
SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2022 AT 12:30

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
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
Rob Knott (RK)	Director of Communications (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Rich Ramsdale (RR)	Head of England Talent (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Nancy Squires (NS)	Director of Governance (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Keir Worth (KW)	Director of Paddlesport (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Charmaine Gawler (CG)	Executive Assistant to the CEO

Apologies

Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Nick Donald (ND)	Independent Director
Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
Lisa Bryant (LB)	HR Director

1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting including a special welcome to Ashley Metcalfe who was joining his first Board meeting as CEO.

JC also welcomed Rich Ramsdale, Head of Talent, who had joined the meeting to present Item 06, England Talent Programme. He also confirmed that Nancy Squires would join the meeting for items 08 and 09, the Governance update and discussions around the Independence Performance Reviews along with Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport. KW would also stay to present item 10, the Staffing update on behalf of Lisa Bryant.

JC confirmed that Rob Knott, Director of Communications would join the meeting for Item 12, the branding project update.

JC proposed a modest change to the agenda to release KW for Freestyle preparations, taking items 09 and 10 directly after item 06.

2. Apologies

Several apologies were received in advance from Stephen Craig, Clare Dallaway, Nick Donald, Susan Hicks and Lisa Bryant.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Minutes of FB79

The Minutes of FB79 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

6. England Talent Club Programme Report

JC welcomed RR to the meeting to provide an update on the England Talent Programme including the Talent Club Partnership Programme.

RR presented the paper, outlining the success of the programme and also the key challenges faced by the system at the current time.

JC asked whether there was an opportunity to secure more talent funding given that participation levels were on the increase and still returning to pre-covid levels across many sports. RR confirmed that the team had explored this with Sport England at the time of the last submission but further direct investment was unlikely. KW reassured the Board that the team will always explore ways of finding new investment.

RR confirmed that the Backing the Best funding secured in the last cycle to help the paracanoe pathway would end shortly.

There was a discussion around talent pathways, the crossover between disciplines and the importance of knowledge sharing, particularly from the funded programmes into the non-Olympic disciplines. KW confirmed that a talent audit is ongoing across disciplines, the results of which will be available soon.

There was a discussion around inclusion and engaging the talent clubs in the EDI initiative. It was noted that geographical location also presents a challenge to widen participation across the population. The Board agreed that the talent club environment needs to be inclusive. RR confirmed that all talent clubs receiving funding have a requirement to work through the

quality assurance framework, including transparent EDI targets to help clubs achieve greater representation of the community in which they operate. The Board recognised the challenge.

There was a discussion around how to measure success of the Talent Club Partnership whether that be through coaches, family experience, business involvement or quality of the overall experience. Each Club will be assessed on their impact across two cycles. The Board wished to receive a report on progress, success and challenges of the Talent Club Partnership in late 2023.

RR confirmed that no actions were behind schedule on the talent inclusion plan but agreed to double check progress against the targets and inform the Board of any challenges that were beyond our control.

The Board thanked RR for the update and noted the contents of the report.

9. Independent Performance Reviews: IP and Women's Kayak Olympic Selection

JC welcomed NS to the meeting to present this item with KW. They provided a summary of two independent reviews completed between December 2021 and March 2022. Namely, a review into the British Canoeing International Panels and a review of the process of Canoe Sprint Women's Kayak Olympic Selection in 2021.

NS also provided a brief overview of steps already taken to embed recommendations into a revised appeals procedure which had been approved by the Governance and Risk Committee and published on 06 June 2022. NS stated that the procedure is now deemed more athlete friendly with appeals dealt with in a timelier manner.

There was a discussion around athlete appeals and selection. The board noted that it would take time to change the culture and that we wouldn't expect to see immediate changes. We needed to raise standards, set clear expectations and encourage greater affinity between athletes and coaches. NS confirmed that the grounds for appeal remain the same, with the powers of the panel restricted slightly.

It was highlighted that a process is in place if the Chair or a Board member is approached by somebody in relation to a decision that they themselves were involved in. The person must be directed through the proper process to speak with the Senior Independent Director or Chair of the Governance & Risk Committee for assurance on behalf of the board. The Board requested that the President remain independent in these circumstances and maintains a purely ambassadorial role.

JC stated that the external reviews undertaken were of high quality and that the Board can be assured our procedures are robust, sharper and more fit for purpose. JC thanked the Executive for sharing the full report in the papers.

The Board considered and approved the action plan recommended in the report and agreed to receive confirmation of completion at the December Board meeting via the Governance & Risk Committee.

10. Staffing Update – Recruitment, Retention & Staff Survey Results

JC invited KW to present the report on behalf of the HR Director, Lisa Bryant who had sent apologies for the meeting.

KW highlighted the key takeaways from the staff survey;

- Emerging from Covid had been a lot harder for staff than going in due to challenges around Covid fatigue.
- The lowest scoring questions were skewed by the results within the World Class Programme which were deeply impacted by staff changes through a real period of uncertainty.
- Workload balance remains an ongoing challenge, particularly within the WCP. The executive were committed to resolving these issues.
- Staff have started to spend more time together at on-the-water socials and in staff gatherings.

The Board were keen to benchmark the results against other NGBs to share learnings.

The Chair of the HR & Remuneration Committee confirmed that British Canoeing were not the only organisation to have seen engagement scores decrease through Covid as many organisations go through a period of readjustment.

AM confirmed that SLT were monitoring and evaluating hybrid working. He stated that British Canoeing employs really good people and finding a way to get the best out of them as individuals to produce smart outcomes would be crucial. He confirmed that the next staff survey would be circulated in early November with a report to Board shortly afterwards.

On behalf of the board, JC showed appreciation to all colleagues. He noted that the WCP had to show initiative and resilience during a busy season and finding new ways of working post Covid and Brexit.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

7. Recreational Update

SUP Update

AM confirmed that the official independent submissions for SUP NGB recognition across the home nations were made in March 2022 with the exception of CANI who were waiting for the negotiations with the Surf Association of Ireland to be concluded. He confirmed that the Sports Councils' Recognition Panel met on 20 June to consider the submission but at the time of the meeting, no immediate feedback had been received.

Paddler Code

AM provided an update on the new Paddler Code, an area identified as a priority from our members within the strategy consultation. He confirmed that the code aims to appeal to the broadest possible audience but especially those new to paddlesport. The code was developed

in partnership with Natural England and consulted on with a number of focus groups to produce a simple code of conduct that mirrors the Countryside Code strapline of 'Enjoy, Protect, Respect'. It has since been circulated to the Environment Agency, Canal & River Trust, National Trust and manufacturers to be white labelled by any of those partners.

There was a lengthy discussion around the consultation involved in producing the code and concern expressed over whether paddlers had been properly consulted. These views were noted. The board welcomed the safety messages included within the code and noted that it was predominantly aimed at new paddlers.

The Chair acknowledged the mixed views. The Board would like to see the Code launched amongst the paddling community in a way that maximises impact. The Chair stated that British Canoeing would expect paddlers to follow the code.

The Board noted the contents of the report and the progress made with the SUP submission. The Board endorsed the Paddler Code and recommended timely publication.

11. Governance Update

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

NS referred to the paper and the draft EDI strategy framework shared in advance emphasising how EDI was a key strategic priority for British Canoeing and a cross cutting theme in Stronger Together 2022-2026. NS stated that the revised Code for Sports Governance requires British Canoeing to have an ambitious and meaningful Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and it is intended that our EDI strategy and underpinning action plan will meet this requirement.

It was noted that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discussed British Canoeing's overall approach to Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) at a recent meeting and if it were possible or appropriate to capture our ESG framework within the EDI strategy.

The Board discussed transgender inclusion and competition. NS confirmed that we have a Transgender Competition Policy in place (due for renewal) that currently allows trans-women to compete in meaningful domestic competition and represent GB internationally, provided they have the minimum testosterone levels based on 2019 IOC guidance. It was noted that the IOC had passed policy responsibilities to individual international sporting federations but that the ICF do not yet have a transgender policy. AM stated that the ICF were likely to start their consultation and review of the transgender policy at the November Congress in Thailand. BC should not be out of line with ICF rulings.

There was a discussion around the term 'meaningful' competition within the wording of the current transgender policy. It was agreed to look at the sensitivity of language across the existing policy and to explore and address the wider issue of transgender inclusion outside of competition.

The Board considered and discussed the EDI Strategy and the draft strategic framework set out at Appendix 1. The Board noted and agreed that a final draft of the EDI strategy would be brought to the Board for approval prior to publication at the next meeting.

Sports Resolutions Action Plan

NS provided an update on further progress made against the Action Plan implemented to address the key findings and recommendations of the Sports Resolutions report published in March 2020.

The Board acknowledged the two modest outstanding actions and discussed a timeframe and process for completion of these actions and sign off by the Board.

The Board recognised the sheer extent of staff time and resources devoted to this Action Plan and thanked colleagues for their hard work.

The Whyte Review

NS confirmed that the Whyte Report had recently been published. It was agreed for the Board to receive the output of British Canoeing's review against the recommendations in the Whyte Report as a separate issue at the September Board meeting.

The Board considered the paper and noted the progress made against the action plan and;

- **Confirmed Action 3 of the Sports Resolutions Action Plan had been completed;**
- **Agreed to sign off the plan subject to the two outstanding matters being approved by Governance & Risk Committee with a clear and formal announcement that we have completed the action plan against an external review published via member news and at the AGM in 2023.**

12. Annual Plan Update

AM provided an update on the work towards the Annual Plan 2022. The Annual Plan 2022 was uploaded to the Google Drive for Board members that wished to see more detail.

AM reported on progress to June confirming actions were tracking nicely against the plan with a current completion rate of 21%, just above where we were at the same time last year.

AM reassured the Board that Ambitions 1 and 2 (attracting new paddlers & supporting recreational paddlers; and increasing membership & improving member services) remain a priority and work in progress, despite none of the actions in these areas having been fully completed.

AM highlighted two actions that were behind schedule against their set target dates but set to be completed within the next couple of months, namely 3.6 to recruit a trails and PaddlePoints content lead and action 8.8 to embed the procurement policy.

The Board noted that a new CEO is a considerable change for the organisation but that energy can now be focused on those areas that have fallen behind. The Board appreciated the level of granularity in the main report but wished to see a RAG rating overview in the next report to show those key areas where progress may have accelerated or fallen behind schedule, together with a judgment on whether actions will be completed or not by the end of the year.

AM stated that the recruitment environment remained challenging but with recent successes, we were hopeful to fill the majority of roles shortly.

There was a discussion around peaks and troughs in membership and correlation with weather. The Board suggested that we perhaps explore an offer for a discounted multiyear membership option.

The Board noted the progress towards delivery of the Annual Plan 2022 at the half year stage.

13. Brand Update

JC welcomed Rob Knott to present the branding project update following on from the joint session held with SMT on Saturday 07 May.

RK outlined the initial findings in response to the 6 big areas within the current branding architecture;

- British Canoeing name and brand – should we retain this / how and when to use it?
- How do we bring greater clarity to English delivery responsibilities?
- Would it be beneficial to deliver a consistent brand architecture with the other NGBs?
- Should the discipline committee brands / logos be more aligned and consistent?
- Should the Go Paddling brand continue operating in the current way or is there any argument for change?
- Is the branding approach to programmes and services correct?

The Board fully discussed the initial findings from the project. There was a discussion around the UK elements and the impact across the home nations. The national associations were all keen to explore change to try to obtain branding synergy and alignment between each home nation but shared concerns over cost. It was agreed to gauge the appetite first and to undertake a cost versus benefit analysis. A Board member indicated a preference for the term Paddle England to describe BC's English responsibilities.

There was a further discussion around the discipline committee brands and the success of some of those identities. The Board recognised the importance of not confusing identity and brand with a logo.

There was a discussion around the timing of any brand change and how it aligns to crucial points in the cycle, such as kit ordering. The Board noted the importance of the sustainability policy in relation to any brand change.

The Board discussed the importance of 'looking outside' to maximise growth to attract new members and commercial opportunities. The Board were keen to establish how we were going to capture the views of both non-members and members, and the coaching community to get the consultation right.

JC noted the mixed feelings from the Board. A cost benefit analysis would be vital when consultation had concluded.

The Board noted the contents of the update, the clarity in the report and agreed to receive a further update at the next meeting of the Board in September requiring a more formal decision.

14. CEO Report

The Chair invited AM to present his verbal report to the Board.

AM shared his first impressions in the role;

- It takes time to understand, fully digest and evaluate the sheer breadth of British Canoeing and the huge amount of work involved by so many stakeholders
- Opportunity now to look forward and focus on the many positives
- Having met and spoken to many people over the past 3 weeks, it is clear we have good people at the heart of British Canoeing – both staff and volunteers
- Our team is key and they should feel supported and empowered to grow and develop so that we retain and look after them
- Recognition that canoeing remains an elite sport across all our disciplines and we are funded by UK Sport
- Our National competitions are of a high standard and provide excellent opportunities
- Antagonistic relationships are not productive - collaborative working essential to help take the sport forward.

AM outlined his key priorities over the coming 3-6 months;

- 2022 ICF Freestyle World Championships
- Environment & Sustainability campaign
- Clear Access Clear Waters (CACW)
- Membership growth and retention
- Coach development pathway to encourage high quality coaches within the sport
- Safeguarding appeals
- Addressing resource and capacity issues across all teams
- Review Transgender Policy
- British Canoeing response to the Whyte Review
- Meeting the Chairs of all the Discipline Committees to foster excellent collaboration across all our disciplines, including Sprint.
- Find ways to work more closely with clubs and coaches to attract and develop talent across all disciplines.

AM confirmed that no further updates had been received from the Haverford West safety report.

The Board invited questions offline from the new CEO in relation to lessons learned from past events.

AM noted that British Canoeing do not have a hall of fame and confirmed that he would look into this initiative. A Board member offered AM the chance to visit their own club to paddle.

The Board received the CEO Report and fully supported AM to shape the delivery of the plan that he had inherited.

14. Finance Report

AM outlined the headlines from the quarterly accounts to end of May 2022.

- The cumulative deficit to the end of May was £609, £344k better than budget
- The month of May generated a surplus of £232k versus a budgeted monthly surplus of £123k
- The yearend forecast is showing a surplus of £360k, which will be reviewed and updated each month to reflect ongoing performance
- Membership income continued to perform in excess of budget throughout May, with numbers peaking at an all-time high of 92,000.
- Membership income for the first 3 weeks of June was £93k down on the same period last year, but still remains +17% better than budget
- The member total had declined in the first 3 weeks of June to 89,637
- Commercial income remains buoyant
- Non-grant funded expenditure is underspent against budget by £257k
- Talent remains overspent due to the huge amount of work being delivered on a limited budget
- British Canoeing Events Ltd is forecasting a £92k loss on the Freestyle World Championships (a combination of the required NGB financial contribution of £15k and the underwrite of the forecast financial loss (£77k) on the event).

The Board were pleased to note that the Freestyle World Championships had not incurred any further loss since the last report to Board in May.

AM confirmed that the Stronger Together fund (£200k) is still budgeted for October but it is expected that the majority of this will be ring-fenced to a reserve at yearend, rather than distributed to recipients.

JC confirmed that at the most recent Finance & Audit meeting it was agreed that any surplus made by British Canoeing would be reinvested.

The Board noted and approved the Finance Report.

15. Risk Management

AM reported that one new emerging and significant risk had been identified since the last report to Board in May relating to the retention, recruitment and longer-term pathway development of performance coaching for both the Olympic and non-Olympic programmes. This had been given a risk rating of 20 and needed addressing immediately.

The Board noted other emerging risks to appear on the register;

- Washburn site and the declining water releases from Yorkshire Water
- Transgender competition policy and transgender inclusion
- Long term viability of the sprint performance programme into the LA cycle if results do not go positively in Paris.

The Board noted the risks that were trending upwards on the risk register;

- Inflation and increases in the cost of living
- Staff recruitment and the ability to recruit within current pay bands
- Safety
- Hybrid working and team effectiveness/culture

The Board noted that the risk around concerns over the stability of the leadership structure in the Sprint and Para programme had been trending downwards to a stand-on risk rating of 9.

The Board received and noted the risk report and agreed to;

- **Review and possibly raise the risk around long term viability of the sprint performance programme into the LA cycle**
- **Deep dive into key risk and mitigations as separate agenda items at future meetings of the Board.**

16. Committee Reports

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

16.1. HR & Remuneration Committee

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

16.2. Finance & Audit Committee

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

16.3 Governance & Risk Committee

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

16.4 Scottish Canoe Association

SL reported that there had been a recent positive increase in membership numbers.

16.5 Canoe Wales

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

The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

17. Any Other Business

The Board noted that the date of the next scheduled Board meeting (Sunday 25 September) was difficult for a number of Directors. It was agreed for CG to circulate some alternative dates to all members after the meeting. The Board welcomed the opportunity to attend meetings at locations outside of Nottingham. AM and NS agreed to look at Board dates for 2023-24 as part of the Board Evaluation Review.

JC highlighted the two VIP Receptions that were due to take place at the Freestyle World Championships noting that the President of the ICF, Thomas Konietzko would join the event over the weekend.

18. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors