

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Open Water Swimming Leadership Group Meeting
25th February 2025, 7pm via Zoom

Present	Paul Kendall (PK)	Manager
	Stewart Murray (SMu)	Director Representative
	Ian Murray (IM)	Bedfordshire Representative
	Jacqui Kendall (JK)	Norfolk Representative
	Helen Stephens (HS)	Essex Representative
	Sarah Tate (ST)	Suffolk Representative
	Stephen Westwood (SW)	Specialist
	Marion Westwood (MW)	Specialist

25/01 **Apologies**

- 25/01.1 PK welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.
- 25/01.2 HS joined the meeting at 7.18pm.

25/02 **Declarations of conflict of interest**

- 25/02.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

25/03 **Previous minutes**

- 25/03.1 Minutes from the meeting held on 1st October 2024 were circulated prior to the meeting.

25/04 **Matters arising**

- 25/04.1 No matters arising.

25/05 **2025 Plan and Budget**

- 25/05.1 PK confirmed that the budget submitted to the Region had been approved, This budget for 2025 replicates close to what was achieved in 2024, with adjustments for the increase in costs. PK apologised for not circulating the budget.
- 25/05.2 PK confirmed that there was only one contentious issue - the traffic management course, but this has not been removed from the budget.
- 25/05.3 PK is looking into purchasing some barriers for the entrance to the Whitlingham decking.

- 25/05.4 A discussion took place around what type of barriers to purchase.
- 25/06 Open Water Championships 2025**
- 25/06.1 PK reported that 33 officials and 16 canoeists had confirmed being available. Another four to five who have supported in the past are still to confirm.
- 25/06.2 PK needs to confirm with one of the canoe clubs what provision there will be for food, drink and travel arrangements etc.
- 25/06.3 PK has confirmed with race timing solutions the provision of timing and transponders.
- 25/06.4 Toilets have been booked and the deposit paid. Radios and the PA system have been booked. Fine Designs will be supporting the event again this year. First aid cover has been arranged.
- 25/06.5 JK confirmed that the people who run the BBQ have confirmed that they will attend this year.
- 25/06.6 JK stated that an extra person would be needed to help on registration, as one lady who had helped previously is unable to attend.
- PK stated that registration normally opens around 7.45am but timings will be confirmed via email.
- Action: PK/JK to email HS with timings of registration to inform the volunteers.**
- 25/06.7 PK reported that the venue have confirmed the booking, but PK is still waiting for the final hire cost. There will also be a different venue manager this year who will be managing the booking.
- 25/06.8 PK will check that the conditions are correct for this event, adding specific guidance regarding wetsuits. Enquiries are already being made about when entries will open.
- PK has produced a PDF briefing of the current World Aquatics guidance regarding wetsuits and has circulated it to all the Open Water referees and the regional coordinators.
- A discussion took place regarding World Aquatics guidance and around wetsuits and tri-suits.
- It was agreed that, as the wetsuits at the venue are not suitable to swim in, a statement will be issued that wet suits are not available.

25/06.9 PK reported that he has agreed to Para-swimmers being allowed to take part, as they did last year.

SMu agreed that it is essential to include multi-classification Para-swimmers, as it is a growing element of World Para-Swimming.

SMu gave an update from the World Para-swimming rules, that any S11,12 or 13 swimmers who cannot navigate the course independently, will be permitted navigational assistance. The support could be in the form of a small non-motorized craft, surfboard or a guide athlete. A guide athlete would need to pay an entry fee.

A further discussion took place around the age at which a Para-Swimmer could compete. If it is swum under Swim England rules, the athletes would not qualify for World Para points and the age would be lower, whereas if they were swimming under World Para-swimming rules the minimum age would be 14yrs.

25/06.10 PK advised that the number of competitors who may qualify at the event to go forward to Nationals will stay the same as last year - five. The National Open Water conditions should be published shortly.

JK advised that, although 12-yr-olds will be able to swim in the regional event, 12-year-olds will not be competing at Nationals again this year.

PK stated that the distances swum at the regional event last year were 2, 3 and 5 kilometres. Competitors who go forward to Nationals will swim up in distance, so they will swim 3, 5 and 7.5 kilometres.

25/07 Open Water Development Day 2025

25/07.1 PK reported that the Open Water development day is being held on the 7th June at Stanbrough lakes.

25/07.2 SW and MW confirmed their availability if required.

25/07.3 PK reported that he had been asked by individuals from London Region about whether they could attend the day to learn about officiating.

25/07.4 PK reported that, for development of officials, he had given Helen Akers (HA) a list of nine dates when he would be available. The regional zoom facility or Swim England's Teams facility would be used to provide online training for the new officials.

25/07.5 PK confirmed that he has supplied the dates to HA and that she should be publishing them.

The dates are 16th and 23rd March 2025, 27th April 2025, 24th and 31st May 2025, and 1st June 2025 - all weekend dates.

Friday dates are 14th March 2025, 25th April 2025 or 23rd May.

25/07.6 HA had confirmed that the weekend dates she can do are 27th April 2025, 31st May 2025 or the 1st June 2025 and the Friday dates she can do are 14th March 2025, 25th April and 23rd May 2025. PK is waiting on further information from HA, but there has been nothing published on the Swim England website regarding the training.

25/08 Masters Open Water Development Day

25/08.1 IM reported that a representative from the East Region Masters had asked if there could be a development session specifically for Master swimmers, possibly in 2026.

25/08.2 There was a discussion around how many Master swimmers would attend and if it would be held on the same day as the Junior development day or not. It was agreed to look into it and how the day would be planned.

Action: IM to talk with Chris Greenhalgh.

25/09 Traffic Management course

25/09.1 SMu confirmed that the traffic management course is still in the budget. The Board have questioned whether a volunteer should be putting up signs on a public highway. Consideration was given as to whether a different way of signposting people to the event could be used.

25/09.2 SW commented that he just volunteers for the job – he has never been required to do so. It was felt that signage to the venue is important.

25/09.3 SW explained about the need for no-parking cones along the lane, and that the County Council have stated that they can only be used if a qualified operative puts them out and ensures their collection after the event. Hence the need for him to go on the course.

25/09.4 SW had spoken to the Country Park staff, and they have given options on which parking areas can be used for the event.

The Country Park also require that car parking is staffed to monitor the parking.

Also, if the Flint Barn field is used, a marshal will need to tell the 'customers' that they need to pay for their tickets so that the Country Park does not lose revenue.

They had also stated that no-parking cones and signage to the car parks would be required to ensure the safe and smooth operation of the Country Park during the event.

25/09.5 SMu stated that if SW completes course, the traffic management arrangements can be justified if challenged.

25/09.6 There was a discussion around how it would work with SW setting up the car park then becoming technical director (TD), to ease the pressure on PK.

The pre-event contact with SW as TD would have to be by radio or phone, although initially PK could be the point of contact until SW became available.

HS would need to find the volunteers to marshal the car parking during the day.

25/09.10 PK confirmed that he would like SW to do the course. SW confirmed he is willing to do that and also willing to be TD on the day, if required.

25/10 Any other business

25/10.1 HS confirmed that a sign-up will be available for volunteers on the swim meet portal under Open Water Swimming.

25/10.2 ST confirmed that she will be attending the event as Suffolk representative.

25/10.3 PK advised that because of the problems at last year's event, he and Emma Winter will work together on the results.

25/10.4 HS clarified that volunteers will be required for the car park, the registration desk and on the deck.

25/10.5 PK will arrange any additional signage which HS might require.

25/11 Confidential items

25/11.1 There were none.

25/12 Next meeting

25/12.1 The next meeting will be on Thursday 8th May 2025 at 7pm.

