East Diving Leadership Group

(the "EDLG" or "Group")

Minutes of the Diving Leadership Group held via video conference

8th October 2026 at 7pm

Present:	Lottie Thompson (LT)	Diving Manager
	Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Board Representative
	Sharyn Bord (SB)	Operations Officer
	Lexie Bushnell (LB)	Specialist
	Beth Lee (BL)	Luton Representative
	Steph Lewis (SL)	Southend Representative
	Ian Rollinson (IR)	Competitions Officer
	Emma Winter (EW)	Regional Administrator

26/58 Welcome and apologies

26/58.1 LT opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

26/58.2 Apologies were received from Sarah Gateshill (SG), Dacorum Representative. SG was unable to attend but provided a written update (see 26/63.4).

26/59 Declarations of conflict of interest

26/59.1 None declared

26/60 Previous minutes

26/60.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13th August 2026 were reviewed. No comments were raised and the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

26/61 Matters arising

26/61.1 Minutes template abbreviation (26/45.3): LT confirmed that Sarah Barrow's abbreviation has been updated to SBw throughout the minutes template. *Closed*

26/61.2 Cambridge Gymnastics Academy twisting session (26/46.3): LT reported that the session with Matt Jackson did not take place, as he was unavailable in September. Wider development activity is covered under 26/66. *Closed*

26/61.3 Guidance on self-employed/invoicing arrangements for coaches (26/49.2): BL confirmed that she had contacted SBw for guidance. *Closed*

26/61.4 Hatfield affiliation notification (26/49.3): LT reported that she had messaged Jo Stalley (JSt) on a couple of occasions to confirm whether Hertfordshire's Secretary had been notified of Hatfield's affiliation but had not received a response. It was understood that this had been done, but it had not been confirmed.

IM agreed to follow this up directly, and, picking up on the same point, noted that a couple of other clubs had recently appeared on the affiliation records without the Board being informed.

Action: IM to follow up directly with JSt to confirm that Hertfordshire's Secretary has been notified of Hatfield's affiliation, and to raise the wider issue of new club affiliations not being reported to the Board

26/61.5 Hatfield pool time and coaching support (26/49.3): LT noted that, at the last meeting, the Group had discussed Hatfield having pool time available that was not being fully used. As Luton's pool is closed, Luton divers have now started training at Hatfield.

BL reported that the first session took place on Wednesday 7th October after some difficulty in getting it set up, and a further session is booked for Saturday. The pool operator (GLL) applies a "one person on the boards" rule, meaning that only one diver may dive at a time, even with three groups working on three separate boards. This had not been made known in advance and resulted in a slow session. GLL has advised that if the club hires an additional lifeguard, two divers will be permitted at a time. The club will make adjustments to improve the next session.

BL confirmed that no one could dive from another board while a diver was on the 1m board. BL confirmed that the rule came from GLL.

LT asked whether BL had been able to catch up with Will Machin (WM) regarding coaching support. BL reported that she had not done so in any detail, but that Aurelia Lee had spoken with the duty manager and is keen to help coach at Hatfield in the future. *Ongoing*

26/61.6 Pool closures: IM asked whether Dacorum was experiencing similar problems. LT clarified that the closures affect Southend (pool floor broken) and Luton. She was not aware of any issue at Dacorum. IM stated that he had been told the Dacorum pool was closing for a full refurbishment. LT messaged Becky White during the meeting to check.

BL confirmed that Luton had looked into training at Hemel Hempstead during its closure, but the fee had been too high.

Later in the meeting, LT reported Becky's response that the Dacorum pool remains open and the club has not been told of any closure. *Closed*

26/61.7 Water-confidence session qualification route (26/49.4): SB reported that AC had already spoken with SBw. *Closed*

26/61.8 Aquatics GB Next Gen date (26/50.3): LT confirmed that the date had been obtained, allowing the date for the 2027 Regional Skills competition to be finalised (see 26/65.1). *Closed*

26/61.9 Beaumont Team Challenge judges' sign-up sheet and synchronised diving judging video (26/51.3 and 26/55.3): LT confirmed that EW had emailed officials to confirm that the event had been postponed, and that a new sign-up sheet has been issued for the rescheduled event at the end of November (see 26/65.2). Once sign-ups are received, selections will be made and the synchronised diving judging training video will be recirculated.

Action: LT to make judging selections once the Beaumont Team Challenge sign-ups are received, and recirculate the synchronised diving judging training video to officials

26/61.10 Regional J-Pad inventory (26/55.1): IR confirmed that he had not yet compiled the J-Pad information. LT acknowledged that the summer period is always difficult and suggested that they catch up directly at the end of the meeting. *Ongoing*

Action: LT and IR to complete the regional J-Pad inventory (numbers, condition and last service dates)

26/61.11 Coach educator tutor assessment outcomes (26/55.2): LT confirmed that IM had written to Swim England Qualifications (SEQ) and that further information had been received. The regional budget allocated for AC's tutor assessment is not required, although IM noted that a cost of up to £100 might still apply. LT reported that AC is currently undertaking upskilling, and that the Region will be told if any cost support is needed, though this appears unlikely. *Closed*

26/61.12 LT invited any further questions on the actions from the last meeting. None were raised.

26/62 Correspondence

26/62.1 LT reported that, from a regional perspective, no correspondence had been received since the previous meeting other than routine meeting administration.

26/63 Club reports

26/63.1 Southend (SL): The replacement part for the pool floor has arrived and the repair is scheduled for 27th–29th October. Finding sessions at other pools has been difficult. The club has had problems with the pool operator (Fusion), which has refused to pay for sessions at other pools and refused to reduce members' direct debits, even though divers are receiving considerably fewer hours of training. It has been a particularly difficult period. Shan Veasey (SV) away on honeymoon for a month.

SL reported that the club is slowly moving closer to running its own competition. SV is arranging a meeting with SBw and a small group from the club to get a date in the diary.

SV has requested six additional members of staff, and several people have recently completed their Level 1. She is not overly optimistic about securing all six posts but needs to replenish numbers after losing a significant number of staff over the past 18 months, for a variety of reasons outside her control.

Using funds recovered from Southend Borough Council with IM's help, the committee has agreed to purchase an additional board. The lead time for delivery is not yet known. Once installed the club will have a complete set of boards.

LT asked whether the new board would be installed on the dryland. SL explained that the new board will go in the pool, with the existing pool board moved to the dryland.

SL also reported on a confidential matter which was later covered under confidential items (26/70).

LT welcomed the progress on the pool repair, noting that at least there is now an end date in sight.

26/63.2 Luton (BL): The pool remains closed, with the repair now more likely to be completed in mid-November. The council owns the building and has had to approve a structural engineer to remove a section of wall so that the broken equipment can be taken out, repaired, returned and tested before the wall is rebuilt - hopefully replaced with a door for future access.

Upcoming competitions had been booked on the assumption that the pool would have reopened by then, and the club has worked hard to find alternative training at other pools. BL thanked Cambridge for its considerable support. The club was also training in London and also started at Hatfield on 7th October (see 26/61.5).

Paying coaches' expenses to travel to other pools has been a problem, as Active Luton will not cover this expense. Active Luton has frozen one month's direct debits. Coaches' expenses have been met from club reserves. Phil Pelling of Swim England Bedfordshire made an application on the club's behalf to Swim England

Bedfordshire, which has donated £750 to help to continue paying coaches' expenses. BL reported that the county's swimming clubs had been very supportive, agreeing that they would want similar help in the same position.

The club has been meeting with Active Luton for updates on the pool. A period without communication meant that no alternative sessions had been booked, resulting in just over a week with no pool time at all and some negative feedback from parents. Volunteers are working extremely hard to keep training going.

Upcoming competition: There are two divers attending the London Legacy Open, three attending the Talent Games, a group of brand-new divers attending their first competition at Shipley Novices, and divers entering the Beaumont Team Challenge.

Making use of the additional dry-land time, Jack Tempest arranged a session with a GB gymnast focused on form and technique. This was well received.

LT thanked BL, noting that the situation was in some ways similar to lockdown in prompting inventive approaches. Although divers have had less training than hoped before competitions, they will at least get valuable pool time at the events. LT commended both Luton and Southend, and their volunteers, for their efforts in using different pools, and congratulated Luton on securing county funding.

26/63.3 Cambridge (SB): Operations are running smoothly. Dan Murphy and Alice Clarke (AC) signed their employment contracts on 7th October, so the club retains two professional coaches. The pool operator has been confirmed as GLL. The club is pleased with this. Meetings are being held with GLL to make sure nothing changes to the club's disadvantage. The club hopes to negotiate additional pool time, although this is unlikely.

Like many clubs, in recent times Cambridge had experienced strained relationships between coaches and the committee. A small club structure group was formed to break down and understand all the issues. The issues have now been resolved, leading to the contracts being signed, and SB hoped that clearer ground rules had been set.

Learn-to-Dive numbers have increased. However, numbers in the competitive programme are low after several older divers left, including some going to university. There is a push to speed up the progression of younger divers. Coaches have developed "Floor and Bounce", a gymnastics-style Learn-to-Dive programme using dryland (floor mat work and simple trampolining) to compensate for limited pool time, on the basis that dryland training benefits all divers. SB has almost finalised the insurance, and the programme is intended to increase the number of divers progressing into the competitive programme.

A Swim England drop-in session for Cambridgeshire is scheduled for 27th October. SB intends to raise the impact of swimming galas held at the pool on diving sessions.

LT stated that she would be interested to hear how the Floor and Bounce sessions progress, including numbers and how they feed into the competitive programme, noting that dry-land programmes have been tried at clubs over the years with mixed longevity.

26/63.4 Dacorum (written update from SG, read by LT): No issues to report and nothing to raise from a club perspective.

26/63.5 Hatfield: No separate report was given. See 26/61.4 and 26/61.5.

26/64 Operations update

26/64.1 LT reported that the regional financial statements had only been received earlier in the week. She had forwarded them to members of the Group but appreciated that they would not have been reviewed before the meeting.

26/64.2 SB reported that the 2027 booking forms for Regional Skills and Next Gen have been submitted. Booking forms for the 2027 Age-Groups and Beaumont Team Challenge still need to be submitted. SB will do this once Louise Lano has had a chance to process the current form and sought confirmation of the preferred venues and the agreed dates.

26/64.3 SB reported that Luton is approximately £485 more expensive than Southend for a two-day event, with hourly hire rates of approximately £132 at Luton and £106.60 at Southend, following Southend's recent increase.

LT suggested that Southend's increase is likely to be the first of several, and that the two venues may become closer in price over time. Whilst there are benefits to divers experiencing different pools - the event has been held at Southend for a several years - moving to Luton would probably require a larger increase in entry fees. LT was therefore inclined to remain at Southend.

IR also preferred Southend because it has a scoreboard. Luton's scoreboard runs swimming-specific software through a dedicated laptop and interface, which he had tried to use many times without success. Using a projector serves only the balcony and is of no benefit to divers. TVs could be installed on poolside with a Wi-Fi network, but every display would need its own laptop and power supply. It is possible but much less practical than using a venue with a scoreboard.

26/64.4 It was agreed that the 2027 Age-Groups and Beaumont Team Challenge will continue to be held at Southend.

Action: SB to submit the booking forms for the 2027 Age-Groups and Beaumont Team Challenge at Southend once the current form has been processed

26/64.5 Entry fees for 2027: SB proposed that entry fees should increase. A 5% increase on the current £15.50 per event would take the fee to approximately £16.25. LT stated that this was consistent with last year's discussion, when the Group anticipated the Southend increase and agreed to a steady, staged increase in fees. IR agreed that the current level could not be sustained.

SB asked whether 5% would be enough to ensure that the books balance.

26/64.6 IM asked whether the pricing review was being brought to the Regional Operations Committee (ROC). LT explained that the ROC meeting has not yet taken place as the Region is slightly behind the usual timetable. Budget requests are normally issued in October following the ROC meeting. LT noted that the aim is always for events to be cost-neutral, although a small surplus has been generated in previous years.

26/64.7 IR asked whether the Region should have some credit from the revenue generated by the Skills events over the past two years. SB explained that, as budgets are set by financial year, it does not, although she agreed that the amount of work put in should be recognised.

26/64.8 LT stated that with hire costs nearly doubling, there should be some leniency if an increase in entry fees does not fully cover costs this year. The Group does not want to raise fees sharply but recognises the need to move towards covering costs.

SB and IR cautioned that fees set too high may deter entries. Divers may enter fewer events or not attend the second day, losing both divers and spectators.

26/64.9 IR suggested that the East Region entry fees remain cheaper than those in other regions, some of which he believed charge closer to £20. He proposed a benchmarking exercise. LT agreed to contact other regional leads, including South East and North East regarding their pricing structures and any changes planned for next year's budgets.

LT noted that she had previously provided Keith Belton with a breakdown of regional entry and spectator fees. While she did not expect full standardisation across disciplines the Board may give guidance on items such as spectator tickets.

LT queried how multi-event discounts are applied. SB confirmed that the Beaumont Team Challenge offers a discount to divers entering all three events and this could be reviewed for Age-Groups.

26/64.10 LT stated that no decision was required at this meeting. She noted that national event fees are deliberately set higher than regional fees, and IM emphasised that the Region must fight its corner.

Action: SB to model entry-fee scenarios on a per-head basis using last year's entry numbers and the new hire costs

Action: LT to benchmark entry fees with other regional diving leads, including any changes planned for next year's budgets

26/65 Regional diving competitions

26/65.1 The following 2027 dates and venues were confirmed:

- Regional Skills: 13th–14th March 2027 (Southend)
- Age-Groups: 24th–25th April 2027 (Southend)
- Beaumont Team Challenge: 9th–10th October 2027 (Southend)

SB explained that there were two possible weekends for the 2027 Beaumont Team Challenge and recommended 9th–10th October, which had originally been free and was believed to be still available. LT noted that the event has moved between the first and second weekends of October in past years and had no strong preference. IR asked whether the Southampton competition was on the following weekend. LT confirmed that it takes place over October half-term, which is later. The 9th–10th October date was agreed.

26/65.2 Beaumont Team Challenge 2026: IR reported that, after considerable back-and-forth, a rescheduled date had been agreed, with WhatsApp proving useful in reaching agreement. The event will now take place on 28th–29th November 2026.

26/66 Regional development

26/66.1 Wet-rigging course: LB had not attended but had heard positive feedback from the coaches who attended. LT reported that even though the pool was out of action, Alex Rochas delivered a session covering the techniques needed to transition to wet rigging, particularly dropping and lowering divers onto the trampoline, which differs from usual dry-land rigging.

Six coaches attended. The plan is to run the wet-rigging session in the pool once it reopens. Attendees will be better prepared to make the transition to the pool as a result of the initial session.

26/66.2 LT reported that other regional development plans have been disrupted by the pool closures, as they required pool access. The aim is to hold an activity in December on the weekend of 12th–13th December, subject to pool availability.

LT noted that attendance at last year's December event had been affected because Southend's divers had not been told that it was taking place.

26/66.3 LB noted that there had been no regional talent games preparation session ahead of Talent Games. LT explained that this was because of the lack of a pool. Both dryland and pool sessions were planned, but Southend's dry land was under heavier use while the pool was closed. AC and Jack had run their own session earlier in the year on the talent games skills.

26/66.4 LT invited questions. None were raised.

Action: LT and LB to regroup with AC to plan regional development activity for the end of the year (provisionally 12th–13th December)

26/67 Officials update

26/67.1 LT reported that a J1 course took place in September. Swim England has not yet confirmed who attended or passed. Any new East Region judges will be added to the regional judges list once confirmed.

26/67.2 A J2 course is being run alongside the London Legacy Open, and some East Region candidates have been selected. LT expects that there will be some new J2s by the end of the year and was pleased that a J2 course had been secured in the south, given the demand from both the London and East Regions. LT also noted that the national J2 course in Sheffield had been cancelled (see 26/46.6).

26/67.3 LT had not yet seen the list of officials signed up for the Beaumont Team Challenge but hoped it would include some newer judges who have not judged for the Region before, given the large number of people completing their J1 this year. Some have already judged for the Region once or twice, and the pool of judges is being built up again.

Action: LT to update the regional judges list once Swim England confirms the September J1 results and, in due course, the J2 outcomes

26/68 Coaches Forum update

26/68.1 LT reported that she had not received a direct update, as SV has been away, and that activity at clubs has been dominated by the pool closures. LT gave special thanks to Cambridge for hosting and supporting Luton divers, noting that it makes a big difference and that it was good to see clubs working together and supporting each other.

26/69 Any other business

26/69.1 No other business was raised.

26/70 Confidential items

26/70.1 One confidential matter was discussed.

26/71 Next meeting

26/71.1 The next meeting is scheduled for 3rd December 2026 at 7pm.

26/71.2 LT will arrange the 2027 meeting dates, broadly following the same weeks as this year's meetings and built around the competition calendar. Members of the Group were asked to advise LT of any weeks or periods to avoid.

Action: LT to circulate proposed 2027 meeting dates

Action: All members to advise LT of any dates or periods they will be unavailable in 2027