

Minutes of GBDSC meeting

Holiday Inn Reading South, Pioneer 1 Function room

8.30pm 31st October 2015

1. Welcome, domestics, apologies for absence

Brian welcomed everyone, ensured they knew the fire drill instructions and read out apologies for absence from Nigel Seamarks, Peter Noden, Martin Lee, Lorraine Oaten, and Amanda Kenny. Richard Lees' absence was noted: as he has not renewed his club membership, he is no longer a committee member.

Present were: Brian Baxter, Margaret Baxter, Jim Joyce, Mel Davis, Ashleigh Scott, Sarah Tappenden, Rob Holdbrook, Sam Chamberlain and Tom Baxter.

2. Reports: Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Coach, Team Manager, Vice Chair

Brian began by summarising the events of the last few months, noting the passion present in the club, and hoped we could channel that positively.

World Championships: Congratulations to the team for achieving what they did in difficult climatic conditions, thanks to Sam and Mel for the work they did out in the States and also to Mel on the enormous amount of meticulous preparation that went on before the trip. There were tough decisions that needed to be taken before the trip, and the development of a Selection Policy to support future events will be helpful. There will be an appeals panel in place in future in the event of anyone being aggrieved at non-selection – this will have external people on the panel. The swimmers will have to commit to justify selection and keep working afterwards – they will be required to sign a contract. Brian has fed back to ICSD and to US Deaf Swimming about the arrangements and competition. There has been an acknowledgement that our comments will be taken into account in the planning of future events, and they are looking into the issues of the overcharging of hotel rooms and the incorrect medals table.

Liaison with UK Deaf Sport: The loss of Bill Baillie from the UK Deaf Sport staff because of a lack of funding was noted: the nutrition talk that had happened earlier today was testament to the work we had been doing with Bill.

Political lobbying: Brian mentioned the meeting he, Nigel and Bill Baillie had had with Lucy Frazer, MP, and the subsequent work with local MPs as well as Scottish MSPs. He said this work was still ongoing, but that club parents still wanted to help in this regard.

Relationship with British Swimming and the ASA: described as a love:hate relationship, Brian gave a summary of the latest news with regard to the S15 classification being removed from the British Disability Points Calculator, the recent developments regarding the original reason for having a new, S65 category and its recent removal by the ASA, and the removal of the opportunity to only grant S15 status to current GBDSC members. Brian asked the committee to consider whether to continue with our current practice of carrying out the classification process as part of membership, or to make a separate charge for classification. Margaret reminded people of the reasons for only having the classification available to club swimmers, as a result of one particular swimmer in the past who refused to submit audiograms after an ear operation. Jim suggested a nominal charge for classification, with a reminder on the

website about what would be the regime with a hearing loss that was borderline (10 dB either way) around the 55dB loss in the better ear required for international selection.

The Treasurer's report was brought up next: Brian asked if there was anything anyone wanted to discuss from it? He noted that now the club has 3 year's accounts signed off by a qualified Auditor, which puts us in a good position to decide whether to go for charitable status, Swim 21 or Clubmark status. He also has a few questions about the Worlds spreadsheet to put to Nigel. The question of the money from the 5 Deaf Otters was raised: originally, it had been thought that the previous Executive of Peter, Nigel and Margaret had agreed that 50% of anything raised should offset the World Championship Squad costs with the remainder going to the club, but this didn't appear to have been mentioned in either Nigel's report or his Worlds cost spreadsheet. Margaret had established, when the Otters first contacted the club, that they hadn't read the fundraising article Nigel had managed to have published in Swimming Times: the Otters just wanted to help "deaf swimming". Jim felt that the split between the Worlds squad and the club was the correct one, the club portion to be used on presentations such as the one which had been given today about nutrition. Ashleigh suggested that we ask the whole club membership. Others variously felt that we should consult the whole committee, or check with Nigel and Peter what their understanding of the situation was. Margaret pointed out that the committee present was quorate and that, as per the constitution, could make a decision. A vote was taken and by a majority of 7 to 2, it was decided that 50% of the funding should go to the Worlds Squad to be set against their costs and 50% to the club.

The Vice-Chair asked for more stories of swimmers' successes, and asked for help to create a members only section of the website, so that the English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh and the expected Manx records could be held in the members-only part of the site and the national records should be kept on the open site, available to all site visitors. The committee also agreed that the website renewal fees should be paid from club funds.

The Club Secretary summarised her recent activities: helping out with various membership issues, including the reminders for non-payment, dealing with initial contacts from the UK Deaf Sport and our websites – these could be membership enquiries or questions such as that she had received from an Australian student about starting systems available for deaf swimmers in the UK. She had also recently supplied the requisite information for UK Deaf Sport's new website. The ASA had asked for details about our classification process, so this was created with the help of 3 Audiologists known to Margaret. She has also dealt with the first drafts of the Pathway document, the Selection Policy and all the suggested and discussion points on the Constitution. She wrote the letter to the Scottish MSPs who have club members in their constituencies, asking them to support the motion in the Scottish Parliament about the lack of funding for deaf footballers, explaining that the lack of funding also affected swimmers. She had 100% replies. The arrangements for Reading and for the 2016 Nationals were also being dealt with including the creation of a survey to be sent to parents to ask feedback which would help with future events. Finally, she gave a brief resume of membership numbers for this year, which were down by a half-dozen, but the statistic she found more of a concern was the loss of 5/8 of the Category A swimmers. She had contacted all those not renewing to elicit the reasons, and could share that information to inform future debate about what we provide for our members.

Coach Sam read his report which had previously been circulated. He was really pleased with the number of swimmers who had reached finals in the World Championships. He would like different training events for the Elite and Development squads in future if possible. He is currently working on the squad criteria and selection policy and will discuss these with Brian when he has finished this.

Team Manager Mel felt that Crystal Palace was good for the younger swimmers to see how older swimmers organised themselves, and was really happy with the venue staff, especially the caterers who worked hard to accommodate our teams' dietary requirements. She then talked about Texas, and she commented how disorganised the US Deaf Swimming organisers were: mealtimes, lack of arrangements for lunches and insufficient number of buses. She also felt that the transfer from Houston was far too long and we were charged for transfer from San Antonio by the US organisers. Jim queried why some of the swimmers needed to attend all the sessions: Mel said that although those he was citing were adults, being deaf they were still vulnerable and if that was what the committee wanted, then a third member of staff, such as perhaps a Physiotherapist to be a member of the team and to provide extra cover, would be required. Brian said that this was a learning point and should be considered when plans were made to take the next squad out to a competition.

3. Ashleigh Scott, NDCS

Ashleigh introduced herself and said she was enjoying the weekend. She is a Swimming Development Officer with the NDCS, running a deaf-friendly swimming 3 year project. The funding for this is from Sport England, and follows on from a successful 5-year deaf-friendly football project. There is a similar swimming project in Scotland, but the funding bid for one in Wales has failed and Ireland's forthcoming project is awaiting a decision about funding. Ashleigh has already worked with groups of young people in Wolverhampton, Manchester and Bromley, and will eventually run 12 such projects throughout England. She has organised training for Coaches in 3 locations: these are Making Swimming Deaf-Friendly and BSL for Swimming, training 150 Coaches and Teachers. There is a similar course in Bristol on 17 November. She is also able to fund L1 teaching aquatics qualifications and is to organise a 5-day residential course jointly with the ASA next year. To answer questions set by Nigel, yes, NDCS did respond to the recent Government Consultation, emphasising that there should be genuine options for deaf swimmers, and noted that Deaflympics wasn't mentioned, but should be. The NDCS will promote the Deaflympics. They can't influence conversations with British Swimming, because their remit is participation (not excellence). Rob asked how Ashleigh could raise the profile of deaf swimming? Jim's response was that it was in the education of Coaches.

4. Pathway

Margaret explained that the document had been devised at the request of Bill Baillie and had been heavily influenced in its style and simplicity by a conversation she and Brian had had with Rod and Lorraine Oaten at Crystal Palace, where they had stressed the need for visual, simple documents. Much of what would be in the selection policy, for example, would be in the detail behind the policy, which was to be a simple diagrammatic representation of the use of both mainstream and deaf routes by a deaf swimmer. The committee agreed that the document could be published on the website without the addition of, for example, FINA points.

5. 2016 Nationals

Margaret and Ashleigh outlined the forthcoming 2016 Nationals in Nottingham, being a joint venture where our usual long-course championships would be short-course because of the uncertainty of whether there would be a European Short-Course competition in 2016 and also so that the NDCS could host a gala in the morning. The proposed timetables and most of the details would be sent out to all members on the following Monday. It was suggested that the committee might consider building in a day's event on the Friday so that they could spend time discussing issues and future direction.

6. Policies ASA

Brian proposed that the club should adopt and adhere to Wavepower documents and note on our website that we were adopting this and any subsequent revisions (because a new version of Wavepower is due out soon) with tweaks, if needed, to specifically cover deaf issues. The committee agreed to this.

7. Constitution

Because we had over-run our allotted time, Margaret suggested that all present review the constitution documents that she had already sent out and send her their comments by Saturday 7th November. This was agreed by the committee.

8. Working groups –

- **Finance** Margaret and Jim said they would join this group
- **Communication – including Team App** Mel showed us Team App, which the committee agreed to adopt. With regard to the Communications working group, and the need for more people to join the Finance group, it was proposed and accepted that all club members should be invited to offer up their skills for these groups. The last four items were not covered as the time was 11 30pm. These will be discussed at a future meeting.

9. Generation of ideas? Communication with swimmers

10. Parent Judges on International judging register

11. Efficiency – doing things faster

12. Next meeting - Nationals weekend AGM on the Saturday morning and a further meeting, if required, on the Saturday night or Sunday morning.