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**SATURDAY 13 MARCH 2021 AT 13:30 – BY ZOOM**

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**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
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Dee Paterson (DP)	President
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales
David Joy (DJ)	CEO

**Also In Attendance:**

Zofia Campbell (ZC)	Performance Wellbeing Coach ( <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

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**1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting on the Zoom platform. JC advised that the meeting was being recorded to assist with the production of the minutes.

JC welcomed DP to the meeting further to the confirmation of being appointed as President of British Canoeing at the AGM. On behalf of the Board, JC congratulated DP on her appointment and wished her every success in the role. It was agreed that JC, DP and DJ would meet separately to discuss the role of President and plan the President's engagements in the year ahead.

JC notified members that Alexandra Lane had recently resigned from the Board. It was noted that filling the vacancy would be considered following discussions with the English Forum.

JC confirmed that Paul Ratcliffe (PR) would join the meeting for Item 06, World Class Programme funding 2021-25 and Item 07, the World Class Performance Report. Zofia Campbell (ZC) would also join the meeting to present the Culture Health Check findings within Item 07.

## **AGM 2021**

JC advised that 239 members had registered for the AGM this year with around 150 members in attendance at any one time. This represented the largest attendance at an AGM for many years. JC welcomed observations or comments about the AGM from the Board.

The Board were pleased to see that more people were engaged in the AGM this year and agreed that the platform worked well for people coming onto screen to ask questions. It was noted that some of the responses to the questions submitted in advance felt a little too scripted.

The split screen had resulted in some of the slides not being easily visible to read remotely.

A Board member observed that some members may still feel like they have to do a lot to maintain their coaching qualification and this may not have been fully addressed in response to the coaching question raised during the meeting.

The Board fully supported the exploration of Stand Up Paddle boarding (SUP) as a discipline of British Canoeing.

DJ confirmed that feedback would be sought from those members that attended the virtual event and a review would be undertaken to decide how best to conduct future AGMs.

DJ thanked JC for chairing the AGM in such a professional manner. DJ commended the staff team for the immense effort which had gone into organising the virtual AGM. JC confirmed that he would write to the CEO on behalf of the Board to acknowledge the work involved and express appreciation for a well-run event.

## **2. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

GS reported that his wife was no longer a member of the Board of the Spanish Canoe Federation.

DP declared that she may have involvement in the Freestyle World Championships (selections and event) as athlete or coach that may conflict with the discussion around the Freestyle World Championships event later in the agenda. DP confirmed that she would submit a full declaration of conflicts of interest form after the meeting.

SL reported that his son, Peter Linksted, had been awarded prospect funding.

There were no further declarations received.

#### **4. Minutes of FB72**

The Minutes of FB72 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting subject to a spelling amendment under Item 03.

#### **5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda**

The issue around interpreting new Brexit custom regulations for non-Olympic teams transporting goods and services across borders would be picked up in international travel discussion as part of the CEO Report.

The Chair confirmed that an update on the response to the letter written by the SCA Board in relation to the UK Agreement would be covered in agenda item 08 under the CEO Report.

There were no further matters arising.

#### **6. World Class Programme funding 2021-25 and beyond**

JC welcomed Paul Ratcliffe (PR) to the meeting and introduced Item 06 highlighting that a decision was required around the approval of the co-funding allocation of £580k for the 2021-25 Paris Funding cycle.

DJ highlighted the key points from the paper;

- It is a DCMS directive that all NGBs receiving World Class Performance Funding need to contribute to the costs of the Performance Programme
- The amount required had recently changed and increased, due to the impact of coronavirus and the reduction of the DCMS award to UK Sport. All provision for “Gap Funding” was removed from the process and the NGB contribution increased from 15% to 25% of core costs. For British Canoeing this amounted to £452k for the Olympic programmes and £128k for the Paracanoe programme.
- The value of the Performance Programme to British Canoeing and the interdependencies between WCP and core costs needed to be fully considered
- The expenditure in the programme cannot be reduced any further whilst maintaining the potential to produce the results required
- Funding cuts would need to come out of core costs that are already lean
- The proposed sources of funding was £400k from retained balance sheet funds, which had originated from public funding sources. The balance of £177K was planned from commercial partnerships, but this could not be guaranteed.

There was a comprehensive discussion around the principles of supporting the funding contribution. The Board required that the change is drawn to the attention of the members within future financial reports.

There was recognition that the principal of this requirement is likely to stay and that it may be at this level for future cycles. The challenge will be greater, if balance sheet funds have already been released.

A Board member emphasised that it was important to note that cash flows in both directions across British Canoeing and the World Class Performance Programme and that it is in British Canoeing's interests to make this contribution as it represents a positive net funding position overall.

It was noted that British Canoeing fund the non-Olympic disciplines with around £150k in total each year and has also invested heavily in Go Paddling resources for recreational paddlers.

**The Board noted and approved the co-funding allocation of £580k for the 2021-25 Paris Funding Cycle as outlined in paragraphs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of the paper.**

## **7. World Class Performance Report including Culture Health Check**

JC welcomed Zofia Campbell (ZC) to the meeting to present the UK Sport Culture Health Check findings for 2020. The papers were taken as read with only the key findings highlighted.

### ***UK Sport Culture Health Check Results 2020***

***Paracanoe*** - ZC reported that the survey results were really strong across Paracanoe, particularly in the following areas; effective leadership, mental health and wellbeing, feeling cared for and feeling proud to be part of the programme. An area identified for improvement was the consequences for inappropriate behaviour where the results were not so good.

***Sprint*** - over 75% of respondents agreed that they felt cared for and that the programme supported them to be the best they can be. They also felt empowered to take ownership. The primary themes for improvement were around consistency, clarity of what is expected, effective leadership and working effectively.

***Slalom*** - strong results were reported across the board with many respondents feeling supported and proud to be part of the programme. The main themes identified for improvement were around consistency, the consequences for inappropriate behaviour, working together, leadership and staff personal development.

Action plans have been agreed to address the challenges identified within the Culture Health Check surveys. Examples of actions we expect to take across each programme include;

***Paracanoe*** - the consequences of inappropriate behaviour would be addressed fully following the Games as generally both staff and athletes commented that it was not deemed high enough priority to focus on in an Olympic year.

***Sprint*** - improving effective leadership. Changes to the leadership personnel which had taken place recently were reported. Work was underway to identify clear principles for how the programme will operate, in line with the values of British Canoeing. These will drive decision making, communications and behaviours. Work was underway to improve athlete development meetings, to ensure professional and regular reviews and the right time is spent within support teams to plan and review effectively.

**Slalom** - Work underway to improve how decisions are communicated so that athletes can understand and observe consistency; addressing standards and continuing the conversation around culture.

Across all three programmes, more regular culture 'pulse checks' would be undertaken to understand how people are feeling throughout the season, identify any patterns and track if interventions are making a difference.

Examples of the type of behaviour that didn't receive appropriate consequences were turning up late for sessions causing frustration with coaches and other athletes alike; leaving the gym in a mess, showing a lack of respect to others.

JC invited PR to comment on the findings.

PR stated that the results were broadly in line with where he had expected them to be, especially given the impact of Covid across the year. PR reported that the Sprint programme had felt like it had been on hold for a year with the Situational Analysis Review and the wait for funding confirmation, both of which had affected the culture in the programme. Signs that the culture is improving were starting to show with the mood in the camp already feeling more positive. PR recognised that consistencies in decision making had been difficult this past year.

ZC reported that funded athletes must undertake volunteer appearances throughout the year and we could make better use of these opportunities for social impact and to inspire young paddlers and help clubs.

JC thanked ZC for her report and invited PR to present a progress update on the World Class Programme.

### ***World Class Performance Report***

PR reported that there had been some considerable developments since the last Board meeting that had affected the WCP, including adverse weather at HPP causing floods and a freeze; the ongoing Covid situation and recent staff changes. He reported that the teams were responding positively as we move towards the new funding cycle on 1 April and The Games later in 2021. PR highlighted three key areas;

### **Talent Programme**

- Sprint Talent Club Partnerships now announced and phase 2 with Slalom talent club now launched.
- Backing the Best funding for Paracanoe had been confirmed, this included a new role for talent inclusion.
- New support had recently been introduced for 10 athletes to start 1 April – 3 slalom athletes and 7 sprint athletes. This is intended to support athletes sitting just outside WCP as the programme had not been able to introduce any new places for 2 years.

## **Tokyo Planning**

Sprint and Paracanoe selection was planned for 17-18 April. Plans were progressing well around training camps and travel requirements, so teams can stay as covid safe as possible in the run up to Tokyo. It had been confirmed that teams would only be allowed on venue 5 days before Olympic competition.

The Performance Department were awaiting the outcome of the UK Sport Representation meeting having challenged the decision on the Paracanoe athlete places and subsequent funding amount for the Paris cycle, and no additional funding for Extreme Slalom.

It was reported that at the ICF Board meeting held on 12 March there had been no mention of cancelling the European Sprint and Paracanoe Tokyo qualification event. The ICF Covid policy was due to be released shortly.

It was reported that at the time of the meeting, Team GB Olympic and Paralympic athletes selected to compete in Tokyo would fall within Government policy age bands in relation to the timing of the roll out of vaccines, with no special dispensation planned for the vaccination of elite athletes.

There was a question about whether the Covid vaccines were compliant with the WADA Code. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) will continue to monitor all available information and advise athletes and other members of the anti-doping community in the event an ingredient of a vaccine might be problematic. PR confirmed that work had been completed by UK Anti-Doping on this matter and that the vaccines did not contravene the code.

There were further questions about our anti-doping work in light of recent revelations around British Cycling. The Board was clear in wanting to ensure that we were always without reproach. It was agreed that an agenda item on Anti-Doping would be considered in June or September 2021.

JC thanked PR for the report.

**The Board noted the Culture Health Check and the World Class Performance reports.**

## **8. CEO Report**

### ***Recruitment Update***

It was reported that Keir Worth had recently been appointed to the role of Director of Paddlesport.

### ***Response to Covid-19***

The HR and Remunerations Committee had recently discussed and approved a revised Working from Home Policy, which provides for staff to have greater flexibility to work from home for up to two days a week, subject to the requirements of their role. This will be introduced later this year once restrictions are lifted in line with national guidelines and staff are able to return to work in the office. It was reported that subject to national guidelines it

was expected that staff would return to the office from 01 July, with a small number opting in from 29 March on a needs only basis.

### ***Environment and Sustainability Advisory Group***

DJ reported that following a recruitment process within our membership, members had recently been appointed to a new Environment & Sustainability Advisory Group. The engagement in this process and the quality and experience of the applicants were both outstanding. This group will hold its first meeting in April.

DJ highlighted two further issues requiring a decision by the Board;

### ***Commercial Activity***

DJ updated the Board on positive discussions that had taken place in the past month leading to draft contract stage with a commercial partner, who will become named sponsor for Go Paddling. He advised the Board of some concern that had been raised by existing partners about the proposed development. The Board considered the proposal and the nature and extent of the objections from current partners and the best interests of members. The Board confirmed their support to proceed as planned.

### ***ICF 2021 Freestyle World Championships***

DJ referred the Board to Appendix 1 of the CEO report that outlined the proposal that subject to ICF agreement, to postpone the 2021 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships from July 2021 to June 2022. The re-budgeted forecast investment in the event in 2022 would be £45k, subject to there being no Covid related restrictions at that time.

The Board discussed and approved the proposal to postpone the event to 2022 when the event could be hosted as part of a major festival of paddling. It was noted that the ICF Board would consider our recommendation at the end of March.

### ***Case Management***

The Board noted the progress on two outstanding case management issues.

It was noted that declarations of interest must be monitored very carefully at future Board meetings, in relation to case management issues.

**The Board noted the CEO Report and approved the following;**

- **To extend the Board's congratulations to Keir Worth on his appointment to the Director of Paddlesport role**
- **To fully endorse the commercial partnership for the headline sponsor for Go Paddling**
- **To support the decision to request ICF to postpone the ICF Freestyle World Championships to June 2022.**

## **9. Finance Report**

SH updated the Board on the financial performance of British Canoeing to February 2021, highlighting the key headlines from the report;

- Membership income in January was 10k ahead of budget. Membership income for February was 72k against a budget of £80k. Cumulatively, the membership income was slightly behind budget by £16k. There were a greater number of new members joining than in the same period last year, offset by slightly lower retention rate of existing members, considered to be as a result of lockdown restrictions.
- The campaign strategy to boost membership through growth and retention is planned to impact in April and May 2021, to coincide with the end of lockdown in 2020, when we received a considerable growth in membership.
- The grant funded programmes (UKS and Sport England) were still heavily impacted by Covid, international travel limitations and innovation projects running behind schedule, so all were running underspent against grant funding. UK Sport would tolerate a 5% (or £55k, whichever is lower) underspend. We would take this opportunity to invest in kit and equipment to be well prepared and to carry momentum into the Paris cycle.
- Water licence costs are expected to increase throughout the year, due to the significant growth in sales in 2021.

### ***British Canoeing Events Ltd***

No further activity was reported outside of the ICF Freestyle World Championship update included within the CEO Report. The next BCE Board meeting and AGM was scheduled for 20 April 2021.

### **The Board received and approved the Finance Report.**

### **10. Strategic Plan – UK Agreement 2022-25**

JC introduced item 10 confirming that the UK Agreement was due for renewal in the autumn of 2021.

DJ spoke to the report and highlighted the following areas;

- The structure we have with British Canoeing having both UK wide and English deliveries is common for UK wide NGBs. It is not the only model and DJ identified some alternatives which are used within other sports.
- He pointed to the strengths and weaknesses of each model presented within the report
- He pointed to some anomalies and misalignments in the way in which the 4 NGBs within canoeing had agreed to operate
- The work undertaken to review the UK Agreement required the consent of all four of the Parties. He proposed merit in revisiting some areas through the process of reviewing the UK Agreement.

The Board discussed the ways of working between the National Associations. It was agreed that some clarifications were still required as some still remain confused over British Canoeing and English paddling activity. Branding and the Per Capita payments were considered important areas for focus within any review of the UK Agreement. It was generally thought that the structure of the UK Agreement was working well between National Associations but



that it would be helpful to fully explore where difficulties were perceived and any improvements which could still be made.

DJ observed that recent challenges between the Parties were in part due to the introduction of digital developments taking place within British Canoeing and that the 4 NGBs were digitally separate.

DJ confirmed that he would be discussing these matters with the lead officers at the next UK CEO Meeting on 15 April. DJ also advised that he would be coordinating the meetings between the four Chairs and four CEOs of the National Associations to review the UK Agreement, which would then inform the discussion of the four Boards.

JC updated the board on a confidential matter in relation to ways of working with one of the National Associations.

**The Board noted the contents of the report and approved that further discussion take place on this matter at future meetings.**

## **11. Risk Management**

SH invited questions or comments from the Board. It was noted that the risks related to Membership and the ICF Freestyle World Championships had already been discussed within previous agenda items.

JC thanked SH for the Risk report. The Board was assured that key risks were identified and being managed.

**The Board noted and approved the risk report.**

## **12. Committee Reports**

The committee reports were taken by exception with only the key issues highlighted.

### **12.1. Finance Committee**

No further updates were reported outside of the Finance report.

### **12.2. HR & Remuneration Committee**

It was reported that the committee had decided to delay the confirmation of annual pay review until July when the position of membership income was known and stable. The following was also noted;

- The new Working from Home Policy was finalised and a Wellbeing Policy introduced with a focus on mental health.
- A new Performance Review process had also been implemented.
- The committee would focus on matters around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at its next meeting.

### **12.3. Governance & Risk Committee**

No further updates were received outside of those matters already discussed.

### **12.4. Nominations Committee**

No further updates were received.

### **12.5. Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)**

The SCA Board last met in February 2021.

### **12.6. Canoe Wales**

Canoe Wales had recently appointed Alistair Dickson as the new CEO. JC extended the Board's congratulations to Alistair Dickson on his new appointment. It was hoped that covid rules would be relaxed soon to allow paddling to resume in Wales.

### **12.7. Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)**

CANI continued to suffer from lower membership numbers due to lockdown restrictions. It was also reported that the current funding stream ends on 31 March 2021 with confirmation of the next funding cycle yet to be received.

### **12.8. Safety Advisory Panel (SAP) Report**

*[Post meeting note - There had been no SAP meeting since the last Board meeting held in January. The next Safety Advisory Panel meeting will take place on 26 May 2021. The focus of work over the last two months has been SUP safety promotion, Weir Safety and supporting frameworks for members that have witnessed or been involved in a paddlesport incident].*

**The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.**

## **13. Any Other Business**

## **14. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors**