



# MINUTES

Of the meeting of the **British Water Ski & Wakeboard Board** held on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024** via **Video Conference Call**

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## 1. To Record Attendance and Apologies for Absence.

### Present:

Martin Winter  
Andy Phillips  
Michael Lock  
Margaret Curtis  
Anny Wooldridge  
Patrick Donovan

Keir Boissevain  
Kylie Cooper  
Sarah Wassell  
Cathy Hughes

### Apologies:

Steve Sopp

## 2. BWSW Strategy 2022-27 Review.

The BWSW strategy, an overview of associate member benefits and a document mapping membership totals over a 20 year period to the number of member based facilities was circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. The BWSW 2022-27 strategy outlined 8 key ambitions:

- Grow and Retain Participation
- Support our Facilities and Delivery Partners
- Provide High Standards of Welfare and Safety
- Tackle Inequality by Delivering an Inclusive Sport
- Support a Skilled and Valued Workforce
- Raise Awareness and Profile of the Sport
- Demonstrate Value and Improved Member Services
- Run the Sport Effectively Demonstrating Strong Governance and Assurance

There were additionally 4 core themes running through the strategy:

- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Partnership working and community
- Well-being and the great outdoors
- A commitment to environmental and social governance

Each of the above key aims and themes were strongly linked to both Sport England and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport strategy for sport and recreation and BWSW broader aims as a representative body for the sport of waterskiing and wakeboarding.

Introductory section – some interesting discussion generated, noted operationally a greater need to focus on cable and data capture for the broader pay and play market which represented, on a per person basis, the bulk of the participation in the sport...

Core themes section – good work in place on delivery and outreach as outlined by Cathy on EDI, this theme and ambition in the strategy was highly relevant and resourced centrally to

improve diversity in the sport with particular groups and communities. The environmental theme had not developed beyond some materially historic activity. The new Sport England requirement for a sustainability plan would require the organisation to give attention to this area (this point was an agenda item for the next board meeting).

Ambitions section – in terms of growing and retaining participation the threat to facilities was highlighted with some long term historic loss of facilities for a myriad number of reasons to include end of leases, national park speed limits etc. A facilities strategy and clearer development plan in relation to facilities could assist in this area in focusing on strengthening the network and recognising risks to particular facilities as they arose. Also, in terms of recognising opportunities as new areas of water became available e.g. gravel pits, changes of use and local authorities seeking to improve revenue from existing areas of water. Ambition was key and the extent we could claim to be ‘innovative’ needed to be considered.

Kylie highlighted some of the club activity around universities and colleges which we did not necessarily drive centrally but which did take place as routine within the sport.

**Action:** The pressing and existential need to tackle membership decline, the subject of constant discussion, was acknowledged. Andy was asked to put together a bullet point plan, hopefully on no more than 2 sides of paper, to set out actions to increase membership and participation with reference to (i) club focused actions and (ii) underlying club/centre member actions. This needed to be actioned now and consolidated with actions proposed as regards EDI

Sarah raised a point on wording in relation to ‘training’ in ambition 3 and a reference to ‘in the absence of any mandatory qualifications’, this point not referring of course to mandatory safeguarding standards but was more related to qualifications and training to improve safety and good practice. May need some rewording / clarification on this bullet point. The effective mandatory nature of training in the context of ensuring Code compliance and meeting our funding obligations was acknowledged.

**Action:** Patrick and Sarah would review / discuss this point offline.

Noted that in ambition 4 on EDI that data related principally to members rather than the broader (and more elusive) casual participant base across the sport. No need for any specific changes to the wording in ambition 4 from Cathy’s perspective.

In terms of workforce / People Plan and ambition 4 Cathy highlighted the resource issues to drive this operationally and champion the ambitions within this section. No particular issues with the wording in this section. It would be seen if a new board appointee could take charge of ensuring necessary actions on the People Plan were implemented.

Ambition 6 on awareness and profile of the sport – some improvements and successes noted in terms of access to the PA Media electronic press distribution service and work on social media now more streamlined. Obviously, an area that could be immensely resource hungry, noted some issues in obtaining quality photography, video etc. with the diverse disciplines of the sport operating at times in an informal and insular manner in terms of feeding in information to the centre.

Ambition 7 outlined demonstrating value and providing services and benefits to include advocacy. Some clear tangible aspects were in place for example personal accident insurance and Kylie had put some good work in presentation of the benefits of membership (though these didn’t always get absorbed). Advocacy and demonstrating the less tangible benefits of joining was an ongoing ‘battle’ of winning hearts and minds. Martin said that the membership and potential membership needed to be persuaded, if they wanted BWSW to work effectively, that the membership subscription was, in part, about supporting the sport in the longer term and could not just be about a return on the fee subscribed - even though every effort was made to give value. In terms of the cost of a behind the boat ski or ride the individual membership fee was not significant (although the aggregate subscription of a club often was (and this could represent a challenge)

**Action:** Kylie and Keir were working on a value proposition for clubs in addition to the existing material for individual members. For further consideration on a departmental basis e.g.

affiliation, qualifications, insurance, support etc. Kylie would look at this this point with Keir as a starting point to reevaluate what we do and how we promote it. Kylie/Keir's draft document will be circulated, once finalised, as an internal document for comment in due course).

Ambition 8 on governance and assurance – no particular issues or need to change the wording in this section. Cascading good governance down through the committee and affiliated structure continued to require a further refresh and refocus (committee reviews were highlighted).

Useful to take time out and reflect on the strategy document with key items identified for action to sharpen the strategy both operationally and in terms of some areas of the wording.

### **3. Confirmation of Future Meeting Dates.**

#### **Board**

Thursday 21st November 9AM

Some additional meetings may well be required to address ad hoc issues and the proposed time for these meetings is 9am on Wednesday mornings.

#### **Board Sub-Group**

Wednesdays 9AM

#### **Advisory Council**

Tuesday 29th April 2025 TBC

#### **AGM**

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025 1PM Queens Club, London

The meeting closed at 10:50AM

#### **Minuted by:**

Patrick Donovan

**CEO**