

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Masters Leadership Group Meeting
16th January 2025 at 6pm, via Zoom

Present

Gerry Metcalf (GM)	Swim England East Region Director
Liz Woolner (LW)	Chairman of the meeting and Bedfordshire Representative
Douglas Drake (DD)	Essex Representative
Andrew MacDonald (AM)	Hertfordshire Representative
Helen Davis (HD)	Cambridgeshire Representative
Marianne Phoenix (MP)	Norfolk Representative
Caroline Cofield (CC)	Suffolk Representative

Also present James Salmon, Regional Manager (JSa)

25/01

Apologies and introductions

- 25/01.1 No apologies for absence received.
- 25/01.2 JSa informed the meeting that Martyn Fresher is no longer the Masters representative for Cambridgeshire - the position is currently vacant. JSa will contact Cambridgeshire to ask if they can provide a replacement.
- 25/01.3 Bernie Buck (BB) joined the meeting at 6.10pm and left at 6.45pm.

25/02

Declarations of conflict of interest

- 25/02.1 There were no declarations of conflict of interest.
- 25/02.2 JSa requested that any conflict of interest forms still outstanding need to be completed and sent in by the end of the month.

25/03

Masters Leadership Group membership

- 25/03.1 JSa introduced MP as the new representative for Norfolk.
- 25/03.2 As BB has stepped down from the role of Masters Manager, this role is currently unoccupied. LW has put herself forward in the meantime to chair this meeting.

JSa advised that BB would still like to be a part of the committee in the role of events organiser.

GM stated that without a manager, there can be no competitions. JSa said that hopefully having someone to help with organising the events would lighten the workload for the manager.

No objections were raised to the appointment of BB as events organiser.

LW asked for clarification on the role that BB would take on.

JSa responded that it is a new role which will include setting events up, receiving the entries, etc. GM mentioned that there can be up to two specialists on each Leadership Group so BB could be appointed in that role.

LW asked whether BB would still be willing to be the promoter for the East Region Masters event. JSa responded that he may be willing to do that.

It was agreed that BB be appointed as a specialist. JSa confirmed that BB would be invited to join meetings on a regular basis.

25/03.3

BB then joined the meeting.

LW informed BB of the unanimous agreement to his appointment in the role of specialist for the Leadership Group.

BB explained the role would include setting up the meet. He has put together a draft schedule which needs to be agreed. Once the schedule and conditions have been agreed, he will set up the entry system, monitor it and take it through to the event on the day, providing updates on progress as necessary. He will not be responsible for the competition dates, booking the pool, food etc.

The same would apply for the inter-counties competition. Once the schedule is agreed, he will send out the team sheets and set up the competition so that somebody can run it on the day.

BB agreed to take on the role of promoter for the Masters Championships. After discussion, it was agreed that he will be the named promoter in the meet conditions.

MP asked about the cut-off date of the National Masters as her feedback from Norfolk is that by the time people had got times at the East Region event, the National Masters had already filled up. BB responded the National Masters normally closes at the end of the first week in October or the middle of the next.

The schedule and qualifying times should be out by the end of January 2025. this will allow athletes to plan their competitive year, and look to perhaps achieving qualifying times earlier in the year.

He mentioned that there will be a lot of changes to the National Championships this year based on the bad experience from last year in terms of numbers of entrants, with the first phase being opened and there being a lot of spaces, then phase two being opened and being full within two hours. He mentioned changes are also likely to be made around qualifying times, entry caps and how those are managed. There were also problems last year with the entry system.

BB advised that discussion is taking place around amending qualifying times and adjustments to phase 2 entry times for the older swimmers. Also being considered are some adjustments on some age-groups. The number of events which can be entered in the first round was reduced from five to four and is unlikely to change.

BB advised that 28th September 2025 was the date on the draft schedule for the East Region Masters. The decision was made to move the event to 7th September 2025, subject to pool availability.

A discussion followed about whether it was necessary to use Newmarket and about the suitability and cost of the pool. JSa advised making a booking as soon as possible and will try to book Newmarket first. Other options will be considered if it is not available.

The cost of hire, and the suitability and availability of various pools was discussed. A list of the costs for various pools would be useful for comparison. Pools mentioned were Basildon Sporting Village, Crown Pools, Ipswich, Inspire: Luton Sports Village, Newmarket Leisure Centre and SportsPark, Norwich. The Bury St. Edmunds pool was not considered suitable, based on feedback received.

Action: JSa to book Newmarket Leisure Centre, if available, on 7th September 2025.

25/03.4 BB said that there had been discussions a potential Masters long course meet with Team Anglia and the Region working together on the organisation, and sharing any profits made.

GM asked what would happen in the event of any loss. BB said that if entries were low, the event could be cancelled at the close of entries and entry fees refunded. Time would be needed between the close of entries date and the competition date, so any pool hire cancellation fees are avoided.

BB said the idea required a feasibility study by a small group. The event would not be held in 2025 because of the large amount of work involved in setting it up.

The initial response was positive for a long course meet, and BB will work on further details and report back.

JSa stated that if there is a definite proposal, then this can be put to the Swim England East Region Board for their decision.

- 25/03.5 BB reported that an inter-regional event has been discussed by the national Masters Working Group. There are eight regions nationally, ten with Scotland and Wales included. There are 16 age-groups. A 50-metre pool could be divided into two by age, with the set-up similar to at the National Inter-Counties Team Championships event. Potentially this could have financial backing in terms of contribution to travel costs etc in line with what happens for the National Inter-Counties.
The event would not happen this year.

BB reported that a sub-group of the national Masters Working Group will be put together a feasibility plan which will go to the governing bodies, Swim England and the Regions for their potential buy-in.

- 25/03.6 BB mentioned that the programmes for the Inter-Counties run on three cycles and he is not sure which one it is for this year. It is the same set-up for the Nationals, with four separate schedules which move on each year. British Masters will be on a cycle of three different schedules.

BB left the meeting after this agenda item.

25/04 Previous minutes

- 25/04.1 The minutes from the meeting on 9th September 2024 were approved.

25/05 Matters arising

- 25/05.1 LW had checked the relay records and they have been separated into long course and short course.

- 25/05.2 LW asked about the decathlon trophies. LW confirmed that the female trophy is with Alison Fordham. It was presented to her at Newmarket. JSa has the male trophy which needs to be engraved and given to the person it was awarded to. LW added it may be worth waiting until the results are out for 2024 which should be soon.

LW asked about the team decathlon trophies. JSa responded that they have not been found.

Action: LW to check with Louise Mackie about the trophies.

It was agreed not to award the trophies for 2023 given the situation.

25/05.3 LW asked for an update on Cambridgeshire. JSa confirmed that there is now a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, so the County is fully functional.

25/06 **Development Plan and competition plan**

25/06.1 The Development Plan was considered.

The Swim England East Region Masters Inter-Counties is on 9th November.

There was discussion on funding the event, the cost of pool hire, and the possible use of a pool other than Newmarket Leisure Centre.

JSa stated that all disciplines are expected to be self-funded. He confirmed that the income comes from the meets, plus any sponsorship, and the expenditure is pool hire etc. Profit is not shown per event, but overall for the discipline.

CC asked whether there was scope to ask counties to pay a team entry fee for Inter-Counties. GM added the counties do this for the open water event and are charged a set fee for that.

Pools discussed were Basildon, Biggleswade, Braintree, Crown Pools, Ipswich, Hatfield, and Riverside, Chelmsford.

JSa asked for a list to check availability and costs. GM advised that the pool should be booked before the next meeting in July.

Action: JSa to check availability and costs of pools on the list

25/06.2 Development Day – There have been two in the region since LW became involved. A loss was made on both days. The last one was poorly attended LW said that there was a need to find something that people are interested in doing.

LW explained what the previous two days had included. The first was held long course with a presentation on psychology and flexibility training with Lawrence Palmer, plus a pool session. It was quite well attended. The other one covered nutrition, plus a pool session. It was not well attended.

She suggested a Masters' Open Water Development Day as there has been a lot of interest in open water swimming, although East Region already hold an open water development day at Stanborough lakes each year.

Another suggestion was for an AP Race Camp, but there was a cost for the delivery of this.

The county representatives agreed to contact their clubs to gauge the support of Masters for development, and what they would like.

This will be discussed in the September meeting for possible delivery next year.

25/07 **Budget**

- 25/07.1 The budget was circulated and JSa confirmed that it had been agreed.
- 25/08 County matters - updates from representatives**
- 25/08.1 Norfolk –The Norfolk Masters short course event will be on 7th June, with the same format as last year to include relays, skins etc.
- 25/08.2 Essex – Essex Masters Championships will be held on 1st March 2025. Essex won the Regional Inter-Counties competition.
- 25/08.3 Cambridgeshire - No representative.
- 25/08.4 Hertfordshire – Nothing to report.
- 25/08.5 Suffolk – The Valentine’s meet is on 16th of February 2025 at Bury St. Edmunds. This is the County Masters meet.
CC mentioned the lack of response from clubs when trying to get masters for the Inter-Counties. LW suggested building up a network of contacts.
- 25/08.6 Bedfordshire – Nothing to report.
- 25/09 Masters Manager**
- 25/09.1 DD asked what the role involved. JSa replied that the role involves chairing the meeting, producing the annual plans and budgets, arranging competitions (which BB is going to do), and organising development days. DD said he would have a think about it. JSa will send him the official job description.
- Action: JSa to send job description to DD**
- 25/10 Any other business**
- 25/10.1 GM emphasised that a manager is needed and the pools need to be booked if there are to be competitions this year. JSa confirmed that he will try to book Newmarket for the Championships and get a list of options for the Inter-Counties competition.
- 25/10.2 There was positive feedback to LW for her chairing of the meeting.
- 25/11 Confidential items**
- 25/11.1 There were no confidential items to be discussed.
- 25/12 Next meeting**
- 25/12.1 The next meeting will be held on 1st July 2025 at 6pm.