

## 1 Attendance

Sally Atkinson	[7/7]	Chair	Peter Curry	[7/7]	Gareth Wilson	[4/7]	Paddle UK
Matt Crowhurst	[7/7]	Vice Chair	Dee Lindesay	[7/7]	Mark Abbott	[5/7]	Wales
Dave Spencer	[7/7]	Treasurer	Helen Darby-Dowman	[5/7]			
Les Ford	[7/7]	Secretary					

### 1.1 Apologies

Karen Crowhurst	[6/7]	Zac Allin	[3/7]	Paddler Rep
Richard Sterry	[5/7]	Alison Longhurst	[3/7]	England
Mikey Brown	[6/7]	Tony Leaver	[2/7]	Scotland

## 2 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

### 2.1 Code of Conduct

A revised draft Code of Conduct for the sport was circulated and agreed. This will be shared with the community. **Action: LF**

### 2.2 ITO Policy and Judging Costs

There is a concern regarding the costs of supporting officials attending ICF World Cup races (ITO costs for ECA and ICF championship races are covered by those organisations directly) due to the number of UK officials that the ICF are selecting to attend. There is also discussion ongoing with PUK about these costs across disciplines. It was proposed and agreed that the committee limit support to 10 people across the World Cup races (average of 2 per race). This will be communicated to ICF for 2026.

### 2.3 Kayak Cross Levies

Currently there are no levies payable on Kayak Cross. Some events are requesting judging support for Kayak Cross but with no additional contribution to the additional costs incurred. A proposal for levies is needed that is linked to further growth of Kayak Cross at events.

### 2.4 Water Quality

Sending information to organisers and setting up communications about water quality are still to be actioned. **Action: LF**

## 3 Calendar Updates

### 3.1 2025 updates

Nene has been cancelled due to a lack of volunteers within the club to run the event successfully.

### 3.2 Chapel Falls request for financial support

After discussion this request was supported (with the split between the committee and the Welsh committee in proportion to the event levies). The organiser will be asked to re-look at their finances to ensure that the event covers its cost next year.

### 3.3 2026 calendar

The applications for Div 1 and Prem races were considered, with the increasing number of events and possible solutions to clashes discussed. DL & SA will follow up with organisers to attempt to resolve issues. **Action DL/SA**

It is intended that the Lee Valley Prem on 3/4 October would again be a ICF World Ranking race and Prem on Saturday and a World Ranking Race with Kayak Cross on Sunday. This would mean the event that has been the British Open would not be the last weekend of the season. It was felt that the British Open should be the final race on the domestic season. So, the HPP Prem (24/25 Oct) could be the British Open, it was also suggested that Rule 2.5 could be used to run the British Open at Lee Valley and the HPP Prem race as the UK Championship.

## 4 Future of Slalom Consultation

### 4.1 Consultation Feedback

At the conclusion of the consultation the percentages for, against and undecided are the same as presented at the previous meeting. The junior consultation highlighted that division should remain for ranking purposes to maintain a sense of progression. This also highlighted support for the idea of performance points and being able to race at a wider number of venues.

### 4.2 Progress Report

The working group is now evolving the proposal based on the consultation feedback. This we retain Divisions for ranking purposes to retain the 'achievement' of promotion and enable prizes at events to be focused on the relevant target division. It will also introduce tiered racing where the maximum points are based on the difficulty of the water and based on performance rather than position. **Action: Working Group**

## 5 Strategy Development

### 5.1 Recruitment and Growing the Sport (RS)

We are currently working on understanding what we were doing in the past that we no longer do that has led to the decline in numbers. This includes looking at the actual events and how they can be improved to create more excitement and buy in from the paddling community. How do we influence the recruitment within clubs and enable clubs to run events/races with a positive vibe. We have been looking at prizes, trophies and medals to see if there is value seen in them as seen some quality slip in them over the years (partly cost). Overall, we need to understand the possible issues to starting slalom, retaining the paddlers who start and keeping them involved in the sport to enable them to enjoy the sport that we all love.

We have been looking at how we can improve the race events to make more fun and become something that people would want to attend, including

- advertise races and events to build 'excitement' early and create a buzz around the upcoming event
- welcome to all at start of each race (especially at lower division races).
- have someone announce who is about to go down the river, similar to having a commentary but a very simple version.
- improved prizes for top places to encourage paddlers to attend as the win rewards more than just points.
- promote the winners on social media post events and congratulate the event on their success and thank all who helped make the race a success.

These are mostly simple steps that we can encourage organiser to implement.

## 5.2 Retention working group

The group has met a couple of times to move forward a programme of quality coaching to support those outside of the talent programmes (e.g. Prem and Div 1 paddlers outside of squads). It is also hoped this will develop a community feel to further aid paddler retention.

Looking to bring forwards a winter training programme to expand what was trialled over the last year targeting Div1 & Prem's outside of programmes. Looking to make this self-financing and viable for those that we would like to coach on the programme. HL to circulate full document. While the aim is for this to be self-funding, there may need for financial support from the committee (and or England) to underwrite the programme initially to ensure it can get off the ground. **Action: HDD/ ZA**

## 5.3 4-year Strategic Plan (RS/DS)

DS & RS have not met yet as not been able to get an agreed date. I have been working with Helen DD to come up with the strategy and have had multiple conversations to understand the barriers to the sport and what direction we should be traveling in.

# 6 Updates

## 6.1 Working Group Updates

**Lower Divisions (KC)** – I have been asked to re-convene the Lower Divisions Working Group. The intention is to look at the feasibility of running shorter Div 4 courses on the format of 12 gates with 2 or 4 ups. Due to holidays and summer paddling commitments across Europe it has been decided that we will have a meeting either in person on the Saturday of Graveyard race, or a virtual meeting, when members of the group will share their thoughts on this and give advice for the feasibility of running them for sites they know.

**Communications (LF)** - The group hasn't met for a few months due to lack of time, but it is felt there is still a need for a group and work in this area. There are plans to seek volunteers to help create and share content on social media channels to raise the profile of the sport, promote the benefits of slalom and highlight the need for volunteers. We did attempt to get basic information out about entry level slalom in the Paddle UK members news in April, this was not used but was shared on social media just before selection. Again, there is more to do to get PUK/home nations communications raising the profile of slalom to those outside the slalom community.

## 6.2 Home Nation Updates

**Scotland:** No update

**Wales:** Nothing to report

**England:** Nothing to report

**Paddler Rep Update:** no update other than ongoing retention discussions

# 7 Any Other Business

## 7.1 UK Officials

Roll over to next meeting.

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## 7.2 HPP Gate System funding Support request

Rich Ramsdale joined to discuss the proposal of a major project to refurbish the 40-year-old gate system at HPP. This would be similar to the system at Lee Valley and other sites making it more flexible for course setting and kayak cross gate. An added benefit is that old gates posts and equipment will be recycled to add more gates to the back channel and Daleks sections of the course making those more useable for slalom training. Serco and Paddle UK are making significant contributions and PUK are seeking a £5000 contribution from the committee. The gate use agreement is also being renegotiated and will include some protected slots for gate use on weekends and evenings. It was agreed to support at the proposed level (£5000) but that 20% of this be sought from the England Committee. **Action: DS**

## 7.3 Secretary Absence

LF will be away with work for 4 weeks from 13 July and will not be able to access the Secretary's email etc while away. Emails will be forwarded to other officers and LF will ensure there are arrangements in place for publishing to the website, Facebook etc before he travels. **Action: LF**

## 7.4 Future meeting dates (see below)

- Tues 26<sup>th</sup> August (Virtual) - Additional date
- 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