
SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 09:30 – BY ZOOM

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 (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
David Joy (DJ)	CEO

Also In Attendance:

Lisa Bryant (LB)	Head of HR (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Keir Worth (KW)	Director of Paddlesport (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

Apologies

David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales
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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 advised that the plan is for the Board to meet in person again at the next meeting in December.

JC confirmed that Keir Worth (KW) had joined the meeting to present three items; the World Class Performance Report (item 08), Examination of issues within the Sprint Programme (item 09) and the UKAD Assurance Framework (item 10). He confirmed that Lisa Bryant (LB) would join the meeting to facilitate the discussion of item 06, the Confidential Report. SH would then join the meeting after item 06. DP would leave the meeting for this item too and re-join for item 07, the Stronger Together Strategic Plan.

JC pointed to the full agenda and expressed intent to conclude by 3pm for the closed session.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received in advance from David Wakeling (DW) who was unable to attend the meeting due to a family commitment. Greg Smale (GS) apologised ahead of the afternoon session whereby he would need to leave the meeting due to an existing travel commitment. GS confirmed that he would contact DJ outside of the meeting about his views on future Board governance.

3. Declarations of Interest

RB notified by email on 30 August to advise that his son Nick Boreham had been selected to represent the GB Wild Water Racing team and so Richard will exclude himself from any matters that may involve decisions relating to international competition in WWR.

There were no further declarations received.

4. Minutes of FB74

The Minutes of FB74 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting. RB confirmed that the confidential minute redacted for JC and DJ had also been approved by members via email as a true and fair record of the discussion. The Chair confirmed that it was best practice not to refer to Board Members in relation to specific comments within the minutes.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

There were no further matters arising outside of those on the agenda.

[DP left the meeting]

6. Confidential Report

The Board considered a confidential report on some staffing matters.

JC thanked LB for joining the meeting for this discussion.

The Board noted the report and approved the following;

- **External independent Board review to pick up the substantive issues raised in the discussion.**

7. Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2022-26 (Second Draft)

JC welcomed SH to the meeting.

[DP re-joined the meeting]

JC introduced item 12 and invited DJ to provide an update on the development of the Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2022-26.

DJ advised that the second draft Strategy shared in the Google Drive, had been through a considerable amount of further consultation since the first draft was considered by the Board in June 2021. DJ highlighted the significant changes since the first draft, the similarities and evolution of Stronger Together 2017-21 and the new areas of focus to emerge through the consultations. He confirmed that there was still considerable work to be undertaken to finalise the strategy, including matters around branding, identification of KPIs, resource planning and final presentation. DJ confirmed that we were on track for completion by December when the Board would be invited to consider the final draft for approval with launch scheduled in March 2022.

A Board member commended the great work undertaken in the consultations and relayed how much the West Midlands RDT team enjoyed their involvement in the development of the new strategy. It was also noted how DJ had invited all Board members to have 1:1 conversations with him to comment and contribute to the new strategy.

DJ confirmed that all members had been invited to contribute to the development of the new strategy through various communications and surveys. To date, 2,000 members had participated. Specific focus groups had also been set up around SUP and recreational paddling.

A Board member recommended the careful management of the work around SUP consultation. It was confirmed that British Canoeing were in the process of establishing a SUP technical group (the equivalent of a discipline committee) but that this would not cover recreational paddling responsibilities.

DJ confirmed that a piece of insight work had also previously been commissioned with 6k recreational paddlers responding to a survey. A third piece of insight work was due to be released in the coming weeks to look at the concept of social paddling.

JC notified the Board that through the recent UK Agreement review and National Association input into strategy, British Canoeing would also be scoping a branding tender to explore brand alignment within British Canoeing and how the English work of British Canoeing can be better identified.

The Board noted and endorsed the progress of the second draft of the Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2022-26 and approved the proposed process and timelines for the approval and launch of the strategy.

8. World Class Programme Report

JC invited KW to provide an update on the key developments within the World Class Programme.

KW highlighted and expanded on the key points from the paper;

- Summary of performances at the Olympic Games (the Paracanoe events at the Paralympics had not been completed at the time of writing this paper so KW provided a verbal update)
- Summary of other international results in slalom and sprint
- Report on other World Class Programme matters
- A look ahead to some of the significant tasks to be completed by December 2021.

KW confirmed that there would be no formal UK Sport Review as we had achieved the annual targets, but there was an opportunity to apply for further funding due to opportunities presented by Extreme Slalom and the potential of KL3 event in Paris. This needed to be submitted to UK Sport by November 2021. KW suggested that the autumn period would likely feel unsettled with the end of cycle review, athletes transitioning on and off the programme and the absence of a performance director or flatwater head coach in post. However, the staff team were reported to be in a stable place with an established interim leadership team in place that is starting to have constructive and supportive conversations.

KW invited questions or comments from the Board.

A Board member commented that the results from the recent Sprint World Championships in Copenhagen had started to show some signs of promise. KW reported that there were no issues apparent within the sprint team that travelled to Copenhagen.

The Board commended the excellent media coverage that had surrounded the athletes throughout the Games period and congratulated the way in which athletes had represented themselves, UK Sport and British Canoeing. DJ praised the outstanding work of the PR and Communications team in creating media coverage in social media, broadcast and print at a level we had not achieved before. JC relayed that he had written formally to Rob Knott, Head of Communications on behalf of the Board on two separate occasions to congratulate him and the team for their exceptional work in this area.

KW confirmed that British Canoeing had been involved in meetings with the Passionate Coaches Group. The Board noted the importance of engaging effectively with both the SRC and the clubs and community coaches in the delivery the new sprint strategy.

JC reiterated the invitation for candour within the next World Class Performance report following the end of season review in order to take learnings into the Paris cycle.

The Board noted the contents of the WCP report.

[GS left the meeting as previously agreed owing to an urgent commitment]

9. Examination of issues within the Sprint Programme

JC invited KW to highlight the key headlines from the paper including the proposed next steps regarding the replacement of the Performance Director and Head Coach Flatwater.

KW outlined some of the challenges within the sprint programme emphasising the lack of clarity and understanding of roles and responsibilities within some staff; inconsistent and irregular internal and external communication and the overall lack of synergy within the team.

KW confirmed that British Canoeing were proposing to change the leadership structure within the World Class Programme. He confirmed that these proposals were being discussed with UK Sport and internal colleagues. KW stated that each of the three World Class Programmes (slalom; sprint and paracanoe) have very different needs going into the Paris cycle and beyond. The proposal was to explore a 2x Performance Director approach (PD for slalom and PD for sprint/para) but other alternatives may need to be explored as these discussions were not yet final.

KW also outlined a further proposal to make changes to the England National Talent Sprint programme in line with the Sprint Strategy 2021. This involved creating 2 or 3 Academies to support athletes just below world class level and to build on the investment into talent clubs.

The Board discussed the challenges and issues within the sprint programme and identified the areas for improvement. These were in line with the recommendations of the Sprint Strategy 2021. There was a need to create a greater sense of team between staff and community clubs and coaches.

There was a discussion around the new Performance Director role and the experience required in the role and that they needed to have a depth of understanding around some areas within the sprint strategy.

There was an in depth discussion around the differences between each of the three programmes and why there was a disparity between the successes within slalom and paracanoe that were not being seen in sprint.

The Board agreed that the quality of leadership that we now need to recruit is essential to underpin the right values, attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with our strategy.

KW confirmed that the PD job role specification would be released shortly. The Board noted that it was unlikely that the position would be filled until January 2022.

The Board considered the issues raised within the report and unanimously approved to support the adoption of revised PD structure that is appropriate within the World Class Programme. The board welcomed the open and transparent recruitment process planned for the Flatwater PD. The board approved the proposals to make changes to the ENTs programme and the move to establish Sprint Academies from 2021/22.

10. UKAD Assurance Framework

JC invited KW to present item 10.

KW presented the requirement for British Canoeing to be compliant with the UK Anti-Doping Assurance Framework and outlined the requirements of the Board, including a requirement

to nominate a designated Board member Champion for anti-doping work. KW highlighted that work would also be required with the other National Associations to ensure we all fulfill our anti-doping responsibilities.

KW confirmed that British Canoeing were currently showing 64% progress towards completing our evidence submission to UKAD. The Board noted the timeline for full compliance is 01 April 2022.

It was noted that the composition of the Board will change between now and next March with several members reaching the end of their terms. A Board member suggested that members undertake our anti-doping eLearning training and look towards collective training as a Board.

JC thanked KW for his contribution to the meeting.

The Board noted and endorsed the UKAD Assurance framework and approved the recommendation as reported in the paper to commit to full compliance by April 2022.

11. Board Governance

JC invited DJ to introduce the paper that had been produced by the Head of Governance and requested that he take most of it as read and to pick out the key areas of discussion for the Board.

DJ referred to para 6 which outlined the early indications of headlines to emerge from the new UK Code for Sports Governance. The areas which will receive greater focus within the Code are; Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI), welfare, safety, cascading good governance to clubs and committees, people development and our organisational consideration of environmental and social environmental factors. Pleasingly, all these themes mirror the focus of our new strategy and are aligned with the results of the strategy consultations.

It was noted that we will also need to assess the requirements in the new code for Board Champions in areas such as EDI and safeguarding and how we align this with the work of the Committees of the Board.

Board Evaluation

DJ confirmed that we will be progressing quickly with commissioning an external review of the board. This will follow the release of the new UK Code for Sports Governance. It is likely that we will be able to share this plan for an external assessment in more detail at the next meeting of the Board in December.

JC highlighted that this is also the time of year when we conduct our own review of Board performance through appraisal meetings to be scheduled in the last two weeks of October.

It was noted that the Board has one vacant position due to the resignation of Alexandra Lane earlier in the year. DJ confirmed that the Articles allow us to carry the vacancy and that we have been discussing with the English Forum how we might wish to appoint English members

to the Board in the future. The English Forum had agreed to proceed with their Board vacancies under the current process for the two positions that will arise in March 2022. Greg Smale will be retiring in March 2022 and so these two roles will be recruited in time to be proposed to the AGM in March 2022.

The Board noted and approved the contents of the report.

12. CEO Report

Covid-19 resilience and Return to Office

DJ reported that from Monday 13 September, colleagues had started to return to the office. Staff were comfortable with no concerns raised.

Sport England Funding Submission

This would be picked up by SH in the next agenda item, the finance report.

English Forum and Board Recruitment

DJ stated that the English Forum was created to be a voice for the membership in England but there is now the opportunity to explore its future. It has not met for almost two years and members of the Forum are proposing that it is no longer required. He advised that there will be a meeting of the English Forum within the next six weeks to explore the disestablishment of the group and to explore alternative ways to select suitable nominees for the Board from members in England.

Commercial Update

DJ referred to paragraph 2.25 that sought Board support for a commercial partnership which involved electric vehicle charging points at commercial watersports venues. SH advised that the proposal had already been discussed and supported by the British Canoeing Sustainability and Advisory Group. The Board discussed and fully considered the merits and possible disadvantages of the partnership, noting the other opportunities it may present in the future for sustainable energy solutions, particularly at Lee Valley.

Annual Plan Update

DJ apologised for the further delay in completing Action 10.6 on the plan, the work around the Sports Resolution Action Plan. This was primarily due to ongoing capacity issues within the Governance team. DJ reported that consideration was being given to the creating additional senior capacity within the Governance team to meet the demands, which are likely to further increase.

ICF Canoe Polo World Championships 2026

DJ reported that positive meetings had taken place between British Canoeing, Canoeing Ireland, CANI and the Belfast International Watersports Centre in relation to submitting a joint bid by British Canoeing and Canoeing Ireland to host the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships. The Board noted the official bid deadline of 1 February 2022. It was noted that if the event was secured, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) would be established, until such time all work would go through BCE Ltd and Canoeing Ireland.

The Board noted the CEO Report and unanimously approved the two recommendations within the paper;

- To support the finalisation of a commercial partnership to provide electric vehicle charging points at commercial watersports centres
- To approve the proposal to express an interest to co-host the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships in Belfast.

[GS left the meeting]

13. Finance Report

Sport England Funding Submission

SH updated the Board on progress towards submitting the new Sport England grant application for the period 2022-27. SH confirmed that SE had advised that the starting point for all applications was standstill funding based on the 2021 award. This would present a challenge for British Canoeing as our funding in 2017-21 had been front weighted to the first two years, reducing in years 3 and 4. British Canoeing is also a very different organisation to where we were 5 years ago and our capacity requirements are also greater.

SH updated the Board on the financial performance of British Canoeing to August 2021, highlighting the following key headlines;

- The cumulative surplus to August of circa £1m
- The year-end forecast remains healthy at a surplus of circa £840k
- Membership income in August had achieved £532k following an adjustment to take into account deferred income
- The membership forecast for September was set at £180k. By 15 September, £182k had already been achieved
- The membership figure as at 15 September was 89,177
- 45k new members joined up until 15 September this year
- Retention rate now spilt between two different measures;
 - o newer members (joined less than 12mths ago) averaging 34%
 - o long standing members averaging 71-73%
- Additional investment on hold while we develop the new strategy. This will be looked at carefully during the budgetary process as part of the year-end process.

Budget 2021-22

SH confirmed that the budget planning process for 2021-22 had recently commenced. Each departmental team had been asked to identify their resource needs in line with the new strategy. A Board member suggested that meeting costs of mitigating the risk analysis should be a key feature of the budget planning process.

It was reported that the UK Sport budget review exercise would take place in October/November and that we would be submitting applications for additional extreme slalom and paracanoe funding for the Paris cycle.

SH confirmed the 2021/22 budget would be presented at the next meeting of the Board in December and this would take into account the notification of any additional grant funding and alignment to the new strategy.

The Board received and approved the Finance Report.

14. Risk Management Report

SH highlighted five significant risks as detailed in the report and noted that two (Sport England funding and stability of the leadership structure in Sprint and Paracanoe) had already been discussed within previous items;

- National teams continue to manage risk of coronavirus when travelling to international competitions. No major incidents had been reported although the risk remains high until the end of the international season.
- The potential risk around the feature at Boulders Weir remains a major safety issue. A working group had been established to liaise with the Environment Agency on the options available to address the hazard.

SH invited questions or comments from the Board.

It was discussed that that the timeline for mitigation of several risks appeared too optimistic and should be reviewed.

JC thanked SH for the Risk report.

The Board received, noted and approved the risk report.

15. Committee Reports

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

15.1. Nominations Committee

The annual Nominations Committee meeting was scheduled for 4 November 2021. JC reminded members that Board appraisals would be set up for October.

15.2. Finance & Audit Committee

No further updates were received outside of those matters already discussed. The next meeting was scheduled for 11 November.

15.3 Governance & Risk Committee

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

15.4 Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)

The Minutes of the Board meeting held in June had been uploaded to the Board google drive. A further Board meeting had since been held whereby planning took place for the forthcoming AGM. Several applications had already been received for the Director vacancies that existed on the Board. At the Board meeting, concern had been expressed by the Chair and CEO of SCA around the unwillingness of British Canoeing to further explore branding of an English identity. This had since been superseded at the UK Agreement meetings whereby it had been agreed for British Canoeing to commission a piece of work on branding in the autumn.

Membership had recovered to pre-pandemic levels and the SCA were in a good financial position under the circumstances. The SCA were currently operating business as normal via home working and one office base at the Grandtully Campsite.

15.5 Canoe Wales

It was reported that DJ had attended a virtual slot at the Canoe Wales Board meeting and team away day on 3 September.

15.6 Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)

The Minutes of the last Board meeting held in July had been uploaded to the Board Google drive. It was reported that membership figures had returned close to pre-pandemic levels and club and recreational activity had also increased following the lifting of national lockdown restrictions. CANI were content with the progress made in relation to the review of the UK Agreement and were also looking forward to receiving some funding from Sport NI so they could start to scope recruitment.

The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

16. Any Other Business

Safety Reporting

It was reported that a near miss incident occurred at a white water training event on the river Tryweryn. The online system and process of reporting the incident had worked very well. The hazard had since been removed and Canoe Wales had been appropriately informed.

17. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors