

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Regional Operations Committee (ROC) Meeting
Tuesday 5th December, 2023

Present	Ian Cotton (IC)	Chairman
	Keith Belton (KB)	Finance Manager
	Tom Baster (TB)	Committee Member/Swimming Leadership Group Manager
	Paul Kendall (PK)	Open Water Leadership Group Manager
	Sheila Mackenzie (SM)	Committee Member
	David Metcalf (DM)	Swimming Officials Leadership Group Manager
	Geraldine Metcalf (GM)	Committee Member
	Stewart Murray (SMu)	Committee Member
	Lottie Thompson (LT)	Committee Member/ Diving Leadership Group Manager
	Dean Walker (DW)	Water Polo Leadership Group Manager
	Peter Winter (PW)	Disability Leadership Group Manager

SMu joined the meeting at 23/39.7

PK, DM, DW, FV and PW were present for items 23/36 to 23/40

Also present: Joshua Devine (JD), Regional Manager
Fran Vesztrocy (FV), Regional Welfare Officer

- 23/36 Apologies and introductions**
- 23/36.1 IC welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked everyone for giving up their time to attend. Introductions were made.
 - 23/36.2 Apologies were received from Louise Mackie (Masters Leadership Group Manager) and Amy Davis (Artistic Swimming Leadership Group Manager).
- 23/37 Declarations of conflict of interest**
- 23/37.1 There were none.

23/38 Introduction of the Regional Welfare Officer

- 23/38.1 IC provided a formal introduction to Fran as the recently employed Regional Welfare Officer, before opening the floor for Fran to speak about her background and role within the Region.

23/39 Leadership Groups plans and budgets

- 23/39.1 Artistic Swimming: SM noted that owing to the scheduling of meetings for 2023, she had not been able to attend, and hoped that, with the dates being set for 2024, she would be able to attend and input next year.
- 23/39.2 Disability: PW had nothing to add to the submitted plan except the potential of an additional development day. The day may be needed because of interest in Para Swimming created by the Paralympics and we would want to ensure we respond to that. The Group is planning an autumn classification event following a successful one in September.
- 23/39.3 Diving: LT provided an overview of the group's aims for the year, with the exciting prospect of the Region hosting the Swim England National Skills Final in 2024 in Southend. While there is a forecast deficit for development, the aim is that this will be offset against finances generated through events.
- 23/39.4 Masters: IC noted that to date the budget for the group had not been received, with GM adding that the last meeting was not quorate, with only one county representative in attendance.
- 23/39.5 Open Water: PK noted that the biggest shortfall for 2023 was because of issues with the water safety team and the resultant additional expenditure this summer, so the group has already started to explore securing voluntary support. The group has also already established quotes in a number of areas, including the venue, to help to avoid any unbudgeted spend in the 2024 event. When looking at development, the group would like to include a Para stream to the competition for 2024, as well as potentially joining with London Region for the Lake Development Day, using a larger venue, but noting the need to strike a balance between water-based support and land-based facilities. KB noted that because of East Region's success in running the development events, it would seem logical for London Region to join with East Region for the event. PK noted however that the facilities at Stanborough are becoming too small for requirements, but consideration still needs to be given to the distance which all participants have to travel to a venue.
- 23/39.6 Swimming: TB spoke about the need to adjust the event calendar because of the move of the school examination window for 2024, as well as a number of development events being planned. However alignment needs to be maintained with the national pathways. TB also noted a need for a further review when the 2024-2027 strategy is published.

- 23/39.7 Swimming Officials: DM advised that all meetings for 2024 have now been booked. He elaborated on his continuing role in providing training nationally and internationally. Regionally the plan is for the group to provide a complementary referee development and training programme, along with clearer guidelines for referee assessment in relation to facilities. DM noted that the Region now delivers two or more Para officiating development opportunities.
- 23/39.8 Water Polo: DW wanted to thank Emma Winter (Regional Administrator) for her continued support. The group's aim for 2024 is to continue with the work from this year, with ten regional academy sessions across the year. DW is also speaking to the University of East Anglia (UEA) to potentially take some training there, to help develop the University's water polo team, and also to bring regional water polo back to Norfolk. Financially the group plans for participants to contribute to cover costs. There is an aim for four Assistant Coach and Coach courses for which DW will be the tutor. SM asked what provision was being put in place for athletes and felt there is a need to consider specific age group training and development opportunities to help prepare athletes for competitions. DW explained the current set-up of the academy training sessions, with development also taking place to support coaches in the development of their athletes.

23/40

Regional Strategy

- 23/40.1 IC gave a background to the national and regional strategy, providing a screen share of the approved East Region Strategy for 2024-2027. Following approval at the November Board meeting, this is now with Swim England to produce the final version. IC then went on to explain the objectives of the regional strategy focus on overall membership growth, on diversity and inclusion growth, on removing barriers to participation, and on strengthening talent systems regionally to support regional athletes moving on to national pathways. In addition to the work on the strategy, IC mentioned that the counties are starting to work on adherence to the Sport Governance Code, with support from Swim England. The Region would also be undergoing this process over the next 12 months.
- 23/40.2 DW asked what the Region would do with regards to the new Swim England Safeguarding qualification. IC stated that the team will continue to promote this change in the requirements. Jo Stalley (JS) (Regional Operations Officer) will continue to work with clubs to ensure compliance with safeguarding requirements as the clubs renew Club Affiliation or SwimMark.
- 23/40.3 TB suggested removing outdated discipline plans and strategies from the website, in anticipation of the launching of the new strategy this year. IC agreed that the staff would pick this up.
Action: Staff to update the website
- 23/40.4 DM noted that when running courses on Zoom there have been additional layers of complexity with verification codes being sent to east@swimming.org or meetings@eastswimming.org. DW noted that the Institute of Swimming (IoS) have been able to add personal Zoom accounts as "secondary users" to the IoS account to assist tutors. It was agreed this would be an avenue worth exploring for the Region.
- 23/40.5 IC thanked PK, DM, DW, and PW, and also FV, for their attendance, and they left the meeting.

23/41

Minutes

- 23/41.1 SM questioned if members are in fact 'elected' or 'nominated'. It was agreed that, for now, members would now be referred to as 'Committee Members' or just 'Members'.
- 23/41.2 In Minute 23.27.3 and Minute 23.28.3 – clarification is required as to whether the initial should be SM or SMu.
Action: KB to investigate

23/42

Matters arising

- 23/42.1 It was noted that work was planned for 2024 on connecting the Region with clubs and counties through the Chairs' Forums and the new Welfare Forums.
- 23/42.2 In respect of the County Forum and the Club Leadership Group, SMu will continue to support JS with Club Affiliation and SwimMark. A review of the County Forum is underway to look at the possible improvement of the meeting.

23/43

Finance update

- 23/43.1 KB commented that the latest monthly budget reports should have been received today. The Region is on track to break even this year.
- 23/43.2 TB commented on the change in circumstance, with Swimming no longer being a profit discipline due to significant increases in costs, but now breaking even. TB intends to review the use of live streams at events at the end of this season, to see if there is still a need to utilise this given the significant costs this imposes on the Region. The committee then discussed the usage of live stream and the restrictions imposed at the venue with respect to capacity.
- 23/43.3 SM asked KB about the financing of a recent disability development event, which had a limited number of athletes in attendance. KB agreed to follow up with Peter Winter and look at the figures.
Action: KB to investigate

23/44

Regional Operations Committee (ROC) Terms of Reference review

- 23/44.1 IC thanked LT for her support in reviewing this document and then went through the proposed highlighted amendments to the document.
Proposals:-
- The length of terms for members - an initial term of four years, with the ability to serve two additional terms of four years each.
 - Discipline Leadership Group Managers to be invited to the ROC meeting twice a year.
 - A change to the responsibilities of the group (Section 8) moving away from day-to-day overview, and towards more of a check-and-challenge responsibility.
- 23/44.2 The proposed amendments were accepted.
- 23/44.3 LT suggested that agenda items should be mapped for the committee's quarterly meetings to reflect the new check-and-challenge approach for the committee.

23/45 Leadership Groups minutes, and additional comments on the budgets

23/45.1 LT followed up on the comments from SM with regards to water polo development (*Minute 23/39.8*) in the Region, noting that costs and limited coaches are potential barriers. It was suggested that offering additional funding could overcome these barriers. SM's comments about age group training sessions being perhaps more beneficial to the athletes, rather than mixed age group academy training, will be discussed with the Water Polo Leadership Group. IC will address this.

Action: IC to contact DW and the Water Polo Leadership Group.

23/45.2 GM reiterated the point from earlier in the meeting that the last Masters meeting was not quorate and could not take place.

23/45.3 LT asked if there was improved communication regarding resolutions for 2024 Artistic Swimming Leadership Group meetings to take place. IC added that dates for the Artistic Swimming Leadership Group meetings were set for 2024, and so it was hoped this would improve the governance for this discipline. SM highlighted the hard work of the Manager and the successful events delivered.

It was hoped that the regional calendar will improve the planning across all committees and groups to track meetings and competitions.

23/46 Any other business

23/46.1 TB expressed concern over the website and it not being update regularly. This will be rectified going forward.

Action: Staff to ensure that the website is kept up to date.

23/46.2 It was noted that the vacancy on the Regional Operations Committee had been previously advertised with no applications received – this would be re-advertised in the new year.

Action: Vacancy to be re-advertised.

23/47 Confidential items

23/47.1 One confidential matter was discussed.

23/48 Dates of future meetings

23/48.1 The following dates are proposed for future meetings:

- Tuesday 26th March 2024
- Tuesday 25th June 2024
- Tuesday 24th September 2024
- Tuesday 3rd December 2024