



Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Masters' Leadership Group Meeting
8th September 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom

Present:

Douglas Drake (DD)	Manager
Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Swim England East Region Board Representative
Caroline Cofield (CC)	Representative
Ryan Kelly (RK)	Representative
Marianne Phoenix (MP)	Representative
Liz Woolner (LW)	Representative

Also present: Emma Winter (EW), Regional Administrator

26/41

Apologies

- 26/41.1 Apologies were received from Gerry Metcalf (GM), Swim England East Region Board Representative. Ian Mackenzie (IM) attended as her substitute.

26/42

Declarations of conflict of interest

- 26/42.1 There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

26/43

Previous minutes

- 26/43.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2026 were reviewed.
- 26/43.2 No amendments were proposed and the minutes were approved.

26/44

Matters arising

- 26/44.1 MP asked for an update on the outcome of the parking arrangements for the Championships at Newmarket.
- 26/44.1.1 EW confirmed that the parking restriction for the event had been lifted, that no parking attendants would be in operation, and that use of the Academy car park had also been secured. EW confirmed that a further note would be circulated once entries had closed and been published.
- 26/44.2 There were no further matters beyond those covered elsewhere on the agenda.



26/45

Budget and Plan 2026

- 26/45.1 The Group noted that budget matters remained unchanged and that there were no additional budget items requiring consideration at this meeting.

26/46

Development Plan and Competition Plan

- 26/46.1 DD opened a discussion on the development plan for 2027 and asked whether the Group wished to organise another Open Water Masters Development Day or an alternative event, noting that entry numbers and weather conditions at the 2026 Open Water event had both been disappointing.

LW suggested giving the development day a break for a couple of years in view of the low attendance at previous events.

EW stated that the Region had previously run development days on themes including sports psychology, race warm-ups, and nutrition.

CC suggested that, rather than a further event aimed directly at swimmers, the Region could instead look at providing guidance to clubs – for example to committee members and head coaches – on how to successfully incorporate a Masters section, covering practical considerations such as sharing pool time and changing facilities with age-group swimmers. CC suggested that this could be delivered as a webinar or a face-to-face session.

LW and DD gave examples of how Masters swimmers are currently integrated at club level in Bedfordshire and Essex, including training in separate lanes alongside main and age-group squads, and noted that younger swimmers benefitted from the presence of Masters swimmers in training.

CC raised further questions for consideration, including whether officials should hold Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)/Safeguarding checks, whether any formal rule requires a buffer lane between Masters and non-Masters swimmers in club competition, appropriate changing room arrangements, and how clubs should manage 16 and 17-year-old swimmers who wish to train with Masters but remain classed as children.

IM suggested a contact who may be able to provide guidance on this topic. EW will investigate this.

DD noted that most published guidance on these matters is recommended practice rather than mandatory rule, and that safeguarding arrangements are managed at individual club level. He was



not aware of any rule preventing Masters swimmers training alongside age-group swimmers.

It was agreed that no Masters development days would be organised for 2027, and that the Region would instead look at producing guidance for clubs on successfully incorporating Masters swimmers.

Action: EW to investigate options for providing guidance/education for clubs on incorporating Masters swimmers, including using the contact suggested by IM

26/47

**Swim England East Region Masters Championships
Sunday 20th September 2026, Newmarket Leisure Centre
Update on entries/planning**

26/47.1 DD reported that, as at 5.30pm that evening, a total of 588 individual entries had been received. There were no relay entries at that point. The projected income was £4,998.

26/47.2 LW asked whether all the entered swims could be accommodated and queried what cap had been applied to the 800m event, noting that 26 entries (11 men and 15 women) appeared to have been received against an intended cap of 18.

EW confirmed that the event should have been capped at 18 entries and acknowledged that this had not been correctly applied, apologising for the mistake. RK suggested that the cap may have been intended as 18 per gender rather than 18 in total, which could account for the discrepancy.

EW confirmed that she would review the 800m entries once entries closed at midday on 9th September and would speak with DD, as promoter, and Gerry Metcalf (GM), as lead referee, to agree how the event would be managed. LW asked that any swimmers not accepted be informed as soon as possible.

Action: EW to review the 800m entries once entries close and agree with DD and GM how the event will be managed, informing any affected swimmers as soon as possible.

26/47.3 LW raised concern regarding the overall running time of the programme, referring to criticism received the previous year when the session had overrun significantly, and asked what steps were being taken to avoid a repeat.

DD confirmed that the total number entries is lower than in the previous year, and that some events – particularly family and team events – had



very low entries, in some cases as few as two, which would reduce the number of heats required. He noted that this would need to be balanced against ensuring sufficient rest between races for swimmers.

EW confirmed that she had asked Keith Belton to help in checking the session timings once entries closed, to ensure that the published timings could be met and that the mistakes made the previous year were not repeated. DD stated that, based on entries so far, he did not expect the session to overrun, although this could not be confirmed until entries had closed.

Action: EW and Keith to check session timings once entries close, to ensure that the programme does not overrun as it did in the previous year

26/47.4 EW confirmed that only 13 officials were currently confirmed for session 1 (the 800m event) and 14 for the remainder of the day, against a requirement of at least 17.

EW confirmed that a minimum qualification of J1 was required.

Clashes with club championships in Essex and Bedfordshire will affect officials' availability.

EW confirmed that four reminder emails had already been sent to all officials on the regional list, on GM's request, appealing to any available qualified officials to assist. A further appeal will be sent.

Action: EW to circulate a further appeal for officials via the regional website and/or newsletter, given the current shortfall

26/47.5 EW confirmed that the parking restriction for the event had been lifted, that no parking attendants would be in operation, and that use of the Academy car park had also been secured. EW confirmed that a further note on parking would be circulated once entries closed and were published.

26/47.6 DD confirmed that he had the Top Club, Top Female and Top Male trophies for the event. EW confirmed that she would send DD a stock form for medal requirements once final entry numbers were known, for DD to complete and return as soon as possible.

26/47.7 DD confirmed that GM had organised the announcer for the event.

26/47.8 The East Region President (Max Paines) will attend to present medals, alongside the county presidents from Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. EW confirmed that she would send a reminder email to



the other county presidents and would confirm attendance in due course.

26/47.9 EW confirmed that the small pool would be available for warm-up/warm-down throughout the event.

26/48

Swim England East Region Masters Inter-Counties Sunday 15th November 2026, University of East Anglia, Norwich

26/48.1 DD confirmed that invitations for the Masters Inter-Counties had been sent out. He reminded the Group that each county is required to supply two officials for the event.

RK asked for the list of club contacts used for gathering officials for the event in the previous year.

Action: DD to send RK the list of club contacts used for the Masters Inter-Counties in the previous year

26/48.2 DD asked each county representative to invite their own county president to the event. EW confirmed that she would send a reminder email to all county presidents inviting them to attend and noted that a good number of presidents – including from Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire – were expected to attend, several of whom also hold official qualifications.

26/48.3 EW confirmed that she had prepared the team sheet template, following the same format used in the previous year. LW stated that she had previously used an alternative format for relay entries, which had been accepted.

EW confirmed that the deadline for initial team sheet submissions would again be approximately one week before the event, in line with previous years, with the final sheet to follow after the event, to accommodate team changes on the day.

Action: EW to confirm the deadline for Inter-Counties team sheet submissions and circulate this, together with the team sheet template, to county representatives

26/48.4 LW asked who would manage the technical set-up for the event, including the running of the automatic officiating equipment (AOE). EW confirmed that she was in the process of confirming volunteers and was confident that Keith Belton – who is familiar with the AOE system and is local to the venue – and Paul would be able to assist. LW confirmed that she would approach Lindsay Wright, who has announced at the event



previously, to ask if she would be available again. RK offered to assist with timing/microphone duties on the day if needed.

- 26/48.5 The pool has been booked from 12.30pm to 5.30pm. Following discussion of previous years' timings, the Group agreed to extend the warm-up period to make better use of the extended booking, given the larger, 8-lane pool at the venue.

It was agreed that warm-up would run from 12.45pm to 1.45pm, with racing to commence at approximately 1.45pm.

The Group discussed options for organising the warm-up, including splitting the pool by county or by gender, and using the two outside lanes as permanent sprint lanes throughout the warm-up – as had worked successfully at Biggleswade in the previous year. DD cautioned that this arrangement would need to be properly marshalled, noting that Masters swimmers can be difficult to organise during warm-up. It was agreed that the arrangement would be finalised on the day, with flexibility for each county's allocation.

- 26/48.6 DD confirmed that the draw for the competition would take place at the event itself, as in previous years, with a representative from each county drawing.

26/49

County matters, updates from representatives

- 26/49.1 **Essex**

RK reported that the Essex Masters inbox had remained quiet, with the main outstanding item being the club contact list for the Inter-Counties, which DD agreed to provide.

- 26/49.2 **Suffolk**

CC stated that there were no matters to report.

- 26/49.3 **Norfolk**

MP reported no further matters from Norfolk beyond the parking query raised earlier in the meeting.

- 26/49.4 **Bedfordshire**

LW stated that there were no matters to report.

- 26/49.5 **Hertfordshire**

IM reported that the Hertfordshire Masters Championships had taken place at Hemel Hempstead, a six-lane facility. IM had been unable to attend personally but understood the event had run successfully despite



the smaller venue. IM indicated that the county would look at alternative venue options for next year, given the distance involved for swimmers travelling from some parts of the county.

26/50

Any other business

26/50.1 DD provided an update on the query raised at the previous meeting (minute 26/38.1) concerning an Essex Masters swimmer's difficulty in claiming East Region records achieved at the Essex Masters Championships. DD confirmed that, following further contact, the swimmer concerned, Phil Harper, had now received all outstanding certificates and had all his records recognised.

26/51

Confidential items

26/51.1 No confidential items were discussed.

26/52

Next meeting

26/52.1 The Group discussed the need for a further meeting between the Championships and the Inter-Counties to allow for a debrief following the Championships, including a review of the post-event feedback survey which EW confirmed would again be sent out to participants.

Following discussion of availability, the Group agreed that the next meeting will take place Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 19:00, via Zoom.