MINUTES

Of the meeting of the **British Water Ski & Wakeboard Board** held on **Thursday 11th September 2025 via Video Conference Call**

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1. **To Record Attendance and Apologies for Absence.**

   Present:
   Martin Winter
   Steve Sopp
   Andy Phillips
   Michael Lock
   Anny Wooldridge
   Shelley Meyern
   Simon Sinclair
   Patrick Donovan

   Kylie Cooper
   Keir Boissevain
   Sarah Wassell (Item 5a)

2. **Declarations of Interest.**
   There were no changes made to the register of members interests.

3. **Approval of the Minutes of Meetings Held on 10th & 24th July, 5th & 20th August.**
   The minutes were unanimously approved by those who were present at the respective meetings.

4. **Matters Arising Not Covered by this Agenda.**
   a) No Advisory Council member had been invited to the board meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol. The whereabouts of the AC minutes for 15 July were uncertain. Martin would follow up with Pete James.

   b) Anti-doping Lead – progress on the induction with a visit to HQ and follow up calls with Kylie re the implementation plan in particular. Melissa Lock was unable to attend today but would be available for the next meeting; an invite to a Wednesday call would also be made.
   Action: List indicating the UKAD training status of those detailed as part of the mandatory groups to be circulated once followed up with Melissa re any recent updates. Maintaining the learning spreadsheet on an up to date basis in conjunction with the relevant discipline chairs continued to be key in ensuring UKAD compliance. The gaps of last year needed to be avoided.

   c) Qualifications Suite – review of the coaching qualifications in process to make the coaching offer more accessible in terms of the time commitment / number of days and of course cost to candidates. Mike was following up.

   d) Health & Safety Executive input re Cable – still awaiting despite prompts on their response and input on the cable risk assessment previously provided.

   e) Environmental Sustainability Plan – Shelley to follow up with David Grey on the latest progress on this policy development.

   f) Chair recruitment – Martin would contact the candidate available to take on the role from 1 January 2026 to schedule a London meeting in October with Patrick.

   g) BWSW Overview Document – Keir to provide Martin with the last iteration of this organisational overview document which was useful for board induction but still in need of some updates.

h) Racing World Championships – brief report on this event, no issues reported following on from a team entry from UKWR via BWSW as agreed with IWWF. UKWR considered the GB Racers had performed well.

i) Magazine - following on from a recent survey the board decision to maintain a printed hard copy magazine rather than a solely online offering was ratified. . A key aim was maintaining a 'connection' with members, survey feedback and issues around actual distribution if online only.

j) IT System [Dealt with as an AOB matter] – Patrick indicated there was a key IT issue which needed addressing. Action was needed in order to ensure the database continued to function. **Action:** Kylie and Patrick would produce a paper on the issues to hand and potential solutions / associated costs to mitigate the risk to any potential business and administration disruption.

5. **Board Related Matters.**
a) Lead Safeguarding Officer – Sarah provided a comprehensive written report for the meeting and outlined the content and answered any queries raised. A number of completed actions were outlined e.g. Club Welfare Officer (CWO) newsletter and drop-in sessions via video conference calls (6 to 9 attending each call which was positive). It was welcome to hear that the Ann Craft Trust adult safeguarding compliance process was ready to submit for assessment. Planned actions included developing further youth involvement in safeguarding (the 'youth voice') at club level, further CWO drop-in sessions and the development of 'easy read' quick guides for parents re codes of conduct and related policy. Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) annual compliance process on schedule for early October and no particular concerns leading into this assessment; follow up communications with the CPSU indicated that BWSW was still at a 'MET' status following on from the last CPSU assessment. Noted a very positive comment from the CPSU direct to Shelley in that Sarah was doing a very good job leading on safeguarding roll out and managing the compliance process.

Two lower level concerns raised, one in relation to conduct and another in relation to photography and being dealt with by Sarah currently. Additional very recently reported concern to be considered by the Safeguarding Working Group with the necessary action points to be determined.

b) Membership / E-Membership & Affiliation Update – E-membership total at circa 2,500 and growing; Keir would add this to the agenda for the next cable site owners meeting. The rate of financial 'kick back' re the site accreditation fee as a 'carrot' for registering e-members to be considered for next season. Martin suggested it should be marginally increased. Keir to follow up as regards costs with two online booking system providers who could potentially build e-membership into their own systems. The paid up BWSW total of associate members was relatively close to the figure of last year at the same point in the season (end of September total) with some time left in the current season to close the narrow gap.

c) Sponsorship – draft sponsorship brochure close to finalisation with minor tweaks pending. Any final comments on the draft circulated to be sent to Keir asap. Implementation of the sponsorship initiative was not dependent on any board input

d) HQ Property Rental / Partial Rental – a two year offer of a discounted rent, subject to terms, to be advertised via the agent re the first floor office rental. In terms of financial due diligence and risk, the board needed to understand the financial robustness of the potential tenant who had made an offer to lease the whole of the HQ building and drastically refurbish it for an alternative business use. Patrick had heard back directly now from the business ownerand a limited set of accounts, this being their first year of their incorporation as a limited company, had been provided to the board for further consideration of the strength of the gym business's financial covenant.   Comments were made as to the mismatch between the reported difficult rental market for landlords and the apparent high expense for tenants in finding suitable accommodation.

