
SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 09:30 – BY ZOOM

MINUTES**In Attendance:**

John Coyne CBE (JC)	Chair and Independent Director
Mark Bache (MB)	Independent Director
Richard Boreham (RB)	Vice Chair and Independent Director
Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Bronagh Kennedy (BK)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Alexandra Lane (AL)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ivan Lawler MBE (IL)	President
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
David Joy (DJ)	CEO

Also In Attendance:

Chris Earle (CE)	Head of Participation & Club Services (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Paul Ratcliffe (PR)	Performance Director (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting on the Zoom platform. JC confirmed that both he and the CEO (DJ) were joining the meeting from the Nottingham office. JC thanked members for accommodating the earlier than usual start and advised that the meeting was being recorded to assist with the production of the minutes of the meeting.

JC confirmed that Chris Earle (CE) would join the meeting to present Item 06, Club Update and Paul Ratcliffe (PR) would present Items 08 and 09 respectively, the Sprint Strategy Progress Review Report and the Paris Planning Report.

JC thanked the CEO and executive team for the quality of the papers and for all the committee work that had taken place behind the scenes that would enable a full and productive meeting.

2. Apologies

None received.

3. Declarations of Interest

A confidential declaration of interest was received and noted by the Board.

4. Minutes of FB69

The Minutes of FB69 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

It was raised and noted that the coaching underwrite for the National Associations would be discussed at the forthcoming UK CEO Meeting on 24 September 2020 and that the agreement would then be shared in due course.

There were no further matters arising.

6. Club Update

JC introduced item 6 clarifying that this was a British Canoeing English update, but welcomed comments from colleagues across each of the Home Nations. JC noted that several proposals within the paper would be shared with clubs following the meeting and so invited board members to offer appropriate guidance.

JC invited CE to pick out the key areas for discussion.

CE highlighted the following areas of progress detailed within the report;

- Continued Covid-19 support for clubs including a series of webinars
- New Club intranet to be launched in October designed to improve quality of information, guidance, templates and communications
- Definition of club activity had been circulated
- Improved clarification of the rights of Club Associate Members had been circulated
- All coaches & leaders within affiliated Clubs to be encouraged to hold a British Canoeing coaching qualification
- Coach Bursary Programme to be launched late October to financially support Clubs to qualify their coaches & leaders.

There was a discussion around how many coaches were currently unqualified in clubs and the proposed competency assessments. CE confirmed that consultation had taken place around how best to help club committees to carry out competency assessment of coaches and leaders and that there would be a high level of support for them in undertaking this process. It was noted that the current insurance policy does cover people who have been signed off by a club committee to undertake activity, but previously there had not been guidance about how this should be assessed. This is now in place.

The Board expressed full support for the new Coach Bursary scheme. It was noted that there may be a demand to support newly qualified coaches through mentoring and peer support.

CE confirmed that this would be encouraged through connecting likeminded clubs in the same area and by organising local support groups. SH confirmed that RDT funding would be available in the normal way so grant applications were welcomed.

There was a further discussion around qualified coaches. It was noted that a transition period would be necessary, but that it was intended to move to a position within the next 3 years, where all coaches and leaders will need to be qualified by British Canoeing to practice in any environment. This would be presented to Board in more detail for a policy decision in 2021.

JC thanked CE for the clear guidance included within the paper.

The Board noted the contents of the report and noted the following actions;

- **The introduction of the coach competency assessment process for clubs**
- **The intention to audit clubs to identify how many unqualified coaches are operating in clubs**
- **Noted the clarifications around various club related matters to be circulated to clubs in England**
- **Noted the intention for all coaches and leaders to be British Canoeing qualified within 3 years.**

7. CEO Report

JC invited DJ to pick out the key areas for discussion.

Covid-19

DJ confirmed that a Covid Officer group had been established and had steered the organisation through the challenges exceptionally well. Coaches had been operating for some time and some colleagues had opted to return back to the office. 30+ non coaching staff were due to return to office shortly on a rota basis. British Canoeing remained fully cognisant of the changing national picture and would respond accordingly in line with Government guidelines. There will be no return to the office until guidance nationally changes.

It was noted that a new Working from Home Policy had been considered and discussed at the HR & Remuneration Committee and subsequently approved by SMT.

The Board welcomed the measured response to Covid-19 and the overall approach taken in making British Canoeing a Covid Secure environment. The Board congratulated those involved for their work. A note of caution was issued around the challenges of maintaining a sense of team when some colleagues are working from the office whilst others remain at home.

Membership

DJ reported that membership figures had shown considerable growth, reaching over 60,000 in the past week. Retention rates were also at an all time high, at 89% over the last few weeks, compared with 75% in 2019 and 65% in 2016. This was a result of improved personalisation, attention to detail and quality of data and service.

DJ confirmed that during 2020 there had been a spike in the demand for Paddlesport and that we had been able to capture this demand through our improved digital capabilities and Go

Paddling website. Over 350,000 unique visitors had browsed the Go Paddling web site. Work was already underway to plan for maximum retention and further growth in 2021 including a piece of insight work which had recently been commissioned in order to fully understand the habits, wants and needs of the new members and potential members.

The Board encouraged greater collaboration with clubs especially in relation to supporting the Clear Access Clear Waters (CACW) Campaign and to align the campaign to Go Paddling.

JC and other board members commended the way in which the team had taken advantage of the spike in demand for paddlesport and optimised engagement through our digital strategy and social media presence and capabilities.

The Board commended the growth membership and expressed a desire for this to be publicised more widely through our own channels.

Commercial Update

DJ highlighted that whilst the pandemic had made commercial developments more difficult, we had established new partnerships during the past few months. There was discussion around some of the emerging commercial partnerships that were in development and how best to maximise those opportunities.

ICF Rights to SUP

DJ drew the Board's attention to developments within SUP that the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) had ruled that both the International Surfing Association (ISA) and the International Canoe Federation (ICF) can stage stand-up paddling (SUP) events, but the ISA will be the International Federation to govern the sport at an Olympic level. This paved the way for British Canoeing to connect, engage and promote SUP without any fear of legitimate challenge from other UK bodies. DJ advised that a proposal around the future development of SUP would be brought to a future meeting of the Board in 2021.

The Board noted and endorsed the CEO Report.

8. Sprint Performance Strategy Review Progress Report

JC welcomed PR to the meeting to present the progress made within the Sprint Performance Strategy Review, since the last report to Board in June 2020.

PR outlined the process to date, the key drivers for change and how the strategy was starting to take shape, noting the considerable collective which had resulted in the Draft Strategy that was being presented.

The Board discussed strategy in some detail. There was discussion around the proposal to decentralise coaching for the Under 23 athletes away from Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham and the impact this may have on some of the individuals now in Nottingham. PR stated that it would be important to do this in a staged manner over a two year period with athlete choice at the heart of any transition. The Board requested that the phased approach is communicated early to enable athletes to align to their own life choices.

It was acknowledged that it was difficult to fully cost the new Sprint Strategy as much of the costs would be at club level. It was intended to further explore the investment required at club level over the next few months. The programme funding from UK Sport & Sport England was easier to identify and this would be allocated to the strategy in line with the funding agreements. DJ reassured the Board that in presenting the final strategy, due consideration would be given to the resources to deliver it and the strategy would be suitably aligned to the available resources.

The Board noted and recommended the following points for inclusion in the draft strategy:

- Highlight importance of 18-21 age group
- Set the scene at the beginning by including the themes and headlines which were within the Sprint Situational Analysis
- Consideration to referencing marathon vs sprint competition
- Include links between Home clubs and Talent clubs
- Recognise that the physical environment at Holme Pierrepont had been identified as needing improvement and actions were required
- Retain talented athletes in our sport in other capacities, not necessarily as paddlers
- Encourage cross discipline to maximise reach to talented athletes
- Emphasise the need to improve coaching
- Emphasise the athlete centred approach
- Revisit the Situational Analysis for other potential gaps that should be addressed

The Board noted progress and supported the content of the Draft Sprint Strategy.

9. Paris Planning

JC introduced this item, noting that the deadline for the submission of the UK Sport Phase 3 funding proposal for Paris 2024, was 16 October 2020.

PR spoke to the report, recognising the considerable work to date from all three World Class Programmes. He outlined the key challenges in balancing these submissions including;

- Balancing the budgets
- Impact on core costs being split more equally across all 3 programmes
- Feasibility of maintaining Dorney as a training facility

PR further highlighted the key themes and proposals within each programme.

There was a discussion around the Strategy's alignment to WITTW and the collaborative and evidence based approach undertaken to continually improve this process. The Board noted the proposed staffing structure into the Paris cycle and discussed how they differ from the Tokyo cycle.

The Board discussed coaching ratios, the opportunities to develop young coaches across each programme and the certainty of which events will feature in Paris 2024 and beyond.

DJ stated that it was a real challenge trying to align the reduced budget to staff, camps, competitions and centre costs but remained hopeful that an evidential could be presented to

UK Sport as part of a strong proposal to increase the number of athlete places within the sprint programme.

JC thanked PR for the report.

The Board noted and approved the Phase 3 funding proposal on the basis that;

- **there were no radical departures from the agreed direction of travel**
- **the Board to receive an update on the proposed staffing structure at the next meeting in November.**

10. World Class Performance Selection Policy Scrutiny

JC invited DJ to talk to the report that proposed the creation of a new Advisory Group with responsibility for check and challenge and scrutiny of World Class Programme selection policies.

It was noted that the Governance & Risk Committee had requested that this group be established to strengthen the scrutiny of these policies.

DJ advised that the group would be an Advisory Group with the purpose to undertake due diligence around the selection policies and to explore the 'what if' scenarios around selection policies. The Advisory Group would not be a formal sub-committee of the Governance & Risk Committee but would advise it on matters around the approval of selection policies. DJ confirmed that the role of this group would add to and not replace the already significant consultation process which is in place for the development of these policies. It was proposed that the CEO and PD would be responsible for the convening the Advisory Group and that members would be sought with legal and World Class Performance expertise.

The Board requested that the Governance & Risk Committee should still have early sight of the policies at the start of the process and then final approval at the end of the process. JC confirmed that the CEO had responsibility to the Governance & Risk Committee to ensure that the selection policies presented to them for approval had been properly developed.

The Board approved the proposal to create a WCP Selection Policy Scrutiny Advisory Group.

11. Finance Report

JC invited SH to present the report noting that the full set of management accounts were uploaded to the Google drive prior to the meeting.

SH provided the latest update on income and expenditure. The year end forecast had been revised and a surplus of £500k was projected.

Investment areas

As a result of the improved financial position, SH confirmed that additional investment of £200k had been approved by the Finance & Audit Committee to be spent in the following areas;

- Club Coach Bursary
- Membership Insight
- Coach Provider Bursary
- Temporary contract support (within HR)
- Back dated pay rise and pay progression
- Staff Recruitment (Digital, Membership & Equality)
- Office Improvements

Reserves

The Finance and Audit Committee had recommended that the year-end surplus should be released to the British Canoeing reserves, increasing the reserves to the next level (sustainable level) of around £800k. The Committee had previously identified this as the appropriate level of reserves for an organisation the size of British Canoeing.

It was still intended to further increase reserves to the next level (investment) by a further £125k, which would provide funds which could be used to invest in suitable opportunities.

SH advised that the 2020-21 budget would be presented at the next Board meeting in November.

JC invited comments from members. The Board made the following observations;

- Achieving the reasonable level of reserves (£800k) within 1 year was very positive as the Finance & Audit committee had anticipated it would take 5 years to get to such a level.
- The Board supported that the membership income should be invested in reserves
- The Board noted that we still had potential liabilities around our international events in 2021 and 2023

DJ confirmed that work was underway on the 2020-21 budget and that this would be based on a cautious revised membership income, but this would give room for investment whilst still working towards achieving the preferred reserves level of £925k.

The Board noted and approved the Finance Report and noted that the 2020-21 budget would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

12. Progress Report on Action Plan following Sport Resolutions Report

DJ outlined progress against the Action Plan which had been developed in response to the Recommendations within the Sports Resolutions Report. He confirmed that the Governance & Risk Committee had considered this progress and that they had noted there were three areas which were delayed, due to capacity challenges within the team;

- Review historical safeguarding files in the office
- Undertake external review of our Disciplinary, Disputes and Complaints Policies

- Consideration with UK Sport about presenting greater clarity in the role of UK Sport in relation to British Canoeing

DJ confirmed that progress is planned in these areas prior to the next Board meeting in November.

The Board noted the progress against the Action Plan and invited the Governance & Risk Committee to continue to provide scrutiny on these matters until the actions had been satisfactorily completed.

13. Risk Management

SH introduced the paper and highlighted the most significant risks requiring Board consideration.

Significant Risks

SH reported that the significant risk reported to Board at the last meeting concerning the level of company reserves falling below acceptable levels had been removed from the risk register.

The loss or significant reduction in UK Sport funding for the sprint programme 2021-25 remained a significant risk.

The Covid-19 impact on the Olympic and Paralympic Programmes had been downgraded from 16 to 9 points since the last meeting of the Board, although still remained an ongoing financial and performance risk to the organisation.

Emerging Risks

SH reported that those risks that had been recently identified as potentially increasing and which may impact on the operations within the near future and require mitigation include;

- The national rise in Covid-19 virus cases may impact on our approach to return to office and the requirements to ensure staff and athletes are safe
- Management of the Places to Paddle sites
- The risk associated with the increase in safeguarding, disciplinary and appeal case work, which continues to stretch the resources within the Governance team.

There was a discussion around the scoring of risks before and after mitigation actions had been put in place to work associated with mitigating the risks. JC stated that the mitigating action may sometimes 'hold' the position, rather than improving it.

The Board requested that timelines be included on the mitigating actions within the risk register.

The Board discussed the management of the places to paddle sites, recognising also the need to develop a facilities strategy and the requirement for more capacity in this area. The CEO was invited to consider this as a matter of importance within the 2021 Annual Plan.

A Board member offered to help connect our officers with key personnel within Severn Trent Water to consider community grants schemes which may support this work.

The Board noted and approved the risk report and agreed to receive a further update on the Places to Paddle mitigations at the next meeting.

14. Annual Plan 2019-20 Update and Proposals 2020-21

DJ reported on progress within the Annual Plan to September, confirming that actions were tracking nicely against the plan with circa 80% of actions projected to complete by the final report to Board in December. DJ highlighted paragraph 2.3 which identified some of the success that had already been achieved this year. DJ also drew the Board's attention to paragraph 2.4 which listed those actions not likely to be delivered during this year.

DJ confirmed that work had already commenced to shape the 2020-21 Annual Plan with several priorities emerging. These were identified in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The Board considered again the increase in membership in 2020 and the opportunities the insight work may present into the next Annual Plan. The Board also discussed whether rebranding should be reconsidered as part of the 2021 Annual plan and requested the CEO to scope this work for consideration at a future meeting in 2021.

The Board noted the progress in delivery of the 2019-20 Annual Plan and the emerging priorities for the 2020-21 plan.

15. Equality & Diversity Update

DJ confirmed that Nancy Squires (NS), Head of Governance & Compliance, would be the lead officer on Equality & Diversity, but progress would require whole organisation action.

It was noted that the #ShePaddles campaign had gathered pace and was operating successfully. There were several projects such as this, where we could point to progress within equality, diversity and inclusion, but that a more coordinated approach was required.

DJ reported the findings of a recent small survey which had taken place with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) athletes.

He identified three key areas of development had been proposed to improve our work around equality and diversity within British Canoeing;

- Appoint full-time Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer (E,D&I)
- Create an Internal Staff Action Group to ensure the equality work is embedded across the organisation
- Establish an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group to ensure the strategic work is suitably informed

The Board felt that the approach played strongly to the Every Person Matters organisational value. It was advised that careful consideration ought to be given to social mobility too within the inclusivity agenda. A Board member offered to help provide a link to E, D & I expertise on the interview panel as well as a link to a possible mentor to the newly appointed person.

The Board welcomed this approach and approved the contents of the report.

16. Committee Reports

JC advised that there had been a number of Committee meetings since the last Board meeting held in June. The Committee reports were taken by exception with only the key issues highlighted.

16.1. Finance Committee

No further updates were reported outside of the Finance report. MB confirmed that the committee were very much looking forward to scrutinising next year's budget.

16.2. HR & Remuneration Committee

At the most recent meeting, the committee had discussed, reviewed and approved the new working from home policy. The committee commended the CEO and Senior Management Team for the care and concern shown for all employees during the Covid-19 pandemic.

16.3. Governance & Risk Committee

No further updates were received outside of those matters already discussed. The next meeting was due to take place on 30 September.

16.4. Nominations Committee

JC confirmed that Martine Kushner (MK) had consented to join the Nominations Committee filling the vacancy left by James Fry. The Board approved the appointment of Martine Kushner to the Nominations Committee.

It was noted that the terms of three Board members were due to end in March 2021; John Coyne, Richard Boreham and Clare Dallaway and that Governance and Risk Committee would consider and approve the recruitment and appointment processes.

16.5. Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)

The SCA Board met recently and were planning a remote AGM to be held on a Thursday evening. It was reported that Margaret Winter, one of the longest standing individuals at the SCA had announced her retirement. It was reported that the SCA had not seen the same upturn in membership numbers as British Canoeing and this would likely impact on the level of company reserves at year-end.

16.6. Canoe Wales

Canoe Wales had not seen a surge in membership but the financial situation was better than initially forecast due to receiving the same level of grant funding but without having the expense of providing coaching and events during the pandemic. The National White Water centre at Bala had been busy but constrained by capacity under social distancing rules. Canoe Wales had recently appointed a new Performance Manager, Alistair Dickson, former Director of Sport Development at the Royal Yachting Association.

16.7. Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)

It was reported that CANI had seen a downturn in revenue on last year for the period April to August but remained on track to break even. Coaching income had been slower to recover. A virtual AGM was currently being planned for a weekday evening. It was noted that CANI staff were still working from home.

The Board formally noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

17. Any Other Business

International Travel

The Board commended the early decision that had been taken around restricting international travel and the requirement for British Canoeing athletes and officials that chose to compete abroad, to quarantine from British Canoeing activities for a period of 14 days. This had worked well.

18. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors