formation of this group, the terms of sitting on the group and the timeline for setting the group up. The Board offered assistance to AB, if required, regarding the formal part of the process such as the creation of terms of reference.
- 32.2. FF raised a concern in relation to the number of senior women who have recently departed the women’s water polo squad. AC and FF are keeping a watching brief on this, and the Board were informed that David Meli will be meeting with athletes to conduct exit interviews in order to try and gain an understanding as to why there has been a sudden exodus of female athletes from the squad.
- 32.3. KW called for an extraordinary Board meeting to take place in 21 days’ time, or earlier if appropriate and if needed in line with the articles. This will be a virtual call.
Action – WL to arrange meeting in line with the articles.
- 32.4. AS thanked the Board for her time on the British Swimming Board which had been a privilege. KW reiterated the praise stated for AS and said that Adele’s departure would be a significant loss to the Board. KW thanked AS for her offer of ongoing help in relation to the ongoing Board recruitment and alumni programme.
- 32.5. KW thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting and the meeting was closed.
- 33. Date of next meeting – April 14-15, 2023, venue TBC.**