Action: Patrick would notify the board as to the agent's commission rate and when payable. It was important to ensure the agent's motivation as regards the first floor letting was not subsidiary to the letting of the whole. The amended first floor advert did not appear to have been actioned by the agent though they had indicated previously that it was about to be published and this would be followed up..

e) Succession Planning Code Requirement 2.6 – targets re diversity in relation to the make up of the board were in place and agreed last year as part of any recruitment drive. Any thoughts from current board members who were potentially considering standing down would be welcome early re any pre AGM recruitment process.

f) E&A Congress 2026 – a meeting had taken place yesterday at HQ with Steve attending in relation to the planning of this event now that the peak of the season had calmed down with the return to school / staff members back from holiday. Progress on the arrangements, previous congress bulletins were available to provide templates for any booking and related administration processes. The cost/practicalities of an external dinner/event for attendees the Congress were not considered practical.

g) Complaint re National Championships – a formal written complaint had been received from the parent of a young competitor at an event and notified to the insurers regarding the potential for a claim however the complainant had since retracted their complaint. Patrick had met with the discipline Chair and facility owner to discuss the points raised and to make a record of the responses from the organisers to the allegations made. The insurer had now been notified that the complaint had since been retracted with all relevant documentation including the retraction. The complaint, retraction, meeting notes and comprehensive documentation re the running of the event and communications made to competitors was available on the hq server for future reference.

h) Accredited Site Termination of Lease – an accredited site had announced its closure having failed to negotiate a lease renewal with the site owner. The site's future was currently unclear though it was understood anecdotally that there were plans for the sport to continue in some form at the site. Steve would contact the owners directly and report back.

i) IWWF Congress Feedback - Martin was quizzed on the IWWF Congress. He said in terms of BWSW's concerns as regards IWWF governance (and compliance with International Olympic Committee [IOC] principles) that the meeting was a disappointment but, based on the 2023 Congress, not a surprise.

Points made included (not referenced in order raised at Congress):

The IWWF UK directors had been obliged under the variously adopted articles (articles 99/97) since incorporation in 2003, to present audited accounts to the members but never had, after the first accounts. [There had been various references up to c 2018 by accountants in the filed accounts to their reviewing/compiling etc. After 2018 the accountants name still appeared on the front page of the accounts with no further reference to them in the filed accounts themselves]. There seemed no acknowledgment of the protective value of an audit (the requirement for which has a number of references in the IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance.) IWWF felt that an email from a co-ordinator at the IOC saying the audit requirement would not be enforced for the time being removed the rationale for an audit (and constituted a satisfactory basis for saying an audit was not mandatory).

The new articles for the Swissco no longer specified any audit requirement. This is probably a slight improvement in terms of removing an existing disregard of the articles (even if an important one). The IOC requirement for a separate line item in the audited accounts setting out officials travel and accommodation expenses was referenced by Martin but not responded to. There are detailed internally prepared and not externally scrutinised figures which are not publicly available. [Martin found these figures presented hard to interpret]. Martin also made the point that under the new articles the previous obligation to present financials 30 days before Congress had now been removed. Consequently, they could now be presented on the day itself. There was no disagreement to his suggestion that a 30 day period should be honoured but no agreement to enshrine this anywhere.

There was a somewhat scary comment from an IWWF representative that the filed accounts were approved by Companies House. It was uncertain whether Congress was adequately disabused of this unfortunate statement. The fact that there was a limited unfiled statement made by the accountants for 2024 (available to members only) but none for 2023 resulted in a degree of confusion.

The Ethics Commission's terms of reference had been approved by the Bureau in November 2024 but were not made part of the Congress pack and therefore available to members, until almost immediately before the meeting. This was despite a specific BWSW request in early August for them to be provided. [A number of immediate issues arose on the document: in house appointment so no voting in of Ethics Commission members, any issue relating to an executive board member to be vetted by a replacement commission appointed for the purpose (with no prior protocol or implementation procedure whatsoever), no obligation to monitor any changes to the IOC code of ethics and no IOC required internal compliance officer to ensure, amongst other things, that issues were brought to the attention of the Ethics Commission]. The President appointed Chair of the Ethics Commission spoke and badged the document as pretty “standard”. There were no comments from the meeting on the contents, aside from US and GB. The USA had specific concerns on the terms of reference and the lateness of their availability, and, with BWSW, voted against their adoption. The Chair did say that the terms of reference could be changed after future discussion of the points raised by GB and USA.

The IWWF stance, on several occasions when it came to BWSW raised points on governance issues, was that time for discussion was limited. The 2023 code of ethics (removing the need for an Ethics Commission and the prohibition on sponsor interference previously contained in the 2016 code) remained approved by the Executive Board but according to the 2023 Congress minutes, unapproved by Congress [even though ratified at that Congress]. Martin pointed out that this meant that the 2023 Code of Ethics was in limbo. This was noted and there was no further discussion on the topic.

When it came to the BWSW items (scheduled on the agenda “for discussion”) the Chair proposed after a statement from the President that this (and the US submission also) be dealt with after the meeting. Martin sought to disagree with this on the basis they were IWWF invited discussion items which should be debated at the meeting, but this had no traction with IWWF or the meeting. No concern was expressed at the meeting by any party other than BWSW on the lack of debate on the additional discussion items proposed by USA.

On Racing Martin made representations on behalf of UKWR. There was no response from IWWF other than to say future recognition of UKWR was for further discussion. Martin made the point that no response had been made to BWSW’s letter of 19 June explaining, in some detail why the IWWF were entitled to admit more than one entity per jurisdiction and that IWWF could, in any event, amend the rules, with a few words, if there really was seen to be an ambiguity. Martin reiterated the extremely limited nature of the BWSW role as a conduit only of unexamined paperwork (and which had been signed up to by IWWF). No indication was given that there would be any response to the 19 June BWSW letter.

The move to Switzerland was approved. BWSW was the only entity voting against the move. Martin read out to the Congress meeting the short extract from the BWSW minutes in this respect - including the lack of transparency on the bureau minutes in breach of IOC requirements. Two quotes of USD 11k for an audit were considered prohibitive by the meeting. There was pivotal and immediate support from the US as to this cost being unacceptable. There was no traction on Martin's suggestion of getting a third quote. The President said they would produce audited accounts if required by the IOC.

Martin was told after the meeting by the President that BWSW were listened to. The President was told the audit fee was a cost that should be incurred. The President said IWWF had listened to BWSW on the reintroduction of the Ethics Commission.

A senior Racing representative also expressed great thanks, outside the meeting, for BWSW's help in achieving UKWR's participation in the current worlds (and which they regarded as pivotal). In a separate discussion Cathy Williams from IWWF (President of USA Wakeboard and sits on the board of USA Water Ski & Wake Sports and the IWWF World Wakeboard Council) expressed great enthusiasm, following an introduction by Nicky Caine, to take up an e-membership initiative in the interests of demonstrating participation numbers. Martin explained how it worked and that it was very much a work in progress but he would put Cathy and Keir in touch.

Martin thanked BWSW board members for their input on the Congress meeting and apologised, on a number of occasions, for his failure, despite their input, in making any substantive progress with IWWF on governance issues.

In the circumstances, given the IWWF approach and BWSW's resources it was agreed, after discussion, that there was no point in proactive follow up with IWWF. Material and very specific issues had been raised with IWWF on the desirability of an audit (including the benefit of external scrutiny of officials travel and accommodation costs), the terms of reference of the Ethics Commission and the required transparency as regards the agenda and minutes of the Bureau. IWWF and Congress were clearly aware of them in full and if they had any resonance the IWWF Bureau would no doubt be in touch.

j) Confirmation of Any Code Requirement 4.7 / 5.2 Issues for Noting at this Meeting - ongoing update reports on development of safeguarding, and development of the environmental sustainability project however no particular key decisions made today that provided for significant / measurable impact in terms of social and environmental governance.

6. **Finance.**
a) Finance Report – Andy outlined that following on from our current finance staff member Katie resigning and a round of recent interviews a new Finance Manager had been offered the role and was available to start next week. Katie had kindly offered to stay on to the end of the month beyond her notice period to assist with the handover which was appreciated. Andy had produced some management accounts for May and June; he outlined the June accounts briefly which represented a key point in the season re income. Noted the year to date budget versus actual and a comparative with previous years to highlight any particular issues requiring attention or raising concerns. Coaching and driving were highlighted as running behind anticipated budgeted income, overhead costs were inline with budget expectations, development and excellence programme costs were an area of expenditure that would ‘catch up’ in the August accounts to anticipated budget levels. The budgeted deficit for 25/26 was £40k but obviously difficult to predict at this point. A note of thanks for Andy’s comprehensive overview of the finances and the management reports received. This was particularly helpful in the context of the existing material budgetary pressures. Andy emphasised the importance of cost control, however minor the item, and the need to seek to avoid a future situation where radical cost cutting became necessary contrary to the best interests of the sport.

7. **AOB.**
None recorded [other than IT issue and Martin confirmed that he would resign at the end of October].

8. **Confirmation of Future Meeting Dates.**

Board

Thursday 30th October	09:30AM
Thursday 4th December	09:30AM

Some additional meetings may well be required to address ad hoc issues and the proposed time for these meetings is 9am on Wednesday mornings.

Board Sub-Group
Wednesdays 9AM

Advisory Council
TBC

AGM
Sunday 18th January Virtual Online AGM

The meeting closed at 11:35 AM

Minuted by:

Patrick Donovan
CEO