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**SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 09:30**

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**MINUTES****In Attendance:**

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| John Coyne CBE (JC)  | Chair and 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 |
| Martine Kushner (MK) | Independent Director                |
| Steve Linksted (SL)  | Director nominated by SCA           |
| 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> )      |
| Mark Ratcliffe (MR)   | Performance Director, Slalom ( <i>Partial attendance</i> )    |
| Nancy Squires (NS)    | Director of Governance ( <i>Partial attendance, virtual</i> ) |
| Keir Worth (KW)       | Director of Paddlesport ( <i>Partial attendance</i> )         |
| Charmaine Gawler (CG) | Executive Assistant to the CEO                                |

**Apologies**

|                      |                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kerry Chown (KC)     | Director nominated by Canoe Wales   |
| Nick Donald (ND)     | Independent Director                |
| Bronagh Kennedy (BK) | Independent Director                |
| Zoey Rowe (ZR)       | Director nominated by English Forum |

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**1. Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The Chair (JC) welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everybody for attending given the sad events of the past week with the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

He advised that the events team have respectfully complied with DCMS and national guidance in delivering the Slalom Ranking Race this weekend, and formally recognised and thanked colleagues and all involved for the respect the sport had shown to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

JC welcomed Nancy Squires, Director of Governance, who had joined the meeting virtually to present items 06, the External Board Evaluation Review; item 07, BCE Board Appointment; item 08, the Whyte Review; and item 13, the EDI, Sustainability and

Safeguarding Strategy Updates. He also confirmed that Rob Knott, Director of Communications, would join the meeting for item 11, the Branding update and Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport would present item 14, the World Class Programme Report during which a working lunch would be provided.

JC proposed a modest change to the agenda to release NS during the morning, taking item 13 directly after item 08.

## **2. Apologies**

Several apologies were received in advance from Nick Donald, Bronagh Kennedy, Kerry Chown and Zoey Rowe. He advised that input had been received in advance from ND and KC.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

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

## **4. Minutes of FB80**

The Minutes of FB80 were approved as a true and fair record of the meeting.

## **5. Matters arising not covered by the Agenda**

JC reported that since the last meeting of the Board, he had discussed the review of the transgender competition policy with the ICF President. NS stated that the policy would likely be announced at the ICF Congress in November.

JC had also raised concerns with the ICF President over the reallocation of medals and doping sanctions for Russian athletes that led to two of our athletes gaining 2014 European Championship medals. He reported that British Canoeing's request for further action to review and reconsider all results and samples of the pairing from 2011 to 2014 had been passed to the medical commission. A formal response was expected shortly.

There were no further matters arising.

## **6. External Board Evaluation Review**

JC welcomed NS to the meeting to help guide the Board on the implementation of recommendations made in the Board Excellence External Board Evaluation.

JC pointed to the paper that outlined six formal recommendations and a series of other opportunities for board improvement. He took these by exception focusing only on the issues where there may be some different perspectives.

**Recommendation 1A - National Associations**

*National Bodies (Home Nations) and the English Forum (or any such body or mechanism discharging the nomination function of the English Forum) nominate two or three candidates for each post from which the Board, supported by the Nominations Committee, can select the candidate which best contributes to the Board's desired skills and diversity mix. Nominations could include Members who self-nominate. The Board must always select the agreed number of Members from each Nation;*

JC relayed on behalf of KC that Canoe Wales were wholly supportive of this but recognised the practical difficulties of National Associations' ability to generate candidates. The SCA echoed the same view.

There was a short discussion around how members could self-nominate onto the Board and it was agreed that all self-nominations must come through direct from a National Association.

The Board considered the selection of members joining the Board and recognised the importance of the skills matrix in this process. It was noted that the Board's role is to assess the desired skills and diversity matrix and discharge its duties appropriately under the Companies Act.

The Board authorised the complete review of the English Forum recognising that many actions may come out of this process. It was noted that any Article changes would not be proposed until 2024.

It was agreed to ask the Governance and Risk Committee to consider whether it would be helpful to appoint an external representative onto the Nominations Committee.

**Recommendation 1D - Performance skills matrix**

*Greater emphasis within the Board skills mix is placed on a member (either a nominated or independent member) who brings specific expertise in overseeing performance programmes in elite sport and who could chair a newly established Performance Committee;*

JC relayed ND's view that this would be better covered by a subcommittee. JC observed that the growth in our sport has been more at recreational level, rather than performance.

The Board agreed to establish a performance subcommittee within the board structure and to place greater emphasis on performance within the skills matrix but not to make it mandatory.

**Recommendation 1F - A New Committee of the Board**

*A new Committee of the Board is established to undertake the heavy lifting on behalf of the Board in developing and overseeing canoeing in England. In addition to nominating the Chair of the Committee the English Forum should be given the authority to nominate an appropriate number of further non-Board members to the Committee.*

Following completion of the English Forum review, it was agreed to review this further in relation to the branding project and for the CEO to reflect back on how we might shape our English identity in the future

***Recommendation 2 - To avoid being too operational in the Board's focus***

JC relayed that both KC and ND were keen to ensure the Board's focus remains on strategic items to allow for greater scrutiny on the key strategic development and delivery and the significant risks and opportunities facing British Canoeing.

***Recommendation 4 - Risk***

*The respective responsibilities of staff and Committees in relation to risk identification and management should be clarified and risk reporting to the Board should be less frequent and more substantive, including the periodic opportunity to step back and assess their completeness.*

It was noted that some Board members felt that this recommendation was the most important to implement. The Board agreed that it is the role of the Governance & Risk Committee to bring the most important risk items for discussion to Board.

***Recommendation 6 – Formal Review of the Role of the President***

*The role of the President be redefined as an Ambassadorial role, for a one year term in recognition of the holders outstanding contribution to canoeing. They would be supported by an immediate past President and Deputy President and over time a community of past Presidents to promote the sport in the community and act as a sounding board for the CEO and Board on the views of the membership.*

There was a discussion around the role of the President. The Board expressed some mixed views but overall wished to ensure there is balance of responsibilities. The Board agreed that the timeline for implementation for change should be 2024.

**The Board thanked NS for some important guidance on board composition, board protocols and an improvement path. The Board approved the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1, with one caveat;**

- To address the skills matrix and in doing so mention Performance but not with the 'essential' status that the review suggested;
- To progress with the establishment of a performance subcommittee

**The Board invited the Director of Governance, in conjunction with the Chair, CEO and Governance and Risk Committee to draw up an action plan to implement these recommendations.**

**7. British Canoeing Events (BCE) Board Appointment**

JC invited NS to present this item to seek confirmation of British Canoeing's nomination to the Board of British Canoeing Events (BCE) Ltd.

NS outlined the proposal to replace David Joy with Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport onto the Board of British Canoeing Events Ltd. NS reminded the Board that they had already

approved ND as BCE Board Director which was awaiting ratification at the next BCE meeting on 18 October 2022.

**The Board approved the nomination of Keir Worth, Director of Paddlesport, to the Board of British Canoeing Events.**

#### **8. British Canoeing's Response to the Whyte Review**

NS provided an overview of the British Canoeing position in relation to the recommendations of the Whyte Review, published on 16 June. She stated that the recommendations align to the British Canoeing strategy and will be expanded upon within the Welfare & Safeguarding Strategy which will come to the Board for approval in December.

There was a discussion around where the work and focus is most required – at grass roots, club, talent pathway and/or elite level. The Board expressed a commitment to resolving issues early and recognised the need to resource and support Talent Clubs in best practice. The Board noted that it is not necessarily a one size fits all approach to mitigating the risks across each participation level. The Board noted the potential impact across RDTs and Discipline Committees in their role to raise standards to expected levels.

AM confirmed that both the forthcoming MAIB report into the recent tragic accident at Haverford West and the launch of the UKS and SE backed CIMSPA Workforce audit would seek greater knowledge and clarity around NGB associated volunteer coaches and leaders, with an emphasis on ensuring improved safety and well-being and that NGB's had a clear understanding that all coaches were appropriately and fully accredited in terms of recognised qualifications. He recognised that every area is important and that the strategy and timeliness must be all inclusive.

JC highlighted the four key areas in the report that are fundamental to shift the focus to welfare and wellbeing; safeguarding and welfare; complaints handling; standards and education; governance and oversight.

NS confirmed that the British Canoeing Welfare and Safeguarding Strategy will be shared with the Safeguarding Steering Group that has representation from the National Associations. The Board agreed to strive to keep safeguarding policies across the UK for best practice.

**The Board considered the paper and approved the direction of travel and to receive a draft Welfare & Safeguarding Strategy at the next meeting in December.**

#### **13. EDI, Sustainability & safeguarding Strategy Update**

JC moved straight to item 13 and invited NS to provide an update on the progress of British Canoeing's strategies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Sustainability; and Welfare & Safeguarding.

NS provided a brief update on progress against the three strategies as part of Stronger Together 2022-26, all of which were on track and to be completed by early 2023;

#### ***EDI***

NS highlighted that EDI Board training would be arranged for a weekday evening in late October/November.

#### ***Sustainability***

NS reported that we were in the final stages of consultation and that a draft Sustainability Strategy would come to Board for approval at the next meeting in December.

#### ***Welfare & Safeguarding***

NS confirmed that consultation was due to start on the current draft that would then be shared with the Governance & Risk Committee prior to coming to Board for approval at the next meeting in December.

**The Board noted the contents of the update and the progress made to date and agreed to prioritise the dates for EDI training.**

### **9. Risk Management**

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

#### ***Performance & Non-Olympic Discipline Coaching***

SH stated that KW would update the board during item 14, the World Class Programme report.

#### ***Cost Inflation including high levels of inflation on energy prices at Lee Valley impacting the affordability of the domestic training environment***

SH provided an update around the risk of water usage at Lee Valley, impacting both the Olympic and Legacy course. SH reported that the impact will be felt across the Talent programme, Slalom Programme and the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. It was noted that three days of water usage at the international event will be protected by an existing VIK agreement. The board noted the £300-350k potential financial impact on the slalom programme between now and the end of the Paris cycle.

SH outlined potential mitigations, including adopting a revised slalom training schedule to help reduce costs as well as exploring partnerships with sustainable energy providers.

The Board noted that we had previously asked UKS for extra funding to mitigate against the cost but fully supported the CEO approaching UK Sport again to seek some help.

The board noted the severity of the risk and recognised that further discussion and decisions may need to be taken later on how any financial shortfall should be met.

JC shared that pumped water courses represent a huge challenge to the Olympic programme, citing the Canoe Slalom event taking place in Oklahoma City where there is an existing course during the 2028 LA Games.

***Long term viability of Sprint Performance Programme into the LA cycle***

The Board noted that we delivered on UK Sport expectations during this current season but recognised that there was still further work to be done towards Paris. AM highlighted that the Board would receive updates and progress against milestone targets through the regular World Class Programme reports to Board at future meetings.

**The Board received and noted the risk report.**

**10. Finance Report**

SH reported that membership peaked at 94,523 in August, a record number of members. The annual budget was therefore achieved in August. Membership figures were 5% down within the first two weeks of September, when it rained a lot, underpinning the trend that membership is hugely weather dependent. The Board noted that membership as at Friday 16 September was 94,057.

SH reported that we are now starting to go back to more traditional profile of membership pre-covid, where historically it peaked in August and dropped a little into September. SH suggested this may indicate that we have consolidated most of the growth we have seen since 2020.

There was a discussion around a potential price increase for membership in 2023 due to the significant cost rises seen across the organisation. The board noted that the last membership price increase took place in 2017. SS reported that the SCA recently approved an increase in their membership. The board noted that only a small number of members are members of British Canoeing and affiliated to a club. The board requested that improvements are made to our communications to emphasise exactly what our waterways licence covers.

The board discussed market trends in recruitment and how to effectively respond to inflationary increases on wages. They advised not to underplay the staffing risk around wages and to ensure we do what we can to retain key staff.

**The Board noted and approved the Finance Report.**

**11. Brand Update**

RK presented an update on the branding project.

He reminded the Board of the initial findings provided by the brand consultants in response to the 6 big areas within the current branding architecture. He then outlined 4 potential branding scenarios that had been proposed.

RK confirmed that 3 surveys had been undertaken with members and non-members through a Go Paddling snap poll, the members' hub and the member satisfaction survey. The results showed that kayaking and paddling are the top phrases that describe what British Canoeing is about.

RK outlined the proposed timelines to a phased launch if British Canoeing were to rebrand along with the cost feasibility.

The Board discussed at length their appetite to rebrand taking note of the recent survey results and in full consideration of potential associated costs.

The board universally supported a rebrand away from British Canoeing but wished to explore further, in collaboration with the National Associations, what the new identity structure may look like.

**The Board noted the contents of the brand update and agreed to;**

- **receive an agreement in principle with the National Associations at the next meeting in December in time for work to commence in 2023**
- **proactively and formally share British Canoeing Board minutes with the CEOs and Chairs of the National Associations through the Executive office.**
- **consult NS in relation to constitutional requirements and add rebrand to the agenda at the next AGM.**

## **12. CEO Report**

### ***Haverford West Incident and MAIB Report***

AM confirmed that the draft MAIB report had been released in confidence and he had since shared it with the Chair. It is hoped that the final report will be published before the end of October. AM confirmed that the Home Nation Sports Councils now need to revisit the NGB status for Stand up Paddleboard (SUP). He reported that British Canoeing were expecting a response from Sport England imminently.

The Board briefly discussed qualifications for coaches and leaders and expressed a desire to do more than just implementing 'minimum standards'.

### ***NHAP***

The Board noted the decisions made at the recent National Honours & Awards Panel (NHAP).

JC encouraged members to notify the executive of any excellent people deserving of Honours.

### ***CEO Reflections - State of Play***

AM shared his reflections of British Canoeing following his first 100 days in post;

- Overall British Canoeing is in good shape
- Most people coming into the sport either Kayak or SUP
- 93% of those involved are recreational paddlers
- 2,000 club members are also members of British Canoeing



- The new group of members (just over 60k) are independent paddlers
- British Canoeing is a traditional NGB in many ways but membership base has changed post covid.

AM outlined the four key pillars to how British Canoeing can evolve to benefit a broader market while still focusing on Strategy 2022-26;

- Enabler of sporting excellence
- Deliverer of value added excellence to the independent, recreational paddler (paddle more, paddle safe and paddle better)
- Lead and deliver on high quality national, regional and international campaigns
- Underpinned by Governance excellence, membership services, marketing, communications, safety, education and finance.

The board supported the direction of travel and looked forward to receiving the Annual Delivery Plan for 2022-23 to reflect this view at the December meeting.

**The Board received the CEO Report and noted progress to date and approved the direction of travel of the CEO's vision.**

#### **14. World Class Performance Report**

*[Mark Ratcliffe joined the meeting]*

Keir Worth provided key updates from the World Class Performance Programme.

KW reflected on a very successful season pointing to the two new Performance Directors who had joined the team at a time of high turnover of sports science and medical staff. He confirmed that Sprint and Paracanoe are both in a good place with sights set Paris 2024 targets. The Board noted that Malcolm Johnson had been appointed to the IP for Sprint.

There was a confidential discussion around priority boats and strategy. KW confirmed that the team are very mindful of the need for rapid progress in Sprint to secure funding post Paris.

MR confirmed that Campbell Walsh starts at British Canoeing in October as Canoe Slalom Podium Technical coach. He reassured the board that the slalom team are now well set up, with a core team consisting of excellent practitioners and sports science staff, some of which are new to the team who have brought renewed energy and ideas into the programme.

The board wished to protect the WCP from external distractions to facilitate stability where they can focus on their own controls.

MR confirmed that the team will be reviewing logistical operations to best manage the 90 days rule brought about by Brexit. He also highlighted that the selection policy did not necessarily align to the 90 days rule. MR reported that conversations were ongoing in relation to DCMS and UK Sport dispensation for elite athletes in regards to the 90 days rule.

The board were reassured that the slalom team remain in a good place ahead of Olympic qualification in 2023 and a home world championships.

The Board noted the plans for how Extreme Slalom will start to grow into a talent pathway through building relationships with the slalom community and via the competition structure.

#### ***Performance & Non-Olympic Disciplines Coaching***

KW outlined the risk of long term coach development across both the Olympic and non-Olympic programmes, including the lack of full-time and suitably qualified coaches within clubs.

The Board discussed the challenges and potential solutions including creating a better framework of activity so our podium coaches can lead the development of our talent coaches, as well as facilitating greater encouragement within the community.

KW confirmed that mitigating actions were already being instigated by moving towards more team coaching and encouraging coaches to take their time off in lieu to avoid extended fatigue.

The board noted that a two day coaching conference is scheduled in November.

JC, on behalf of the board, thanked MR and the team for showcasing an excellent Slalom Ranking Race this weekend.

**The Board noted the contents of the report and the risks around performance and non-Olympic coaching and agreed to receive coach development updates within future World Class Programme updates.**

#### **15. Annual Plan**

AM provided an update on the work towards the Annual Plan 2021-22. The full Annual Plan was uploaded to the Google Drive for Board members that wished to see more detail.

AM reported on progress to end of August confirming actions were tracking nicely against the plan with a current completion rate of 56%, significantly above where we were at the same time last year. Compared to the last meeting, we are performing significantly better and on track to achieve 80% by the end of the year.

AM explained that the targets missed within HR and IT were mainly due to capacity issues, recruitment, and prioritising other projects that have had to take precedence. Those actions will be picked up in the plan next year.

AM advised that we will look to reduce the size of the Annual Plan next year, whilst still aligning to the strategy. He also confirmed that we will provide further RAG rating clarity in our reporting mechanism on whether targets are on track now, and for the end of the year.

**The Board noted the progress towards delivery of the Annual Plan 2022.**

## **16. Committee Reports**

The committee reports were taken by exception with only the key issues highlighted. JC emphasised the improvement to include written reports where possible as part of the Board evaluation recommendations.

### **16.1. Finance & Audit Committee**

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

### **16.2. HR & Remuneration Committee**

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

### **16.3 Governance & Risk Committee**

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

### **16.4 Scottish Canoe Association**

SL confirmed that the SCA would submit a written report ahead of the next meeting in December. He thanked AM and KW for visiting the SCA in September.

### **16.5 CANI**

The Board referred to the written paper circulated in advance.

### **16.6 Nominations Committee**

JC advised that the next meeting will take place on 8 November and asked members to look out for the email to arrange their annual board appraisal review.

**The Board noted and accepted the Committee Reports.**

## **17. Any Other Business**

JC, on behalf of the board, formally recognised the sad passing of British Canoeing Vice President, David Green, who was a long standing and committed ambassador to British Canoeing, and in particular flatwater racing. He confirmed that British Canoeing will be represented at his funeral in October. The Board paused to remember David Green.

The Board also formally recognised the tragic passing of Robert Eggleston, a renowned adventurous paddler who lost his life recently in Norway. The Board expressed heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

## **18. Closed Session with Non-Executive Directors**