

1 Attendance

Sally Atkinson	[3/3] Chair	Peter Curry	[3/3]	Mark Abbott	[3/3] Wales
Matt Crowhurst	[3/3] Vice Chair	Dee Lindesay	[3/3]	Gareth Wilson	[1/3] Paddle UK
Dave Spencer	[3/3] Treasurer	Karen Crowhurst	[3/3]		
Les Ford	[3/3] Secretary	Richard Sterry	[3/3]		
		Mikey Brown	[3/3]		
		Helen Darby-Dowman	[2/3]		

1.1 Apologies

Tony Leaver	[1/3]	Scotland
Zac Allin	[2/3]	Paddler Rep
Alison Longhurst	[2/3]	England

1.2 Committee Admin

LF is chasing up a few outstanding items regarding standards of deployment and website photographs. **Action: LF**

The updated Committee Expenses Form will be circulated. **Action: LF**

2 Previous Minutes and matters arising

2.1 Safeguarding Issues

The Paddle UK Safeguarding Policy and good practice guidance for communication with young people have been shared with committee members and Bib Officers.

WhatsApp – there is concern that the phone number of anyone joining a group is visible to all group members. Spond is recommended and used by Paddle UK for communicating with junior squad members, but it has drawbacks for use at events. Further investigation has found that we can use WhatsApp Channels. These allow organisers to broadcast information to those following the channel, but followers' details are not visible to other people, or fully visible to Channel Admins. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that WhatsApp Channels are used where event organisers need this form of communication at their event. Instructions are being created and will be shared to organisers and through the organisers pack. Information will also be out on the website to make paddlers and parents aware of this change. **Action: MA, DS, LF**

2.2 Ranking & Reinstatement Policy

A policy for the reinstatement process was agreed. The website needs to point people to how they apply to be reinstated into the ranking system, LF will discuss with DB. **Action: LF**

2.3 Results Email / Processes Clarification

The results@canoeslalom.co.uk email address now goes to DS so organisers can send the csv file from Simply Slalom to DS to upload to the ranking database. This will also be used to create a pdf of results that will be added to the website results page. The organisers pack and Simply Slalom are being updated with these instructions to organisers.

2.4 International Update

An updated process for those entering international races has been shared with entries being managed through Paddle UK. Clarification is needed on whether this also includes other overseas races (e.g. ECA junior cups). **Action: DS**

Once clarified, this needs to be published so paddlers are aware of the process to be followed.

Action: LF / RR

The International Panel will be meeting in late February to look at selection races and begin looking at selection policy for 2026,

3 Future Racing Structure Development

3.1 Slalom Structure Working Group

The rationale for changing the competition structure of the sport is to address the decline in numbers of the sport. Increasing recruitment is a big part of this and 14 clubs have applied to the Slalom Start initiative and are wanting to actively run a recruitment campaign into slalom. The Lower Division working group is also looking at how recruitment can be supported.

The proposed new competition structure seeks to increase retention in the sport by making racing more locally possible and enabling clubs/groups to attend races together rather than going off to different divisional races.

Documents are being prepared to share the vision, explain the proposed competition structure, highlight the benefits, and address likely FAQs that will be. These will be finalised and shared widely shortly to enable us to engage with the whole of the slalom community to move forward with these changes.

Actions: Working group to finalise details and FAQs that will be published. Communications group to create a strategy to communicate and excite the community about the change, including examples of who it will benefit the community.

3.2 Lower Divisions Working Group

The group is focussing on what we can do to encourage and support clubs and events to get more people into boats more often.

Research on past ranking lists seem to indicate that only 4 clubs have strong active recruitment into the sport. It also highlights clubs where slalom has dwindled or died out. There are plans to engage clubs to understand why they are not keen to do slalom and what could be done to encourage them to engage with slalom again.

It is considered that the recruitment issue is really a coaching issue as coaches get people into boats and along to races.

3.3 Communications Working Group

The working group met in mid-January to look at how we can raise the profile and awareness of the sport to increase participation. This would include better use of social media, volunteer to help generate and publish content, and selling the wider benefits participants can get from the sport.

The next meeting will focus on plans to engage the community and sell the benefits of changing the competition structure of the sport that we are looking to make.

3.4 SCM Logistics

It was agreed that we hold an SCM on 5th April at Paddle UK HQ to bring forward the proposals to changing the competition structure for the 2026 season. The date will be communicated asap to clubs and the whole community. **Action: LF**

This will require the usual admin and publication of the agenda by 21st March. **Action: LF**

Post Meeting Note:

On further reflection we need further engagement and consultation with the slalom community to explain the need for changes, present proposals and gain feedback to be able to move forward with any proposed changes. Therefore the **5th April** will be used as an event to present proposal and start a consultation. **Action: LF to communication details to the community.**

4 Strategy Development

4.1 4-year Plan Development

There was a broad discussion of developing the long-term strategy and an action plan for the sport. It was agreed that the vision must be to grow the sport over the next 4 years through increased participation, increased retention, and providing a racing structure to support these.

Core to these will be:

- Engaging clubs and supporting them to recruit more paddlers (RS)
- Collaborate with governing bodies to maximise the support available to slalom. (SA)
- Recruit and support more coaches in clubs (GW/LF)

Name members will lead on these areas and start to draft bullet point actions against each.

4.2 Committee Roles

Updating committee role descriptions is ongoing. **Action: ALL**

5 Home Nations and Paddler Representative Updates

England – the committee is continuing to collaborate with Paddle UK ‘s talent programme on the Club Support Funding Programme which can support various things to help clubs to develop the sport. The deadline for applications is 24th February.

Work is being done to start to understand when sites are available for races to try to help with planning the calendar better across the country.

Wales – The performance programme has held selection and recruited 12 athletes to Performance and 13 Athletes to Talent programme, plus there are 18 athletes across the three regional programmes. Gwion Williams selected to the WCP academy

A new Lead Performance Coach, Jon Haylock, has been appointed and will lead on the Performance and Talent pathways for slalom.

Winter training is ongoing in preparation for the start of the season and selection.

Scotland – The Slalom Development Group (previously the Scottish Slalom Committee) is up and running with 4 members: Mike Chandler, Owen Inglis-Humphrey, Peter Curry, Tony Leaver

Early season races are now being approved and early bird booking for Grandtully campsite has been opened to the slalom community

We note the parallel activity for “Kayak Cross Activation” and are engaging with the group. This ought to link our Development Group with the Kayak Cross Group and venues such as Pinkston so we are all coordinated on any development activity/initiatives. There is a meeting of that Kayak Cross group planned and I have put myself forward as the contact in Scotland (and will coordinate with our Development Group and Pinkston).

As a Development Group we are pulling together our own short, medium and long term development plans and will look to maximise any benefit through relevant coordination with the strategic planning work that Gareth is leading on (although, in the short term, we are likely to just get on with key activities that have a more immediate impact).

MC is looking into who now looks after the Scottish timing kit, and who knows how to put this together.

Paddler Rep – the England WW sessions have been well attended and additional dates added.

6 Volunteers

6.1 Training Presentation and Roll Out

The volunteer training presentation trialled by SA at September's HPP event was shared. This worked well to recruit additional judging volunteers and enable them to start Section Judging supported by an experienced volunteer. Agreed to have a small team that can roll this out at events and to clubs. LF to publicise this to organisers and the slalom community. **Action: LF**

Challenging Parents at Events

The issue of managing challenging parents at events was discussed and consideration will be given to a motion to add 'athletes representative' to rule 1.12.4 regarding 'unsportsmanlike behaviour'. We could also look at a parent's code of conduct. **Action: LF**

7 Any Other Business

7.1 2025 Calendar Updates

For 2026 it is intended to amend the deadline for calendar applications to 1 July and 1 Sept (instead of 1 May and 1 July).

Most 2025 events are now published and the organisers of those outstanding are being chased to check details and publish their events.

7.2 Lee Valley – Selection

There have been delays in getting some information from the organiser. SA to raise with the International Panel. **Action: SA**

7.3 Entry Fees

A comment has been received about the cost of racing e.g. for those doing both classes and kayak cross Div 1 and selection March is an expensive month. This was noted, but entry fees need to ensure that events are financially viable, and paddlers can choose which competitions and races to attend.

7.4 Div 2/3/4 Calendar Leaflet

Work is being done on updating the map on the leaflet before this goes to print. It will be delivered by the end of February in time to be taken to races at the start of the season. **Action: DS**

7.5 2025 Organisers Pack

Work to update this for the coming season is close to completion. **Action MC & DS**

7.6 Paddle UK Event Support

We have had communication from Paddle UK Events team that they are planning to support the Lee Valley and HPP selection races, and the Lee Valley British Open race. There is also generic support offered around event planning and safety. Details of specific support at the events was discuss and will be taken back to the team. **Action: SA**

7.7 Terms of reference Review

The amended Terms of Reference to reflect the recent changes to organisation names is has been approved and published on the website.

Officers are reviewing the Terms of Reference more widely and will bring possibly changes to a future meeting for discussion before amendments are taken to the November ACM. **Action: LF, SA, DS, MC**

7.8 Coaching Consultation

LF and GW have been consulted for a Slalom coaching development plan that is to be developed by Paddle UK.

7.9 Safety & First Aid

There is ongoing discussion regarding the appropriate qualification for event first aider, which is likely to require a minimum of a 16-hour first aid qualification.

Any changes to the competition structure brought in for 2026 may need some reconsideration of what organisers include in their safety plans.

PC intends to step down at the ACM, so the committee needs to be considering the continuity of the Safety Officer role and the approval of event safety plans.

7.10 Welfare Officer

PC is stepping back from this role. Paddle UK requires the committee to have someone in this role, and there are additional training requirements for the role under Standards for Deployment. MC will take on this role.

7.11 Future meeting dates (see below)

The 2024/25 committee meeting schedule is as follows:

- Sat 8th February (face-to-face)
- Tues 11th March (virtual) ahead of the proposed SCM
- **Sat 5th April – Consultation Event on Proposal for Change**
- Sun 6th April (face-to-face)
- Sat 24th May (face-to-face) ***** Note change of date and venue**
- Tue 8th July (virtual) ***** Note change of date and venue**
- Tues 23rd Sept (virtual)
- Sat 8th November (face to face) - prior to the ACM
- **Sat 29th November – ACM**
- *Sun 30th November – Paddle UK Slalom Coaching Conference*
- Tues 2nd Dec - after the ACM