

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors
12th May 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom

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

Also in attendance: James Salmon (JSa), Regional Manager
Lottie Thompson (LT), Specialist
Fran Vesztröcy (FV), Regional Welfare Officer
Sarah Barrow (SB), Club and Community Development Lead, Swim England
Clare Davison, (CD), Director nominee

26/062 Apologies and introductions

26/062.1 No apologies were received. Ian and Sheila Mackenzie joined shortly after the meeting commenced. SMu welcomed Sarah Barrow and Clare Davison.

26/063 Declarations of conflicts of interest

26/063.1 No declarations were made. Board members were reminded to raise any conflicts of interest at the relevant point.

26/064 Sarah Barrow introduction

26/064.1 SMu introduced Sarah Barrow, Club and Community Development Lead (Swim England), covering the East and London Regions.

26/064.2 SB has worked for Swim England for approaching seven years, with a background in diving. Her role sits within the community health and participation strand, under Claire Coleman (Head of Aquatic Clubs), with line manager Lisa Brooks. There are four field-based Leads nationally, each covering two Regions.

26/064.3 SB explained that the role is new (approximately five months in), with ways of working still being established. It is intended to provide additional national

support to clubs, collaborating with the regional team rather than replacing the existing position. A target of 50% field-based time exists, but this has not yet been reached.

- 26/064.4 SB noted that positive work to date includes supporting the Harlow Penguins Swimming Club dissolution and the transfer of over 500 swimmers to Dunmow Atlantis Swimming Club. A productive team meeting with JSa and colleagues took place on the Thursday before this Board meeting.
- 26/064.5 In response to a question about whether clubs with an issue should contact the regional team or SB, SB responded that arrangements vary by Region. Some are piloting a centralised inbox. For now, anything reaching SB is passed to the relevant regional team member. A joint Teams channel has been set up.
SMu commented that he had challenged a national newsletter which directed clubs to contact SB directly, and that the contact should cascade through the regional team in the first instance.
- 26/064.6 Asked if the role extends to county level support, SB stated that county/club engagement is included in the support and development offer, though not yet implemented in the East. SB is open to attending county forums.
- 26/064.7 LT suggested that the Swim England organisation chart and SB's presentation from the team meeting be shared with all Board members.
- 26/064.8 SB left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

Action: JSa to circulate the Swim England organisation chart and SB's presentation to all Board members

26/065

Safeguarding update

- 26/065.1 FV presented the Q1 2026 safeguarding report.
- 26/065.2 Swim England's neurodiversity project continues. A new CPD workshop on neurodiversity in aquatics was welcomed. National Welfare Forums have restarted after a six-month hiatus, with dates now in the calendar. FV hopes that future sessions will canvas attendees on the agenda content rather than operating as one-way communications.
- 26/065.3 Matt Basford has been appointed as Swim England Head of Safeguarding. He is communicative and responsive and is due to meet FV and welfare leads from the London and South West Regions. The East Zone Safe Aquatics Officer post has now been filled following re-advertisement, though the start date is unconfirmed.
- 26/065.4 Four recent positive outcomes were highlighted:
 - (1) A safeguarding investigation was reviewed, and learning was identified following FV's intervention;
 - (2) An apology was secured for a club which received poor service;
 - (3) Two cases of inadequate victim care involving a non-Swim England pool employee were raised and a procedure review is underway;

(4) Specific safeguarding guidance has been agreed for water polo where World Aquatics rules conflicted with WavePower. Advice is to be issued and included in the next WavePower rewrite.

26/065.5 FV had raised a concern regarding the loss of inclusion expertise following the departure of Mike Hawks. His role does not appear on the current Swim England organisation chart, leaving a gap. FV has asked internally without a clear answer and will continue to pursue the matter.

26/065.6 FV left the meeting

26/066

Minutes

26/066.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2026 were approved as an accurate record.

26/067

Matters arising – Action Log

26/067.1 **Asset register:** KB has begun entering values for equipment held. A full review will be presented at the next Board meeting.

26/067.2 **Governance Review feedback:** All consultation processes are concluded. Swim England is collating responses and anticipates a further meeting with Regional Chairs in the second week of June.
SMu's written feedback to Swim England was noted and appreciated by SMA.

26/067.3 **Helen Kent-Jackson (Audit Risk & Probity Committee Chairman) meeting:** SMu and JSa met with Helen Kent-Jackson. She requested that Leadership Group minutes better identify issues for escalation to Board level, and that Board discussions actively cross-reference the risk register. Audit, Risk & Probity (ARP) Committee meetings will now take place quarterly. ARP members are being allocated to specific disciplines and will attend the next relevant Leadership Group meeting to introduce their role.

26/067.4 **Water polo costume stock:** KB has emailed Jackie Spinks with full stock and sales details. No response has been received - KB will chase this.

26/067.5 **Risk assessments:** SMu confirmed that all discipline Leadership Groups are now reviewing and updating assessments prior to events.

26/068

Ratification of Items agreed since 7th April

26/068.1 No items for ratification

26/069

Finance

26/069.1 KB reported that the April budget reports had been circulated. Most variances are timing issues with no cause for concern.

26/069.2 KB noted that the financial planning documents suggested that the Water Polo Grand Prix should have taken place, but no trace of it could be found on the website.

IM reported that the national and regional competition calendar has been subject to frequent date changes. Jackie Spinks is having significant difficulty in booking venues and hotels because of clashing dates for events.

- 26/069.3 The revised Articles of Association and The Resolution have been submitted to Companies House following the Annual General Meeting. They are under review and expected to go live within approximately one month. Once live, KB will formalise the change with the Charity Commission. KB and Chris Galer will then review the Regulations to remove duplication with the Articles.

26/070

Minutes from the Leadership Group meetings

- 26/070.1 **County Forum:** Minutes received. No queries raised.
- 26/070.2 **Diving:** SMu asked whether the situation with Level 2 coaches at Hatfield is a shortage of courses or a pipeline issue.
LT explained that Level 1 courses are available; there is one soon in Southend. The main problem is Level 2 courses. They are less frequent, and another problem is that the typical Level 1 coach is often 16 years old and therefore not yet eligible for a Level 2 course. By the time they reach the required age, many have left the sport.
- 26/070.3 **Artistic Swimming** The minutes noted a shortage of judges in the Region. IM confirmed that judging courses are run nationally through the Region and involve both theory and practical examinations.
- 26/070.3.1 IM confirmed that the barrier is availability of courses rather than appetite for courses. IM suggested that Sarah Barrow could assist in organising a judges' course, working with Amy Davis. SMu agreed that this is a suitable area for SB's support.
- Action:** JSa to raise the shortage of Artistic Swimming judges with SB as a potential area of support, working with Amy Davis.
- 26/070.4 **Masters:** The February minutes were considered. The question of county contributions to the Inter-Counties competition has been resolved as Swim England has confirmed that they will continue to fund it this year. The date for the Masters Inter-Counties competition was confirmed as 20th September at Newmarket Leisure Centre. KB noted that the conditions for the event are being rewritten.
- 26/070.5 **Regional Operations Committee (ROC):** The minutes were considered and no significant items were raised.

26/071

Risk Register and risk assessments

- 26/071.1 There were no changes to the Risk Register.
- 26/071.2 SMu confirmed that reviewing and updating risk assessments is taking place across disciplines.

26/072 Regional Manager report

- 26/072.1 **Club Affiliation:** 26 clubs completed the Club Affiliation process this quarter. All 26 were ultimately successful, though one was initially resistant and required extensive chasing. Delays were experienced with personnel records not being updated promptly by Swim England.
- 26/072.2 **Meeting our members:** JSa, Jo Stalley, and FV attended the Regional Swimming Championships. The event was a good networking opportunity. At future events it would be useful to have banners, leaflets etc. to draw members in and start a conversation. Positive feedback was received from members who appreciated putting a face to a name.
- 26/072.3 **Jeff Cook Salver:** As the award is a regional rather than national award, JSa proposed opening nominations this week for a 2026 winner, with the award being presented this year and then again in April 2027 to return to the normal cycle. This avoids the current holder retaining the trophy for 18 months with no award in 2026.
- 26/072.4 **Clubs with Learn-to-Swim sections:** Of the 15 clubs identified last year as non-compliant, three remain. Two are actively working towards compliance. Chris Galer is working with the third.

26/073 Notable bereavements for the Swim England Annual General Meeting

- 26/073.1 SMu asked Board members to consider whether any notable bereavements within the swimming community should be submitted for recognition at the Swim England Annual General Meeting.
JSa has circulated the request. Any names should be passed to JSa promptly.

26/074 Any other business

- 26/074.1 SMu introduced CD, who had been observing the meeting as a Director nominee.
CD confirmed that having observed the meeting she would still be pleased to serve as a Director of Swim England East Region.
- 26/074.2 SMA queried the status of the Annual General Meeting minutes.
SMu confirmed the minutes are in his inbox and will be returned to JSa for circulation shortly.

26/075 Confidential Items

- 26/075.1 One matter was discussed.

26/076 Next Board meeting

- 26/076.1 The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9th June 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom.