
SUNDAY 13 JUNE 2021 AT 09:30 – BY ZOOM

MINUTES**In Attendance:**

John Coyne CBE (JC)	Chair and Independent Director (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
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 (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Dee Paterson (DP)	President
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales
David Joy (DJ)	CEO (<i>Partial attendance</i>)

Also In Attendance:

Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Helena Russo (HR)	EDI Lead (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
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

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 confirmed that Keir Worth (KW) had joined the meeting to present the World Class Performance Report, in the absence of Paul Ratcliffe who was travelling with the Slalom team in Prague. He confirmed that Gemma Wiggs (GW) would join the meeting to present item 07, the International Events and International Relations Strategy. Helena Russo (HR) would present Item 8, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Bronagh Kennedy (BK) for the morning session due to a family commitment.

3. Declarations of Interest

DP reiterated that she was hoping to be a member of the freestyle team which may have involvement in the Freestyle World Championships (selections and event) as an athlete or coach.

JC and DJ would leave the meeting during item 06 as both were deemed to have an interest.

There were no further declarations received. JC stated that the Declarations of Interest forms had now been uploaded to the shared Board Google drive for transparency.

4. Minutes of FB73

The Minutes of FB73 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting subject to the following amendments;

- Page 2 - Declarations of interest to be amended to reflect that DP may have involvement in the Freestyle World Championships (selection & event) as an athlete and coach
- Page 5 - there should be a strengthening of the wording regarding the discussion around the contribution to World Class Programme to reflect that there was a long conversation on this matter and a commitment to demonstrate clear transparency to the membership. GS agreed to provide a form of words to Charmaine for the Chair to approve.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

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

JC vacated the Chair to RB for Item 6, the World Class Performance report.

[JC and DJ left the meeting]

6. World Class Performance

The Board discussed a confidential matter relating to the World Class Programme.

7. International Events Strategy and International Relations Update

[JC and DJ re-joined the meeting]

RB handed back the Chair to JC.

JC welcomed Gemma Wiggs (GW) to the meeting to present item 7.

International Events Strategy

GW confirmed that the 2022 ICF Freestyle World Championships and 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships were both progressing well and on track.

GW outlined the aspirational future events programme being considered by the British Canoeing Events Board, which included a blend of Olympic and non-Olympic events. All identified events were currently being scoped, explored and assessed for feasibility.

It was noted that Italy had not yet been granted the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships, following the cancellation of the 2021 event and so the opportunity was still there for a UK/Irish bid.

The Board considered several events that were being explored and discussed their appetite for hosting an event every year with the associated resource demands and financial risks. The Board agreed that a bid for the 2026 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships in Belfast presented a positive opportunity to work together with the national federation in Ireland and with CANI.

The Board recognised the importance of building the capability to host events well and to invest in facilities and volunteers to do this. The Board agreed that each of the events within the draft programme should be further explored and that the feasibility analysis should be completed for each for consideration by the BCE Board and this Board in September. It was noted that the earliest expression of interest date for any event was November 2021.

International Relations Strategy

In line with the UK Sport International Relations investment strategy timelines, a 2021-25 British Canoeing International Relations Strategy had been developed. The ambitions of the International Relations Strategy are to:

- Strengthen and develop personal relations with key ICF and NF representatives
- Expand and further engage CEO/Secretary General network for the sharing of best practice
- Build a strong influential relationship with the new ICF President (following election at the 2021 Congress)
- influence modernisation of ICF and ECA governance, consultation with NFs and transparency of decision making.

GW confirmed that following an approach by the outgoing Chair, Jane Gibson had been nominated to stand as Chair of the ICF Medical and Anti-Doping Committee, should Tim Brabants not be standing. The Board discussed the nominations process for ICF positions.

International Team Travel Covid-19 Policy

GW provided an update on Non-Olympic events team travel, confirming that for the 2021 season, decisions around British team entry into international events would be taken on an event by event basis. UK Sport had confirmed that unless someone is travelling under the elite sport exemption, any trip would be regarded as leisure or recreation. Consequently, travel of non-Olympic or junior slalom, sprint teams to international competition would be

classed as leisure travel and so British Canoeing would be unable to support participation in events in amber or red countries. The Board requested that the status of the other Home Nations is checked for consistency with that policy and clarified after the meeting. GW acknowledged the lack of international events experience available to athletes this season and confirmed that other development opportunities to send teams into competition were being looked at.

It was reported that British Canoeing were planning to host a Covid and Brexit customs workshop for those teams travelling abroad this year.

JC on behalf of the Board congratulated GW for her selection to the UK Sport Event Leaders Programme.

