

# AQUATICS GB BOARD

## MINUTES

**FROM THE MEETING HELD 7<sup>TH</sup> AND 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024 AT ONE LYRIC SQUARE,  
HAMMERSMITH, W6 ONB**

### ATTENDEES:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Karen Webb Moss (KWM)   | Chair  |
| Drew Barrand (CEO)      | CEO  |
| Corinne Cunningham (CC) | Senior Independent Director                                  |
| Caroline Green (CG)     | Swim England – Home Nation Nominated Director                |
| Keith Ashton (KA)       | Swim England – Home Nation Nominated Director                |
| Jane Nickerson (JMN)    | Swim England – Home Nation Nominated Director                |
| Graeme Marchbank (GM)   | Scottish Swimming – Home Nation Nominated Director           |
| Fergus Feeney (FF)      | Swim Wales – Home Nation Nominated Director <i>[virtual]</i> |
| David Carry (DC)        | Independent Member   |
| Piers Martin (PM)       | Independent Member   |
| Nili Safavi (NS)        | Independent Member   |
| Aimee Booker (AB)       | Athlete Representative <i>[virtual]</i>                      |
| Kathreen France (KF)    | Director of Finance <i>[item 21 only]</i>                    |
| Alison Gill (AG)        | Bvalco <i>[item 22 only]</i>                                 |
| Rob Henderson (RMH)     | Business Operations Coordinator                              |

### MINUTES:

- 20. Welcome and Apologies (Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June)**  
KWM welcomed all to the meeting, especially the new Independent Non-Executive Director – Nili Safavi. Individual Directors introduced themselves to NS, who also gave a brief introduction.
- 21. Finance update**
- 21.1 KF joined the meeting virtually to discuss the End of Year Management Accounts for 2023/24.
- 21.2 With regards to the central budget, there is a final deficit of £177k, which represents an adverse variance of £96k due to the rebrand.
- 21.3 KA fed back that ARC would like to see events budgets more overtly referenced in the accounts in order to see value of investment more clearly. DB and KF are keen to offer more clarity.
- 21.4 CC made the Board aware of a point for resolution outside of the meeting, which is how the Para Swimming World Championships are reported from an accounting perspective.
- 21.5 The Board agreed that parameters need to be set in the Risk Register and new Events Strategy to ensure the organisation is aware of its accounting role when organising events.

- 21.6 The World Class Programme has ended £490k lower than budgeted expenditure although KF is awaiting final figures, which will be circulated prior to the next Board meeting. GM pointed out some key areas where underspend would not necessarily be expected.
- 21.7 DB responded that figures are regularly shared with UK Sport and no issues have been flagged by them. The lack of clarity in the global calendar in recent years has also presented issues for budget forecasting.
- 21.8 KWM thanked KF for attending the meeting.
- 22. Strategic Session – Bvalco external Board Audit**
- 22.1 AG joined the meeting, representing Bvalco, to discuss the recommendations made in the external Board Audit report.
- 22.2 KWM thanked Bvalco and summarised the key recommendations and noted a lot of positives in the report. KWM invited questions from the Board to be asked of Bvalco relating to items in the report that may require further clarification. AG responded to all questions asked.
- 22.3 KWM gave thanks to AG and the Bvalco team for all their efforts. AG left the meeting.
- 22.4 The Board participated in a closed workshop to discuss the recommendations and to advance improvements in one of the key suggested areas for development around best-practice Board procedures and behaviours .
- 22.5 KWM thanked all for time and efforts and called the meeting to a close for the evening.
- 23. Welcome and Apologies (Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June)**
- 23.1 KWM welcomed all to the meeting.
- 23.2 RMH will help coordinate 1:1s between current Board Members, SMT and NS as a part of induction.
- 24. Declarations of Interest**
- 24.1 KWM updated one new potential Conflict of Interest, as she has been appointed as an advisor to Quest International.
- 24.2 There were no further declarations in addition to those previously identified and the Interests Register has been updated accordingly.
- 25. Governance, Minutes and Matters Arising**
- 25.1 Minutes of the Board meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
The Minutes were taken as read with no further comments and approved for publication.
- 25.2 Actions Arising from previous Meeting Minutes
- 25.2.1 71.3.5 – CG's HR Magazine article is to be shared with the wider Board.
- 25.2.2 73.3.4 – the Risk Register is to be discussed during the meeting.
- 25.2.3 73.3.6 – the appropriate changes have been made to the Risk Register.
- 25.2.4 7.5 – Board member Mentoring Action Plan is to be discussed during the meeting.
- 25.2.5 8.2.17 – GM to ensure feedback on Communications Plan is given to DB after the meeting.

