



Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Open Water Swimming Leadership Group Meeting
21 October 2021

Present	Paul Kendall (PK)	Chairman
	Jacqui Kendall (JK)	Norfolk representative
	Derrick Jones (DJ) (stand-in for Sarah Tait)	Suffolk representative
	Bryan Thompson (BT)(stand-in)	Hertfordshire representative
	Marion Westwood (MW)	Specialist
	Steve Westwood (SW)	Specialist

Also present

David Metcalf (DM), ER Independent director. Keith Belton (KB), ER Finance Director

21/20 Apologies

21/20.1 Danny Bunn (DB), Essex and Sandra Grant (SG), Bedfordshire representatives. No apologies received from Cambridgeshire.

21/21 Declarations of conflict of interest

21/21.1 There were none

21/22 Previous minutes

21/22.1 The minutes of the meeting 15 April 2021 were agreed, with one correction to 21/14.1. The last paragraph was shortened to read: GP informed the meeting that Hertfordshire is working towards holding an open water event later in the year.

21/23 Matters arising

21/23.1 There were no matters to discuss

21/24 County representation on OWSLG

21/24.1 Discussion on importance for Counties to have a presence on the Leadership Group identified these representatives played a crucial role in maintaining close liaison between the Region and the athletes, their coaches and their clubs. The apparent lack of current commitment to the discipline by some counties and what, if any, measures should the region apply to address this found the meeting broadly in favour of taking no direct action at this time that

may impact on athlete participation at the regional event. The OWSLG would continue to encourage participation by volunteers from all counties to assist with the running of the competition, not just with manning their own medal table.

21/25

Athlete and Officials development opportunities

21/25.1 Development opportunities for athletes centred around a 2-day program, one spent on-line with advice and guidance from experienced coaches and presentation of personal experience example from a current international athlete (possibly Nathan Hughes?), followed-up by a practical in-lake training opportunity in late May / early June, with a competition style swim and direct person to person coaching opportunities. Entry criteria for the on-line element may possibly be looser than for the in-lake training, where prior open water experience and evidence of distance event stamina / race results may be used to filter the numbers to a manageable level. Anticipated group sizes: On-line could be up to 250 whilst the in-lake group would need to be kept to no more than 50. Participation in the on-line event would be free however there would be a need to charge a fee for the in-lake element.

21/25.2 Development opportunities for officials is dependent upon the release of a revised training package to accompany a new qualification of Open Water Technical Official. The new package is in its final period of development and will be released once SE regional trainers have completed their evaluation of it. The new qualification combines the current Level 1 and 2 theory to remove the need to complete 2 phases of classroom training; practical demonstration of each duty remains unchanged, however individuals have ability to cover a wider range of roles whilst under training.

21/26

Swim England – 2022 National Age Group entry

21/26.1 Swim England have confirmed that the events and age groupings for the 2022 Open Water NAGs will remain the same as in 2019, these being:
2000m, age 12 and age 13.
3000m, age 14 and age 15.
5000m, age 16, age 17/18 and age 19+
Precise entry criteria have still to be confirmed but are also likely to remain as open to individuals placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in age at regional open water events over a corresponding representative distance. No precise date for the national event was confirmed however there is a likelihood that it could fall mid-week on 10 Aug 22.

21/27

2022 Regional Open Water Championships

21/27.1 Whitlingham Adventure - Whitlingham Great Broad, Norwich, have confirmed our booking to use their facilities on 10 July 2022. The Country Park authorities have also confirmed that we have the use of their land. The event date has been published to safety team canoeists and first aiders and we await confirmation of their availability.

21/27.2 Requests for quotes for race day equipment and facilities; i.e. hats, toilets, competitor numbers, chip timing, entry process etc have been submitted to



various suppliers and replies are awaited. Anticipated costings will be incorporated in the budget submission in the absence of any firm information.

21/27.3 The need for new volunteers to fill various roles before and on the day of the event has been identified; i.e. KB indicated that he would be away on holiday, meaning that as a minimum the results management position is vacant. Use of on-line entry and payment processes are being examined to assist the management of this element. PK requested meeting participants make enquiries in their local areas to encourage volunteers to come forward and make themselves known ahead of the event. Anyone with particular skills to offer is asked to make the organiser aware well before the day.

21/27.4 Discussion on use of pre-event on-line swimmers' briefings in the week ahead of the day to reduce the congestion on the decking on the day was generally inconclusive. Experience gained using this system at other open water events suggests that it is a positive step, however it does rely on participants cooperation and access to internet at the time of the briefing(s). Athletes that have used this system elsewhere appeared to be in favour of the process. Given the numbers of anticipated participants at our event it is estimated that at least two briefings would need to be held if this system was used. Athletes would have to be seen to have attended a briefing as part of their terms of entry. Concern was voiced that some may fail to listen or mute the sessions, however experience so far suggests that did not happen elsewhere. Whatever process that is finally adopted must offer those without suitable IT or internet access the opportunity to still be able to participate. Further development is required, maybe by trialling it for just one distance.

21/27.5 Use of self-applied competitors number transfers was discussed, with these seen as another possible way to reduce congestion on the decking and improve availability of the event officials to perform other roles. The financial and logistical requirements for use of these needs to be examined further, but their use in 2022 is not ruled out at this time.

21/28

2022 Open Water Budget

21/28.1 Potential costs, numbers of participants, coaches pass and entry fees were discussed. The consensus was that the event is likely to attract a similar sized entry to previous years meaning that we could reasonably expect upwards of 450 entries. To comply with finance requirements competitive quotes would be sought from the major service providers such as chip-timing and toilets. The predicted costs, any deposit requirements and terms of cancellation and potential losses that could be incurred would be notified to region prior to proceeding. KB agreed he would provide a breakdown of previous OW event financial costs to aid with production of the 2022 submission. PK indicated

that he would prepare and distribute the proposed budget to the committee for comment before submitting to region.

21/28.2 Discussion surrounding event entry costs agreed these would need to be based on present day expenses and reflect the current increases experienced. Additional costs from use of Chip Timing and number transfers would need to be covered, with county fees used to buffer the impact of these increases on the individual. County fees are currently set at £250, though in discussion the meeting considered that this was considerably less than it could be. Given the overall cost of staging this open water event, the value for money it represents to counties holding their championships within this regional event should not be underestimated.

21/29 Any other business

21/29.1 There was no other business

21/30 Confidential items

21/30.1 There were none

21/31 Next meeting

21/31.1 The next meeting will take place on 05 April 2022 via Zoom.