The Board noted the progress of the International Events and International Relations Strategy and approved the nomination of Jane Gibson as Chair of the ICF Medical and Anti-Doping Committee.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update

JC welcomed Helena Russo (HR) to the meeting to present the report.

HR took the paper as read, highlighting the key points;

- The Inclusion Advisory Group (AIG) recently held its first meeting chaired by John McCalla-Leacy
- Several areas of work across several teams had provided good examples of how we are working to ensure we are embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into existing and new processes across the organisation

HR welcomed questions and comments from the Board.

HR elaborated on the staff training that had been delivered in the spring via a 3hr online webinar. Some great conversations took place during those training sessions and the feedback received at the end of the course had been very positive. An annual refresher course was planned for 2022. A Board member suggested that it may be worthwhile exploring the creation of an EDI product for others to access and offered a connection to the EDI lead in their organisation. HR confirmed that a suite of training was planned to continue professional development and this would be rolled out to include board members and other volunteers.

In 12 months' time, success within EDI would be measured by;

- obtaining a better understanding of our membership demographics to impact changes within key communicates and under-represented groups
- Embedding EDI within the new strategy underpinned by an equality action plan to drive progress
- Developing and launching a new eLearning module to introduce EDI to the paddling community

- Working with diverse groups of people across all aspects of the organisation
- Collaboration with the IAG to integrating processes

HR confirmed that a calendar would be created to review and update British Canoeing policies and procedures to reflect EDI work.

HR stated that a key organisational ambition for British Canoeing would be to achieve the Advanced Level of the Equality Standard for Sport. The standards are currently under review, and it is likely that we may have substantial work to undertake before achieving the Advanced Level later in 2021 or 2022.

Board members welcomed the opportunity to promote and take part in EDI initiatives.

JC thanked HR for the excellent update.

The Board noted the contents of the EDI update.

9. CEO Report

Covid-19 resilience and Return to Office

DJ confirmed that we were awaiting the Government's announcement on the easing of lockdown restrictions due on 14 June, but that due to the increased risk of transmission in the office at the point of teams going to the Games, the return to office date had now been pushed back from 1 July to 1 September. This would also allow for all of the planning required to ensure best use of time while staff are in the office.

Membership

Membership had increased to over 77,000 during the past week. A further more detailed update would be provided within the Finance Report.

UK Sports Paris Funding

The representation to UK Sport to contest the funding for extreme slalom and paracanoe had now concluded. No further investment had been granted for the Paracanoe programme but circa £100k had been awarded to Extreme Slalom in year one with a review scheduled towards the end of the year. The Chair relayed details of his conversation with the Chair of UK Sport where he had voiced our significant concerns about the Paracanoe funding decision.

Dorney

DJ confirmed that it had now been agreed to terminate our contract at Dorney to hand back the facility to Eton at no cost to ourselves. They had agreed to us retaining a boat store on site and to a 50% reduction in water fees for planned use in the Paris cycle. Our agreement will terminate at a date to be agreed towards the end of this year.

Sport England

It was reported that we were starting to plan for our Sport England funding submission and would host a visit from a senior SE Director to HPP on 1 July.

World Surf Kayak Championships Bude 2022

It was reported that we have agreed to support Bude Canoe Club to host the World Surf Kayak Championships in 2022 through a small cash injection and staff support.

Case Management

The Board noted the progress on an ongoing case involving a legal claim on British Canoeing.

DJ confirmed that the historical safeguarding folders had now been initially reviewed, and that further consideration was required around some of the cases. Progress would be shared with the Governance & Risk committee by September.

A Board member noted that flexible working arrangements can provide a competitive edge for recruitment and retention. DJ stated that the policy would be kept under review to ensure staff continue to work optimally when they return to the office.

The Board requested that they receive their new British Canoeing Hummel kit shortly.

DJ updated the Board on the status of our commercial trade partnerships and confirmed that the team were working collaboratively to maximise those opportunities.

The Board requested that DJ shared appreciation to staff on behalf of the Board for their hard work and extent to which momentum has been maintained throughout the pandemic.

The Board noted the CEO Report.

10. Recognition of Stand Up Paddle Boarding

JC invited DJ to highlight the key headlines from the paper.

DJ reported that British Canoeing, working with the other National Associations had begun the process of seeking formal recognition from the respective four Home Country Sports Councils to be recognised as a governing body responsible for Stand Up Paddle Board (SUP).

British Canoeing were currently defining the scope of recognition for SUP to include inland and coastal waterways, for qualifications and British events and Championships and for entry to ICF competitions. This had been shared with the national associations. Discussions were now planned with Surfing England who had been granted some rights previously for SUP.

DJ stated that as part of this recognition process, Board level support is sought to show that the Board of British Canoeing fully supports that the Sports Councils should recognise British Canoeing and the other National Associations as NGBs responsible for SUP within the UK.

The Board noted and approved the recommendation as reported in the paper.

11. Board Ways of Working

JC invited DJ to introduce the paper that had been produced by the Head of Governance and encouraged members to express their views on the three key areas to explore pertaining to a Board Improvement Plan;

It was noted that there were two external factors that may impact on Board ways of working:

- The new code of Sports Governance - due to launch imminently
- External Board Evaluation – likely to remain a requirement of the new code and had not been undertaken recently. This would be scoped through the Governance & Risk Committee and commissioned soon to provide a framework to create an improvement plan for the Board.

Board Composition

There was a comprehensive discussion around the composition of the Board particularly in relation to the balance of home nations representatives, the nomination process and the inclusion of a Board Member nominated directly by the membership.

A number of key points were raised including;

- It is important that British Canoeing, as a member organisation, enables the membership to have a strong voice on the Board and that the AGM process ratifies Board appointments
- Board accountability for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) is diminished if the Board itself has no way of influencing its composition
- Recognition that leadership at Board level is not reflective of society as a whole
- The Board needs to take steps to embrace diversity and inclusion
- Specialist roles from Independent members has worked well
- The Board's primary purpose is to govern offering oversight, scrutiny and review, rather than management
- It would be now timely to review the purpose and structure of the English Forum
- It was recognised that the Disciplines Chairs group was working well
- Role of President requires clarity as it is often perceived differently by members and the Board (representative vs ambassadorial)
- Review and explore the process of Directors nominated from SCA, CW and CANI
- Consider succession planning

DJ summarised that this had been a very helpful first discussion as we start to consider the board improvement plan and this discussion would be further informed by the publication of the new code of Sports Governance and external board evaluation process.

Board Structure

There was a discussion around the Board's committee structure and it was agreed that it was working well but fine tuning was always possible. It was discussed that the Committees could play an enhanced scrutiny role in this next 4 years.

The pros and cons of the principle of Champion Board Members in areas such as safeguarding and EDI were discussed. Board members were encouraged to have wide interest across the organisation and to share a collective responsibility in scrutinising key areas of work.

The Board would welcome further conversations around this matter.

Board Effectiveness

There was a discussion around Board effectiveness including scrutiny, training, planning, stakeholder engagement and meeting frequency and duration.

The Board would welcome a year plan of agendas for the coming year, and meetings should have timed items and indications of which items are for noting, decision and strategic discussion.

As part of the external evaluation, the Board emphasised the importance of consulting SMT members as to their experience of Board and what they would like to see more or less of.

JC thanked members for good discussion and invited the Governance & Risk Committee to progress this item and to bring it back to a future meeting for further board discussion and approval.

The Board noted and commented on the report and;

- **confirmed the Governance and Risk Committee together with the Chair of the Board to be responsible for progressing the External Board evaluation, further consider the issues raised in this paper and to make recommendations to the Board later in 2021.**
- **noted and considered the Nominations Committee paperwork shared in the Google drive.**

12. First Draft Strategy 2022-25

JC introduced item 12 confirming that the draft Strategy 2022-25 will form a large piece of work over the next few months.

DJ pointed to the full first draft Strategy shared in the Google Drive that had already been developed in line with two member consultations in 2020 and most recently in May 2021. The Purpose and Vision had evolved to reflect Board discussions at the last meeting in March, but are still draft and require refinement.

DJ highlighted the importance of restating the significant progress made since the launch of the first strategy in 2017 as the consultation demonstrated that many members were still not aware of the some of the progress and new developments.

The 2022-25 Strategy would have a greater focus than in recent years in the following areas;

- embedding what has already been created and engaging members and paddlers with our products and services
- embracing the opportunities to engage and promote SUP and other accessible crafts
- promoting health, safety and wellbeing

- Supporting volunteers
- Setting out actions to further increase non grant income by 2025
- Aligning with the Sport England strategy to maximise funding to reinvest back into the strategy.

The next phase in the process of developing the new strategy 2022-25 (Phase 3, June- 30 September) would involve consultation within British Canoeing committees and advisory groups, national associations, staff and internal working groups.

The Board will be invited to consider the second draft for approval at their next meeting.

JC relayed that he had attended the SMT Strategy day in May.

The Board recognised the work that had been achieved in the last four year strategy. The Board also emphasised the importance of the work around club engagement and club support and ensuring that the definition of “club” is clearly defined in the new strategy. The strategy should also include reference to making excellent the competition venues for domestic and international events.

A Board member recommended that the cross cutting theme of Safety is renamed to Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the direction of travel of the draft Strategy and to receive the second draft at the next meeting.

13. Finance Report

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

- Membership income in May had achieved £1.3m (£350k above budget) despite the adverse weather and new members not quite offsetting the lack of renewing members
- Retention average throughout May had been 60%
- Record income figures were achieved on the May day bank holiday which saw 551 new members and 423 renewing members
- On average, 1000 new members are joining every 3 days
- The membership figure as at 10 June was 77,433
- In June, Membership income had achieved £220K to 10 June (£5k higher than the entire budget for the month)
- Retention rate in June to date had been 75%
- There had been an increase in family, female and younger paddlers joining British Canoeing
- Weather directly impacts on membership trends
- Operations team due to meet later in June to review re-investment projects

- The Finance & Audit Committee reviewed some financial decisions earlier than planned, including the staff pay review and increased investment for our competition disciplines.
- Trends for the year still unknown with caution noted in the potential volatility of the 77K membership numbers.

A Board Member noted that whilst it remains important to retain the strong reserves position that we had built up to maintain the healthy financial position of the organisation, a robust plan to reinvest some of the surplus was now required.

The Board welcomed a recommendation from the Finance & Audit committee on whether changes to our year-end calendar may be worth considering to allow for the bulk of our income to arrive towards the start of the year to enable quick, assured decision making.

It was noted that some members who are competitive paddlers may have let their membership lapse due to lack of competition opportunities caused by covid.

SH reported that 170k had been ring fenced for competition disciplines within the 2020-21 budget, partly to support what was thought to be an anticipated year of international competition. To date, very little had been awarded. SH confirmed that work was currently underway with each Competition Discipline to understand how the money would be spent on grass roots, participation development, talent and to support athletes.

It was observed that high membership numbers may be a direct consequence of the Government's restrictions around international travel.

DJ confirmed that approximately half of new members are not new to paddling, so our reach is expanding.

The Board received and approved the Finance Report.

14. Annual Plan Update

DJ reported on progress to June confirming that actions were tracking nicely against the plan as expected. DJ reported that a couple of items, such as the development of a facilities strategy, were behind schedule and corrective action would be applied to bring them back on track. The work around the Sports Resolution Action Plan would be prioritised and completed as soon as possible. DJ confirmed that rebrand had been incorporated into the UK Agreement discussions and would be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

The Board noted the progress in delivery of the Annual Plan 2021 at the half year stage.

15. Risk Management

SH reported that following recent lengthy discussions with SMT, no new emerging risks had been identified.

SH invited questions or comments from the Board. It was noted that all substantial risks had already been discussed within previous items.

SH confirmed that any adversities known prior to travel to Tokyo would likely not be covered by our current insurance policy and British Canoeing would therefore self-under write in such circumstances. This extra cost around international travel had been reflected in the World Class Performance.

JC thanked SH for the Risk report. The Board was assured that key risks were identified and being managed.

The Board received, noted and approved the risk report.

16. Committee Reports

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

16.1. British Canoeing Events Ltd

The Minutes of the BCE AGM and Board Meeting held in April had been shared in the Board Google drive.

16.2. Governance & Risk Committee

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

16.3 Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)

SL reported that he had missed the last Board meeting but that the next one was scheduled for late June. The SCA were fully engaged in the review of the UK Agreement and were keen to explore international travel opportunities for Junior athletes for later in the year.

16.4 Canoe Wales

For the first time in Canoe Wales history, membership had broken through the 3,000 barrier. The new CEO had settled into the role very quickly. The next Board meeting was due to take place on 8 July. A Board member commented on how well the booking system for Tryweryn had been received.

16.5 Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)

Membership had almost doubled since the lifting of lockdown restrictions from 500 to 1000 members. It was reported that CANI were currently in the process of reviewing their Board composition. Discussions were also taking place with Sport NI around funding and Executives were engaged in UK Agreement talks with the other National Associations.

16.6 Safety Advisory Panel (SAP)

The Minutes of the last meeting were included within the Board pack.

The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

17. Any Other Business

Historical Teams

It was reported that some retired Lee Valley Slalom team paddlers were seeking to conduct some interviews with retired British Canoeing paddlers for historical archives. DJ committed to improving the storage of historical archives and records for the benefit of the whole sport.

Board Member presence at Events

A board member raised some operational concerns that had been shared with him by a member. It was noted that any detailed issues raised directly with Board members at events should be referred to the Executive to be dealt with outside of board meetings.

DJ confirmed that the purpose, structure and composition of International Panels would be reviewed post Tokyo.

International Team Travel

DJ confirmed that communication would be due within the next week with decisions taken on an event by event basis.

18. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors