

MINUTES

In Attendance:

John Coyne CBE (JC)	Chair and Independent Director
Mark Bache (MB)	Independent Director
Richard Boreham (RB)	Vice Chair and Independent Director (<i>by video conference</i>)
Stephen Craig (SC)	Director nominated by CANI
Clare Dallaway (CD)	Director nominated by English Forum
Bronagh Kennedy (BK)	Independent Director
Martine Kushner (MK)	Independent Director
Alexandra Lane (AL)	Director nominated by English Forum
Ivan Lawler MBE (IL)	President
Steve Linksted (SL)	Director nominated by SCA
Greg Smale (GS)	Director nominated by English Forum
David Wakeling (DW)	Director nominated by Canoe Wales
David Joy (DJ)	CEO

Also In Attendance:

Susan Hicks (SH)	Finance Director
David Parsons (DP)	Chair of the Sprint Review Panel (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Lee Pooley (LP)	Head of Coaching & Qualifications (<i>Partial attendance</i>)
Paul Ratcliffe (PR)	Performance Director (<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 including Richard Boreham (RB) who joined the meeting virtually. JC gave a special welcome to two new members who joined the Board following the AGM on 14 March, Alexandra Lane (AL) and Martine Kushner (MK). JC also congratulated Bronagh Kennedy (BK) on her reappointment to the Board for a second term.

JC advised that an additional agenda item had been added to the agenda to discuss Covid-19, following the recent escalation of events. This would be discussed after Item 7, the World Class Programme Report.

JC welcomed David Parsons (DP) and Paul Ratcliffe (PR) to the meeting to present the Report on the Sprint Situational Analysis and the World Class Performance Report respectively.

6. Sprint Situational Analysis

The Chair invited DP to present the Sprint Situational Analysis and thanked him for ensuring this work had been completed slightly ahead of schedule.

DP reminded members how British Canoeing and UK Sport jointly commissioned this Review to more deeply understand why there had not been more depth in the senior athlete pool in Sprint and why there had not been more medal success at Senior World and Olympic level.

DP acknowledged the good support received from British Canoeing throughout the review, particularly from Laura Duffin and Hannah Brown in arranging the interviews.

DP outlined the limitations of the study together with the strengths of the sport. DP then presented the findings and recommendations within 8 key themes;

- Vision, strategy and culture;
- Coaching;
- Domestic club landscape
- Male versus Female programmes
- Performance leadership and structures
- “What it Takes to Win”
- Crew boat versus individual boat philosophies
- Daily training environments

The Chair welcomed questions and responses from the Board, inviting DJ and PR to respond first.

DJ noted the accurate analysis and strong recommendations to emerge from the review, and acknowledged the significant change required to turn these recommendations into action.

PR welcomed the independent nature of the review and the rounded view of the current situation.

PR confirmed that recent discussions taking place around Tokyo planning had identified similar themes and there were few surprises in the report. DJ stated that prior to the new UK Sport Funding Strategy, planning had always concentrated on a 4 year cycle but now there was an opportunity to take a slightly longer term view beyond Paris.

The Board discussed the findings, emphasising the importance of clubs being more involved in the pathway and the importance of engaging the sprint community to create a new strategy. The Board requested that they see a clear long term strategy with achievable goals.

JC commended DP for the quality and clarity of the Report which provided a solid framework for the next plan. JC thanked DP for presenting the Report and extended appreciation to the other panel members for the thorough work that had been undertaken.

The Board noted the contents of the Sprint Situational Analysis update and agreed the following;

- **Develop and agree an Action Plan with strong stakeholder engagement within appropriate timeframes**
- **Establish a transformation group to manage and oversee the process of change (JC-DJ with PR-IL)**
- **Regular reporting to Board at the next two meetings in June and September**
- **Manage UK Sport submission for Sprint programme by October (DJ-PR)**

- **Share the Report with staff, athletes, all those that contributed and the wider community.**

2. Apologies

None received.

3. Declarations of Interest

JC confirmed that he had signed off the Declarations of Interest from AL ahead of the meeting. No other declarations were made. JC highlighted the importance of members making a declaration during the meeting if agenda items presented personal conflicts of interest.

4. Minutes of FB67

The Minutes of FB67 were approved as a true, fair and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda

Steve Linksted (SL) referred the Board to the Scottish Canoe Association's position in relation to the Vice President nomination. They were concerned that this had not been formally shared with the National Association's prior to the release of the AGM papers. JC acknowledged that the UK Agreement required each National Association to have a position on the Awards Panel. DJ acknowledged and apologised for the group failing to abide by the Terms of Reference for the NHAP to inform the National Associations of the Vice President nominations. DJ confirmed that this would be discussed within the NHAP.

