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**SATURDAY 11 MARCH 2023 AT 13:00**

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**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> )
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Nick Donald (ND)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Zoey Rowe (ZR)	Director nominated by English Forum
Manpreet Sehmbi (MS)	Independent Director ( <i>Virtual</i> )
Greg Spencer (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ashley Metcalfe (AM)	CEO

**Apologies**

Gareth Mahood (GM)	Director nominated by CANI
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**Also In Attendance:**

Dee Paterson (DP)	President ( <i>Virtual</i> )
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Steve Linksted (SL)	SCA Director
Gemma Wiggs (GW)	Head of Events and International Affairs ( <i>Partial attendance</i> )
Keir Worth (KW)	Director of Paddlesport ( <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 and thanked everybody for attending. He especially welcomed MS who was attending her first Board meeting as Director of British Canoeing following her appointment at the AGM earlier that morning.

JC advised that SL had been invited to attend the meeting as an observer to maintain the link between British Canoeing and the SCA as we await the appointment of the SCA nominated Director.

JC advised that several colleagues would join the meeting throughout proceedings including Gemma Wiggs, Head of Events and International Affairs who would join the meeting virtually to present items 08 and 09, the 2023 Slalom World Championships and the Anti-Doping report. He also confirmed that Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport would join the meeting for item 11, the World Class Performance report.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from GM.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

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

## **4. Minutes of FB83**

JC advised that the word 'optimise' had replaced 'maximise' in Section 9, Finance, under cash position. JC also clarified that the position around risk ownership had since changed following a Governance & Risk Committee meeting who approved that they will retain the Risk Policy but overall risk management would sit within the Committees of the Board, with a further deep dive bi-annually at Board meetings.

The Minutes of FB83 were then approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

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

JC expressed his sincere thanks to the executive team for the quality of work involved in delivering the virtual AGM. He welcomed feedback on the effectiveness of the online AGM to help evaluate the success of the format.

A Board member relayed that they had encountered some technical difficulties with the audio in accessing the meeting through an iPad and as a Panellist on the zoom call. It was felt that the system may only be working well on laptop or desktop computers. This could make it difficult for members. The Board recognised that some members had experienced difficulties in asking questions on the live call.

The Board requested that a formal review of these issues is undertaken to establish feedback from those members that did join the AGM.

The Board discussed member turnout at the AGM and whether a Saturday morning was the best time to hold a virtual meeting. It was agreed to explore hosting future online AGMs on a weekday evening (7-8:30pm). The Board, recognising the importance of in-person contact, also agreed to consider other occasions throughout the year where British Canoeing could engage further with members.

A Board member commented that the branding update provided at the AGM had not been aligned to what the Board had previously agreed. The Chair concurred, recognising that this was due to the delays encountered in the branding tender process.

There were no further matters arising.

## 6. CEO Report

JC moved straight to item 06, the CEO Report.

### ***Membership***

AM reported that membership numbers had remained stable, at around 93,000.

### ***Risk Management***

AM pointed to the risk summary that had been circulated in the pack. He highlighted 3 risks with a rating of 15 and above that had been identified as trending upwards on the register;

- Inflation rate
- Retention of performance coaches
- Elite coach development

AM advised that the risk around the facilities at HPP, although they have not improved, could be downgraded to an amber rating knowing that the issues are longer term and if there was an immediate issue, it would not prevent us operating.

### ***International Relations***

AM confirmed that the debate around Russian/Belarusian participation and an IOC/ICF desire to soften the current stance around qualifying opportunities between now and the Games remains very topical. He reported that the Board's current strong stance in support of Ukraine and against a softening of any approach to Olympic and Paralympic qualification had since been relayed to the ICF, BOA and BPA, as well as UK Sport and the DCMS and that this position was mirrored by a number of nations in Europe, including the German Canoe Federation. AM stated that at the moment, there was not a threat around the hosting of the Slalom World Championships if British Canoeing maintained its position. AM confirmed that he would keep the Board updated between meetings if the situation changed.

Noting these further developments, the Board maintained its commitment to the strong stance aligned to the UK Government and UK Sport expectations and not allow athletes from Russia or Belarus to participate at the Slalom World Championships in September.

### ***ECA Congress***

The Board noted that the ECA electoral congress is scheduled to take place in March with two candidates running for President. JC reminded Directors of the decision of the board taken 3-4 years prior and British Canoeing's commitment to good and fair governance. AM received a unanimous mandate from the board on how to vote at congress.

### ***World Class Performance Review***

AM reported that British Canoeing had received an investment uplift of £154,000 awarded to support the increased costs of domestic training at Lee Valley, plus a further investment of £59,595 to support on-going innovation projects, including the development of data logger boxes, data measurement, boat fitting measurement and hardware capture projects.

AM reported the total uplift of £213,595 meaning the overall award had risen to £13,081,836.

### ***2023 Canoe Slalom World Championships***

AM reported that there is still a possibility that there may be a shortfall on the event and the Board will be asked to examine cost saving options to mitigate this figure within Item 08. The Board noted the cost of the ramp is higher than we had anticipated but recognised that the ramp represented an investment into the future.

### ***Branding***

Following the good response to the ITQ branding project, the Board noted that five companies would be invited to pitch their branding proposals in March. MS offered to support the interview and selection process. The Board agreed to empower the Finance & Audit Committee to approve the cost of the branding project on behalf of the Board, provided the detail is also shared with the Board. It was noted that the separate commercial strategic review project would be predominantly funded by UK Sport.

### ***SUP Recognition Update***

AM reported that British Canoeing fully recognise the need to work with Surfing England and have already invited the Chair and CEO of Surfing England to meet and that we are in the process of establishing a SUP Steering Group to ensure our partnership is coordinated and cooperative. The Board noted that interviews were ongoing to recruit a specialist SUP lead. AM confirmed that British Canoeing were due to meet the Water Skills Academy later in March.

### ***Manvers Club Visit***

AM reported that the meeting at Manvers on 22 February to further discuss their future plans and the option to support the decoration of their new corporate facility as a British Canoeing Heritage room had been postponed. The Board noted that a third-party organisation had been engaged to undertake the first phase of the British Canoeing Paddling Heritage Project. A Board member raised concerns around outsourcing this piece of work. AM explained that it is a specialist piece of work. Operationally British Canoeing does not have the capacity to effectively complete this project in a timely manner and volunteers had not been able to provide the time and expertise.

AM reported that a meeting is being sought with the Chair of Dragon Boat racing to explore if there was any common ground and the opportunity to work more closely together and that further updates would become available once this had occurred.

### ***Coach Licensing Update***

The Board noted that internal meetings to progress this work had taken place but that firm principles were still to be established.

### ***Annual Plan 2023-23 (Super Seven) Update***

AM reported that progress towards the Annual Plan 2022-23 and Super Seven organisational priorities remained on target and on track.

### ***Staff Matters***

The Board noted that recruitment continues to be busy with nine roles in the recruitment pipeline. AM reported that three colleagues had resigned since the last meeting of the board but all were for positive reasons.

### ***Stronger Together Fund***

AM reported that 135 applications had been received in this first funding window. The Board noted that the Panel met on 9 March and agreed in principle to a number of projects up to value of £215k and that the applicants would receive notification by the end of the month.

As the total value of the projects proposed to receive support was slightly higher than originally approved by the Board, there was a discussion around what was deemed appropriate at this stage and whether those decisions were properly assessed against EDI and other factors. AM confirmed that those people on the panel were very much aware of EDI and confirmed that all applications were eligible under the guidance created and agreed in the Stronger Together fund.

The Board discussed whether those that had narrowly missed out would be prioritised in the next round of funding. The Board requested that the regions are informed of those projects that had been successful in their areas and that a geographical heat map is provided of where projects are taking place.

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

### **7. Board appointments to the Committees of the Board**

JC presented the report which outlined a series of recommendations to confirm the appointment of Directors to Board subcommittees and Board Champion roles.

**The Board approved the appointments recommended within the paper;**

- **Manpreet Sehmbi appointed to the Finance and Audit Committee**
- **Zoey Rowe appointed to the Governance and Risk Committee**
- **Manpreet Sehmbi appointed as Board Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.**

### **8. 2023 ICF Slalom World Championships**

JC invited GW to highlight the key points from the report.

#### ***Progress on event***

GW confirmed that planning for the event is on track and good progress is being made on all the Championship objectives. The wider social impact and sustainability programmes were also both progressing nicely.

#### ***Financial overview***

SH summarised the financial profile of the event highlighting those four economic implications that had arisen that were unknown at the time of bidding for the event;

- Health, safety and security requirements required since covid
- Inflation costs on the event (increased by £120k)
- The cost of living economic crisis to hit the country
- An increasing trend of people buying tickets much closer to the event date.

SH advised that the Local Organising Committee have undertaken a huge amount of work to mitigate these costs without impacting on the quality of the event. The Board noted that the forecast deficit of £28k could be underwritten by further reductions in event overheads but at this point the standard and delivery of the event would be impacted.

The Board discussed their appetite to release additional funds to underwrite the current delivery model and protect the standard of delivery of the event. It was noted that the technical requirements could not be compromised due to ICF requirements, but other areas, such as VIP hosting and hospitality costs, could be reduced if so desired. The Board wished to deliver VIP hosting and hospitality in the right way for the event in order to obtain a good return on investment.

The Chair noted that it is difficult for non-broadcast sports to obtain commercial sponsorship. GW noted that the current deficit is not wholly dependent on broadcast and that commercial income for the event was on target.

SH confirmed that we had not yet drawn down on the contingency fund available for the event and that we could apply if unforeseen circumstances materialised, such as the rising rates of inflation.

The Chair wished to recognise the intangible benefits of hosting a successful the event and felt fairly confident that we could release funds of up to £50k without requiring further Board approval.

JC thanked GW and SH for the paper that provided the Board with huge confidence in the event.

**The Board noted the progress made in the preparations for the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships and remained focused upon delivering an exceptional World Championship. It was agreed in principle that additional financial support would be considered to ensure quality of delivery.**

## **9. Anti-Doping Report**

JC confirmed that as required by the annual UKAD Assurance Framework, NGB Boards are required to have anti-doping on the agenda on at least one meeting annually. He reported that British Canoeing, and all National Associations, achieved 100% UKAD Assurance Framework Compliance in 2022 and are on track to achieve this in 2023 by 1 April deadline.

GW stated that British Canoeing were in a positive position in regards to anti-doping and that no athletes had failed or missed a test. GW highlighted the importance of education and

confirmed that the British Canoeing education programme had been delivered according to the education implementation plan.

The Chair proposed the addition of an “I paddle clean” initiative on race bibs and GW agreed to propose this to the ICF and next meeting of the Stakeholder Board.

**The Board noted the contents of the report and confirmed the appointment of MK as Board lead for Anti-Doping who will complete the Mandatory training by 31 March to ensure compliance with the UKAD Assurance Framework.**

## **10. Finance Report**

SH reported that the accounts for the first two quarters of the financial year 2022-23 were on track and in line with budgets and expectations. SH confirmed that the financial results in February surpassed the budget of £105k and that March had started strongly running 12% ahead of budget for the first ten days.

SH reminded the Board that our financial profile in winter is traditionally less favourable and builds over the summer months and this is further compounded as we fully invest in to all our programmes and projects. SH reported that membership is stable at 93,016 and we have not experienced the same winter drop off as in 2022. The Board noted that retention rates have improved.

The Board commended the membership figures given the £2 price increase that came into effect on 1 March.

JC thanked SH for the financial update and associated report.

**The Board noted the contents of the Finance report.**

## **11. World Class Performance Report**

KW presented key updates from the WCP report;

- The extra funding granted by UK Sport will help the Slalom programme offset the increase in water fees plus enable further investment across a number of innovation projects in all WCP disciplines.
- The WCP fund ban on men’s canoe sprint has now been lifted
- New staff have settled well with both PDs creating good teams with progress on track over the winter period.
- The GB One Sprint coaching conference took place on 4 March at Reading Canoe Club which had received positive feedback.
- The Talent Programme continues to operate effectively, despite the known challenges highlighted in the paper.
- Within the non-Olympic disciplines, Anna Gray, Sports Development Officer will be leaving at the end of May which provides an opportunity to review the role.

- A change is underway in Coach Development with regards how British Canoeing develops coaches across all disciplines. The role of Performance Coach Developer will become 'Coaching Pathway Lead' and the role will move from the Coaching Department to the Paddlesport Directorate.

KW invited questions from the Board.

GS stated that he had not appeared to have received a follow up email asking for feedback on the GB One Conference. He stated that it was good to see the performance department spend time with the community coaches. KW confirmed that there will be opportunities for the White Water community to attend Kayak Cross events as the pathway builds.

There was a discussion around coach vacancies and the challenges of recruitment. KW stated that this point in the cycle limits the pool of candidates. Recruiting for Slalom internationally is more attractive than for Sprint and that recruitment for Talent coaches is harder generally due to expected daily training schedules, competitions and camps and as a result, is not always a sustainable option for those with families. The Board noted that these challenges are being faced across most sports.

The Chair shared that these, and any other issues, may be helped in the future by the establishment of the Performance Sub-Committee of the Board.

AM confirmed that we are still awaiting the decision from the commercial partner in relation to the title sponsor for the WCP.

KW reported that following discussions with members of the slalom community and the Committee itself, an action plan had been developed which identified priority areas to focus on to improve the slalom talent pathway. He stated that this will be an agenda item at the next meeting of UK CEOs.

A Board member commended the Great Britain Junior Training Squad (GBJTS), a collaboration between the Sprint Racing Committee, the National Associations and British Canoeing's World Class Programme launched in January, which had proved very popular.

**The Board received and noted the World Class Performance report.**

## **12. Committee and National Association Reports**

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

### **12.1 Finance & Audit Committee**

ND reported that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 4 April.

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



KC reported that a productive meeting was held in February with good progress recorded against the KPIs.

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

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. MK highlighted the outstanding issue in relation to the SCA Director nomination to the Board.

### **12.4 Canoe Wales**

KC relayed that Canoe Wales were in talks with Sport Wales in relation to securing additional funding for SUP. KC invited Directors to attend the Canoe Wales Board away day in September.

### **12.5 SCA**

SL reported that there had been no further developments in relation to the SCA nominating a director to join the Board of British Canoeing. He confirmed that three SCA directors had been approached but none had accepted the nomination, mainly because they all wished to attend meetings in person but felt that they did not have the time to commit to the travel. SL stated that he could not attend the next Board meeting in June and it was noted that his tenure on the SCA Board would come to an end at the SCA AGM later in the year.

There was a discussion around the challenges faced by National Associations in attracting British Canoeing Board Members and whether there was a need to explore alternative models to achieve representation. It was agreed to discuss further at future meetings.

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

## **13. Any Other Business**

JC advised that the Discipline Committees have been working hard to finalise their competition schedules for the year and we now have a fairly comprehensive list of national level events that will take place. He stated that it is always appreciated when board members and Vice Presidents attend these events. JC asked colleagues to look at the 2023 domestic event schedule once it is circulated and advise CG which events they can attend.

AM confirmed that he had enquired internally about whether we are sending a representative to the Rivers Trust Conference in April. He agreed to feedback to ZR.

Following an enquiry by SL, AM confirmed that the ICF Masters Classes were missing from the medals summary within the Annual Report because although we applaud their efforts and achievements, British Canoeing had not selected those group of individuals to participate in those events.

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