



Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Disability Leadership Group Meeting
21st January 2025 at 8pm

Present	Peter Winter (PW)	Disability Swimming Manager
	Helen Stephens (HS)	East Region Board Director
	Ann Byrne (AB)	Suffolk Representative
	Sandra Grant (SG)	Bedfordshire Representative
	Anthony Moore (TM)	Norfolk Representative
	Christopher Pagan (CP)	Essex Representative

Also present: James Salmon, Regional Manager (JSa)

25/01 Apologies

25/01.1 Apologies received from Carl Cooper (CC), and Paula Durrant from Cambridgeshire.

25/02 Declarations of conflict of interest

25/02.1 None declared.

25/03 Previous minutes

25/03.1 The minutes of the meeting on 12th November 2024 were agreed.

25/03.2 JSa raised an item which was brought up at the East Region Board meeting regarding Minute 24.33.1 which stated that there was no feedback from the Para Championships. At the East Region Board meeting, Gerry Metcalf had said that although she was not at the Disability Leadership Group meeting, she had given feedback to PW and CC about the lack of swimmers at that event and that this needs to be looked at for this year.

PW agreed that the minutes will be updated accordingly to reflect the feedback given.

25/04 Matters arising

25/04.1 PW advised that there will be a meeting with the National Para Talent Manager, Martin Lees, next Monday. PW, JSa, HS and Ian Mackenzie will attend. There will be feedback to this Group at the next meeting.

25/04.2 HS referred to the matter of the Board being concerned about the number of swimmers at the regional meet.

It was questioned whether a stand-alone regional meet is necessary. Could assessments be carried out in a para section included in an ordinary open meet?

In response to this, PW explained that, because of the way that the classification works, it takes up a large proportion of the weekend, therefore it is not feasible to have classifications alongside an open meet. PW explained further that at national level to get the international classification, the classifications take place two to three days prior to the actual meet.

The classification numbers were low last year because of another classification event on the same day in Bristol. Ideally swimmers due to be classified should attend a classification event local to them. PW confirmed that around ten swimmers went to Bristol. The organisation of the classification meet in Bristol on the same weekend as that in Newmarket will be raised at Monday's meeting. There should be no clashes.

25/04.3 PW has already put the dates for this year in the diary, the licence has gone through, and the pool is also booked.

25/04.4 There was discussion about allowing several licensed meets, including a regional licensed meet, on the same day, and the impact this on, for example, finding officials. It also impacts entry numbers - para swimmers possibly choosing not to attend a regional meet if their club has a meet they can enter on the same day.

Action: HS will contact Simon Gee, the Regional Licensing Officer, to ask what the policy is within the Region regarding regional para meets and other meets happening at the same time.

25/05 Athlete recognition

25/05.1 **AB - Suffolk** – Corey Hare competed at the Aquatics GB Para-Swimming Winter Meet 2024.

25/05.2 **TM – Norfolk** – William Ellard has been awarded an MBE and was nominated for Young Sports Personality of the Year 2024.
PW said that William also broke a World Record at the Para-Swimming Winter Meet. AB said that it was only classified as the World's Best Time, because there were no doping controls in place, and therefore it could not be classified as a World Record. She added that several para swimmers at the meet were similarly affected. World Records could not be ratified because there were no doping controls.

25/05.3 **CP – Essex** – Nothing to report.

25/05.4 **SG – Bedfordshire** – SG is unable to report on athlete recognition in Bedfordshire or how many para swimmers they have owing to a lack of information.

25/06 County reports

- 25/06.1 **SG – Bedfordshire** – SG informed the Group that since the last meeting she has been elected to the position of Swim England Bedfordshire Disability Secretary.

The following is the text of the report provided by SG which she sent to JSa for inclusion in the minutes:

I have emailed all the aquatic disciplines in Bedfordshire county, this includes swimming clubs, water polo clubs, synchro swimming, Masters and diving.

I've introduced myself to them, I've disseminated information on how to become an official for disability or para events by sending out the link for the signup to subscribe to SE East Region officials. I've sent the information out to the clubs with regard to disability training day on Saturday, the 1st of March in Chelmsford. I've also signposted them to the section on the Swim England Para Disability website and the section for updated resources for swimming inclusion and have added to the email sent out the attachments and links in relation to various documents such as members, parents and guardians certificate of exception guidance, application form et cetera. I have checked the Beds County Website and requested alterations to the content to reflect the new Certificate of Exception and that has been carried out.

I do recall from my previous involvement in this role that communication seems to be the main stumbling block, having sent the email out introducing myself to all those who are on the SE Bedfordshire mailing list, of the 15 also clubs affiliated to SE Beds ASA chair I've only had responses from five clubs in the last 2 weeks. One of those is diving, one is a masters, one is water polo and the other two are swimming clubs.

At the moment Bedfordshire swimming clubs are preparing for the county championships so we shall be patient and see what responses we get on the conclusion of the Bedfordshire County Championships.

However, it is such things as County championships that I believe it is of vital importance that the clubs communicate with me, do appoint someone within the club to deal with and have a designated role as responsibility for disability/para swimming and proactively promote inclusion in that regard.

In my communications with the clubs I am trying to ascertain how many disability/para swimmers we have in the county. Hopefully that will become clear sooner rather than later and also that we can be sure that each club is receiving all the information about disability/para opportunities and events and passing it on to those who are not on the radar to receive it and also to promote swimmers coming in.

- 25/06.2 **CP - Essex** - CP is trying to identify how many para swimmers there are in Essex. Currently he has noted 17 with different classifications and some unclassified. CP would like to organise a Swimability meet based in Essex. It needs to avoid clashes with other Swimability meets in the Region. Braintree, as a central location, has been contacted for a date potentially at the beginning of September. PW supported this initiative as it encourages new swimmers to compete in a friendly, relaxed environment, and having it early on in the season means that the more experienced para swimmers can pass on their knowledge. AB added there is no need to worry about officials because with it not being licensed, older swimmers can officiate. CP was advised to contact AB, HS or PW if he needs help.

25/06.3 **AM -Norfolk** – One committee meeting has been held by Zoom. No disability issues were raised.

25/06.4 **AB – Suffolk** - There is one entrant for the Suffolk meet so far. AB has booked the Swimability meet for 5th April 2025 and the forms and application forms are going out this week. It will be the 20th year of the meet and it will again be sponsored by the Lions. William Ellard is scheduled to attend for a meet and greet depending on his schedule. PW asked AB to share this with the other county representatives to help with attendance at the event. He requested that AB emails JSa and Emma Winter too.

25/07 **2025 Budget and Plan**

25/07.1 The cost of hiring the Newmarket pool for this year's Championships has now been received and added to the budget.
PW mentioned the potential for money coming in from the Development training days and the para meet.

25/07.2 HS asked how many swimmers are needed for the regional para meet to break-even. PW responded that, depending on how many swims they do, a minimum of 20 is needed; less than 20 swimmers and the meet will be cancelled.

25/08 **Regional training sessions 2025**

25/08.1 New Hall swimming pool near Chelmsford has been booked for 1st March. It is open to everyone. Six swimmers are booked on. PW asked the county representatives to email potential swimmers. PW stated that New Hall is used as a regional training camp base as well.

The Regional Development Day is likely to be 1st June at Bishop's Stortford, where swimmers can practice starts and turns before the Coventry Junior Open Para Championships.

Action: AB will email Tony Ward to find out the dates of the Coventry meet.

if there are not enough swimmers, the event will not be held because of the expense in organising it.

Action: JSa to email those who attended the 2024 Development Day

Action: PW to email the coaches

25/09 **Para-Swimming Championships 2025**

25/09.1 The agreed conditions are essentially the same as for last year with the addition that swimmers must be aged 9yrs. on the day of classification. The licence application has been submitted and the venue is booked. HS will be in charge of the volunteers. Stewart Murray will be the lead referee and David Metcalf is likely to be there as the technical director. The format will be much the same as in other years. There will be Swim England East Region branding.
Classification will take place on 20th and 21st September, and the meet will be on 21st September.

- 25/09.2 PW explained that those being classified swim at the meet, but the meet is open to other classified para swimmers. Swimmers who are on the waiting list can also take part, but they will not be eligible for a medal. He stated that because it is a Para Championships, he has to follow national guidance which stipulates that it has to be open to classified swimmers, or swimmers on the classification waiting list, or those who are classified at that meet.
- 25/10 Any other business**
- 25/10.1 JSa asked that anyone who has not filled out their conflict-of-interest form to do it as soon as possible.
- 25/10.2 AB reported that William Ellard won the World Series title in the Junior Men's category. He was second overall in the Men's category.
- 25/11 Confidential items**
- 25/11.1 None raised.
- 25/12 Next meeting**
- 25/12.1 The next meeting is scheduled for 29th April 2025 at 8pm.