
SUNDAY 04 DECEMBER 2022 AT 10:00

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
Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Nick Donald (ND)	Independent Director
Bronagh Kennedy (BK)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Zoey Rowe (ZR)	Director nominated by English Forum
Greg Spencer (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ashley Metcalfe (AM)	CEO

Also In Attendance:

Dee Paterson (DP)	President
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Rob Knott (RK)	Director of Communications (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Lee Pooley (LP)	Director of Coaching & Qualifications (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Nancy Squires (NS)	Director of Governance (<i>Partial attendance, virtual</i>)
Keir Worth (KW)	Director of Paddlesport (<i>Partial attendance, virtual</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everybody for attending. He especially welcomed BK, who was attending her final Board meeting as a British Canoeing Director.

JC advised that several colleagues would join the meeting throughout proceedings including Lee Pooley, Director of Coaching & Qualifications who had joined during the morning for Items 06 and 07, the Coach Licensing paper and the Annual Safety Report. Rob Knott, Director of Communications would join us again for the Brand Update after lunch. He also confirmed that Nancy Squires, Director of Governance, would join virtually for items 08, the Annual Safeguarding Report; and Item 09, the EDI Strategy. Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport would virtually present Item 18, the World Class Performance report.

JC stated that in trying to move towards the recommendations from the Board evaluation review, some changes to the running order of the agenda had been agreed with the CEO to ensure most decision items were taken up front whilst also managing executive time.

2. Apologies

None received.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Minutes of FB81

The Minutes of FB81 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting [Post meeting note - the location of the meeting at Lee Valley is clearly shown in the footer].

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

There were no further matters arising.

20. Board Schedule 2023

JC moved straight to item 20, the Board meeting schedule for 2023 referring to the revised paper tabled at the meeting which proposed a mix of virtual and in person meetings with regular standing items distributed across the meetings;

2023

- Sunday 29 January (Hybrid meeting)
- Saturday 11 March (In person meeting to follow AGM, HPP Nottingham)
- Tuesday 18 April (Virtual, EDI training, evening)
- Wednesday 07 June (In person, London combined with Parliamentary event)
- Tues 18 July (Virtual, Risk Management training, evening)
- Friday 22 September (In person, Lee Valley)
- Tuesday 17 October (Virtual, Financial Management & Controls training, evening)
- Saturday 02 December and Sunday 03 December (In person with SLT working session, Nottingham)

The Board discussed the schedule noting that it was good to see what was planned ahead. JC stated that with three new Board members to be confirmed at the forthcoming AGM a meeting in person to follow would be ideal. The Board agreed that Directors standing down would not be required to attend the AGM in person.

The SCA reported that their board meetings often fall on a Tuesday so they would cross check those evening dates. A board member noted that there appeared to be a large gap between March and September. JC reassured the Board that he would provide regular monthly

updates to ensure big ticket items were not lost. A board member requested that opportunities to meet athletes were provided during the year.

The Board noted, commented and approved the proposed dates for Board meetings in 2023 and agreed to match the same principles in 2024.

15. CEO Report

JL moved straight to item 15, the CEO Report.

ICF Congress

AM reported that Congress itself had been positive. The ICF had shown an openness and appetite to be more transparent and engaging with its member federations. The new format enabled National Federations to interact with one another through a series of workshops. AM reported that he had been invited to present to share insight on our membership and commercial strategies. He also confirmed that the ICF introduced their draft strategic plan.

Athlete Medal Reallocation

AM updated the board in relation to the athlete medal reallocation. He reported that it had given British Canoeing an opportunity to raise further questions to the ICF in regards to other event results. British Canoeing were awaiting responses from the ICF, WADA and the IOC. AM confirmed he would keep the board updated.

Commercial Update and CEO Meetings

AM reported that British Canoeing were in lengthy discussions with a potential partner for the World Class Programme and were also progressing negotiations with other existing partners. AM reported that he had recently met with British Canoeing's more traditional trade partners to explore solutions of how we can work together. The Board noted that our clothing partners who provided the Hummel brand had gone into administration and this had presented a new opportunity to find an alternative partner. Hummel internationally continues. The board noted that this would not affect the kit for Paris 2024 as the athletes wear Team GB. AM thanked the board for their recent input into the latest commercial opportunity.

