



Vice Chair Report

Introduction

The overriding theme in the governing body for the last year has been one of change. The composition of the board has changed significantly with a number of resignations, including the chair, mainly attributed to lack of time available for the commitment required.

We are extremely grateful for the efforts of the board directors who retired over the last year - Andrew McGuigan, Calum Mark (Chair) and Zac Hegarty. There has been a significant body of work carried out which would not have been possible without their input, significantly - Andrew was integral in creation of policies for equality; Zac for his mentoring of the Development Officer; and Calum for his work in confirming our one year interim funding from sportScotland.

Despite the actual on-water season being pitifully short this year what has become apparent is that the time commitment required by board directors should not be underestimated. Previously our Chief Operating Officer (Alan Murray) took on many of the duties of the board. A move to a more “skills based” board called for significantly more time commitment than had previously been expected, which challenged many positions. We are extremely grateful to these previous board members for their hard work and enterprise during this last year.

Chief Operating Officer

In March of 2020 Alan Murray announced he was stepping down from the role of Chief Operating Officer. After over 20 years at the helm of WWS Alan had been looking to retire from the position for some time. It is difficult to express how much of a debt of gratitude that WWS owns to Alan. Without his tireless efforts WWS would not only have not come into existence but the NTS would also not exist. Alan was instrumental in everything from finding the site to raising the funds to establish what is one of the UK's best purpose-built water ski and wakeboard sites.

As Alan retired from position and we looked forward to the start of a new season the world was hit with COVID-19 pandemic. The board took on the COO tasks along with their own while we went through the process of advertising, interviewing and recruiting a new Chief Operating Officer. Carole Cooney comes to us from the Scottish Qualifications Authority and has 20 years of operational management experience. Coming into a particularly challenging situation for everyone, Carole found her feet remarkably quickly and has been integral in delivering the governance required from sportScotland.

Carole helped us deliver the new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which we created in order to allow us to have some form of operation in 2020. We created the SOPs as generic in nature and shared these to all the clubs as well as to BWSW. Our close connection with sportScotland and, in particular, our Partnership Manager Barry Cook have been invaluable in allowing us to guide the governance of the sport to all our clubs during this difficult time. We owe a debt of gratitude to Barry for his help in keeping us going.

Throughout the pandemic sportScotland have been particularly supportive and, in recognition of the challenges faced across all sports, were able to provide one year funding without targets. This has been very helpful and allowed us to concentrate on the process of managing the almost weekly

changes in COVID-19 guidelines. Carole has quickly established herself with all the clubs, initially “virtually” followed by visiting in person and then hosting weekly video conferencing meetings.

Membership

Our primary goal for this season had been to try to create more of a “community” across all Scottish ski and wake sites, not just those affiliated to WWS but also the commercial “pay and play” sites. The delivery of watersports has changed significantly over recent years and, whilst club memberships may be down, the overall participation is high. One of the challenges of the governing body is to connect with participants at all levels and help them enjoy and participate more in the sport. Carole, has already made significant advances in connecting with clubs and sites which we have previously lost touch with.

One of the concerns raised over previous years has been to the “value” of a paid WWS membership in addition to a BWSW membership. The reduced season for everyone and total lack of any training, courses or competitive opportunities makes it even harder to justify these additional membership fees. In light of this, the board agreed that the additional membership fees from affiliated clubs would not be levied this year. Whilst there were still significant administrative duties carried out on the behalf of all members, value needs to be perceptible before membership fees are reintroduced.

Competition

Unfortunately, there has, due to the pandemic, been no opportunity for competition this year. Prior to this it was clear that a fresh look at competition in Scotland is required. We are looking forward to reintroducing the “Backyard Slalom Series” and Scottish Wake series. The possibility also exists of a Scottish Ski race.

Courses

No courses have been run in 2020 due to the pandemic and recommended guidelines.

Staffing

At the time of this AGM (October 2020), we currently have 5 volunteer directors (Ollie Jessop, Kim Johnston, Stuart Baillie, Chris Heron, Kevin Lochhead) and a chief operating officer carrying out all the duties of the governing body.

Unfortunately, our previous Development Officer, after a positive start, resigned her position after less than a year in post. We have recently placed adverts for two part time positions - a Development Officer and a coaching development post. These posts have been created through agreed funding from sportScotland. With the successful instalment of both positions by the start of season 2021 we hope to be able to action the competition and training opportunities integral to the growth of the sport.

National Training Centre

Due to the pandemic, the NTS has been operating in a much reduced capacity over 2020 (see NTS report) and we owe Kris Waz a dept of thanks for his efforts in keeping everything running and ensuring that everyone complied to the changing guidelines. Matt Mills once again rose to the challenge and created outdoor privacy facilities for participants to use while the indoor changing facilities were closed.

We anticipate a significant loss for the 2020/21 season.

Additional activity over 2019/20:

1. Feasibility studies on new income projects for NTS
2. Revamp of website with due diligence on various options to further split out WWS and NTS
3. Development of new logos for WWS and NTS
4. Sourcing and implementing a new booking system for NTS

5. Working with accountants to separate out monthly WWS and NTS management accounts
6. Regular liaison with BWSW and attendance on various committees including helping to manage the current challenges with Insurance cover for Ski racing in the UK
7. Liaising with Fife council over lease and building maintenance
8. Board training on child protection and safeguarding to meet sportScotland guidelines
9. Rewriting of the Articles of Association
10. Restructuring of WWS & NTS
11. Policy updates as required
12. Liaising with individuals and companies looking to set up commercial watersports activities in Scotland.

2020/21

Moving forward we are now at the start of a four year investment cycle from sportScotland. What this means is that, in order to receive the funding to employ the COO, development officer & development coach, we need to commit to an agreed (targeted) 4 year strategy. These employees of the company are then at the disposal of the WWS and our affiliated clubs to help develop the sport in exactly the way that everyone agrees that they would like. In addition we also ensure government policy is followed.

The targets are effectively a way of measuring the outcome of the agreed activities. The strategy day held before the AGM will form the basis of this 4-year plan and we will ensure that all involved are happy and engaged with the outcome.

With a community of united clubs and participants across the country this is great opportunity to grow our sport for everyone.