

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors
7th April 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom

Present:	Stewart Murray (SMu)	Regional Chairman
	Keith Belton (KB)	Finance Manager
	Gerry Metcalf (GM)	Vice-Chairman
	Tom Baster (TB)	Director
	Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Director
	Sheila Mackenzie (SMa)	Director
	Helen Stephens (HS)	Director

Also in attendance: James Salmon (JSa), Regional Manager

26/047 Apologies and introductions

26/047.1 Apologies were received from Lottie Thompson (LT).

26/048 Declarations of conflicts of interest

26/048.1 No declarations were made. Board members were reminded to raise any conflicts of interest at the relevant point.

26/049 Minutes

26/049.1 The minutes of the meeting on 10th March 2026 were reviewed and were approved as an accurate record.

26/049.2 SMa queried whether the March concern about unapproved minutes being published applied to Leadership Group minutes. SMu confirmed that it did not — Leadership Group minutes are shared with the discipline manager and Board representative before being uploaded and carry the standard notation that they are subject to approval.

26/050 Matters arising – Action log

26/050.1 County Governance:

This has been paused nationally. Cambridge and Essex are continuing to work towards compliance. The position is to be reviewed once the Swim England Governance Review outcome is known.

26/050.2 SumUp terminal for Artistic Swimming:

KB has agreed a deferral with the individual concerned and will now chase again, as there is a gap between diving events.

26/050.3 **Governance Review actions:**

The recording and presentation were circulated. Board members' reflections were received and collated by SMu. No convenient date was found, via doodle poll, for an interim meeting, so the matter is brought to this meeting. Survey questionnaires were distributed to the Board. A meeting with Helen Kent-Jackson is scheduled for 21st April to discuss action/issues log.

26/051

Ratification of items agreed since 10th March 2026

26/051.1 No items for ratification

26/052

Finance

26/052.1 KB reported that the independent examiner had raised last-minute queries requiring research. There are no changes to the figures or wording of the version previously seen by the Board. The examiner's signature page remains outstanding.

26/052.2 KB noted timing variances in the budget reports, where expenditure had been incurred earlier than budgeted for. He reminded discipline managers to flag budget/timing changes to Jo Stalley promptly and to include correct coding when authorising expenditure. Incorrect coding had caused difficulties during the independent examination.

26/052.3 KB proposed that the Board formally sign off the annual accounts at this meeting to meet the Annual General Meeting (AGM) deadline. IM agreed providing that there are no substantive changes. KB confirmed that there are none.

Decision: The annual accounts were formally approved for submission to the AGM.

26/052.4 **Open Water – branded tote bags:**

KB raised a concern that branded tote bags had been listed for sale on the Region's website without budget provision, without consulting the Finance Manager, and without consideration of trading, accounting, and potential VAT implications.

JSa confirmed that he had now removed the order form. No orders had been placed.

KB explained that if items are sold through the Region's website, the Region is acting as a trader, requiring separate accounting of trading income and the potential for VAT to be added. The current arrangement with Fine Designs – where Fine Designs sell and the Region receives commission – avoids this. He proposed that the listing be kept down until a proper proposal with full financial analysis is presented to the Board.

Action: KB and SMu to meet with the Open Water Leadership Group to discuss financial and governance implications

26/052.5 **Water Polo costume stock:**

KB reported approximately £1,200 of Water Polo costumes in stock. This stock is over six years old. Sales are minimal and each sale is made at a loss. He proposed offering them at half price to training day participants to clear the stock.

Action: KB/JSa to approach Jackie Spinks to explore options for clearing the costume stock

26/053

Minutes from the Leadership Group meetings

26/053.1 Open Water minutes were received. The following items were raised:

26/053.1.1 **Participation membership category (26/05.5):**

JSa confirmed that the new category is planned to be launched later this year. It will not be in place for the forthcoming regional Open Water Meet.

Branded merchandise:

Discussed under minute 26/052.4

26/054

Risk Register

26/054.1 There were no changes to the Risk Register since the previous meeting.

26/054.2 TB raised a concern about whether all disciplines have current, documented risk assessments for their events, held centrally and shared with event organisers. Board members were asked whether they had seen risk assessments for their respective disciplines:

SMu confirmed that Open Water did review theirs annually.

GM confirmed that Swimming did review theirs before each championship. Masters had not reviewed theirs.

HS was not aware of a review for her disciplines.

IM/SMa were not aware of a review for Artistic Swimming, Water Polo, or Diving.

SMu acknowledged that this confirmed the concern. Assessments may exist but are not being communicated to Board representatives or event organisers.

26/054.3 TB suggested that risk assessments be added as a standing Board agenda item on a rotating basis. SMu agreed and proposed, as a first step, that JSa request current assessments from all discipline managers.

Action: JSa to request current risk assessments from each discipline manager. SMu and JSa to review and identify gaps

26/055

Regional Manager's report

26/055.1 **Club developments:**

The Leighton Linlade merger is progressing. GM noted that the club chair had raised unresolved queries at a recent Swim England Bedfordshire meeting. JSa to speak to Jo Stalley to ensure that appropriate support is in place.

26/055.2 **Connecting with clubs and members:**

JSa reported that a proposal for regional staff to visit counties to engage with members was shared at the county chairs' forum. Feedback is awaited.

SMu questioned whether daytime standalone visits would attract sufficient footfall and suggested attending regional and discipline events would give significantly greater reach. TB noted that over 1,000 athletes are expected at the Regional Swimming Championships, with at least as many parents, and that club officers would also be present. KB noted that there is suitable space available.

26/055.3 **Website support:**

The Region is experiencing difficulties with its current provider and is exploring alternatives.

26/055.4 **Swim England – operational challenges:**

JSa reported continuing difficulties with Swim England's restructuring. Processes are unclear, and club queries can take over five weeks before being referred to the Region. JSa noted examples in both safeguarding and general enquiries.

SMu reminded the Board to remain constructive in feedback to Swim England.

26/056

Regional Awards process

26/056.1 JSa had circulated a proposed timeline aligning the Region's Awards with the Swim England's revised national calendar.

The Board discussed presentation formats.

TB noted that, at the Short-Course Swimming Championships, several recipients had declined a public presentation.

KB observed that individual preferences vary, and that Club of the Year is well suited to public recognition, whilst individual awards may be better presented in a setting of the recipient's choice. SMu agreed a hybrid, flexible approach.

Regarding the Jeff Cook Award, TB proposed that it is announced at the AGM and presented separately at a convenient time. The Board agreed.

Decision: Awards timeline agreed in principle. Presentation arrangements to be flexible and individual. Jeff Cook Award to be announced at the AGM

26/057

AGM preparation

26/057.1 The AGM information – agenda, elections information and nominations – was circulated to members last week, within the 21-day notice period. Annual accounts will now follow, as they have now been agreed (see item 26/052.3).

SMu advised that the AGM start time has moved from 19:00 to 20:00, to accommodate county chairs and secretaries attending a Swim England governance workshop on the same evening (22nd April), which concludes at approximately 19:30.

Nominations Committee process:

IM raised whether the Nominations Committee should have reported its findings to the Board before the AGM pack was issued. TB noted that the Terms of Reference state that the Nominations Committee Chairman informs the AGM directly.

SMu acknowledged that the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference need looking at before next year

26/057.2 TB noted that several documents on the website are outdated, including the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference which still references the old Regional Operations Committee (ROC) structure. JSa confirmed that he and Jo Stalley are working through all the documents.

KB noted that once the Articles of Association are finalised, the Regulations should also be reviewed to remove duplication.

Action: JSa and Jo Stalley to complete the review and update of all governance documents

26/058

Governance Review feedback

26/058.1 SMu summarised the feedback received from Board members and regional staff. He noted that it was remarkably consistent.

26/058.2 SMu will give Board members a further week to submit additional comments, then prepare a draft formal response for circulation before the next Regional Chairs' meeting (anticipated at the end of April).

Action: Board members to submit further reflections on the Governance Review to SMu within the next week

26/059

Any other business

26/059.1 **Masters Leadership Group – Board representation:**

GM reported that the Masters Leadership Group next meets on 5th May, when she will be attending World Para swimming. KB agreed to attend in her place.

ROC Chairman:

SMu proposed that JSa take on the role of ROC Chairman, bringing the staff team closer to discipline leads. Direct Board representation on the ROC will be maintained. SMu to review the Terms of Reference to confirm any amendment required.

Action: To review the Terms of Reference to confirm any amendment required

26/060

Confidential items

26/060.1 No confidential items were discussed.

26/061

Next Board meeting

26/061.1 The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom.