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Hitchin Water Polo Induction Pack

The first thing to know is that while a few sports claim to be the 'sport of kings', water polo officially has the royal seal of approval.

The Duke of Cambridge himself is a fan of the sport and played at university and at national level for Scotland.

The sport combines speed and strength, as well as teamwork and a high level of fitness. One outfield player can cover up to two miles in one game alone!

Although the Swimming Club was founded in 1932, we're not actually sure if water polo was part of the club then, but we do know from many old photographs that it has been an active part of Hitchin Swimming Club at least since the 1950s.

This induction is designed to give you an overview of the Water Polo Club and an understanding of the journey to becoming a competitive water polo player, or alternatively just enjoying the sports and the fitness and enjoyment it provides.



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1. The Water Polo Club and connections to Hitchin Swimming Club

Hitchin Swimming Club (HSC) is a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers who form the Committee and is affiliated to Swim England East Region. The Water Polo club activities are self-funding within the overall sphere of the Swimming Club; however we have close links, sharing a number of activities and administration functions.

The Water Polo division has grown steadily since an all-time low at the end of the COVID lockdowns. The longer-term goals for the club over the next 2 years are:

Junior – Progression for club matches to a local league within 12 months and within 2- 3 years, team entry to the Water Polo National Age Groups competition.

Seniors – Playing local league as a full Hitchin Team within the next 12 months.

2. Communications

The main water polo email address to use for all communication in the first instance is hitchinwaterpolo@gmail.com

There are WhatsApp group for the Senior and Junior divisions (parents and guardians only for the Juniors) for day-to-day general communications.

All match and special pool bookings are undertaken using the app. “SPOND”. The message facility in this is also used to convey specific match arrangements.



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Other than email, other forms of communication (and last-minute posts about traffic or galas) from the club is made via social media:

- Twitter: @hitchisc
- Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/hitchin_swimming_club/
- Facebook: [Hitchin Swimming Club Waterpolo | Facebook](#) (Hitchin Swimming Club Water Polo) private group - request to join)

3. Fees

There are two annual fees that are payable upon joining the Club and are renewable each January thereafter: **Swim England** and The **Club Annual Membership**.

Monthly squad fees are then charged on the first day of each month and are dependent on which package the player adopts:

In 2024, the Club Annual Membership is £26 (next review date December 2024) .

Swim England have three types of membership:

1. **Train** – £18.35 This will allow your swimmer to be part of the water polo club and able to compete in local league competitions.
2. **Compete** – £42.20 This allows your swimmer to compete in any National Level Water Polo competition e.g., Inter-Regional, National Age Groups and British Water Polo League
3. **Support** – This is solely for volunteers who are not signed up as players. As a volunteer of HSC, the club will cover this cost for you.

Monthly costs (review date February / March 2024)

Section	Costs
Juniors (all)	£24.00 / month*
Juniors (Flitwick only)	£10.00 / month* (annual membership is waived under this scheme)
Seniors (monthly)	£29.00 / month*
Seniors (ad/hoc or sessional fee basis)	£10 / session*. Must be paid for training and for any matches. This option is only available to Seniors and makes allowances for those who cannot attend training on a weekly basis, perhaps through work or other commitments. Payments can be made via a card machine via a water polo administration representative – usually present every session.
Seniors (2 nd club)	£15 / month*. If a senior is actively paying monthly fees for another club but want to take advantage of additional sessions with Hitchin Water Polo, then they can do so at this much reduced rate. On this scheme, we waive the annual club fee.

**Next review date for monthly and ad-hoc payments: March 2025*



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If anyone already trains with the Swimming Club, then they are eligible to get their water polo monthly fees at a discount of 50%.

4. Training

Juniors

Beginners: 8.00am deep water area at Letchworth Leisure Centre

Intermediates: 9.00am deep water area at Letchworth Leisure Centre

These sessions run throughout the year apart from Xmas, Easter and a short Summer Break. On occasion, the club may choose not to run a session or a special reason e.g., Coronation Day.

We run additional “full pool” training sessions at other local pools e.g. Flitwick Pool (monthly) , Bedford School and occasionally at Hartham Leisure in Hertford.

During the summer, the juniors are invited to some of the outdoor training sessions at Letchworth Outdoor Pool (a full schedule of times and sessions is available nearer the time).

Juniors on our new Flitwick Scheme pay a lower subscription as the sessions at Flitwick are only held approximately every month. Juniors on this scheme are also eligible to join every Junior sessions at the outdoor pool during the summer season.

More advanced junior players are invited on an ability basis to join the seniors’ session detailed below.

Seniors

Weekly sessions at Hitchin Indoor Pool Sunday 8.30 – 9.45pm from September – May. Occasionally the sessions may not run due to prior pool bookings e.g., the Swimathon or other special events such as Swimming Club Championships.

From June through to mid-August, the Swim Club takes over sessions at Letchworth Outdoor Pool in the early evening. Approximate start time 6.15pm (a full schedule of activities is available nearer to the start of the summer season). The pool has a lovely spectator terrace area, which makes for much more sociable watching.

5. Other activities

There is an **Awards evening** every year around November time where trophies will be given out to recipients. Our awards cover excellence in an age group, a nominated seniors’ award and contribution to the club. At this point, the club name the junior Captain for the next year.



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The **AGM** is normally tagged onto the Awards night and finishes with food and a disco!

Charity swim - every year we join with the Swimming Club to take part in a charity swim to raise funds for a club nominated charity. A different charity is chosen by the children each year. The Charity distance swim is the largest activity that we do to raise awareness and funds. A family BBQ is run at the same time, everyone is welcome!

Last year, the entire club raised over £3,500 for our chosen charity, Cancer Hair Care www.cancerhaircare.co.uk.

6. Competitions

Juniors – regularly play and host local matches and tournaments. The club ran two junior tournaments in 2023 and hosted the Senior League Tournament.

Based on coach recommendation, some of our juniors also attend training on Friday nights at Haberdasher's Boys' School in Watford hosted by Watford Water Polo.

We are fortunate to name many of our players who have gone on to play for the East Region at Inter-Regional competition, for clubs at the National Age Groups and even at International level for Great Britain.

Seniors – play in a local Hertford League with additional friendly matches.

7. Welfare

At HSC, member's safety and wellbeing is paramount and everyone must adhere to the principles and practices set out in [Wavepower](#), Swim England's child safeguarding policy document. Governed by NSPCC Child Protection in Sports Unit (CPSU), this document includes the code of conducts which all members must agree and abide by. We expect all members and coaches to be treated respectfully and bullying will not be tolerated. Matters of conduct should be referred to the club chairperson in line with club policy.

Copies of all our codes of conduct can be found [here](#)

Club policies can be found [here](#)

Please note that all children attending any session if in year 6 and under, must be collected from poolside by a parent / guardian. Occasionally there may be times when the late collection of children is unavoidable, or parents/guardians may be delayed, or unable to collect their child from training, or after an event, on time. Parents/guardians should inform the appropriate officer of the Organisation if they are going to be delayed and come to an agreement with the Organisation on the best appropriate action.



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Please phone 07985 200726 in case of emergencies or the pool reception staff who can get a message to the session attendees.

Any medical concerns or injuries should be discussed with the head water polo coach who will be able to tailor training to meet individual needs, as necessary.

All volunteers and coaches are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked and are required to complete child safeguarding training. The club also has a designated welfare officer (Julie Williams) who can be contacted via welfare@hitchinswimmingclub.co.uk.

Being a member of a swimming club has both psychological as well as physical benefits: friendships and memories are made while developing a life skill that offers opportunity far beyond competition. Our aim is for all members to have a positive experience however life can be challenging. Swim England's dedicated helpline can be contacted at **Swimline** on 0808 100 4001 or **ChildLine** on 0800 1111.

Further information and resources can be found at:

[Health and Wellbeing Hub | Swim England \(swimming.org\)](#)

[Keeping Your Child Safe in Sport | NSPCC](#)

<https://thecpsu.org.uk>

7. Volunteers

Coaches

Jackie Spinks (Head Water Polo Coach)

Dan Cheney

Pete Norman

Jim Whidborne

Matthew Fletcher (Assistant Coach)

Sam Akerman (Assistant Coach)

Coaches in training:

None at present

Committee

The Swimming Club hold committee meetings and the full roles and responsibilities are published on the website. Dan Cheney and Hannah Wright are the water polo representatives on the committee.

Team Managers

Toni Fenton – Lead Administrator

Sarah Woodthorpe – Kit secretary



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Lisa Akerman
Hannah Wright
David Vickerstaff
Levash Govender
Simon Steele
Jane Nethersole
Sharon Timpson (in progress)

Poolside Helpers

Taylor Fenton
Ashleigh Fenton (in progress)
Emma Bennett (in progress)

Administration

Much of the administration work is carried out by volunteers from the Swimming Club. Toni Fenton is the first point of contact for the water polo club and can be contacted via hitchinwaterpolo@gmail.com

Volunteers

Our volunteers make a big difference!

There are several official roles that are required on an ongoing basis that include:

- Referees (requires Swim England qualification)
- Table Administration (for keeping score and managing the “shot clocks” during a match).
Can be done informally for helping at training or through Swim England approved training to help at National Level games.
- Team Managers
- Helping with equipment and goals
- Helping at Tournaments

Please let us know if you would like to help in any way with the running of the club and join our community of like-minded people!