
SUNDAY 03 DECEMBER 2023 AT 09:00

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
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Nick Donald (ND)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director (<i>Virtual</i>)
Jim Miller (JM)	Director nominated by The SCA (<i>Virtual</i>)
Zoey Rowe (ZR)	Director nominated by English Forum (<i>Virtual</i>)
Manpreet Sehmbi (MS)	Independent Director
Greg Spencer (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ashley Metcalfe (AM)	CEO, British Canoeing

Apologies

None received

Absent without Apologies

Gareth Mahood (GM)	Director nominated by CANI
--------------------	----------------------------

Also In Attendance:

Dee Paterson (DP)	President (<i>Virtual</i>)
Chris Earle (CE)	Director of Recreational Paddling (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Rob Knott (RK)	Director of Communications & BD (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Lee Pooley (LP)	Director of Coaching and Qualifications (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Nancy Squires (NS)	Director of Governance
Barry Wade (BW)	Director of IT and Digital Transformation (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Charmaine Collins (CC)	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.

JC advised that several colleagues would join the meeting throughout proceedings including Nancy Squires, Director of Governance who would join the meeting to present item 07, the Constitutional Update and item 13, the Annual Safeguarding report. He confirmed that Chris Earle, Director of Recreational Paddling, would join the meeting to present item 08, the KKP Facilities Report and Lee Pooley would present item 14, the Annual Safety Report. He also advised that Barry Wade, Director of IT and Digital Transformation and Rob Knott, Director of

Communications and Business Development, would join the meeting to present items 09 and 10 respectively (the central website progress update and the membership survey results).

2. Apologies

The Board noted that GM was absent. JC confirmed that apologies had not been received by the Executive in advance of the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

JC thanked colleagues for submitting their annual declarations of interest. No further declarations were received outside of those already submitted.

4. Minutes of FB86

The Minutes of FB86 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting subject to a minor amendment within item 02 to note that Gareth Mahood was absent without apologies.

5. Matters arising not covered by the agenda

There were no further matters arising.

6. CEO Report

JC introduced item 06 and invited AM to speak to his CEO Report.

Finance & Membership Update

AM reported an estimated year end forecast surplus of £187k. He shared that membership income for the year was £3.65m, £102k better than 2022, as a result of the increase in membership fees. The Board noted that membership finished the year at 87,374. He reported that 100+ people had joined British Canoeing through the recent WSA agreement.

Risk

AM stated that the risk register features 3 risks with a rating of 15 and above, with all 3 risks flagged as static trending over the last 12 months; retention of performance coaches; the size of the coaching pool across non-Olympic disciplines; and the ageing facilities at HPP. He outlined the mitigating actions being implemented to address these risks, including an audit across all disciplines, the results of which would be reported in the new year. JC pointed to correspondence received this week which relate to matters that are pertinent to the top two risks.

Organisation Health Pilot

AM reported that British Canoeing rated well in UK Sport's pilot programme to explore a new diagnostic framework to manage the Organisational Health of NGB's, showing gaps only across areas where work is in progress - Environment Sustainability and EDI.

BCE Ltd

The Board noted that the BCE Ltd draft year end accounts are reporting a small surplus of £5k, which will bring the company reserves to £23k, £3k over the reserves policy. AM reported that at the most recent BCE Board meeting held in November, Directors discussed the future of BCE and future hosting aspirations. He advised that a further paper would be presented to the BC Board in February.

2023 ICF Slalom Worlds Championships

The Board noted that the British team crowned their best ever performance at the Slalom World Championships with 8 medals won from 10 events. AM confirmed that 8k tickets had been sold throughout the event, 50% of which had been from the Lee Valley region. The Board noted that the cost of selling tickets superseded the income generated through ticket sales, although recognised that this had been a common challenge across various sports. AM formally recognised the phenomenal work of the 300 volunteers that contributed to the success of the event, 47% of which were new to the sport. AM highlighted that 1300 school children took part in water based activity across the event week. He confirmed that a full social impact report is being conducted by UK Sport and will be shared at a future meeting.

Branding

The Board noted that work continues at pace to launch the new brand in mid-March with a new website and social media channels. The Board agreed to empower the National Associations to access the various Paddle UK brand logos in their own time, if they are not in a position to rebrand at the same time as British Canoeing in March 2024.

SUP Recognition

AM reported that positive meetings had taken place with various stakeholders and that British Canoeing were on track to sign MOUs with our partners by the end of the year. He noted that British Canoeing had successfully hosted a National Safety Conference in November with many key stakeholders engaged. AM advised that British Canoeing continue to support the National Associations in their bids to be appointed to NGB status for SUP. The Board noted that the SUP action plan was almost finalised and would be shared with the Board in the new year. The Board discussed their appetite to collaborate with other SUP organisations. It was suggested that the SUP community would welcome a proactive approach in this space.

Transgender Policy

AM reported that the Governance Committee approved a revised Transgender Competition Policy at its meeting on 22 November with a decision taken to maintain the current policy approach in relation to the inclusion of trans participants.

UK Code for Sports Governance

The Board noted that the outstanding actions have now been completed and will be shared with UK Sport in line with the December deadline. AM reported that a formal decision is anticipated in March 2024 and that we are not expecting any issues. We are compliant with the Code.

Annual Plan 2022-23

AM confirmed that work towards the Annual Plan 2022-23 had now finished, with most targets fully achieved. He advised that the only item delayed into 2023-24 had been the development of a careers page on our website which is part of the overall website redevelopment.

Annual Plan 2023-24

AM reported that work had already started on deliverables within the Annual Plan for 2023-24 and although it was early days, some significant progress had already been made within the 3 key headline areas;

Winning More Medals

- The draft strategy for the LA Funding submission submitted on time. British Canoeing met with UK Sport Panel in November with the final submission due December.

Growing Membership

- Current membership 87,261
- Digital member card project (digital wallet) underway
- Membership review group up and running
- Meetings with stakeholders to secure exclusive waterways licence agreements

Strong Organisational Governance

- British Canoeing achieved highest standard of compliance in recent CPSU Review
- A number of new policies and strategies have been launched (#SaferTogether)
- Case Management Group strengthened.

Stronger Together Fund

AM confirmed that a full report detailing how the funding had been used across the 'Gold Projects' would be shared in February. The Board noted that the Stronger Together Fund would be clearly branded as a Paddle England initiative following the rebrand. The Board discussed whether it would be beneficial to be more ambitious in this area. They requested that future applications are also measured against innovation criteria. The Board were pleased to see over £200,000 being invested in the community.

Club Meetings

The Board noted the correspondence that had been received following recent club meetings and the Sprint Programme not qualifying a quota place for Paris.

Commercial Report

AM assured the Board that follow up meetings continue to take place around developing the recommendations within the commercial report. He confirmed that more concrete proposals would be presented to Board in February.

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

16. Sprint & Paracanoe IP Interim Arrangements

JC invited NS and AM to summarise the issues of concern involving members of the Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe International Panel (IP).

NS provided context and outlined the detail in the paper. The Board had an open discussion and referenced the purpose of the IP to set selection policy and select athletes for GB teams.

The Board recognised the importance of mutual trust and confidence across the members of the IP in order for effective decision making.

It was felt that the effectiveness of decision making on the IP could be unreasonably compromised, given that views had been expressed of no faith or confidence in either the sprint strategy, or the leadership of the WCP.

There was a full discussion around the process and timeline of the breakdown of the IP and why dissatisfaction had not been more visible to the Board at an earlier point. The Board were keen to understand whether there would be any learnings to take from the situation and what actions may have been taken to avoid the situation reaching this point.

The Board discussed the views, impact and influence of the sprint community. They were mindful of the need to deliver the Sprint Strategy.

The Board were keen to focus on the immediate future to resolve the issues, mutually repair relationships and minimise impact on athlete welfare and the WCP. AM reported that the Performance Committee is supportive of the proposed interim arrangements.

The Board, by majority vote, confirmed the standing down of the two independent IP members. The Board unanimously approved the interim Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe International Panel Terms of Reference and confirmed the appointment of Nick Fowler-Rimell to the Interim Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe International Panel. The Board requested a further update, including a proposal for a new IP constitution, at the February Board meeting. The Board requested action to rebuild confidence in the Strategy.

7. Constitutional Update

JC invited NS to provide an update on plans for the British Canoeing 2024 AGM and to reflect on the discussions regarding the constitution of British Canoeing at the SLT Away Day.

AGM 2024

NS confirmed that the AGM would take place on Tuesday 12 March in the evening. The AGM would be held virtually and facilitated by British Canoeing to save on costs associated with conference support. The executive team were working to ensure the meeting is as interactive as possible.

Constitutional Review

Following discussions at the SLT/Board Away Day, NS confirmed that a set of proposals would be brought back to the Board in February. She confirmed that any consultation would be announced at the AGM in March, to take place over summer with an EGM held in October.

CANI Director

JC reported that despite best efforts, the Executive had not had any recent contact or correspondence with GM. The Board noted that GM had not attended one Board meeting since his appointment at the AGM in March. NS confirmed that within the Articles, the Board has the power to withdraw a Director from the Board if they do not attend two consecutive meetings without good cause and the knowledge of the Chair. The Board agreed to support a proposal to inform CANI that they wish to remove GM from the Board for the reasons of non-attendance and ask them to renominate.

The Board received and noted the verbal update and resolved to vacate the office of Gareth Mahood pursuant to Article 52(h) of the Articles of Association in light of it having been absent for at least two consecutive Board meetings without sufficient reason or permission from the Board.

13. Annual Safeguarding Report

The Annual Safeguarding Report was presented which provided an overview of progress, challenges and highlights in the area of safeguarding over the course of the year. Directors took the paper as read and NS invited comment and questions.

The Board noted that our approach to safeguarding and interventions appeared to be working better than previously.

The Board formally received, noted and commended the Annual Safeguarding Report.

8. KKP Facilities Report

JC invited CE to present Item 08, the KKP Facilities Report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting as Appendix 1.

CE shared that the purpose of the report had been to establish whether our facilities were fit for purpose for our World Class programme and to consider alternative options to HPP.

CE pointed to the recommendations within the report and confirmed that the issues with our current tenants would be addressed immediately.

The Board noted that the report identified that British Canoeing should develop a more direct relationship with the council given Nottinghamshire County Council were undergoing a major planning exercise to include housing in and around HPP.

CE highlighted that the report suggested that British Canoeing do not have a viable alternative option to HPP. It was noted that although South Cerney has a lot of water, it lacks infrastructure and would require significant investment to get it up and running. A complex

web of stakeholders also complicated the development and we would not have ownership or control.

The Board recognised that our facilities are not optimal for our World Class programme and that investment would be required. The Board discussed how best to leverage support from both UKS and Sport England given the historical position.

SH confirmed that there is no break clause in the current lease, which started on 1 January 2014, with 11 years to run. The lease is also subject to an annual CPI rent increase each year. It was noted that the HPP premises are expensive comparative to city centre locations.

The Board discussed the recommendations within the report and the options available in relation to central head office facilities. The Board recognised the opportunity to collaborate with Serco and the Council, to potentially look at a new agreement over a longer period of time that will see joint investment to improve HPP. The Board also considered other areas within the site that we might consider managing, such as the White Water course. The Board acknowledged that there was perhaps also potential to take over the whole building to be fully self-contained under a direct relationship with the council.

The Board agreed to focus British Canoeing's approach on working well with Serco in the short term and consider working with an external partner to help position ourselves strategically in the long term.

A Board Member suggested that British Canoeing make a formal enquiry to the Cambridge Sports Lake Trust initiative. This will be followed up as a potential option.

The Board received and noted the report and the recommendations within it, and formally approved to support the proposal for the Executive to produce an action plan detailing priorities and timeline for implementing improvements, primarily to the facilities at Holme Pierrepont.

9. Central Website Update

BW showcased a live walkthrough of some of the key functions of the new website in line with brand requirements.

BW outlined the most popular reasons why users visit the British Canoeing website; waterways license, membership, renewing membership, safeguarding, training and safety, coaching qualifications and courses; seeking to find a club and keeping up with news.

The Board noted the most popular user new site requests: effective search function; better links to Go Paddling, CACW and PSUP; waterways licence coverage; services look-ups; lower number of microsites; wider range of information on homepage. BW explained how we intend to meet these requests through the design of new website.

The Board noted the brand deadline of 13 March and the plan to rollout the first phase of website development on the same date. AM shared that there had been some lengthy

conversations around dates and timelines. The Board appreciated the value of unveiling the new website at the AGM with a launch on the following day.

BW showcased the membership journey, the paddling services finder and the paddle-bot within the new website. BW confirmed that BCAB would be included within a different phase of website development and that there would be a link to BCAB through the coaching navigation. JM approved of Scottish clubs being shown in the results of the paddler services finder. BW stated that a drop down 'service type' menu option could be considered within the paddler services finder to cover Paddles Up training or delivery partners.

BW emphasised that additional data can be built to pull through into the results feed, such as ecommerce options like clothing suppliers. The Board were assured that people would be redirected to speak to a person, if the bot did not know the answer to a specific question.

The Board commended the architecture of the new website and were reassured to learn that it would configure well on other devices such as tablets and mobile phones.

Following a request regarding cyber security, the Board and President agreed to uniformly use their own BC email accounts for all communications related to their role within British Canoeing.

The Board received and noted the pleasing progress made towards the build of the new central website.

10. Membership Survey Results

JC introduced RK to present the results from the membership survey 2023.

RK advised the Board would receive details of the membership plans for 2024 at the next meeting in February. He advised that 243 members had joined British Canoeing following a recent Black Friday deal.

RK summarised the results from the membership survey;

- 5466 responses received predominantly from on the water and on the bank members
- The most important benefits for members are the waterways licence and liability insurance
- The benefits that members were most unaware of were; access to environmental kits; travel insurance; access to places to paddle sites and education and training.
- The primary reason for joining BC was to obtain the waterways licence
- Customer satisfaction scores remain high and continue to climb, with NPS growing from 42 in 2022 to 53 in 2023
- Paddling aspirations remained fairly consistent with members wishing to paddle more often, to new places and improve skills
- Members were well aware of British Canoeing's environmental campaigning
- The top three preferred social media channels were Facebook, YouTube and Instagram

- 26% of respondents had volunteered, mainly in their club or as a coach.

RK outlined two areas for improvement to increase member awareness of both the Safety Campaign (57% currently aware) and how to report an incident (67% of members know how to do this). The Board briefly discussed whether we could consider mandatory reporting.

The Board noted the larger than normal sample size and the ability to deep dive into the data to find cross correlations to help further inform our insight.

The Board noted that the slides would be made available on the Board google drive after the meeting.

JC on behalf of the board thanked Sam Rankin and RK for the positive set of results.

The Board received and formally noted the membership survey results from 2023.

14. Annual Safety Report

JC invited LP to update on the key safety matters within the report.

LP confirmed that British Canoeing would attend the inquest into the Kempston Weir fatalities on 10 January 2024 given that one of the kayaks had been hired from a British Canoeing Delivery Partner.

LP advised that the swimmer safety award had recently been completed in collaboration with British Triathlon and Swim England.

LP reported that initial feedback from the British Canoeing Safety Conference held on 15th November suggested that stakeholders had pledged a commitment to work together to address particular areas of safety work.

LP advised that a further case study had been published following a fatality in Dorset, which highlighted the dangers of lone working and the useful lessons to be passed on to our community.

The Board noted that despite an increase in participation and interest in paddlesport activity, the number of fatalities had not increased. However, LP shared that there had been an increase in RNLI call outs by 400% for new and novice SUP paddlers.

JC commended the presentation on offshore winds at the safety conference. LP reported that following the event, the Coastguard would utilise our research and training package to train their own teams.

The Board noted that incident reporting had increased year on year with more people engaged in the reporting process. LP confirmed that there had been an increase in the number of minor incidents being reported but that British Canoeing would continue to

promote the tool through our social media channels while emphasising the need to report any near misses.

The Board received and formally noted the Annual Safety Report.

Standards of Deployment

LP updated the Board on the Standards of Deployment project. He confirmed that a draft policy had been developed alongside the National Associations and CIMPSA and was now in its consultation phase. LP shared that so far, 9 English Clubs, 4 CANI clubs, 4 SCA clubs, 9 Canoe Wales clubs and 3 Disciplines had been consulted and all had agreed with the concept of the Standards of Deployment. LP reported that it had been identified that the current systems do not support what we are asking clubs and disciplines to do as part of the implementation process. He advised that the working group were collaborating with our membership service provider to find solutions, as to not put additional strain on volunteers.

The Board noted by March, the Standards of Deployment policy should be complete and that the implementation would be phased, with an immediate focus on safeguarding (by end of 2024) with every discipline and club meeting the Standards of Deployment by the end of 2026.

JC relayed that the public perception obtained via a safety in sport perception survey is that we are already regulated in this space, with 86% believing that sports are already where we are trying to go with this project. He noted that this was a spur to urgency.

The Board received and noted the Standards of Deployment update.

11. Finance Report

SH reported that the draft yearend forecast is currently showing a surplus of £187k. SH shared that this surplus was generated primarily through tighter control of our overheads and bank interest, rather than through significant increases in earned income.

SH outlined the two main caveats to the draft accounts; the financial accounts for the 2023 Slalom World Championships had not yet been completed with transport and accommodation invoices outstanding; and the incomplete Discipline Committee consolidated accounts.

SH reported that the financial accounts were subject to audit and that the full set of accounts for 2022-23 would be brought back to the Board for final approval in February.

The Board noted that the October financial accounts would be uploaded to the Board google drive after the meeting.

JC thanked SH for the financial update and associated report.

The Board received and approved the Finance report.

12. World Class Performance Report

JC introduced the World Class Performance Report and took the paper as read. He invited AM and RB to highlight any further issues not already covered in the meeting agenda.

RB reported that UKS were generally happy with the LA funding submission but highlighted the risk around a 30% funding reduction in sprint which puts the programme very close to non-sustainable levels. The Board noted the many interdependencies of this with central funds and delivery across the whole WCP.

AM agreed to confirm with the Board when the Slalom and Kayak Cross appeals window had closed.

JC, on behalf of the Board, congratulated all disciplines on their international success this season, with over 90 international medals won, most recently in Ocean Racing. He also formally recognised the Board's appreciation of the work of the Performance Committee.

The Board received and noted the World Class Performance report.

15. Committee and National Association Reports

The committee and national association reports were taken as read.

15.1 Finance & Audit Committee

ND advised that the Finance Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Board in September.

15.2 HR & Remuneration Committee

No further updates were received beyond those outlined in the paper.

15.3 Governance & Risk Committee

No further updates were received.

15.4 Nominations Committee

JC advised that the Nominations Committee recently met in November and the paperwork would be shared on the Board google drive.

15.5 SCA

JM agreed to check with the SCA in relation to point 4.1 in the paper that stated that it had not been possible to discuss an item on the agenda in September, despite the minutes suggesting otherwise.

15.6 Canoe Wales

No further updates were received beyond those outlined in the paper.

15.7 CANI

No further updates were received.

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

16. Any Other Business

JC advised that he would work with CC to set up a Zoom call with Board Directors over the coming weeks.

No other business was received.

17. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors