

Swim England East Region

Addendum to the Swim England East Region Annual Council Meeting

12th September 2020

20/19

Swim England

- 20/19.1 George Wood, Swim England Sports Development Director, provided an update on the key issues for Swim England during the last six months.
- 20/19.2 He highlighted the impressive driving force of the Swim England campaigns, with Jane Nickerson, Chief Executive Officer Swim England, being a very vocal ambassador for the sport and the need to get pools open again. This has resulted in a lot of pressure on pools, but with 25% still with no plans to open, there are challenging times ahead.
- 20/19.3 The financial pressure on Swim England was highlighted as an area of concern, with funding sources on hold, and with no competitions or income. This has unfortunately resulted in a third of the workforce leaving the company through a restructure, and many staff on furlough. George thanked everyone involved for their co-operation and understanding in the process.
- 20/19.4 George provided information on a recent data collection survey that had gone to clubs, in the hope of providing a detailed picture of clubs returning to training. To date 500 clubs have responded, providing insight into the current status. One of the key indicators coming from the results is that only 50% are back in the water in some form.
- 20/19.5 George then moved on to discuss specific discipline challenges on a national scale, and the lack of overseas training. The presentation then concluded with some positive news around the emergence of a new form of competition- Level X, with more details being provided in the next few weeks.
George concluded with a special thanks to everyone for coming together during the pandemic.

20/20

Impact of the pandemic on Swim England East Region

- 20/20.1 Joan Wheeler, Chairman, provided an update on how the Region had reacted to the pandemic. It was explained the Region began by cancelling events and competitions up until June, then to September and then until the end of 2020. It had been a very demoralising time for volunteers and staff who had put a great deal of time into planning events.
- 20/20.2 The Region has evolved delivery plans to work in a very different way, with everything going online. This has had a positive effect, as the Region has worked with a much greater range of people, and the relationships built have been a positive.
- 20/20.3 Courses have moved online, with over 300 people accessing these over the past few months. The number of SwimMark clubs has increased. We have also been preparing for Stronger Affiliation, the mandatory process for affiliation and renewals.
- 20/20.4 Joan also provided detail on the financial impact on the Region, in that we too have suffered a loss, primarily due to lack of competitions, although there had been considerable savings by the online delivery. The true scale of the financial impact will be clearer after membership renewals in the new year. The Region had been prudent with expenditure- for example, the vacant Regional Development Officer post has been frozen, furlough has been used where possible, and further cost savings would be considered by the Management Board.

- 20/20.5 Joan concluded her presentation by thanking the volunteers and the staff for going above and beyond to help ensure the survival of the Region and its clubs, and gave particular thanks to club chairmen for all they were doing to support members and ensure the future of their clubs. Ian Cotton, Lottie Thompson, and Tom Baster were also thanked for their support at National level, chairing the Swim England Leadership Groups.
- 20/20.6 Ian Mackenzie received a particular thanks for his support to the national discipline groups when he should have been travelling the country in the ceremonial role as Swim England President.
- 20/20.7 The Chairman invited questions to either the region, or to George Wood.
- 20/20.8 Responding to a question about pools re-opening, George Wood explained that the picture was mixed. With pools managed by a range of providers from large scale pool operators to councils and schools, the barriers to re-opening were varied, but finance was a key issue.
- 20/20.9 There was a request for information on the county swimming championships for 2021. Tom Baster, in his role of Chairman of the Swim England Swimming Leadership Group, reported that county championships had been very much under discussion by the Group. A firm proposal for the 2021 calendar would be discussed with regional swimming representatives next weekend, with a communication to counties to follow in the near future.