
SUNDAY 05 DECEMBER 2021 AT 10:00

MINUTES**In Attendance:**

John Coyne CBE (JC)	Chair and Independent Director
Mark Bache (MB)	Independent Director (Virtual)
Richard Boreham (RB)	Vice Chair and Independent Director
Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI (Virtual)
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum (Virtual)
Bronagh Kennedy (BK)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director (Virtual)
Dee Paterson (DP)	President
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales (Virtual)
David Joy (DJ)	CEO

Also In Attendance:

Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Chris Nightingale (CN)	Places to Paddle Manager (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Keir Worth (KW)	Director of Paddlesport (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

Apologies

Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
---------------------	---------------------------

1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting including those joining remotely. He stated that he welcomed the board meeting again in person, albeit that not everyone was able to join the in person meeting. He shared that the next meeting scheduled in January would also be arranged as a face to face meeting, Covid permitting.

JC confirmed that Chris Nightingale (CN) will join the meeting to present item 06, the Places to Paddle report and Keir Worth (KW) will join the meeting to present item 08, the World Class Programme Report.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Steve Linksted (SL) who was unable to join the meeting due to work commitments.

3. Declarations of Interest

SC declared an interest as a CANI representative in the bid for the Canoe Polo World Championships in Belfast that would be discussed later in the agenda. GS reminded the panel of his role as Chair of the ICF Canoe Polo committee.

There were no further declarations received outside of those submitted as part of the annual declaration.

4. Minutes of FB75

The Minutes of FB75 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

DJ confirmed that a good response had been received from the ITQ for the Board evaluation and that Board Excellence had been appointed to undertake the work. The Board evaluation would involve a series of interviews, a survey, observation of a board meeting and scrutiny of board paperwork with a final report due to be shared with the Board in April 2022. DJ agreed to circulate a copy of the ITQ submission received from Board Excellence to Board members.

It was noted that there would be an opportunity to discuss the latest version of the new British Canoeing strategy later in the agenda.

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

6. Places to Paddle

JC welcomed Chris Nightingale (CN) to the meeting to present the current operational status of British Canoeing's Places to Paddle sites.

CN presented the paper and outlined the key themes associated with the current operating arrangements of the 11 sites. He identified challenges in the following areas across the several sites;

- Management structures, and how we support people managing each site
- Clarity in roles & responsibilities not clearly defined
- Booking processes (where relevant)
- Financial cost control and budget planning
- Lack of usage data and insight
- Physical and governance risks that leave us exposed as an organisation
- Under developed potential to use the sites much better to run events and attract commercial interest
- Need to increase the overall profile of the sites and promote usage as a member benefit for the paddling community.

CN outlined the pros and cons for options for future operating models.

CN proposed that the initial recommendation is to implement options A&B to manage and mitigate the challenges and risks in the shorter term. He noted that inherent risk will always be present on each site given the nature of their environments in open water. CN confirmed that consultations were ongoing with the volunteers at each of the sites, and key volunteers were involved in the local discussions and planning.

The Board welcomed the thorough analysis of the sites. It was proposed that any future strategic partnerships should only be with partners who have the necessary resources and expertise to operate the sites and who share our values and ambitions to improve access to rivers and protecting the environment.

The Board explored views on acquiring further sites which meet the needs of our members and our strategic objectives. It was recognised that there will be other opportunities, but that we need to ensure that we have learned the lessons from our current sites around the management of the sites and associated risks and opportunities.

There was a discussion around the level of financial risk of the sites. CN reported that some budgets have been held centrally, while others have not. Part of this process is to establish a set budget for each site. SH confirmed that there is still some money held centrally that sites can access for significant maintenance projects. It was noted that both the SCA and Canoe Wales have substantial income streams from sites that they manage.

JC summarised that the paper had provided significant detail and clarity of the challenges and risks involved. He proposed that a further discussion takes place in the summer of 2022, once further analysis and discussions have been completed and there are clear proposals for consideration.

JC thanked CN for joining the meeting and for the clarity in the paper.

The Board noted the contents of the report and agreed to the following;

- **To endorse the activation of the phased approach to changing the management structure allowing officers to assess the effectiveness of initial changes in phase 1 while considering further the long-term options.**
- **To receive a progress report in 6 months with proposals for the future management of the sites.**

7. CEO Report

CEO Resignation

DJ reported that his resignation had been received by the Board in November 2021.

Haverford West Incident

DJ clarified British Canoeing's involvement in the tragic SUP incident at Haverford West in Wales, on 30 October, which resulted in four fatalities. British Canoeing, did not have any direct association in the incident, but have assisted the police and Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) with their investigations.