Additional Agenda Item - Covid-19

The Chair indicated that the additional item around Covid-19 would be discussed prior to the World Class Performance paper.

JC invited Bronagh Kennedy (BK) in her capacity as Chair of the HR & Remuneration Committee to share her thoughts. BK emphasised the need to be agile in response to UK Government advice that was moving rapidly around isolation and social distancing. It would also be important to develop clear principles and objectives up front, recognising a balance between reacting appropriately and ensuring people are safe and well. BK recommended clarity around communications published on the website.

DJ outlined the headlines and current position of British Canoeing in responding to the Covid-19 outbreak. He summarised the purpose of the response plan highlighting the primary objectives to ensure the health and welfare of staff, athletes and volunteers, to follow government guidance, as far as possible to still work to deliver the targets for the year and also to provide information and leadership across the sport for our committees, clubs, centres and providers.

It was noted that the cost saving measures outlined in 12.2 of the paper would be imposed with immediate effect and for the remainder of 2020.

DJ also outlined the implications and risks associated with the two international events planned for 2020. He confirmed that the risks were being monitored and assessed with the ICF, ECA and UK Sport.

PR highlighted the importance of planning for selections should the Olympics and Paralympics still go ahead, but domestic events and training environments be compromised due to any Government lockdown. The Board discussed the challenges and it was proposed that each scenario would be managed and if necessary selection events could run on a much smaller scale. If this was not possible, other options would be considered and planned for quickly as and when Government guidance was issued. It was emphasised that should selection events run behind closed doors on a small scale, they would need to be scheduled in a way that ensured they were equally accessible to all athletes.

The Board considered an alternative view that was expressed around the need to be more robust, realistic and clear in our decision making by postponing all events up until 30 April 2020, like many other organisations had already done. There was a lengthy discussion around the merits of balancing our response robustly versus aligned to daily Government advice to maximise business as usual within a safe environment for as long as possible.

It was agreed that the International Panels would be empowered to make selection decisions on behalf of the Board and that this ought to be overseen by the CEO within his delegated authorities.

There was further discussion around recreational events, a business as usual approach and the seriousness of contingency issues. The Board agreed to fully commit to UK Government guidelines and to change approach when necessary to align with those directives. It was agreed important to support clubs to take their own views but provide appropriate guidance to help them to stay fully aligned with UK Governance advice. The Board also recognised the position of the devolved governments within the UK and noted that the National Associations would create and follow their own guidelines.

The Board approved the paper noting the different views that had been expressed and empowered the CEO to react quickly and consistently within government guidelines. JC commended the Executive for the quick turnaround in producing a policy in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

7. World Class Performance

PR referred to his Report and the Paris Funding Submission that had been shared within the Board packs. PR stated that current events presented challenges and opportunities but the intention would be to stay agile and focused on key objectives for 2020.

Staff and Athletes

PR confirmed that there had been a recent period of uncertainty due to the flooding at Holme Pierrepont (HPP) and now the increasing impact of Covid-19.

Sprint Programme

PR reported that the UK Sport Annual Performance Investment Review triggered by missing the 2019 Milestone Targets had been managed well, leading to a reduction in the number of athlete places on the programme, not a reduction in budget.

The jointly commissioned UK Sport review into the Sprint Situational Analysis had been a large piece of work and had now been completed.

It was reported that Athletes had been withdrawn quickly from the Seville training camp in early March due to the increasing impact and risks associated with Covid-19.

Paracanoe Programme

It was reported that the recent flooding had caused some major disruption and challenges for the athletes and coaches, particularly in sourcing alternative venues to train. Some Athletes had trained at different clubs and this had been received positively. The team were now moving forward in a controlled environment at HPP.

Slalom Programme

The training camps in the United Arab Emirates were still to go ahead as planned. Young Athletes were starting to come through and were able to learn from the senior athletes based at Lee Valley. The Tokyo cohort of Athletes remained very focused, motivated, and fit and healthy. They had also been given many opportunities for team development.

PR welcomed questions and observations.

JC expressed satisfaction that the World Class Performance Programmes were adapting well to current and ongoing challenges.

The Board noted and approved the contents of the WCP update.

8. Coaching Update and Centre Feedback

The Chair welcomed Lee Pooley (LP) to the meeting to present an update on key areas of coaching activity together with a centre update.

Coaching Qualifications

It was reported that significant progress had been made in several areas of the 4 year coaching strategy since the last update to Board in June 2018. All coaching awards had been reviewed with the Performance Coach Award due to be launched on 29 June. There had been steady growth in all of the new Coaching Awards throughout the UK and the Paddlesport Instructor Award in particular, had seen numbers double in the last year. It was thought that this was likely due to marketing improvements and engaging the community in helping to design the awards. LP assured the Board that coaching qualification assessments had not become any easier, although access to assessment had become more streamlined.

It was reported that significant work had been undertaken by National Associations to increase the number of females in the tutor workforce and among coaches and leaders.

Leadership Review

It was reported that the review of the leadership qualifications had been completed and that work had now moved into the design phase. LP confirmed that the Paddlesport Leader Plus qualification was designed to allow people to lead multiple craft.

LP confirmed that the team were already scenario planning against the impact of Covid-19 and that they had already seen a lot of First Aid courses being cancelled.

It was noted that the use of apprenticeships to encourage female growth in coaching could be considered for inclusion within the next 4 year strategy.

Digital Learning Resources

Access to digital tools and resources had grown substantially with 52,000 individuals, many from overseas, choosing to access the information. LP confirmed that the online digital library is not just restricted to members, it is open to all. It was reported that the American Canoe Association (ACA) were now using these resources as part of their qualifications. The Board requested that we should explore a fire wall so that such resources should be protected for members only as a benefit of membership.

Centre Work

From November 2019, the British Canoeing Coaching Department had taken responsibility for the administration and management of the Centre Approval Schemes. It was reported that the number of Registered Centres was in decline and that many centres were under threat due to funding pressures. Covid-19 could further increase those numbers.

New Delivery Partner Scheme

LP outlined the aims of the new Delivery Partner Scheme which were to identify and promote "Delivery Partners" that provide a quality paddlesport experience. A new 3 tier approach to working with Centres had been proposed - Bronze, Silver and Gold. It was planned that this would be operational by January 2021.

LP stated that British Canoeing currently engaged with 150 Centres equating to a small percentage of the overall number. The first tier Bronze level would provide the opportunity to engage with a much larger number of Centres as a result of this new approach. He confirmed that the Scheme would only focus on paddlesport specific developments and that British Canoeing was going to move away from offering more general centre approvals.

The Board expressed a desire to promote links between Coach and Centre providers to connect better under this new approach.

The Chair on behalf of the Board thanked LP for the timely and appropriate update.

9. CEO Report

Historical Allegations Report

DJ congratulated the Governance and Communications team on their hard work leading up to publishing the key findings of the report.

DJ referred members to the draft Action Plan that had been drafted in response to the Report. DJ invited questions or comments from the Board.

The Board thanked the Executive for the way in which the release of the Report had been handled. It was noted that JC and DJ would be arranging a meeting with Sports Resolutions to discuss their handling of this case.

The Board thoroughly reviewed the Draft Action Plan and invited the Governance and Risk Committee to further scrutinise the Plan at their next meeting. It was agreed that the CEO should update on progress at each meeting of the Board until the actions have been fully completed.

It was noted that as part of the Action Plan, there will be an external review undertaken of the historic safeguarding case files to ensure there are no outstanding matters requiring attention.

Risk Management

SH referred to the paper circulated in advance of the meeting highlighting the most significant risks requiring Board consideration;

- Coronavirus impact on business operations, events, athletes and teams
- Concerns over UK Sport Sprint funding for 2021-2025 cycle and the impact on programme and overheads
- Negative feedback on club consultation (qualified coaches)
- Capacity issues within Places to Paddle due to major flood damage at Symonds Yat
- Awarding Body non-compliance with regulators, specifically from recent report that there is the need for an independents group to confirm annual compliance and that the Chair of the NGB should sign the declaration
- The level of company reserves falls below acceptable levels due to responding to covid-19 and event risks
- Freestyle World Cup & World Championships finances

The Chair thanked DJ and SH for the CEO update and Risk papers respectively.

The Board noted the contents of the CEO Report and agreed the following;

- **The Governance & Risk Committee to further scrutinise and manage the Action Plan in response to the Historical Allegations Report. Progress and updates against the plan will then be reported back to Board in June and September.**
- **JC and DJ to meet with Sports Resolutions in relation to the timelines of the report.**
- **To approve the Risk Report.**

10. Finance Report

SH reported the financial position of British Canoeing as at the end of the first financial quarter to 31 January 2020 showing a current deficit of £136,690, which was £23,500k better than budget.

SH outlined the headlines from the latest set of accounts;

- Membership income only slightly behind budget (-£4K)
- The budgeted membership price increase of £2 scheduled for 1 April had been delayed until 1 May, impacting £7k on the budgeted forecast
- Salary gapping gains to continue throughout 2020 in light of Covid-19
- The Coaching underwrite for Canoe Wales and the SCA were on track to reach zero by 2021. CANI coaching underwrite had fallen to 50% but remained a challenge.
- VAT percentage recovery rate had improved from 22% to 26% following growth of taxable income during 2019
- In the grant funded area, the UK Sport Paris submission was completed on 28 February with no feedback or early questions received to date
- The Sport England submission for 2021-25 talent funding had been created in line with the Performance strategy for UK Sport but submission deadline dates had yet to be released from Sport England
- New funding (£27k) had been received from Sport England to support the development of the #ShePaddles scheme
- British Canoeing Events Ltd would now be working through the impact of Covid-19 on the two international events scheduled to take place in 2020
- BDO completed the UK Sport financial governance audit in November 2019 and rated British Canoeing satisfactory.

The Board noted and approved the Finance Report.

11. Annual Plan 2020 Update

The Chair invited DJ to present the first Annual Plan update of 2020.

DJ presented the update but advised that the Annual Plan 2020 would now undergo significant reappraisal as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and the potential significant reduction in income which would result in 2020. DJ confirmed that a revised Annual Plan and Budget for 2020 would be presented to the Board in June.

The Board noted the progress in the delivery of the Annual Plan 2020 and requested that all target dates are clarified in the revised version.

12. 2021-25 Strategy Progress Report

The Chair welcomed DJ to talk to the report.

DJ reported that consultation with members in England commenced in February 2020 through an electronic survey with 489 responses received to date. The full analysis would be shared at a later date.

DJ confirmed that the emerging themes were still very much aligned to those within Stronger Together 2017-21, and that it was clear that many members were still unsighted on the progress that had been made during the last 3 years. It was also clear that many members were asking for a slower pace of change and more time to embed the changes made in the last 3 years.

It was confirmed that the roadshows planned for the spring would not take place due to the Coronavirus. The intention would be to now host online workshops in May/June and then to reorganise the workshops in October. The Board requested that engaging the full diversity of interests in our membership in this review is given due care and attention throughout this process.

The Board noted the progress against the development of the new 2021-25 Strategy.

13. Composition of the Committees of the Board

The Chair presented an update to the Board on the proposed membership of the Committees of the Board for 2020.

Two changes were noted; MK joined the Governance & Risk Committee as Chair and AL joined the Finance & Audit Committee.

The Chair invited other members to express an interest if they would like to serve on the HR & Remuneration Committee.

The Board noted the composition of the Committees of the Board and noted the vacancy on the HR and Remuneration Committee.

14. Committee Reports

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

14.1. Finance Committee

No further updates were reported outside of the Finance Report.

14.2. HR & Remuneration Committee

It was reported that the Committee would now meet twice per year as the time consuming work to approve all of the HR policies had now been completed.

14.3. Governance & Risk Committee

No further updates were reported.

14.4. Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)

SL confirmed that the SCA Board would host a virtual meeting with the Committees to consider their new 4 year plan.

14.5. Canoe Wales

DW reported that Canoe Wales had appointed a new Chair, Kerry Chown, who had taken up the post at the last meeting of the Board. DW requested that he remained involved in UK Agreement matters for the time being.

14.6. Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI)

It was reported that good progress had been made in light of recent challenges. The recruitment of new Board Directors would take place prior to the appointment of a new Chair, so SC remained acting Chair in the interim period.

The Board formally noted and accepted the Committee Reports.

15. Any Other Business

Complaint

Following the publication of the key findings and recommendations of the Historical Allegations Report, a Member had made a complaint to UK Sport expressing dissatisfaction with the handling of their complaint and had communicated this directly with Board members.

The Board discussed the issue and timeliness of responses relating to the three complaints submitted by the individual. DJ confirmed that the third complaint remained open and required resolution. The Board acknowledged that the investigation had not been completed in a timely way.

The Board further discussed how to resolve this complaint and considered improvements to the process to ensure the timeliness of resolving matters in the future.

RB agreed to take steps to try to manage the resolution process on behalf of the Board.

ICF Congress

It was noted that if the Tokyo Olympic Games were to be delayed due to the Coronavirus, the ICF Congress might have to be rescheduled.

It was noted that a meeting to review the UK Agreement is scheduled to take place in April 2020.

The Chair indicated that meeting dates for 2021 would be circulated in the near future.

16. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors