
SUNDAY 29 JANUARY 2023 AT 10:00

MINUTES**In Attendance:**

John Coyne CBE (JC)	Chair and Independent Director
Richard Boreham (RB)	Vice Chair and Independent Director
Kerry Chown (KC)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales (<i>Virtual</i>)
Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI (<i>Virtual</i>)
Nick Donald (ND)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Zoey Rowe (ZR)	Director nominated by English Forum (<i>Virtual</i>)
Greg Spencer (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ashley Metcalfe (AM)	CEO

Apologies

Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
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Also In Attendance:

Dee Paterson (DP)	President (<i>Virtual</i>)
Lisa Bryant (LB)	Director of HR (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Sam Rankin (SR)	Head of Membership & Customer Services (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Nancy Squires (NS)	Director of Governance (<i>Partial attendance, virtual</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the hybrid meeting and thanked everybody for attending. He especially welcomed SC and SL, who were attending their final Board meeting as Directors of British Canoeing after two full terms of distinctive service.

JC welcomed feedback on the effectiveness of the hybrid meeting to help evaluate the success of the format.

JC advised that several colleagues would join the meeting throughout proceedings including Nancy Squires, Director of Governance who would join virtually to present Items 07 and 08, the Performance Sub-Committee and the AGM report. Lisa Bryant, Director of HR would join the meeting for items 10 and 11, the People Strategy and the Staff Survey results. He also confirmed that Sam Rankin, Head of Membership and Customer Services would join after lunch for item 12, the Membership Survey Results.

JC advised that there would be an update around the recent IOC and ICF positions on Russia taken as part of the CEO Report.

2. Apologies

Apologies received in advance from Clare Dallaway who had shared her views with the Chair ahead of the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

The President confirmed that she no longer held a link with the DCMS and would submit a new declaration of interest form to reflect the change.

There were no further declarations received outside of those already previously submitted.

4. Minutes of FB82

The Minutes of FB82 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

There were no further matters arising.

6. CEO Report

JC moved straight to item 06, the CEO Report.

Finance

AM reported that membership figures were holding steady and the team continue to track and monitor closely. He confirmed that membership fees would increase by £2 (4%) in April and that currently no negative feedback had been received.

World Class Programme

AM confirmed that an updated investment review request to UK Sport, for up to £154k covering additional slalom water costs had been submitted and will be considered at the next UK Sport Board meeting on 8 February, with a decision expected the following day.

The Board noted the retirement of Bradley Forbes Cryans, a 2020 Tokyo Olympian, from the World Class Programme.

AM reported that programme delivery across WCPs and Talent continues without significant issues and that the International Panels were operating well following extensive community consultation, with selection policies on track and due to be published within the next few months.

The Board noted the new nationality rule change for Sprint approved at ICF Congress that

changed the number of years resident in a country from 2 to 1 year. AM stated that he would ask the ICF the reasons for this change at a future meeting with the ICF.

2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships

AM reported that the Event Stakeholder Board met on 16 January and whilst overall it was felt the project was on track, much of the discussion focussed on the marketing of the event and the potential financial risks. AM shared that there were still some challenges around a confirmation of a broadcast partner that have hindered some commercial discussions and there were some financial risks associated with ticket sales that won't become clear for several months. There was a discussion around ticketing capacity at Lee Valley which had been recently reviewed and was regulated by health and safety requirements.

The Board recognised that there may be some financial challenges ahead and discussed their appetite to make a financial contribution rather than sacrifice any key elements or the overall quality of the event. The Board wished to receive details of where costs could be saved and what options are available.

The Board agreed to receive an update at the next meeting in March.

British Canoeing Events Ltd

AM shared that the British Canoeing Events (BCE) Board recently held a Board meeting on 10 January to discuss future hosting opportunities for major and international events. AM reported that the BCE Board agreed to consider what great looks like in the Olympic and Paralympic space and which events would be worthy of exploration. The BCE Board felt that there was an opportunity to look at Kayak Cross and SUP opportunities more closely as they may generate revenue and/or drive participation. The BCE Board agreed to explore more general ideas to host events in non-Olympic disciplines.

There was a discussion around how to fund the non-Olympic events, which do not qualify for UK Sport funding. AM confirmed that the ICF determine the event entry rates. The Board discussed the feasibility of Dorney as a location for an international flatwater event but it was noted that the ICF bidding window (4 years out) restricts such planning.

The Chair highlighted that the 2019 Slalom World Cup and 2022 Canoe Freestyle World Championships were extremely successful events.

It was agreed for the BCE Board to bring a paper to the June board meeting to suggest a proposal on how they see the future.

ICF Canoe Slalom Committee

The Board noted that British Canoeing hosted the ICF Canoe Slalom Committee in London on 12 January who were delighted with the preparation for this year's Canoe Slalom World Championships.

Commercial Update and CEO Meetings

The Board noted that meetings were scheduled with several commercial partners over the coming months. AM reported that British Canoeing were due to receive a response to a

proposal for the Title Partnership to the GB Olympic and Paralympic World Class Programme, as well as the Title Partnership to the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. AM relayed that our clothing partner had strengthened its commitment to cover our minimum requirements to ensure we have sufficient stock throughout 2023.

Brand

AM confirmed that an Invitation to Tender document for the new branding strategy had been issued to agencies in January with a deadline for submission by 28 February. Members will be updated on the direction of travel with the branding project at the AGM in March. The Board asked whether we still needed two concepts within the ITQ but it was felt appropriate to give the brand agencies the space to bring creativity in developing a brand, and also to have options to help guide the discussion ahead of the brand update at the AGM.

MAIB Report - SUP Update

AM highlighted that the Board had been sent a copy of the MAIB report that had been publicly released on 8 December. He also reported that Sport England had recently confirmed that British Canoeing achieved joint NGB recognition for SUP with Surfing England. There was a short discussion around a joint model and whether there were other examples of best practice in this area. AM stated that British Canoeing were committed to working positively with Surfing England.

AM confirmed that British Canoeing have submitted a proposal to Sport England for additional funding for SUP and that the appointment of a SUP lead will now be accelerated.

The Board wished for the SUP recognition to be communicated really well with members together with an emphasis that our SUP qualifications are the only accredited courses available.

The Board noted that the Water Skills Academy (WSA) had recently been purchased by GB SUP.

Manvers Club Visit

AM confirmed that British Canoeing had recently visited the Manvers Club on 11 January. He reported that positive discussions took place in relation to their strategic priorities and how the club can work more closely with British Canoeing. AM stated that a further meeting is planned in February, the outcome of which he will share with the Board at the next meeting.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

AM reported that the final version of the Strategy had been shared with the Board and will be launched on 31 January.

Delivery Partner Conference

AM stated that the Delivery Partner Conference took place virtually on Thursday 26 January with over 300 delegates in attendance. He reported that we currently have 422 delivery centres that reach 2.5m paddlers. There was a discussion around how we can work more closely with clubs and delivery partners to generate better information and data on the behaviour of the independent recreational paddler.

Whyte Review

AM pointed to the latest update in the paper for information only.

Coach Licensing Update

AM reported that an internal meeting had been held to discuss the best approach to introduce an appropriate and effective database for coaches and leaders associated to British Canoeing. He hoped to bring the proposals to the next Board meeting in March.

Safeguarding & Welfare Strategy

AM stated that the Safeguarding and Welfare Strategy would come to Board at the next meeting in March.

Annual Plan 2023-23 (Super Seven) Update

AM reported that progress towards the Annual Plan 2022-23 and Super Seven organisational priorities remained on track. In relation to campaign work, he relayed the positive news that Jim McMahon MP had recently declared Labour will support freedom to roam and greater access to land and water. The Board noted that the Parliamentary event in June will be co-sponsored by Kim Leadbeater MP who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary group for Sport.

The Board wished to receive a timeline around the facilities strategy which impacts considerably on our operations and risk. SH confirmed that the Places to Paddle review will start on 31 January with a visit to Yorkshire. It was agreed for the Board to receive a thorough update at the June board meeting.

Staff Matters

AM confirmed that 25 new employees joined British Canoeing across 11 departments in 2022. The Board noted that capacity remains an issue across the organisation. There had been a couple of resignations since the last meeting of the Board. AM reported that the annual performance reviews were on track and due to finish at the end of January.

Stronger Together Fund

AM reported that the Stronger Together Fund launched on 12 December 2022 with 22 eligible applications from Clubs submitted already, amounting in value to a total of £120,500. The funding will be processed relatively quickly after the panel meeting in late February.

Risk

The Board noted that the Risk Register had not changed since December and that the review of our risk policy and procedures had now been completed. AM advised that risk will remain under the Governance & Risk Committee but that each subcommittee of the Board will explore their own risks and contribute to the central register owned by the Governance & Risk Committee. [Post meeting note - the Governance & Risk Committee subsequently agreed at their meeting in February that the Risk Policy will be owned by Governance & Risk, but not the Central Risk Register]. Operationally the SLT and Heads of Department will liaise with SH to manage the risk register ahead of final scrutiny from SH and the CEO. The Board will receive an overview of the risk register for check and challenge at each board meeting with greater opportunity to deep dive into risk twice a year as a minimum to ensure the subject is dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.

IOC and ICF Russian Paddlers

AM updated the Board on the recent developments in relation to the IOC and ICF's position on Russian and Belarusian athletes competing at the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Board noted the current stance of the ECA, other International Federations, UK Sport and the DCMS. AM confirmed that a meeting was scheduled with the ICF President and the ICF General Secretary in February to discuss the potential implications for Olympic qualification at the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships in London.

The Board discussed the issues in depth and questioned what had really changed in the last 12 months (aside from entering a Games qualification period) to trigger a change in position from the IOC. In line with UK Government advice, the Board confirmed that they were against allowing neutral athletes to compete at Lee Valley whether they were still residents in their respective countries or not. The Board recognised the political challenges surrounding the issue but were unanimous in their decision to maintain a strong stance aligned to UK Sport and the UK Government and not allow athletes from either country to participate at the Canoe Slalom World Championships in September.

The Board agreed that the matter would remain topical and it was important to receive regular updates.

The Board received the CEO Report and noted progress to date.

7. Performance Sub-Committee

NS presented the report which outlined the creation of a British Canoeing Performance Sub-Committee of the Board.

NS confirmed that the next steps would be to finalise the Terms of Reference in accordance with the proposals summarised in the paper and for the Board to agree to the appointment of the Independent Chair and other appropriate forward-thinking individuals to join the committee at its next meeting in March.

The Board discussed the composition of the Committee. A view was expressed that to achieve good governance, it needed more than one Board Director to attend providing a link back to the Board. It was noted that the Chief Executive would join the Committee, who is also a member of the Board, taking the total number of board representatives to two. A further view expressed concerns around the sub-committee being chaired by a member of the board. The Board noted that all other sub-committees of the board must be chaired by an independent member of the board. The Board agreed that getting the right level of expertise in the independent positions would be vital.

The Board approved the report and agreed to allow the Governance & Risk Committee to sign off the Terms of Reference for the group at its next meeting.

8. AGM 2023

NS confirmed the arrangements for the AGM on the 11 March 2023. The Board noted that there had been no motions received from members and that there were no proposed changes to the Articles this year.

JC confirmed that a nomination had been received from CANI to recommend Gareth Mahood to join the Board of British Canoeing. He reported that the SCA had not yet provided a nomination and that discussions were still ongoing.

The board discussed the issues around SCA's delay in confirming their new nomination to join the board of British Canoeing and reiterated its desire to have 'new blood' and a match to our skills needs. SL confirmed that the SCA Articles state that they are unable to nominate a fulltime member of staff to join the BC Board but they can nominate somebody outside of the SCA Board. The Board welcomed new and fresh candidates to the Board while appreciating the difficulties around finding the right skills and experience.

The Board noted the deadline for AGM papers to be published (17 February 2023). If the SCA nomination is not received by this date, NS confirmed the alternative approaches that could be taken. The Board could make an appointment after the AGM which could then be ratified at the following AGM in 2024, or the Board could call an EGM. Either way, it was agreed for an update to be provided at the AGM on 11 March. In any interim period where the SCA are not represented on the Board of British Canoeing, the Board may invite somebody from the SCA Board to attend as an observer.

JC advised that following a thorough and positive recruitment process, Manpreet Sehmbi had been invited to join the board as Independent Director for a 4 year term, subject to AGM approval. JC stated that the appointment fits well with the board skills matrix in particular commercial and marketing expertise at a time when we are evaluating rebranding.

Separately, it was also agreed to review the Fit and Proper Persons declaration form at the next available opportunity to help maintain the highest standard of good governance.

NS presented the revised version of the Annual Report for 2022 which would be a fully digital document in line with our Environmental Sustainability Strategy. NS proposed that the branding update is covered in the Annual Report section of the AGM presented by the CEO. NS confirmed that there is no AOB as part of the formal AGM but after all business has been considered and the AGM is formally closed, members will be invited to remain on the zoom call to ask any further questions of the Board and SLT.

The Board noted the progress made in the preparations for the virtual AGM and;

- **Approved the Director nominated by CANI for AGM approval**
- **Noted that discussions were ongoing in relation to the SCA nomination and agreed for JC to liaise with the SCA on this matter**
- **Approved the nomination of Manpreet Sehmbi as Independent Director for AGM approval**
- **Noted the vacancies arising on the Committees of the British Canoeing Board**
- **Noted that the Board Champion for anti-doping will need to be re-appointed following the departure of SC from the board**

- Noted the nomination of Dee Paterson as President for AGM approval
- Approved the nomination for Vice President for AGM approval
- Noted that there are no proposed changes to the Articles this year
- Approved the structure of the Annual Report 2022
- Considered and approved the branding update to members at the AGM
- Agreed to review the BC Fit and Proper Persons declaration form.

9. Finance Report

December Management Accounts

SH reported that the accounts for the first two months of the financial year 2022-23 were on track and in line with budgets and expectations.

Financial Statements 2021-22

SH presented the British Canoeing Financial Statements for 2021/22 that consisted of the financial summary, British Canoeing and BCE Statutory Accounts, the Audit Findings Report prepared by Hays Macintyre and the revised Letter of Representation.

SH reported that the consolidated result for the financial year ended 31 October 2022 was a surplus of £742k.

SH stated that following the change in income recognition policy and the modest income growth in 2022, the cash income was only impacted by a further £49k transferred to the deferred income creditor.

Cash position

SH reported that the consolidated cash balance of £8.7m across the organisation had grown in the year due to strong income levels and the timing of receipts of UK Sport and Sport England funding received in advance. When accounting for this deferred income, the net cash balance to cover operations is £2.5m. SH reported that the lowest cash position at any one point in the year was £6.3m. The Finance & Audit Committee would consider how best to utilise this cash position to optimise return.

Reserves

SH reported that the consolidated balance sheet shows reserves of £1.95m with £615k relating to the committees and £1.3m held in core reserves. The Board noted that the central profit and loss account still exceeds the reserve level stated in the revised British Canoeing reserve policy. SH reported that a portion of these 'excess' funds will be ring fenced into the Stronger Together fund and also used to deliver on the strategic objectives of the organisation. The Board encouraged the organisation to explore projects that could benefit from the Maurice Rothwell Legacy fund and create a valuable legacy for the investment.

Discipline Committees

SH confirmed that the consolidated committee position for the year was a surplus of £18k. The majority of this income had been generated from three Places to Paddle sites managed by the RDTs. SH reported that the financial results of the discipline committees were mostly losses this year as inflation in international trip costs had put increasing pressure on the

committee reserves as well as a higher financial burden on athletes, with only Canoe Polo and Freestyle breaking even in the year.

The Board noted that this season the Slalom Committee will benefit from the home Slalom World Championships both in relation to international travel costs and the 90 day post-Brexit European travel rule. JC reported that he had raised the notion of a 90 day exemption for national teams to UK Sport, who were aware of the issues. SH confirmed that there was an opportunity to add a narrative to the Annual Accounts to reflect the increased costs imposed by Brexit.

BCE Ltd

SH stated that British Canoeing provided £96k of funding to BCE Ltd in the year, including the £15k NGB funding contribution and a further £81k to indemnify BCE from the loss of the international event and operational corporate costs.

Audit Observations

The Board noted the Audit Observations provided by Hays Macintyre.

Letter of Representation

SH reported that formal declarations from members of the senior team to the representations contained in the letter have been obtained again this year from all members of the SLT who have formally signed to attest to each statement where appropriate. JC confirmed that he would sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Board.

ND commended SH and the finance team for steering the organisation through a very successful audit.

The Board received and formally approved the finance report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 October 2022.

10. People Strategy

LB presented item 10, the final draft of the People Strategy included as Appendix 1 to the paper.

LB outlined the six key themes identified in the People Strategy;

- Recruitment and Retention
- Culture and Engagement
- Developing Our People
Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- Rewarding Our People
- Health & Wellbeing

LB welcomed comments and feedback on the strategy.

The Board recognised that this piece of work is a critical area, that there is a lot to do and queried whether we currently have enough resource to deliver the strategy. The Board were

keen to put procedures in place that could help in certain areas. It was proposed that the Nominations Committee could help oversee talent management and succession planning.

The Board appreciated the focus on EDI but wished for this to be explored further to help understand cultural differences within people and why people work and lead in different ways. It was noted that absenteeism is not always the best measure of staff welfare post-covid with the increase in working from home.

The Board suggested that the annual performance review KPI should be amended to state all reviews to be completed “on time”. It was also agreed to extend the KPI in relation to ‘diversity across the workforce’ to include the Board.

LB stated that we do now have extra resource in the HR team, although recruitment is a huge area that continues to take up a great deal of time. She agreed to pick up through the HR Committee if further adjustments are required.

There was a discussion around staff turnover and the reasons why people leave the organisation. It was noted that a key reason why people leave is due to the structure and nature of the organisation which provided limited opportunities to naturally progress. The Board wished to maximise the potential of our staff, provide them with a great experience and value them as alumni. LB anticipated that the turnover rate would be lower in 2023.

The Board agreed that they would like to see the People Strategy evolve over time to include the volunteer workforce, offering learning and development opportunities to our key volunteers.

The Board received, noted and approved the People Strategy.

11. Staff Survey Results

LB presented the results from the recent staff survey that had overall produced excellent results. The Board noted the areas where responses had been very strong, particularly where results had increased significantly on the prior year;

- Leadership & Management
- EDI
- Wellbeing
- Personal Development – improve on development of coaches.
- World Class Programme

There was a discussion around the development of World Class Performance coaches. The Board acknowledged that there is a natural cycle to the career of a WCP coach but wished to ensure that we inject a cultural and environmental change into the WCP environment. AM confirmed that there had been structural changes to help with the development of performance coaches and that a recent review had been undertaken. The Board requested that the results of this completed review are reported back to Board at a future meeting.

JC, on behalf of the Board, commended the Director of Paddlesport and WCP senior team for the substantive improvements within the World Class Programme. The Board highlighted the significant improvements made in transparency in leadership as a real positive.

The Board noted the key area for development;

- Teamwork and Communication: teamwork, cooperation and internal communication between and across teams within British Canoeing

There was a discussion around how much this had been impacted by covid and the new hybrid working arrangements.

The Board noted a further development point around environmental sustainability, which had received the lowest overall score within the survey. The Board agreed to receive details of how each of the cross-cutting themes were impacted within each future report to board.

LB outlined the improvement plan to address the results of the survey;

- Leading Together newsletter
- Redesign of the staff intranet
- Focus on ways of working
- Staff benefits
- Pay and grading
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy and highlighting other cross cutting themes
- Line management conversations

KC, as Chair of the HR & Remuneration Committee, commended the fantastic set of results, recognising the work and efforts behind the scenes of the HR team to achieve these improvements.

The Board received and noted the results of the Staff Survey 2022.

12. Membership Survey Results

SR presented the membership survey results focusing on the plans around implementing and addressing the results of the survey. These included;

2023 Targets

- Grow membership by 3% to 97,000
- Focus on Membership Satisfaction and Net Promoter Score (NPS) which dipped slightly on 2021 results
- Deliver campaigns to attract new members and improve retention
- Sustain income generation

2023 Activities

- Revise, adapt and improve membership categories including the coaches and leaders offer; long standing members; club associate and other groups such as family and carers' offers
- Focus on Retention - using member insight to identify high risk groups and initiate specific campaigns to these groups
- Focus on Sustainability and Go Green Membership option (currently account for 17% of the membership)
- Benefits and Content - introduce new benefits and update content
- Marketing Plans including revisiting target audiences, develop partnership opportunities, digital advancements and drive Go Paddling.

The Board noted that the lowest scores in the survey were from long standing members who had been with us for 20+ years. The Board discussed the coaches and leaders membership offer and how members could be acknowledged and rewarded the longer they remain members.

There was a discussion around club associate membership and the lack of data available to formulate clear plans. It was noted that the membership base had changed significantly over the past 3 years, with far more independent recreational paddlers joining the organisation.

The Board noted that there had been different experiences of membership renewal and ease of sign up.

The Board remarked that the consolidation of the membership growth over the past few years indicated that our growth and retention strategies had been working reasonably well. They wished to ensure that retention remains a focus and that the timing of campaigns is aligned to some good weather. SL offered support from the SCA to help map member data through digital systems.

The Board welcomed greater clarity and bolder messaging in relation to member benefits and the overall value proposition.

JC thanked SR for the thorough presentation and confirmed that the presentation slides would be shared with the Board after the meeting.

The Board received and noted the results of the Membership Survey 2022 and the plans to implement activities to address the results.

13. Committee and National Association Reports

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

13.1 National Honours & Awards Panel (NHAP)

JC, in his role as Chair of the NHAP, provided an update on recent activity and discussion within the National Honours and Awards Panel.

The Board noted and approved the recommendations for Vice President, Awards of Honour, Outstanding Contribution and Kings Honours as detailed in the paper.

13.2 Finance & Audit Committee

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

13.3 HR & Remuneration Committee

There were no further matters raised outside of those already discussed.

13.4 Governance & Risk Committee

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. MK extended her personal thanks to SC for his exceptional contribution to the committee.

13.5 Scottish Canoe Association

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

13.6 Canoe Wales

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

13.7 CANI

SC pointed to the board report that he had recently saved in the google drive. He confirmed that CANI were looking to increase the number of Directors on the board. SC reported that discussions were ongoing with Sport NI in relation to NGB SUP recognition. He reported that CANI were currently applying for Sport NI funding to be submitted by 17 February.

The Board noted and accepted the Committee and National Association Reports.

21. Any Other Business

JC, on behalf of the board, formally recognised the hard work, contribution and commitment of Stephen Craig and Steve Linksted who had both served on the Board since 2015. He thanked them both for their generosity in leveraging their networks to assist British Canoeing. SC and SL thanked the board for their support and wished British Canoeing all the very best for the future.

22. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors