

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Open Water Swimming Leadership Group Meeting
8th May 2025, 7pm via Zoom

Present	Paul Kendall (PK)	Manager
	Stewart Murray (SMu)	Director Representative
	Lauren Grice (LG)	Cambridgeshire Representative
	Jeremy Irvine (JI)	Hertfordshire Representative
	Jacqui Kendall (JK)	Norfolk Representative
	Helen Stephens (HS)	Essex Representative
	Stephen Westwood (SW)	Specialist
	Marion Westwood (MW)	Specialist

Also present Emma Winter (EW), Regional Administrator

25/13 Apologies

- 25/13.1 PK welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.
- 25/13.2 Apologies were received from Ian Murray (IM) Bedfordshire Representative.
Stephen Westwood (SW) joined the meeting at 7.28pm.
- 25/13.3 EW introduced Lauren Grice (LG) attending on behalf of Cambridgeshire.
- 25/13.4 Jeremy Irvine (JI) introduced himself as the Hertfordshire Representative. He is from Watford Swimming Club.

25/14 Declarations of conflict of interest

- 25/14.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

25/15 Previous minutes

- 25/15.1 Minutes from the meeting held on 25th February 2025 were circulated prior to the meeting.
- 25/15.2 LG asked for a copy of the minutes.. EW confirmed that she will forward this.

25/16 Matters arising

25/16.1 No matters arising.

25/17 2025 Plan and Budget

25/17.1 PK reported that there has been no change to the plan and budget for 2025.

25/17.2 PK reported that he is aware that the cost for the water hire at Whittlingham has risen this year, but hasn't yet received the final cost. An increase has been budgeted for.

25/17.3 PK confirmed that the date for payment for Whittlingham varies and that he normally has to chase for the invoice.

25/18 Open Water Championships 2025

25/18.1 EW confirmed that there is currently one para-swimmer entry and 57 main entries.

25/18.2 PK reported that 34 officials have already signed up. There might be some additional trainee officials after the 23rd May Open Water training course.

25/18.3 JK reported that the barbeque team will also have extra help on the day – food handling and hygiene certificates are in place.

25/18.4 PK asked for extra help setting up on the Saturday and packing up on the Sunday. Set up is from 1.30pm for about four hours.

25/18.5 PK reported that SW will act as Technical Director on the day of the event, but he will need some assistance with the car parking.

A dedicated team will be needed to marshal the car parks on the day. The car parking arrangements were discussed.

25/18.6 PK reported that he will be assisting with the results along with EW.

25/18.7 JK reported that the toilets, the radios and the announcers have all been booked.

25/18.8 JK reported the possible need for some more bags for the swimmers to put their clothes in.

25/18.9 HS will contact clubs once entries have closed to ask for support from volunteers for the decking entrance.

PK confirmed the purchase of some additional barriers for the entrance to the decking.

25/18.10 PK reported that additional information has been put on the regional Open Water webpage regarding what competitors are required to bring with them regarding wetsuits, as these will not be available to purchase or hire on the day at Whittlingham.

- 25/18.11 PK reported that the National Open Water conditions have been released and make it clear that competitors at regional events who are looking to qualify for Nationals will be swimming a different distance to what they will swim at the national event.

This has also been identified clearly on the regional Open Water competitions webpage.

- 25/18.12 A discussion took place around para-swimmers competing at the regional event and qualifying for the nationals - should they enter as a para-swimmer or in the same way as an able-bodied swimmer.

Action: PK to get clarification from National regarding para-swimmers and the National Open Water event.

- 25/18.13 PK reported that there is no update on numbers of canoes – 16 at present. The number will be confirmed nearer the event.

- 25/18.14 All officials will receive a briefing note before the day. There is a small stock of polo shirts for those who do not have one.

25/19 Open Water Development Day 2025

- 25/19.1 EW reported that 47 swimmers were invited to attend the day based on their ranking times for 800m and 1500m. Only 25 swimmers accepted the invite. It was then opened up to anyone who would like to attend.

- 25/19.2 EW confirmed that there are 46 swimmers registered for the Open Water Development Day. For 15 of the swimmers it is their first time to try Open Water swimming.

- 25/19.3 EW confirmed that, because of the classroom space at Stanborough Lakes, 46 is manageable in two groups. EW will contact Chris Greenhalgh to see if numbers could be increased.

- 25/19.4 PK asked EW if Stanborough Lakes have provided any water quality information.

Action: EW to contact Stanborough Lakes regarding water quality information.

25/20 Any other business

- 25/20.1 SMu suggested an amendment to condition 4.3. which states that '*It will serve as an independent regional Paralympics and special Olympics*'. SMu suggested that it should say '*Regional Para and special Olympics*'.

EW has already changed the conditions and uploaded them to the website.

25/20.2 There was discussion on condition 7.1 which states 'All swimmers under the age of 18 must be under the supervision of a qualified Coach and Team Manager'. There was also discussion on how this would be policed at the event.

Action: EW to find out the situation regarding the policy if there is just one swimmer entering.

25/20.3 SMu raised a point regarding visually impaired swimmers who require a guide, and questioned why the conditions state that they have to pay for their guide.

PK reported that Dave Harman (DH) had given guidance on the para-swimmers element of the conditions.

A discussion took place around having a guide swimmer and the difference between a coach and a guide swimmer.

25/20.4 A discussion took place regarding the wording in the conditions 'development purposes', and it was agreed for it to be removed from the conditions.
EW confirmed she had removed this point and updated the conditions.

25/20.5 It was suggested that Dave Harman is invited to the next meeting for input to next year's conditions.

25/20.6 PK confirmed that the coaches just need to collect their food voucher from the registration tent.

Action: JK will check whether there are sufficient volunteers available for the registration tent, and inform HS.

25/20.7 PK confirmed that wetsuits will be compulsory if the temperature of the water is below 18 degrees, regardless of the weather conditions.

If the temperature is between 18 and 20 degrees and the conditions, in the opinion of the referee or safety officers, are challenging - like the air temperature is cooler than the water temperature - then it is possible that wetsuits maybe required for safety reasons.

25/20.8 SMu reminded PK about submitting event branding choices to James Salmon (JSa) e.g. feathers, pop-ups or Toblerone boards.

Action: PK to contact JSa

25/21 Confidential items

25/21.1 There were none.

25/22 Next meeting

25/22.1 The next meeting will be on Thursday 7th October 2025 at 7pm.

