

**Swim England East Region**  
**Minutes of the Regional Operations Committee (ROC) meeting**  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026**

**Present**

Stewart Murray (SMu) (Meeting Chairman)	Regional Chairman
Keith Belton (KB)	Finance Manager/ Director
Tom Baster (TB)	Swimming Manager
Paul Kendall (PK)	Open Water Manager
Lottie Thompson (LT)	Diving Manager
Peter Winter (PW)	Disability Manager

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

- 26/01 Apologies and introductions**
- 26/01.1 SMu welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for giving up their time to attend.
- 26/01.2 Apologies received from David Metcalf (DM), Swimming Officials Manager.
- 26/02 Declarations of conflict of interest**
- 26/02.1 There were no declarations at this point.
- 26/03 Previous minutes**
- 26/03.1 The minutes from 8th September 2025 were reviewed. There were no comments, and the minutes were agreed to be a true record.
- 26/03.2 JSa confirmed that an action relating to the circulation of budget templates and the expenses policy had been completed.
- 26/04 Planning and Budgeting**
- 26/04.1 KB provided an update confirming that all the 2026 planning and budgeting submissions had been received, apart from one discipline. This has now been resolved. Budget codes have been allocated and distributed, and the accounting system updated.  
A discussion followed regarding clarity of coding and the need for improved information when sending financial submissions. It was noted that miscoding can occur if submissions do not clearly specify the relevant cost code or event.
- 26/04.2 A detailed discussion took place regarding expense predictions, forecasting variances and how early or late payments create distortions. KB explained that predicted expenditure is automatically generated by combining actuals to date with future budget lines, leading to situations where early or late spending artificially inflates or deflates projections.

PK raised a query regarding discrepancies on predicted expenditures. KB clarified that payment timing causes prediction anomalies and encouraged managers to notify finance if expenses occur significantly earlier or later than planned so the forecast can be adjusted.

26/04.3 Discussion moved to long-term financial sustainability. KB highlighted that the Region is predicting a deficit for the current year—acceptable on a one-year basis, but unsustainable if repeated over time. Measures might include adjustments to affiliation fees or reviewing the scale of activities.

The Group agreed that early communication with clubs is essential if fees are to change. Long-term planning must therefore reflect realistic expenditure and income expectations for 2027 and beyond.

## 26/05

### Post-event questionnaires

26/05.1 The Group held an extensive discussion on the purpose, timing, ethical considerations and practicality of post-event questionnaires.

PK reported that some open water survey responses were unhelpfully general and had produced negative comments that caused discomfort to volunteers, despite the overall value of the feedback. He noted that improvements had already been implemented because of last year's responses.

26/05.2 LT raised concerns around timing, Questionnaires usually arrive after events when volunteers are already overwhelmed and unable to revisit preparation work. She recommended that question sets be agreed early in the year to prevent delays and improve response rates.

26/05.3 TB raised safeguarding concerns regarding QR codes displayed at junior events, stating that surveys involving children require parental consent. He noted significant risks including the potential for a child to disclose a safeguarding concern anonymously with no way to follow up.

JSa confirmed that Swim England guidance was being sought to determine what is permissible when young swimmers may inadvertently access surveys.

26/05.4 The Group acknowledged the need for staff training on proper data collection methods and clearer policy direction from Swim England.

26/05.5 The Group agreed that multiple mechanisms for gathering feedback already exist, such as WhatsApp groups, coach forums, and in-person communication at events.

It was recognised that questionnaires should not replace ongoing dialogue but can offer structured insights where appropriate.

26/05.6 SMu summarised the issue: The Region must balance the desire for structured feedback with safeguarding requirements and workload considerations. A consistent, compliant approach is needed before questionnaires can be implemented for upcoming events.

**26/06**

**Chairman update**

26/06.1 SMu provided a detailed update on the national governance review initiated by Swim England, explaining that two structural models are being considered:-  
(1) Maintaining the current connected but separate governance across Regions and Counties, or  
(2) Integrating Swim England, with full centralised control over staffing, finances, policies and operations.

26/06.2 SMu noted that Regions received the proposals with minimal time to digest the information and respond to it. Several Regions felt the same. The East Region Board intends to examine the review in greater depth at the next meeting.

There are widespread concerns that inconsistent communications may fuel rumours. SMu emphasised that members should avoid assumptions until the consultation process is completed.

Concerns were raised about resource strains, the need for improved IT systems, and the need for consistent HR and governance frameworks across Swim England.

26/06.3 SMu confirmed that Swim England intends to provide updates to Counties in April and is likely to announce the next steps closer to the national Annual General Meeting.

**26/07**

**Suggestions for future ROC meetings**

26/07.1 Suggestions included:  
- Adding risk assessment sharing as a standing agenda item.  
- Ensuring that each discipline provides a brief progress update at each ROC meeting, as previously recommended in September.

26/07.2 The Group discussed the importance of aligning future agendas with previous actions for continuity.

**26/08**

**Any other business**

25/08.1 TB asked for an update on cross-discipline training opportunities. No progress had been made since the previous meeting.

25/08.2 The Group acknowledged the need for structured updates at each ROC meeting.

**25/09**

**Confidential items**

25/09.1 No confidential items were raised.

**26/10**

**Next ROC meeting**

26/10.1 Date of next meeting: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2026 at 7.30pm