



Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Open Water Swimming Leadership Group Meeting
31st October 2023

Present	Paul Kendall (PK)	Chairman
	Stewart Murray (SMu)	ROC Representative
	Jacqui Kendall (JK)	Norfolk Representative
	Sara Mathews (SM)	Hertfordshire Representative
	Steve Westwood (SW)	Specialist
	Marion Westwood (MW)	Specialist

Also present Emma Winter Regional Administrator (EW).

23/33

Apologies

- 23/33.1 PK welcomed the Group to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
- 23/33.2 Apologies received from Bedfordshire and Essex. Cambridgeshire sent apologies after the meeting. No Apologies received from Suffolk.

23/34

Declarations of conflict of interest

- 23/34.1 There were none.

23/35

Previous minutes

- 23/35.1 Minutes from the meeting held on the 10th May 2023 were circulated prior to the meeting, spelling mistake point 23/26.6 corrected and minutes were agreed.

23/36

Matters arising

- 23/36.1 There were none.

23/37

Open Water Championships 2023 - Debrief

- 23/37.1 Participants Feedback
A number of emails were received, all with positive comment. Specific thanks for results and presentations were received from a number of individuals, which was especially nice to hear; a definite improvement from the situation in 2022.

- 23/37.2 Volunteers
We could not have run the event so successfully without the volunteer support gathered from around the region by Helen Stephens. Needless to say, it is a recipe that we wish to use again in 2024.
- Whilst we were well supported, there were still areas that could have had more help. We should try to encourage additional volunteers to come forwards in 2024.
- 23/37.3 Electronic entry process
The electronic entry system appeared to work well, though Region staff may have input on this. There will be a need to amend it to ensure that all relevant and required information is requested to be provided when entry is submitted.
- 23/37.4 Canoeists
Pledges of support from our regular supporters did materialise sufficiently early enough to give a clear indication that we would have the correct cover on the day, so a decision was made to engage the services of a commercial team to bolster the safety team numbers. The cost for this commercial support was not originally budgeted for, but it did mean that on the day we were very fortunate to have very good safety support on the water.
- The reasons behind the low numbers of regular canoe support may be quite complex, there was another nearby weekend long (triathlon) event being supported by some, and for others our requests for assistance arrived later than desirable, meaning we missed the opportunity to grab their services first. For 2024 advance notice of our date along with a request for help has already been sent out to our regular canoe support members.
- 23/37.5 Results
Following the difficulty experienced producing the results in 2022, this year there was a determined effort to learn from the mistakes and ensure that the production processes would be adjusted and trialled well before the event. Obviously, the preparations worked, and our results were ready and published in a very acceptable timespan. As reported, they were well received by being produced so swiftly. I have requested that Race Timing Solutions return again in 2024
- 23/37.6 Officials online sign-up
In conjunction with the program developer - Richard Dexter an adaption of the successful pool official's organisational program "swim-meet" was created for an open water environment. Whilst this program is still not fully developed for all the requirements I wished to use it for, it was outstanding in assisting with gathering, checking, and holding in one place, the details of those who had responded to my request for assistance. I am continuing to work with Richard to further develop this program, and hope that this may benefit other regions if they wish to trial it for themselves..
- 23/37.7 Water cooler
Water cooler was much appreciated but possibly under-used because it was not optimally positioned to give easy access. Next year propose that this is

co-located with the rest of the official's refreshments in Pod 8. Some officials failed to bring water bottles with them.

23/38

Review of 2023 Plan and Budget

23/38.1

Un-anticipated event costs - Commercial Safety Cover

As a result of needing to ensure adequate, competent, safety canoe coverage was on-site for the event, a decision to bring in a commercial team of 6 canoes to provide additional coverage at short notice meant an un-budgeted cost was incurred. On reflection the need to take this action may not have been necessary if the organiser had been made aware in good time that the numbers of 'club' canoes that would eventually come to support the event would have been sufficient on their own. That said, it meant that the safety team were able to rotate coverage far better and give greater support to the event and themselves throughout the day.

23/38.2

Reduced income – Coaches Passes

Due to a misunderstanding the published fee for a Coaches Pass was half that set in the budget. This error was not noticed until it was too late to correct the error. It is not known how the rate came to be set so low, unless possibly copied and pasted from a pool document. We will ensure that this is checked for compliance before releasing the entry form next time.

23/39

2024 Plan and Budget

23/39.1

Development Plan

To run a face to face Open Water Lake day with classroom and lake work, along with a race simulation. Looking to be held at Stanborough lakes again and looking to hold it around the 8th/9th June or the 22nd/23rd June 2024.

Official's development to hold an online theory session for Technical Officials for them to then attend the Open Water lake day to gain the practical side of the course.

23/39.2

Championships Plan

A number of regular facility suppliers have already provided notification of what their service charges will be in 2024.

23/39.3

PK informed the Group that next year we will need to purchase a new stock of hats to serve the event, he proposed that we purchase 1000 hats, which will cover two years plus.

PK also informed the Group that he would like to propose that we purchase a coloured shirt for officials from the regional supplier that would provide a more serviceable colour and give an independent identity for those officials

working in open water at region level. Having contacted the supplier shirt costs would be approximately £12.50ea. I would propose buying 40 shirts, which would be sufficient for the number of officials that we usually work with. A sizing request will be included in the request for their assistance at the event.

- 23/39.4 2024 Entry Fees and Entry form
For 2024 propose the entry fee rises to £30 for 2k, 3k, & 5k and to £25 for 1k. To look at the 2024 entry process to open much earlier than in 2023, propose the entries to open in March.

To include a medical declaration form for the protection of both the competitor and the event staff to ensure that we have relevant information in advance regarding potential issues that might be needed to respond to.

- 23/39.5 Traffic, parking and signage.
Local approval for signage will still be needed to be applied for from Norfolk CC. Currently SW has the necessary license to post signs on the highway however his license will require renewing before the 2025 event, at a current price of £282.

SW informed the Group that we may need to look at getting the signage replaced as it has the old ASA on them.

- 23/39.6 Inclusion of a Para event
PK informed the Group that he has been asked whether we can accommodate separate para swimmer races at 1k and 3k. PK informed the Group that this request poses many questions.

Access to the venue, there is only a small parking area allocated to the rear of the venue for disabled parking, although the routes from the main carparks are well paved and wheelchair friendly.

SW suggested that we have prior information of how many disabled parking will be required to make sure that we have the spaces reserved.

Para results will be separate from those for the rest of the event, We will need to ensure that the data asked for on the entry form covers all the relevant points necessary. Have received an offer of help from Peter Winter.

- 23/39.7 Volunteers expenses
To review the expenses policy and look at co-inside with Swim England's Open Water expenses policy.

The Group were happy with the 2024 Plan and Budget to be submitted.

23/40

Any other business

- 23/40.1 SW suggested that the risk assessment may need to be revisited after the events which took place at the National Open Water event this year, that there may need some bits added to the potential need to bring in a helicopter into the site if needed by a swimmer. Will need to look at the site to see where it would be best for a landing site and also how it would be managed if needed.



23/41 Confidential items

23/41.1 There were none.

23/42 Next meeting

23/42.1 The next meeting to be held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 @ 7:45pm via Zoom.

DRAFT