

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024

### 1. Introduction

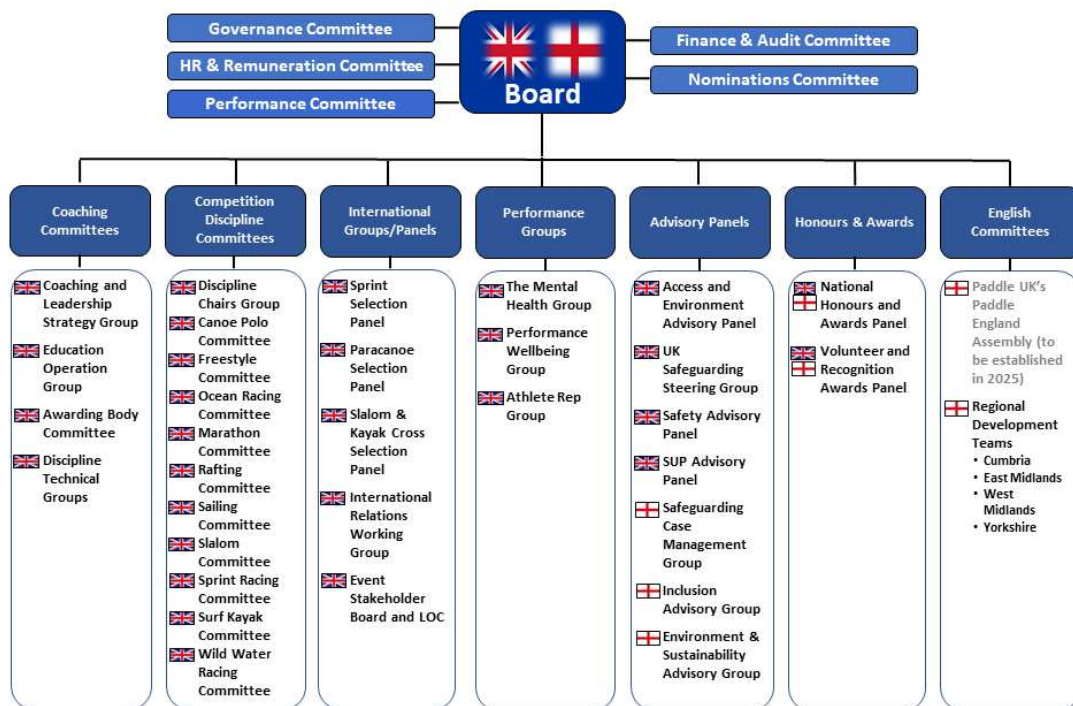
- 1.1. The statement reports publicly on the extent to which Paddle UK (formally constituted as British Canoeing)<sup>1</sup> is in compliance with the Tier 3 of A Code for Sports Governance ("Code"). This annual governance statement is prepared as part of the Code requirements and outlines our progress to date.
- 1.2. Paddle UK is fully committed to ensuring good governance throughout the organisation. The Board acknowledges that it has a responsibility to ensure there are sound systems in place, not just because it is a mandatory requirement of our funders UK Sport and Sport England but because it is in perfect accord with our strategic plan – Stronger Together 2022-26.
- 1.3. This Annual Governance Statement covers the period November 2023 to December 2024.

### 2. Structure

**Organisations shall have a clear and appropriate governance structure, led by a Board which is collectively responsible for the long- term success of the organisation and exclusively vested with power to lead it. The Board shall be properly constituted and shall operate effectively.**

- 2.1. The governance structure of the organisation is such:

#### The Non Executive Committee Structure of Paddle UK



<sup>1</sup> Paddle UK is a trading name of British Canoeing which is a Company registered at Companies House with the registered number 01525484

2.2. Full details of the Board Members including a profile and confirmation of their current term of office, along with full details of the Committees of the Board, their composition and their terms of references is available on our website.

<https://paddleuk.org.uk/board-members-meetings-committees/>

2.3. The Governance Policy is available on our website:

<https://paddleuk.org.uk/our-policies-and-procedures/>

This policy sets out the relationship between the Board and other key constituents within Paddle UK. The policy was reviewed and updated in April 2019 to ensure it was reflected that the Board is comprised of *nominated and appointed* directors (rather than elected).

2.4. Paddle UK has a wholly owned subsidiary company, British Canoeing Events Limited, whose purpose is to run British Canoeing's international events. Compliance with the requirements of the Code for Sports Governance for Tier 2 organisations was confirmed by UK Sport in October 2021 and British Canoeing Events has maintained compliance through 2022 and 2023. It has had no financial activity in 2024 and will be kept dormant in 2025.

2.5. On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Paddle UK held a General Meeting to ask the members to approve changes to the Articles of Association. The changes were to establish a Paddle UK Paddle England Assembly, to introduce a mechanism for the English membership to directly elect English Directors to the Paddle UK Board, and to replace the Presidential role with that of a Patron. The membership approved the changes by special resolution at the General Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024, and the revised Articles of Association were filed at Companies House on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The changes do not affect Paddle UK's on-going compliance with A Code for Sports Governance requirements.

### 3. People

**Organisations shall recruit and engage people with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that further the organisation's goals**

3.1. Martine Kushner, Independent Director on the Board completed the end of her first four-year term and was re-appointed for a second four-year term at the AGM in March 2024.

3.2. Gareth Mahood, director nominated by Paddle Northern Ireland (Canoe Association of Northern Ireland) resigned from post in December 2023. James Miller, director nominated by Paddle Scotland (the Scottish Canoe Association) resigned from post in June 2024. Both positions remain vacant and Paddle UK are working with the respective national associations in Northern Ireland and Scotland to confirm a representative Board appointment to the Paddle UK Board.

3.3. The target of a minimum 30% of each gender on the Board was met in 2024.

3.4. The Board Skills Matrix was updated in November 2024.

### 4. Communication

**Organisations shall be transparent and accountable engaging effectively with stakeholders and nurturing internal democracy.**

4.1. In March 2022 British Canoeing launched its strategic plan for 2022-2026, [Stronger Together 2](#). This strategic plan sets out our vision to support, grow and celebrate paddling in England and the

UK. It builds on the work and progress of the previous strategy and presents a plan to guide the work of all within British Canoeing and the paddling community.

- 4.2. The Annual Report 2024, contains a full communication to members on the work of the organisation this year and a progress report following the second year of delivery of 'Stronger Together 2'. The Annual Report contains statutory information such as the annual accounts, and provides details of the work of the Board and the Committees and attendance of Directors.
- 4.3. In accordance with the Code and in order to ensure engagement with our stakeholders the following surveys were carried out in 2024:
  - Staff Survey
  - Member Survey
  - Board Evaluation Survey
- 4.4. In the interests of transparency summaries of the Board meetings and minutes of each AGM are made available on the website.
- 4.5. Paddle UK received confirmation from UK Sport in April 2024 of compliance with the new and revised requirements of the Code for Sport Governance. Paddle UK has remained compliant with all other Code for Sport Governance requirements throughout 2024. The commitment to excellent governance is ongoing and Paddle UK are committed to continually working with UK Sport to ensure we are constantly updating and improving in accordance with best practice and any future requirements of the Code.

## 5. Standards and Conduct

**Organisations shall uphold high standards of integrity and engage in regular and effective evaluation to drive continuous improvement.**

- 5.1. Paddle UK remains committed to its values of;

Every Person Matters  
Striving for Excellence  
Always with Integrity  
Enjoying the Journey  
Individually Committed  
Stronger Together

- 5.2. Paddle UK continued to work collaboratively with the Paddle Scotland, Paddle Cymru and Paddle Northern Ireland in line with the principles set out in the UK Agreement.
- 5.3. Paddle UK have in place consistent Terms of Reference for each national and regional committee. The national and regional committee structure can be found on our website where Terms of Reference for each committee can also be found.

- 5.4. The Board undertook Roles and Responsibilities, Code of Conduct, and Safeguarding training in 2024.
- 5.5. The Board were due to conduct an annual review of its performance and its own effectiveness in October/November 2024, but due to the change of Chair due in early 2025 and several other changes to the Board composition this was deferred to spring/summer 2025.
- 5.6. In accordance with the requirements of the Code, Board appraisals were conducted in October and November 2024 with the Chair appraising the Board Members and the Vice Chair appraising the Chair.
- 5.7. In accordance with the requirements of the Code a register of Conflicts of Interest is maintained, a register of gifts is maintained and all Directors complete a Fit and Proper Persons declaration upon appointment.

## **6. Policies and Processes**

**Organisations shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, undertake responsible financial strategic planning and have appropriate controls and risk management procedures.**

- 6.1. The Governance and Risk Committee have approved a Policy and Procedure Checklist which is available on the Paddle UK [website](#).
- 6.2. Paddle UK's Disclosure Policy, Safeguarding Procedure, Articles of Association, Whistleblowing Policy, Standards for Deployment, Standards for Deployment for Commercial Providers, Transgender Competition Policy, Data Breach Policy, Participant Privacy Notice and Member Privacy Notice have all been reviewed and updated in 2024.
- 6.3. Financial Control, Financial Strategy and Internal Control is overseen by the Finance and Audit Committee which reports into the Board. Annual accounts are audited by an external auditor who presents to the whole Board the outcome of the audit.
- 6.4. Paddle UK operates with a Risk Management Policy and Procedure which ensures a consistent assessment of risk, risk management and mitigation across the organisation is continually undertaken.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. Governance arrangements have been monitored and evaluated during the year by the Governance Committee which reports into the Board. The Governance Committee has had reference to and has been involved in assessing the effectiveness of key elements of the Code as outlined above. The Head of Governance has responsibility for development and maintenance of Code compliance and good governance overall.
- 7.2. In 2025 the organisation will continue to develop and improve policy and practice, in particular, reviewing the Governance Policy for the organisation.
- 7.3. The Board has agreed this annual governance statement and is satisfied that the governance arrangements in place are not only sufficient to ensure Tier 3 Code compliance under the previous code but are also meeting best practice across the sports sector.