The incident raises several issues for British Canoeing and the industry;

- The incident has caused concerns for our insurers who are re-evaluating the risks associated with our insurance policy and have indicated increased premiums
- Raised awareness about the importance of our qualifications and safety advice for leaders, instructors and paddlers
- NGB recognition of SUP and clarity from Sport England around who is the leading authority on SUP
- It has highlighted the existence of unregulated training providers and the risk that this may present
- The risks for clubs and British Canoeing of uncertificated coaches operating in some clubs.

It was noted that the need for providers to be regulated is not a requirement of the law.

It was discussed that the Marine Accident and Investigation Branch (MAIB) will be wanting to examine the matter of governance, leadership and safety around SUP.

DJ thanked a Board member for their detailed communication submitted that week around matters of safety. Pre activity risk assessment had been highlighted.

It was noted that British Canoeing safety training is well developed and widely available but there was no room for complacency. It was confirmed that there will be a complete review and revision of British Canoeing safety qualifications in 2022.

It was discussed that more needed to be done to promote entry level safety training for paddlers. It was reported that the West Midlands RDT had run some hybrid refresher white water safety courses in the autumn, and the feedback received included that it provided a safe space for people to learn and refresh their skills without the immediate pressure of taking exams.

It was agreed to discuss safety further, including the requirement for qualifications in clubs, at the next meeting of the Board in January 2022.

English Forum

DJ advised that discussions have taken place with members of the English Forum to explore the future of the Forum. There is a view that the Forum may no longer be required, but there is also some reluctance to 'give up' a Forum which has an English focus. The Forum members do not naturally recognise that this function to oversee the needs of members in England, rests comfortably with the Board.

The English Forum will determine how to operate in 2022 with any changes to be recommended in time for these to be approved within changes to the Articles at the AGM in 2023. A further meeting between the CEO, Chair of the English Forum and the President and Vice Presidents will take place in December.

Commercial Activity

DJ advised that there are several conversations with potential commercial partners taking place. Securing a title sponsor for the World Class Programme remains a priority. A full commercial update will be shared at the board meeting in January or May 2022.

Sport and Recreation Online Learning Area (SAROLA)

DJ outlined the SAROLA initiative, which has the potential to provide an elearning platform and content for other NGBs and external organisations. This has the potential to leverage learning programmes already developed and to generate additional revenue for British Canoeing to invest back into strategy and to enhance the reputation of British Canoeing as an industry leading organisation. It has the potential to both build reputation and diversify our income streams. The risk of distracting us from core business was discussed.

It was recognised that a business plan was required before making any firm commitments around this opportunity. It was noted Sport England were interested to explore this further and to potentially invest in the start-up project. It was agreed that a business plan for SAROLA should be presented to the Board in May 2022.

ECA Congress

DJ reported on the ECA Congress held in Slovakia on 2 October 2021. The changes to the statutes proposed by British Canoeing were narrowly rejected by the members.

UKAD Assurance Framework Board nomination

DJ referred to Para 1.46 in the report that outlined the requirement for British Canoeing to nominate a Board champion to lead on anti-doping. It was reported that Stephen Craig (who is CANI's nominated Board member) has agreed to be the nominated Board member for the interim period, subject to the support of the Board.

It was reported that the ICF may now require support staff to undertake UKAD training in order to run events.

2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships

The Board had previously approved in principle to support a bid for the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championship in partnership with Canoeing Ireland. It was reported that Canoeing Ireland have since withdrawn their support for the bid and it was being recommended that we do the same. DJ provided further background on the increased risks associated with hosting the event.

The Board discussed their appetite to bid for the event, recognising that any decision would need to be taken with the advice from the British Canoeing Events Board. The Board agreed that they now do not have sufficient appetite for the organisational risks that would now be associated with hosting the event.

Strategy 2022-26

It was noted that the purpose, vision and mission had changed since the last version of the draft. DJ confirmed that these would be revisited with the Board in January, taking into account the feedback from the member consultation. It was noted that the member

consultation closes on 6 December. The final version of the strategy will be shared with the Board at their next meeting in January for approval.

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

- **To support the proposals for SAROLA as outlined in para 1.37**
- **To approve the nomination of Stephen Craig as the Board Champion for anti-doping as required by UKAD**
- **To recommend that BCE do not support a bid for the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo Championships.**

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;

Grant Funding

UK Sport had awarded the paracanoe programme an extra £382k over the next 3 years. This provides six extra athlete places and will allow more athletes to come on to programme with a focus on the LA 2028 cohort. An additional £56k had also been agreed to support innovation projects. The funding for Extreme Slalom will be confirmed in the New Year.

Sprint and Paracanoe

KW reported that there appeared to be more positivity in the team. There had been some changes in personnel with James Train and Colin Radmore taking on interim leadership roles. Recruitment had begun for the vacant flatwater Performance Director role with UK Sport, SRC and athletes all engaged in the process. JC explained why the Board would not be directly involved in the interview process.

Slalom

There had been some staff turnover at Lee Valley with EIS colleagues moving onto other opportunities. It was reported that Mark Ratcliffe will shortly be appointed as the new Performance Director for Canoe Slalom.

Athlete Appeals

It was reported that there had been several appeals by athletes around the lottery funded places on programmes and these were in process. It was noted that the decisions at the margin had become more complex as a consequence of a change in the Olympic programme and a significant reduction in athlete places for sprint.

There was a discussion around the appeals process. It was reported that an external review of the appeals process was currently underway, the findings of which would be reported to Board at the next meeting in January.

There was a discussion around the sprint strategy. The final version of the strategy had been amended slightly and changes discussed with the SRC. The strategy is set to be launched shortly and the Board expressed a wish to see the Sprint Racing Committee and other partners to get fully behind the new strategy.

JC thanked KW for the World Class Programme report.

The Board noted the contents of the WCP report.

9. Annual Plan 2021

DJ presented the final report of the Annual Plan/Balanced scorecard report for 2021 confirming that 61% of the 123 actions had been achieved in 2021. He confirmed that the area most challenged by progress this year was Governance due to ongoing capacity issues and the substantial increase in incoming cases and subject access requests, which take considerable time. These issues will be addressed within the next Annual Plan 2022.

DJ summarised the pleasing progress towards delivering the ambitions and actions within the four year strategy Stronger Together, confirming that a full progress report would be reported more comprehensively to the Board in January 2022.

There was a discussion around the capacity within the Governance team. It was agreed to keep the resource within this team under close review to avoid over-burdening the team next year.

The Board noted the large and growing number of unique visitors to the Go Paddling website, the 77% membership retention rate and the overall coaching satisfaction rate achieved during 2021.

JC on behalf of the Board commended the staff and committees on their focus throughout the year to deliver some exceptional work in a difficult covid environment.

The Board noted and formally approved the Annual Report for 2020/21.

10. Annual Plan 2022

DJ referred the Board to the detailed Annual Plan 2021-22 shared in the Board google drive.

He confirmed that the Plan had been developed in the context of the new strategy consultation with members and stakeholders. There were some exciting projects planned for 2022 outlined in the paper, all of which had been aligned to the budget.

DJ expressed confidence that the plan could be delivered but that it was once again a challenging plan and that additional staff resources would need to be allocated to manage its delivery.

The Board noted and approved the Annual Plan 2021/22.

11. Finance Report

SH presented the finance report and indicated that the projected year end surplus was in the region of £1.1m. This was higher than the £965k forecast in the report due to the slight increase in membership, club affiliation and coaching income, since the report had been shared.

SH outlined the headlines from the accounts;

- Operating overheads ran lower than usual due to ongoing covid implications
- Additional funds were allocated to the discipline committees that travelled internationally, although the grant allocation overall will likely be lower than originally forecast
- The £60k provision reserved for the branding project was not spent
- Membership income in November was just in excess of the budget of £88k. The membership retention rate in November was 96%.
- The forecast surplus would increase the level of reserves to £1.8m which is £800k over the top investment level, providing the organisation with an unprecedented degree of financial security to allow for investment in the future
- The Finance and Audit committee are reviewing whether the membership apportionment approach is still the most appropriate method on the treatment of deferred income, following the sharp growth in membership income over the last 2 years. Their recommendation and any potential impact on reserves will be included in the year end papers, due for Board approval in January 2022.

The Board congratulated the team on achieving the remarkable level of company reserves in such a short time frame.

SH confirmed that British Canoeing had received a planning figure from Sport England of 150k more than the last cycle, but this was contingent on the final submission. The Phase 2 funding submission deadline was 17 December 2021.

The Board received and formally approved the Finance Report and thanked SH, MB and the Finance & Audit Committee for achieving the unprecedented results.

12. Budget 2021-22

SH presented the British Canoeing Budget for 2021-2022 which projected a modest surplus of £14k. The key principle of the budget had been the reinvestment of the 2020-21 surplus back into the organisation over the next four years to deliver the ambitions of the new strategy.

It was confirmed that the budget had been developed in line with the Annual Plan 2022 and was based on the following:

- Membership income budgeted at a prudent level and assumes that the current membership total of 90,705 decreases to a more modest level of 72,570 members.
- Coaching income forecast as growing based on new economic coaching model

- The establishment of a Stronger Together Fund of £250k in 2021 (£550k in total 2022-26) for affiliated community, competitive or recreational paddling clubs and groups
- Recruitment of additional staff capacity across the organisation prioritised by specific risk and opportunities
- Overheads return to a “normal” year
- The talent programme underspend 2017-21 of £220k to be retained to fund future activity. £20k has been included in the 21/22 budget with the remaining £200k allocated across the next 3 years.
- British Canoeing to return to break even by the end of 2025/26 should all financial assumptions be met.

MB summarised the discussions that had taken place at the Finance & Audit Committee meeting in relation to the prudent nature of the income within the budget. The budget had been amended following the meeting but it was agreed that the income stream was difficult to predict even though the cost base is effectively quite fixed. A relatively small adjustment in membership figures can have a huge impact on the organisation. It was noted that the budget is most lean within the first two quarters of the financial year which forces us to earn the money before it is spent.

It was agreed to bring a discussion document to Board in January about how the Stronger Together fund will work prior to its launch in March 2022.

DJ confirmed that British Canoeing had been operating with significantly fewer staff during 2017-21 than in 2013-2017. It was important now to invest in some key positions given that British Canoeing is now a very different organisation than it was in 2017, with more than 90,000 members.

On behalf of the board JC commended the work of the staff team and Finance & Audit Committee in putting together a well-judged and realistic budget.

The Board received and unanimously approved the Budget for 2021-22.

13. Risk Management Report

SH highlighted three significant risks identified with a risk rating of 20 or more:

- Safety is trending upwards due to the significant growth in our membership of new and inexperienced paddlers.
- We received notification from Serco on 11 November that due to changes in the relationship between Serco, the Leisure Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council, Serco intend to recharge business rates to us (circa £26.5k per annum). This is a change to the terms of our lease. (new risk)
- Challenges in agreeing liability insurance as the rates had substantially increased due to the increase in the number of members of British Canoeing and two recent high

profile safety incidents. SH confirmed a reduced limit on the Director and Officers liability Policy cover for British Canoeing.

There was a discussion around insurance market trends more generally and the impact of this on sporting NGBs. The Board agreed to accept the revised terms of the D&O liability policy.

It was discussed and agreed to amend the risk level around the leadership structure in the Sprint and Para programme to previous levels, as the new Performance Director had not yet been appointed.

It was agreed to bring back the discussion around club coaches and leaders operating without qualifications to the Board meeting in January.

The Board received, noted and approved the risk report.

14. Committee Reports

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

14.1. Finance & Audit Committee

It was reported that the committee are in the process of modelling scenarios for the membership income recognition policy ahead of the next meeting in January. The Board noted Craig Wagstaff's resignation as an independent advisor, and thanked him for his service to the committee. An interim appointment would be sought from within the Board.

14.2 HR & Remuneration Committee

BK pointed to the minutes shared in the google drive. The work of the committee now focused on management development, competency, EDI, recruitment practices and pension arrangements.

14.3 Governance & Risk Committee

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

14.4. Nominations Committee

The annual Nominations Committee meeting took place on 09 November 2021. The papers were made available in the google drive. The Board approved the search consultancy to manage the recruitment of the CEO role.

14.5 Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)

No updates were received.

14.6 Canoe Wales

It was reported that there were a couple of safeguarding cases ongoing that had highlighted concerns around the effectiveness of procedural processes between CW and BC. The UK Agreement outlines jurisdiction in such cases and this would be picked up in the review of the UK Agreement at the next meeting of the Board in January.

It was noted that JC was due to meet the Chair of Canoe Wales in mid-December.

DW confirmed his intention to stand down from the British Canoeing Board at the AGM in March 2022. Canoe Wales were due to nominate a replacement shortly.

14.7 Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)

CANI had submitted their bid to secure Sport Northern Ireland funding for the next financial year. They were expected to receive notice of their indicative award by February. CANI had finished the first strategy consultation with members and were due to release the first draft shortly. The AGM was scheduled for 8 December whereby SC would stand for re-election in his final term.

14.8 Safety Advisory Panel

The latest report had been shared within the Board pack. The Board noted that none of the fatalities that had occurred this year were directly related to members of British Canoeing or the National Associations. The Board welcomed increased efforts to direct people towards using the incident reporting tool. The Board asked for clarification around Para 2.8 – during 2021 one safety alert and two guidance sheets were issued. It was agreed to ask Lee Pooley to clarify with the Chair who will share with the Board.

The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

15. Any Other Business

GS reported that UK Sport hosted an international relations meeting on 19 November and that he was subsequently drafting a briefing sheet for our international reps group with Gemma Wiggs.

GS reported that he was due to attend a gender equality and international sports governance meeting on 8 December.

It was noted that the World Games are taking place in Birmingham, Alabama in the US in July 2022 and it may present a good PR opportunity for British Canoeing.

16. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors