

Paddle UK Slalom Committee

Paddle UK HQ, Nottingham

Sunday 6 April 2025



1 Attendance

Sally Atkinson	[5/5]	Chair	Peter Curry	[5/5]	Mark Abbott	[4/5]	Wales
Matt Crowhurst	[5/5]	Vice Chair	Dee Lindesay	[5/5]	Alison Longhurst	[3/5]	England
Dave Spencer	[5/5]	Treasurer	Karen Crowhurst	[5/5]			
Les Ford	[5/5]	Secretary	Richard Sterry	[5/5]			
			Mikey Brown	[5/5]			
			Helen Darby-Dowman	[4/5]			

1.1 Apologies

Gareth Wilson	[2/5]	Paddle UK
Zac Allin	[2/5]	Paddler Rep
Tony Leaver	[2/5]	Scotland

1.2 Committee Admin

Still outstanding Standards of Deployment information. **Action: TL**

2 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

An email has received and responded to following the reminder letter sent to all organisers regarding event safety.

3 Consultation Event

3.1 Initial Feedback

Good feedback has been received on the event format and presentations, as having the opportunity to be engaged in the change process.

Around 80 people attended either in person and online, and over 200 comments and questions through the feedback form on the day (although there is quite a bit of duplication). The intention is to work through the questions and comments raised and publish these along with answers, however this will take some time. MB will group similar questions. Various people will draft response **Action: MB and ALL**

The slides from the event presentations will be made available online. **Action: LF**

It is important that there is a clear message that this is a consultation process, and the proposals will only proceed with the support of the community. The post-event feedback form (<https://forms.gle/YqHxx7Kcgiod3F6R8>) is available and will remain open until the 31st May. All need to encourage people to give their thoughts on the proposals via this form and encourage people to pass it on to those that they know have left the sport recently. A poster will be created that can be used at events to link to the form and the proposal documents, and it will be pushed through social media. **Action: LF**

3.2 Further Consultation Events

It was agreed that the consultation on the proposals needs to reach out to the whole slalom community at all levels of the sport and ensure we seek the views of young people in the sport. Various committee members are attending races in April and May where proposals can be presented and feedback encouraged. AL, MA & MB will also look at opportunities to engage young people at upcoming training camps. **Action: Various**

4 Strategy Development

4.1 Retention: Talent Pathway Update

HDD & SA met with RR & GW regarding the England Talent pathway, the lack of opportunity for those outside the pathway, and how they see the programme fitting with the wider slalom community. The challenge of the new programme criteria creating a greater drop off was also discussed. The Slalom School programme is good, but this has restrictions on who is eligible to access these opportunities. It also explored whether resources available through the talent programme could be shared with the wider community.

To support paddler retention effectively there needs to be positive messages and access to opportunities for those outside of programmes to paddle and train, particularly over winter. This winter's white-water camps are an example, but there is a need for more opportunities and for them to be accessible to more paddlers. There was discussion of what already happens in the home nations and regions that could be supported and extended to other areas to increase opportunity and aid retention. It was felt that something needs to be in place for the coming off season.

A working group (HDD, MB, MC, LF, JD/MA, SA) will look at what exists and what opportunities can be developed for next winter. **Action: Working Group**

4.2 4-year Strategic Plan

The need to continue to develop the strategic plan was discussed and progressed. **Action: RS/DS**

4.3 Support to Aid Recruitment

There is a lot of activity happening around the Slalom Start programme with information being shared between clubs involved in this. We need to encouraging information to be shared wider so all clubs can learn from those running the programme.

Similarly, we need to encourage clubs that are running informal events or other activities around their slalom to share these experiences and encourage more fun activities around lower division slaloms.

Coaching and recruiting coaches also key to recruitment in clubs and needs to be supported.

A recruitment working group will be established led by RS. **Action: RS**

We also need to grow the expectation that paddlers and parents need to volunteer as well to help their sport run, whether that is as judges or other roles at events or within their club.

5 Water Quality

Water quality and sewage overflows is receiving media coverage and raises challenges for our sport in terms of both paddlers protecting themselves, and organisers responsibilities in relation to mitigating risks. Following discussion, it was agreed to ensure paddlers are aware of the potential risks and good practice to keep themselves safe (washing/showering after paddling) through online information and signage for organisers (e.g. reminders regarding good hygiene particularly before eating/drinking).

While online information is available on sewage overflows, it is unrealistic to expect organisers to monitor this throughout the event. However, where an organiser is aware that there is a decrease in water quality, they should make paddlers aware so they can make their own decisions.

Posters and information to be drafted. **Action LF /PC**

6 Updates

6.1 Judging Update

Responses to a complaint regarding judging were reviewed and a response will be sent. Action: SA. This has highlighted that there is potential confusion in the wording of rules regarding judging which are taken from the ICF rules. A statement to clarify the application of the current rules will be published, and a motion drafted for the ACM to simplify and clarify the judging rules going forward.

6.2 Home Nation Updates

Scotland: No update

Wales: The recent meeting focused on considering and engaging around the racing structure proposals. Grant have been awarded to clubs for equipment at Bala Mill and Llandysul. Slalom taster events are planned in north Wales and Cardiff linked to summer races. Wales committee is looking to push forward with additional recruitment into the sport across the board.

England: Nothing to update.

6.3 Paddler Rep Update

No update.

6.4 Working Group Updates

Communication: a form to gather interest and information from potential social media volunteers is being put together. The intention is they would help us promote the sport, create content and potentially manage the channels. Some safeguarding training will be needed for these volunteers.

A feature was put together for inclusion in the English Members newsletter to raise the profile of slalom and encourage people to consider attending entry level events. However, this was not included. LF will follow up and put this out through our social media.

7 Biodiversity: Protecting Our Rivers

There was a wide-ranging discussion regarding protection of the river environment, which followed on from a presentation at the recent discipline chairs meeting.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 Membership & Bib Issue

There is an issue regarding membership with interface between Home Nations and the slalom bib system that is being worked through. We are looking to change the current practice so promotes return their bib to the bib officer that issued it, rather than the new division bib officer, and information on the website about getting ranked or reinstated needs to be reviewed. **Action LF / KC**

8.2 Calendar Updates

The British Open has yet to be published on the entry website, but this is being chased.

It was agreed to review the rules regarding cancellation, postponement and adding new event during the year for possible amendment at the ACM. **Action: LF**

8.3 Code of Conduct

It was agreed that a Slalom Code of Conduct be developed based on the Paddle UK club template. A draft will be circulated. **Action: LF**

8.4 Possible ACM Motions

LF is keeping a list of possible motions for the ACM, including those that may be wanted if proposals to change the racing structure are not taking forward.

8.5 ICF Judging Expenses

The element of these costs that are picked up by the committee were discussed, and there is an active discussion taking place with Paddle UK regarding their contribution to these. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. **Action: LF**

8.6 Future meeting dates (see below)

- Sat 24th May (face-to-face)
- Tues 8th July (virtual)
- 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