SUP Update

AM reported that the MAIB Haverford West report was due to be published on 8 December. He confirmed that the recognition panel for England had approved our submission to be the joint NGB for SUP and this was awaiting final sign off by Sport England. It was anticipated that the other Sports Councils would follow in line. AM reassured the board that this would not only be communicated but fully embedded in our strategy for SUP in 2023.

Staff Matters

AM reported that recruitment and retention remains a concern. The board noted that staff were predominantly leaving to progress their careers or due to a change in lifestyle, not because they do not like British Canoeing. AM thanked BK and the HR & Remuneration Committee for being able to award a cost of living bonus to all staff which had been hugely appreciated by colleagues. BK stated that there were lots of resources available to help

people mitigate against the cost of living crisis and highlighting these would also help show how much British Canoeing care. AM reported that a NGB talent pool would be discussed at the next CEO forum meeting.

JC reported that AM had recently completed the CEO 6 month probationary period and that a formal recommendation would be put to the HR & Remuneration Committee to confirm this period had been successfully completed with commendation.

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

16. Annual Plan 2021-22

AM presented the final report on delivery of the 2021-22 Annual Plan. The full Annual Plan was uploaded to the Google Drive for Board members that wished to see more detail.

AM reported that the team had achieved what we had hoped with a completion rate of 72% of all actions set out at the start of the year, equating to 76% of the balanced scorecard points.

AM shared that the two areas where results were not quite on target were within HR and Digital due to recruitment challenges and changing priorities respectively. The outstanding actions in these areas would be addressed next year.

AM stated that he was comfortable and confident that the HR team would catch up in 2023 now that they have a full staff team in place. The team had been asked to deliver a huge amount in 2022 alongside the ongoing challenges of recruitment and retention. The board noted that the staff survey results would be presented at the next meeting in January.

The Board welcomed targets within the annual plan that ensured the right balance between aspiration, challenge and achievement.

The Board commended the hard work involved in the delivery of the annual plan 2021-22 noting that sometimes delays often result in a better product being delivered.

The Board noted and approved the final progress report towards delivery of the Annual Plan 2021-22.

17. Annual Plan 2022-23

AM presented the Annual Plan 2022-23 for approval by the Board. The full Annual Plan was uploaded to the Google Drive for Board members that wished to see more detail.

AM highlighted the 3 key pillars of sporting excellence, recreational paddling and campaigns in setting the basis of the annual plan 2022-23.

AM outlined the 'Super Seven' – the seven key targets that had been identified as a major strategic priority for the whole organisation requiring cross team working and input;

- Deliver 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships (Sport)

- Develop Products, services and guidance to support Stand up Paddleboarding Community (Recreation)
- Continue to raise the profile, awareness and impact of British Canoeing to include corporate, sporting, political and environmental campaigns (Campaigns)
- Review and make improvements where required around due diligence of clubs, coaches, leaders, staff and volunteers (Operations)
- Increase commercial opportunities across the organisation and drive growth in independent income streams, including management of the BC re-brand (Operations)
- Publish a British Canoeing facilities strategy (Operations)
- People, Staff, Development, Wellbeing (Operations)

AM recognised that the annual plan for 2022-23 is challenging, yet realistic.

The Board commended the content and shape of the annual plan for 2022-23. A board member offered to assist in creating opportunities to enter into more strategic partnership with access partners.

The Board noted that the dates of the annual plan 2022-23 align to the financial year, starting on 1 November. AM wished to start the process earlier in 2023.

The Board welcomed more creative and imaginative thinking to respond to the spike in recreational paddling. AM confirmed that British Canoeing engage with non-members through social media channels, word of mouth and via clubs. AM stated that through our communications, marketing and campaign work, reaching the active independent paddler should improve in 2023.

The Board discussed the value proposition for membership and welcomed a more direct link to member benefits. AM outlined additional membership benefits that were identified through the recent membership survey.

There was a brief discussion around EDI and the label of the ‘recreational paddler’.

The Board noted and approved the Annual Plan 2022-23.

13. Budget 2022-23

SH presented the 2022/23 financial budget and 3 Year forecast which projected a surplus of £35,640.

SH outlined the fundamental principles underpinning the budget that had been developed in line with the annual plan 2022-23;

- Significant inflation budgeted within the overhead base of the organisation (£108k) in addition to non-grant funded staff inflation (£100k) and £96k to grant funded staff.

- Membership income budgeted at 90k members (93,109 members as at 4 December) and a £2 price increase (significantly less than inflation) to come into effect on 1 March 2023
- Earned income assumptions; coaching income forecast at £95k and commercial at £65k
- The Stronger Together fund included with a budgeted increase of £150K
- Under current financial commitments (both income and overheads) the budget projects a trading surplus of £378k
- New investment of £343k included as a separate line item in the budget split across 4 main investment areas;
 - Additional capacity and support into existing teams
 - Recreational paddling & safety
 - The Whyte report and sustainability
 - Earned income generation (Commercial strategy)

SH reported that the branding project had been removed from the core budget. It is proposed that the reserves from 2021-22 that exceed the reserve policy are to be utilised to fund the branding project. SH expected to bring this back to the Board in early spring for more formal review and authorisation.

ND stated that the budget is bold and ambitious especially in the context of the UK and world economic financial position. He highlighted that in approving the budget, the board must acknowledge there is risk appetite as additional income will be required going forward. He relayed that the Finance & Audit Committee are happy to support the budget.

The Board discussed the budget for 2022-23. AM stated that he was comfortable with the budget and it was important to have stretched targets that were both challenging but realistic and achievable. SH reassured the board that we carefully monitor membership and its correlation to the weather and react appropriately. A board member suggested that we remain flexible in relation to investment into people. The board acknowledged that we now have a surplus and therefore more financial resilience.

The Board noted and formally approved the Budget for 2022-23.

14. Finance Report

SH presented the finance report pointing to the 2021/22 financial year end accounts and the finance income recognition policy.

SH reported that the revised financial forecast for the 2021-22 financial year is £541K surplus, lower than the £697k reported in the paper due to;

- The change in income recognition policy having a financial implication on the accounts
- Retaining some of the Sport England funding, as agreed with Sport England

SH noted that British Canoeing generated more income this year than last year but overheads were higher (by 21%) partly due to normal activity resuming post covid.

SH highlighted that the British Canoeing committee accounts had not yet completed consolidation. SH advised that the financial audit starts on 12 December 2022.

Income Recognition Policy

SH outlined the background of the current policy based on the principle of benefit apportionment and the portion of membership income recognised immediately is based on management judgement. This year, SH confirmed that the Finance and Audit Committee have recommended that the policy is changed to one of full deferment. SH summarised the advantages of moving to such an approach including that is a simpler, more traditional approach that auditors generally prefer. It would make us more comparable with other NGBs and allow us a buffer against financial volatility.

The Board noted the impact on reserves by adopting the revised policy and making a prior year adjustment in the accounts (-£1.2m) but were reassured that British Canoeing would still exceed the highest level of reserves by 10%. ND assured the board that changing the income recognition policy in this way was reliable, relevant and sustainable. The major impact on the accounts is in the year that the change is made.

JC commended the team on the very pleasing set of year-end financial accounts.

The Board received and formally approved the Finance Report and approved the adoption of a new policy on income recognition.

12. Risk Management Report

The Board took the risk report by exception.

The Board received and noted the risk report.

10. Environmental Sustainability Strategy

SH presented item 10, the final draft of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy “Protecting the Places we Paddle”.

SH outlined the recommendation in the paper to pledge our support for the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework which mirrors nicely to our strategy.

The board discussed the further commitments contained in section 3 of the report;

- Setting criteria for commercial sponsorships
- Financial commitment to sustainability

The Board expressed a desire to partner with organisations that share our environmental commitments. A Board member suggested that consideration is given to encourage and incentivise clubs to adopt more environmental sustainable ways of working and activity.

SH reported that we have partly established our baseline data for carbon but this work was due to be completed in 2023.

The Board welcomed the proposals in section 3 and pledged their support to lead by example in advocating and delivering the strategy.

The Board discussed the proposals in the paper and;

- **Approved British Canoeing's pledge to support the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework**
- **Reached a consensus to positively support the further commitments contained in section 3 of the report**
- **Approved the British Canoeing Environmental Strategy, "Protecting the Places we Paddle".**

7. Annual Report from the Safety Advisory Panel

JC welcomed LP to the meeting to present the annual report from the Safety Advisory Panel.

LP summarised the report highlighting the key themes from the year.

- British Canoeing focus has shifted over the past 12 months to new and novice paddlers
- British Canoeing have been working collaboratively with retailers, partners, paddlers and agencies to deliver safety messaging at the point of sale
- The fatalities recorded during the year through various reporting systems were related to solo paddling, sea kayaking or SUP
- We can raise awareness but we are not assuming any reasons why
- A range of incidents had been reported through British Canoeing's incident reporting system with the majority classified as near misses. This is an area of focus for 2023 as it is believed that this is a low indication of what is actually happening.
- The RNLI reported a 173% increase in the call out rate for Stand up Paddleboarders.

LP highlighted that the statistics within the report are only to November 2022. He confirmed that the annual report would be refined and circulated more publicly to promote, engage and encourage more positive safety messaging.

The Board requested that patterns of data and correlations are captured to analyse whether our safety messaging has positively impacted the overall statistics. The board noted that although there had been no increase in incidents, the number of people paddling is far higher now.

The Board requested that consideration be given to whether safety should be a standing item at the front of future board meetings.

The Board thanked the Safety Advisory Panel for their work in 2022.

The Board noted and formally received the annual safety report.

6. Licensing of coaches and leaders providing paddling activity

JC invited LP to help guide the Board through a proposal for all British Canoeing affiliated Clubs, Disciplines and National Teams that support and provide paddling activity to hold the relevant and up-to-date certification and be 'licensed' within the British Canoeing database.

The Board noted the proposed cut-off date and the need for a transition period to allow for volunteers to gain the appropriate qualifications and for a new club affiliation agreement to align to this proposal.

The Board fully discussed the proposals in the paper and the potential impact on clubs, volunteers and membership, as well as the reputational risk to British Canoeing in not implementing such an approach.

It was noted that British Canoeing were one of the last organisations to have this in place. The Board supported the need to introduce an effective and reliable database of coaches and leaders but wished to ensure that it was implemented sensitively to bring the clubs on the journey with us.

AM stated the importance of providing relevant qualifications and proactive communications to all stakeholders so all involved could really understand the overall safety and safeguarding benefits that would ensure all paddlers would be given safe, fun environments to enjoy their sport and recreational pastime.

The Board discussed the proposals in the paper and;

- **Approved as a majority the principles outlined in 2.1 as a mandatory requirement (with the exception of one Board Member who rejected the principles)**
- **Agreed to address how the proposals are implemented through a first phase inclusive implementation plan.**

11. Brand Update

RK presented an update on the branding project following on from the last Board meeting in September. RK outlined the latest developments since the recent meeting with National Association CEOs and shared the two preferred recommendations.

KC reported that Canoe Wales preferred option 1 (Paddle UK) as opposed to option 2 (Paddlesport UK) primarily due to the recreational element and potential marketing opportunities. She also shared that the governance structure (British/English identity) remained a concern, as well as the cost.

It was noted that the SCA and CANI were due to host board meetings in the forthcoming week to discuss brand. AM reported that minimal negative feedback had been given at the UK CEO meetings.

RK reported that phase 2 would involve going out to tender to scope a new brand identity while working closely with Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Performance team.

There was a discussion around sharing a brand update with members at the forthcoming AGM to provide some context around the facts that underpin the reasons for change.

AM reported that the ICF were interested to see how we progress this project as they too have been using the term paddling more often in their communications.

The Board requested that due diligence is undertaken on similar brand names and that we explore registering Paddle UK with Companies House and elsewhere as an initial protection.

The Board noted the contents of the brand update and;

- **Approved to move to Phase 2 of the branding project**
- **Agreed to be mindful of National Association preferences**
- **Agreed to provide a brand update at the AGM in 2023.**

9. EDI Strategy

JC moved straight to item 09. He invited NS to provide an update on the progress of British Canoeing's strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

NS briefly presented the final draft of the EDI strategy and confirmed the intention to publish in mid-December.

The Board generally liked the overall look, feel and content of the strategy. There was a discussion around the distinction between UK and English elements. NS advised that this had been captured in the feedback and would be referenced within the strategy.

The Board wished to ensure that the visual presentation of the final design meets the accessibility needs of all and that the use of logos is consistent throughout.

The Board noted the contents of the update and approved the EDI Strategy for launch in December 2022.

8. Annual Safeguarding Report

NS provided an overview of progress, challenges and highlights in the area of safeguarding over the year 31 October 2021 to 01 November 2022.

The Board commended the report and were reassured that our safeguarding case management practices appeared robust following an historic review of safeguarding cases. The review captured specific recommendations in relation to cases in an action plan. The Board noted that the Governance and Risk Committee continue to receive updates on the progress of the action plan approved to address these action areas.

The Board formally received and noted the Annual Safeguarding report.

18. World Class Performance Report

Keir Worth reported key updates from the World Class Performance Programme. The Athlete List was shared as Appendix 1 to the paper.

Slalom

- Athletes settled and established in training blocks
- Coaches and staff team returned from a break in programme activity refreshed
- Overall, the team and new podium technical coach were settled
- The Slalom Committee and British Canoeing had started work on a slalom development plan for the wider discipline.

Paracanoe

- The programme remains focused with a well-run functioning team
- Work continues on the Talent-ID programme to bring more athletes onto the programme.

Sprint

- There were no appeals submitted following athlete selection onto the sprint programme this year
- Various changes had been adopted in the programme to encourage greater inclusivity and athlete recognition
- Meetings had taken place with clubs
- Progress against the sprint strategy will be reported before the end of the year
- A new programme manager will be appointed before Christmas
- Interviews for the vacant men's podium coach position will take place before Christmas.

Non-Olympic Disciplines

- Work is underway to review programmes, budgets and plans for 2023 and to widen the coach development programme.

KW highlighted that Paris 2024 Olympic qualification would be determined next season. There was a discussion around the board recognising the need for priority boats and ensuring resources are allocated in the best possible way to prioritise the boats with the greatest chance of success.

The Board commended Appendix 2, the colour supplement to the paper that summarised the medals won by the British Canoeing team throughout the season. KW reported that the Chair and Director of Paddlesport have written personally to each of the medal winners which had received a positive response from athletes.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

19. Committee and National Association Reports

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

19.1. Finance & Audit Committee

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. ND stated that the committee were now looking at optimising the return on excess cash and would bring some proposals to the Board at a future meeting.

19.2. HR & Remuneration Committee

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. BK confirmed that good progress was being made with a robust work plan in place.

19.3. Governance & Risk Committee

The Board referred to the written papers circulated in advance. MK confirmed that work was underway and on track to review the various policies and paperwork, most of which required only small amendments rather than revision.

19.4. Nominations Committee

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. JC advised that work was underway to recruit a new Independent Director to the Board to replace BK.

19.5. Scottish Canoe Association

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. SL reported that following the recent AGM, the composition of the SCA board was now majority female. SL reported that Amber Maslen had been appointed as the new President. The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Tuesday 6 December.

19.6. Canoe Wales

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

19.7. CANI

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance. SC reported that CANI will be notified of their Sport NI funding for 2023 before Christmas.

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

21. Any Other Business

JC, on behalf of the board, formally recognised the hard work, contribution and commitment of Bronagh Kennedy who had served on the Board since 2017. BK thanked the board for their support and wished British Canoeing all the very best under Ashley's leadership.

22. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors