

Saturday 12 March 2022 at 10:00am
Hybrid Meeting

In Attendance:

Voting Members:

Dennis Alder, Katie Ancomb, Octave Auger, Mark Bache, Chair of Finance & Audit Committee (MB)(virtual), Nicola Bache, Paul Bate, David Belbin, John Bell, Pam Bell, Sally Billingham-Leese, Richard Boreham, Hilary Boxer, Brian Burgess, Brian Chapman, Margaret Chapman, John Coyne, Chair (JC), Stephen Craig, Clare Dallaway, Alistair Dickson, Sarah Divall, Nick Donald, Sarah-Jane Evans, Stephen Foster, Roger Fox, Michael Fulton, Charmaine Gawler, Dave Hastie, Julie Henton Pusey, Sue Hornby, Noel Humphrey, Michael E Jakins, Graham Kingaby, Claire Lambert, Michael Lambert, Alan Laws, Steve Linksted, Graham Lyon, Andy Maddock, Norman Mason, John McAllister, Liz McGown, Alan Mellor, John Monroe, Maureen Moule, Peter Moule, Steven Moule, Tanya Neilson, Adrian Oates, Andy Oughton, Dee Paterson, President (DP), Ian Richards, Jim Rossiter, Stefania Rosso, Zoey Rowe, Andrew Russell, Clare Rutter, Ben Sansom, Tim Scott, Greg Smale, Katrina Smith, David Spencer, Eleri Spencer, Greg Spencer, Mike Sunderland, John Teuwen, David Wakeling, Steve Watts, Paul Wicks, Cathy Wynne.

British Canoeing Board Members:

David Joy, Chief Executive (DJ); Bronagh Kennedy (virtual); Martine Kushner (virtual).

Staff Members in Attendance:

Macauley Allen; Lisa Bryant; Natasha Devonshire; Chris Earle; Susan Hicks; James Hinves; Rob Knott; Sam Rankin; Steph Roberts; Lee Pooley; David Rodgers; Phil Scowcroft; Russell Smith; Nancy Squires; James Unsworth; Gregory Van Heerden; Barry Wade; Gemma Wiggs.

Apologies:

Nick Goddard; Deborah Miles; Shaun Monkman

1. Welcome by Professor John Coyne CBE, Chairman, British Canoeing.

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

JC introduced himself, along with David Joy, Chief Executive Officer and Dee Paterson, President. He advised that Mark Bache (MB) Director and Chair of Finance and Audit Committee, who had tested Covid positive, would be joining remotely to present the accounts. He advised that several Board Members and officers were also present to assist in various parts of the AGM as required. Board Members Bronagh Kennedy (BK) and Martine Kushner (MK) were accessing the meeting remotely.

JC noted that it had been two years since British Canoeing last held an in person AGM. He

thanked members for attending British Canoeing's first ever hybrid AGM. JC confirmed 115 members had registered to join the meeting and that 42 votes were present in the room with 15 online at the start of the meeting. He advised that this number may rise and fall over the course of the meeting as people leave and join online.

JC stated that the voting platform in use during the meeting was provided by Lumi, an independent company who would ensure that all votes were recorded and presented correctly. JS invited Lumi to introduce themselves and to instruct members how to use the voting platform.

Two trial votes were conducted for the purposes of allowing members the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the voting system. JC confirmed that all votes would remain open for 30 seconds during the meeting.

JC advised that the papers for the meeting were distributed via email beforehand, including the finance slides. They were also available on the British Canoeing website and on the Lumi platform under the 'documents' tab.

JC confirmed that all of the Ordinary business on the Agenda required a simple majority of greater than 50% of the votes cast and that Item 08, which involved a proposed change to the Articles was special business requiring at least 75% of the total votes cast to be approved.

5 proxy votes had been received and pre-cast in advance, and these would be included in the final voting results displayed on the screen for each of the motions.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Nick Goddard, Deborah Miles and Shaun Monkman.

2. To Adopt the Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting held 13 March 2021.

There were no amendments proposed to the Minutes.

Votes for: 56 (100%)

Votes against: 0

Abstentions: 9

The minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting were approved by Ordinary Resolution.

3. To consider matters arising from the minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting.

The Chair confirmed that during Item 7 of the 2021 AGM, Steve Watts (SW) raised a question around the wording of the Article amendments providing suitable assurances of video conferencing facilities being a requirement of a virtual or hybrid AGM. JC confirmed that, having reviewed the Articles of Association, the Board is satisfied with the current wording, as changed in 2021 and is not proposing any further changes to these sections this year. He noted that a paper detailing the Board's consideration of this issue was included within the AGM pack under item 3. There were no further matters arising.

4. To adopt the accounts for the Financial Year 1.11.20 to 31.10.21.

JC invited the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, Mark Bache (MB) to present the accounts. JC advised that the summary financial report could be found on pages 16-17 in the Annual Report and that a copy of the finance slides were available on the website and on the Lumi platform.

MB introduced himself and expressed regret at not being able to attend the meeting in person. MB spoke to the finance slides presented to Members. MB confirmed that expenditure had increased by £1.6m during the 2020-21 financial year which mirrored the increase in grant related programmes and a general increase in activity. The operating surplus of £915k had exceeded expectations at the start of the year which evidenced that British Canoeing was in a robust financial state going forward. MB confirmed that the proportion of income received from non-grant funded sources had increased significantly helping to ensure that British Canoeing achieves greater financial independence and therefore less reliance on grant awarded income.

MB outlined the income change by category in 2021 versus previous years (2019 and 2020), noting that funds received from UK Sport had increased in 2021 due to it being an Olympic and Paralympic year. Sport England funding had also dipped slightly due to reductions in Talent activities. Membership income had continued to increase in line with membership growth.

MB outlined in detail how British Canoeing membership income was spent on member services and running the organisation and the value that this offered for members. It was noted that there had been an increase in water licenses due to the growth in membership.

The Balance sheet showed that the cash position had improved significantly by £1.5m which was mainly due to the surplus achieved at the end of the year. MB stated that the financial position was therefore extremely strong. This had led to a substantial increase in reserves to just shy of £2.5m and for the first time, the desired level of central reserves had been achieved, allowing for significant future investment through the launch of the Stronger Together fund.

MB invited questions from the floor but none were forthcoming.

The Chair expressed thanks and appreciation to MB for the presentation and his work as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Chair opened the voting to adopt the accounts.

Votes for: 66 (100%)

Votes against: 0

Abstentions: 1

The accounts were adopted by Ordinary Resolution.

5. To appoint 'Haysmacintyre' as the Auditors for the financial year 1.11.21 to 31.10.22, and to authorise the directors to fix their remuneration.

The Chair advised that the Board proposed to re-appoint Haysmacintyre as the Auditors for British Canoeing.

The Chair opened the voting for the motion.

Votes for: 63 (96.92%)

Votes against: 2 (3.08%)

Abstentions: 2

The appointment of Haysmacintyre was approved by Ordinary Resolution.

6. To adopt the 42nd Annual Report of British Canoeing for 2020/2021.

JC reminded members that the Annual Report had been circulated to all members with the AGM papers and hard copies were also available in the room.

JC stated that the report illustrated what a busy and successful year it had been for everybody involved with British Canoeing and thanked those in the room and across the community who had contributed to both the delivery of the work and the subsequent production of the Annual Report.

JC invited the President, Dee Paterson to speak to her report.

DP apologised for the absence of a written report contained within the Annual Report and detailed this was due to ill health at the start of the year. DP thanked members for attending the meeting in person and online, stating that a hybrid meeting is a positive way for people to engage at the AGM.

The President commended the contribution the CEO had made to the improvements within the organisation in recent years. She noted the way in which British Canoeing has conducted itself in overcoming the challenges of the past two years and that work has continued apace throughout such challenging circumstances. DP encouraged British Canoeing to embrace the change positively into the future to further understand how we can get clubs and the community engaging with one another and sharing best practice.

DP stated that the pandemic had enabled people to discover their local areas and waterways to pursue a passion for paddlesport. The increase in membership to over 90,000 had been truly phenomenal.

In her first year as President, DP had hoped to get out and about to meet people but this had not been possible so instead had joined many online meetings to engage with the community.

DP thanked the staff, clubs and volunteers for remaining positive through two years of disruption and change. She stated that she was very much looking forward to visiting the community, engaging and listening to paddlers in 2022.

DP identified the first weekend of regional slalom competition and the National Canoe Polo Championships in Nottingham as two of the highlights from her first year as President. There

had been genuine excitement of clubs organising themselves and people seeing each other again.

DP expressed her passion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and had been delighted to be involved in filming for the launch of the #WePaddleTogether initiative. The President stated that by focusing on these issues, we can create more opportunities for everyone.

DP visited Hungary in 2021 to learn more about Stand up Paddleboard (SUP) and discovered that the growth of SUP in the UK, although mirrored globally, was increasing at a faster pace than elsewhere.

Over the next year, the President encouraged people to foster their desire for the outdoors and for caring for the environment, to explore more opportunities to support Access and Environment and to raise issues. If everyone does their bit, we can achieve a lot together.

DP stated that British Canoeing will this afternoon unveil its new strategy allowing us all to continue our development and contribute to the future success of British Canoeing.

The Chair thanked the President for her presentation.

The Chair then invited the Chief Executive DJ to present the Annual Review which was the final progress report against Stronger Together, the Strategic Plan for British Canoeing 2017-21.

DJ thanked the President, Chair, Board, Clubs, Committees, Advisory Groups, Regional Groups, Coaches, Providers, Volunteers and our partners for the work completed over the past 12 months and their contribution over the past 5 years in achieving the majority of the targets set out in Stronger Together. He also recognised the exceptional effort by the staff team.

DJ confirmed that by the end of the 2021 financial year, 53 of the 67 actions within Stronger Together had been completed. He confirmed this was all reported in detail within the Annual Review of 2021.

Headline achievements towards the Stronger Together Strategy across the past 12 months included;

- Growth in engagement with recreational paddling seen through the Go Paddling website with 633,000 unique visitors in 2021
- 428,000 unique users of Paddlepoints in 2021
- 48,000 members joined British Canoeing in 2021 with retention rates improving
- 2 Olympic and 7 Paralympic medals were won at the delayed Tokyo 2020 Games
- 62 international medals were won by British Canoeing athletes across six different disciplines
- 373 registered paddle sport activity providers joining the new Delivery Partner Scheme with great retention rates
- 269 clubs became engaged in the Clubhouse portal
- 12,506 signatures achieved on our Access Charter with 2 major new pieces of legislation influenced by British Canoeing and key partners (Agriculture Act and

Environment Act)

- £135,000 Canoe Foundation grants to access and facility programmes – 9 projects completed, 25 still in progress
- Completing a full review of all regulated coaching qualifications and awards
- 79,964 individuals have accessed 24 e-learning packages
- £4.95m of income generated from non-public grant sources in 2020-21 through membership, coaching and commercial activities
- 4.7m unique web page visits in 2021, 1 million more than in the previous year.

DJ confirmed that some of the work undertaken in 2021 will continue into 2022 through the launch of the new strategic plan for British Canoeing. DJ confirmed that there were four cross cutting themes which run through the work of the next strategy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Safety; and Welfare and Partnerships.

The Chair thanked DJ for the presentation and the review of the progress towards the strategic plan targets. The Chair invited questions about the Annual Review.

Mike Sunderland, Chair, RDT Cumbria - wished DJ all the very best for the future and echoed the positive comments raised in the meeting previously. He stated that he was proud to be a key volunteer within British Canoeing's regional set up but asked whether there was a future vision for the regions, given that only 6 reports were included within the Annual Report.

DJ confirmed that where RDTs are strong and active, the intention was to continue to recognise and support the RDTs. DJ acknowledged that clubs in some regions had determined that the RDTs were no longer required. The intention of British Canoeing was to continue to support RDTs but also to explore how it links to other local groups including county organisations, collections of clubs or social media driven groups. DJ confirmed that there were no plans to stop supporting established RDTs.

The Chair opened the voting for the motion to adopt the Annual Report 2021.

Votes for: 67 (100%)
Votes against: 0
Abstentions: 2

The Annual Report was adopted by Ordinary Resolution.

7. To approve the appointment of Directors nominated since the 41st Annual General Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the Board proposed nominations for four Directors and that these were presented to the AGM for approval. Zoey Rowe and Greg Spencer had been nominated by the English Forum and Kerry Chown had been nominated by Canoe Wales. Nick Donald had been nominated as an Independent Director by the Board and if appointed would also serve as Chair of Finance & Audit Committee. All directors were standing for their first term of 4 years.

The Chair invited Zoey Rowe, Greg Spencer, Kerry Chown and Nick Donald to introduce themselves. The Chair confirmed that each vote would be taken separately.

The Chair opened the voting for motion 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.

7.1 Zoey Rowe - Director nominated by The English Forum

Votes for: 64 (98.46%)
Votes against: 1 (1.54%)
Abstentions: 1

The appointment was approved by Ordinary Resolution. The Chair congratulated Zoey on her appointment to the Board.

7.2 Greg Spencer - Director nominated by The English Forum

Votes for: 55 (98.21%)
Votes against: 1 (1.76%)
Abstentions: 5

The appointment was approved by Ordinary Resolution. The Chair congratulated Greg on his appointment to the Board.

7.3 Kerry Chown - Director nominated by Canoe Wales

Votes for: 56 (96.55%)
Votes against: 2 (3.45%)
Abstentions: 2

The appointment was approved by Ordinary Resolution. The Chair congratulated Kerry on her appointment to the Board.

7.4 Nick Donald - Independent Director

Votes for: 51 (92.73%)
Votes against: 4 (7.27%)
Abstentions: 2

The appointment was approved by Ordinary Resolution. The Chair congratulated Nick on his appointment to the Board.

8. To make changes to the Articles as proposed by the Board of Directors, in response to the motion presented by Howard Blackman and Bill Lawrenson from Burton Phoenix Canoe Club

The Chair advised that the following motion was brought by Howard Blackman and Bill Lawrenson from Burton Phoenix Canoe Club for discussion at the 2022 AGM.

“The President may attend discipline committees, regional committees or clubs and is encouraged to attend a range of different committees (5/6 per year) if currently a member of any aforementioned committee, shall not seek re-election to said committee until their term as President ends”

The key principle behind the motion was to promote independence and impartiality of the President. JC confirmed that the Board had considered the motion and were supportive of the intent. The Board had agreed that giving effect to the intent of the motion would require changes to the Articles of Association. JC drew Members attention to the Boards' consideration of the motion and the proposed changes to the Articles as fully presented within the papers.

JC advised that the British Canoeing Articles of Association require these changes to be passed by Special Resolution and therefore require a 75% majority of votes cast to be approved.

The Chair invited questions from members.

The Chair opened the voting for motion 8.

Votes for: 56 (96.55%)

Votes against: 2 (3.45%)

Abstentions: 10

The motion was passed by Special Resolution.

JC thanked Bill Lawrenson and Howard Blackman for the proposal.

9. To receive an update from the Board on progress on the Sport Resolutions Action plan and its response to the motion brought by Teresa Gregory & Tim Scott.

JC introduced this item, confirming that in March 2020, British Canoeing had published the Key Findings and Recommendations of an Independent Investigation led by Sport Resolutions. This Report examined British Canoeing's governance, corporate responsibility and behaviour with regard to allegations raised in April 2017. Those key findings and recommendations were accepted by British Canoeing who had issued a wholehearted apology.

At the AGM in March 2020, the Board committed to further improvements and confirmed that it would develop an action plan to implement the recommendations set out in the report. JC acknowledged that progress against the Action Plan has taken more time than originally planned but that the motion had been taken very seriously, pointing to the full account provided within the AGM paperwork. JC confirmed the Board is confident that the remaining actions will be concluded in the timelines set out within this report.

JC advised Members that a motion had been received from Teresa Gregory and Tim Scott requesting an update from the Board and asking further specific questions. JC advised the Board felt this motion had been responded to in the update in the AGM Papers. JC invited Teresa Gregory and Tim Scott to speak to this motion or ask any further questions. Neither spoke to this or raised any questions.

The Chair then invited questions from Members in the room and attending virtually on this item.

Steve Moule, Chelmsford Canoe Club – pointed to item 7.63 in the sports resolution report relating to the appointment of independents in appropriate investigations. SM suggested that

some recent appointments of panels had not been sufficiently independent.

Nancy Squires (NS) confirmed that the element SM was referring to in the report was initially considered by the Board when the report was first brought to British Canoeing. NS confirmed that the Board strives to ensure that independence is embedded across all British Canoeing dispute resolution procedures, particularly within panels determining cases and those conducting investigations. NS noted there is a need to strike a balance between attaining the highest levels of independence against timelines, cost, and appropriate skills and experience. Appointing a panel or investigator in line with the recommendation in 7.63 may not always allow for this balance to be struck. The recommendation within 7.63 is for this additional level of independence to be considered in appropriate cases and we would consider this and continue to look to how further independence can be embedded into our procedures.

SM replied noting that the appeals process had been subject to a late change last year resulting in a layer of independence removed. NS replied that this change was due to the fact that the organisation originally referenced in the Policy was no longer in existence and that the change was required to enable an appeals process that could be delivered against. The change would still allow for independence in the process.

SM commented that he believed British Canoeing had got the outcome it wanted in the process. NS noted that it was an independent adjudicator that had reached the decision and added that she was not personally invested in the outcome of a case one way or the other but was invested in ensuring athletes have access to a fair and robust appeals process.

The Chair emphasised the Board's commitment to independence within the appeals process.

Brian Chapman, Chair, The Scottish Canoe Association - stated that one of the fundamental issues is the different interpretations of the word 'independent'. He encouraged positive guidance around the terminology so that no ambiguity or misunderstanding could arise. NS agreed that it would be helpful for British Canoeing to document our view on what we mean by 'independence' to ensure that everyone understands and has trust in these procedures.

The Chair noted there was no vote on this item and that this brought business to a close.

10. Acknowledgements

The Chair recognised the three retiring members of the Board; Mark Bache and David Wakeling who had served for the last 4 years and Greg Smale who had served on the Board since 2006. The Chair formally thanked GS, MB and DW for their hard work and commitment in serving the Board and made a presentation to them.

The Chair in closing the meeting, thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution and for their continued work as part of British Canoeing. He also recognised and thanked Lumi, Conference Works and the staff team for their professional support in enabling the hybrid meeting to work so effectively.