- 25.2.6 8.4.7 – Inclusion Policy is to be discussed during the meeting.
- 25.2.7 17.2 – DB provided an update; the Safeguarding review documents are being finalised and will need to be discussed with Home Nation’s safeguarding groups before the September Board.
- 25.2.8 FF requested closer collaboration regarding the document shared and the action owners, to ensure accurately forecast completion dates.
- 25.2.9 The Board agreed to extend the September Board meeting to ensure that the Safeguarding report is given an appropriate amount of focus, alongside the focus on the Swim Wales update and strategic direction with the Swim Wales Board who will host and be present that weekend.
- 25.2.10 **Action: RMH to reverse the action log so the most recent actions are listed at the top.**
- 25.3 Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- 25.3.1 CC gave an update. Audit and Risk Committee are currently keen for more progressive metrics. KA will be departing the Audit and Risk Committee at the end of term in November, and it is envisaged an experienced Board member with financial acumen will be the replacement.
- 25.3.2 There continues to be some concern as to the number of independent members, with quoracy being particularly strict for ARC. The ARC chair is looking at changing ToR to have a third independent and a succession plan, or change the quoracy. Proposal, as attached, to change ToR. Minimum of two overall, with quoracy being Chair/Board member/1x independent.
- 25.3.3 **Decision: The amended Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference were approved by the Board.**
- 25.3.4 **Action: RMH to invite NS to the next full Audit and Risk Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024.**
- 25.3.5 There was some discussion regarding appropriate responsibilities and delegated authorities of the sub-committees. It was agreed to clarify this in advance of the next Board meeting.
- 25.3.6 **Action: DB will contact relevant staff to clarify the responsibilities and delegated authorities of the sub-committees in reference to policies.**
- 25.3.7 DB confirmed that the intention is for LA cycle funding to be received as a lump-sum to be shared across all disciplines. There is increased engagement with all disciplines to think about the medium-long term, rather than about specific monetary amounts.
- 26. Chair’s Report**
- 26.1 INED Appointment  
KWM confirmed that the Board Composition policy has been tabled and discussed at Home Nation Chairs meeting. With KA leaving, and in line with the new policy, a list of skills gaps and suggested expertise will be sent to Swim England for their consideration.
- 26.2 AGM
- 26.2.1 KWM proposed an AGM at the September Board meeting. CC believes the accounts can be finalised by then but this will need checking by the Executive.
- 26.2.2 **Action: DB to discuss a September AGM with the Company Secretary to advise on feasibility.**

- 26.3 CEO Annual Review  
The Board had a closed discussion on the matter and the CEO left the meeting. On return, the Chair and Directors each commended DB on his achievements, commitment and positive influence on Aquatics GB.
- 26.4 Board Sub Committees (Composition and Terms of Reference)
- 26.4.1 KWM and DB ran presented a slide on the topic.
- 26.4.2 Of particular note is KA reaching his end of term in November. It was also noted that the Nominations Group has specific flexibility engrained into its structure and the Board continues to endorse this.
- 26.4.3 KWM, alongside key executives, has had a number of calls with World Aquatics concerning Anti-Doping and the allegations surrounding Chinese swimmers in the lead up to Tokyo 2020<sup>1</sup>.resulting in the release of a public statement by AGB. DB updated that WA are reviewing their processes for the future and this is a constantly evolving piece.
- 26.4.4 AB confirmed the Athlete Commission's involvement with these conversations, ensuring the athlete voice has appropriate input.
- 27. CEO's Report**
- 27.1 Speedo Aquatics GB Diving Championships Review
- 27.1.1 DB gave a presentation, the slide titles were:
- Broadcast
  - Indicative streaming figures
  - Attendance throughout the week
- 27.1.2 Following a question from CC, DB clarified that streaming numbers for Diving at the Olympics would ordinarily be between 100k and 250k per session and is the third most watched sport in the UK.
- 27.1.3 DB is confident every opportunity has been taken to uplift the event and is pleased with the delivery. There will be an events consultation process happening in the next couple of months, with the output being an Events Strategy.
- 27.2 Performance  
BAU report  
The BAU report was taken as read, with no further questions.
- 27.3 Commercial  
BAU report  
The BAU report was taken as read, with no further questions.
- 27.3.2 Partnership Sales update  
DB gave a presentation on Partnership Sales update; the slide titles were:
- Strategic targets
  - Sales outreach
  - Commercial Working Group
  - Reporting process
  - Progress to date: target sectors
  - Progress to date: the numbers
  - Nutrition brands
  - Clear purpose

- Tailored package of partnership rights
  - o Events
  - o Athletes
  - o Fan engagement
  - o Social impact
- A potential end-game structure
- Next steps - sales
- Next steps – AGB product development

27.3.3 232 brands have been targeted across five sectors, with five exploratory discussions. A small number are moving towards the proposal stage.

27.3.4 A tender process is to be run for nutrition providers to respond to, due to the demand shown in this area. This will be relating to Aquatics GB only.

27.3.5 DB stated that all proposals requiring input from the Home Nations will be run through the Commercial Working Group, where each Home Nation has a representative. Organisations are being targeted sector by sector with any partnership having a clear purpose and shared meaning.

27.3.6 **Action: RMH to arrange a commercial deep dive meeting for Board involvement and support.**

27.4 Business Operations

27.4.1 BAU report

The BAU report was taken as read, with no further questions.

27.4.2 Risk Appetite Statement

DB briefed the Board on this item, CC led the work in this area. Audit and Risk Committee have noted that there was previous no guidance on risks the organisation wished to take, this statement outlines our intent in each area.

27.4.3 DC fed back that it may be helpful to split appetite and tolerance. DB responded that some areas are difficult to have tracking metrics in every single area, whilst welcoming templates from other organisations.

27.4.4 CC clarified strategic risk as deciding what the Board want the organisation to action from a strategic perspective.

27.4.5 Risk Register

JMN fed back that the number of operational risks listed was growing beyond the Board's remit. The Board agreed that a strategic overview would be more appropriate, staying above the process of risk.

27.4.6 **Action: All Board members to feedback on the Risk Appetite Statement and Risk Register individually to DB.**

27.5 Principles and Policies

27.5.1 BAU report

The BAU report was taken as read, with no further questions.

27.5.2 Inclusion Policy

DB stated this would need to be a living document due to the rapidly developing topic. It is not possible to be faultlessly aligned with all stakeholders and legal requirements.

- 27.5.3 KWM believes the document is a significant approval on previous iterations. FF specified the Frequently Asked Questions section as a particular enhancement.
- 27.5.4 DB outlined the areas of the policy where challenge could be expected.
- 27.5.5 JMN requested a flow chart to outline the process an athlete, coach, or Home Nation representative needs to follow when utilising the policy.
- 27.5.6 GM requested clarity on record breaking dependant on whether the event was hosted by Aquatics GB or a Home Nation, with this information being added to the FAQ.
- 27.5.7 DB clarified that certification is in place at World Aquatics level, so there is no need for this process within the policy.
- 27.5.8 **Decision: The Inclusion Policy was approved, taking on board Directors' comments, with regular reviews of best practice in this area.**
- 27.5.9 The Board gave their thanks to the internal team involved in DEI Action Plan recently; Aquatics GB is the first organisation across the UK Sport System to get independent approval for this work.
- 27.6 Stakeholder Relations  
The BAU report was taken as read, with no questions.
- 28. AOB**  
2025 Board Dates
- 28.1 KWM requested that the Board review the paper out of cycle and feedback to RMH.
- 28.2 KWM gave thanks to DC for facilitating the Audit report workshop sessions across both days.
- 28.3 The Board sent their best wishes to all Aquatics GB athletes competing in the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 29. Date of next meeting**  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September, Millennium Stadium/Clayton Hotel, Cardiff