

Leatherhead Swimming Club AGM

23 September 2022

Chair's Report

1. This is my first report as Chair of Leatherhead Swimming Club since taking up the role nearly 12 months ago. It has been an immensely enjoyable, varied and at times, personally challenging year, so at the outset of this report I would like to thank my fellow Committee members and the Head Coach – past and present – for all their support, help and wise counsel. Members can be assured that there is a great team in place at LSC helping to manage, lead and develop the Club.
2. The last 12 months have also been the first full year for the Club operating free of any Covid restrictions. Now that we are able to look back with some perspective on that challenging period, it is clear that the Club has emerged strong, resilient and focused on the future. We have come through the pandemic in great shape. Over the past year, membership has grown, there have been fantastic achievements in the pool at all levels, our financial position is strong. The Club continues to be supported by an amazing cadre of coaches – including a talented new ‘home-grown’ Head Coach - and a fantastic corps of parent volunteers working in partnership to put the needs of all swimmers front and centre of every decision and activity at the Club. On behalf of the whole Committee, I would like to thank all of you for your ongoing support and commitment to the swimmers and the Club.
3. You may be forgiven for thinking that the Chair is being overly sentimental about the strength of the club. However, the facts and particulars about the Club speak for themselves. The Head Coach and Club Treasurer will comment shortly on the past year relating to swimmers and finances, but over the last 12 months:
 - **Membership of the Club** has grown from 238 in September 2021 to 380 in September 2022; we receive 5-8 enquiries from prospective members each week, and on average, 5-8 swimmers undertake a trial with the club every week. Growth at the learn to swim/Academy stages is very strong and I am particularly delighted that our Club and Masters squads are thriving, with many more swimmers choosing to continue their journey in swimming with LSC even if competing is not their goal.
 - In June, over 230 swimmers from 5 clubs participated in the Commonwealth Games themed **LSC Open Meet**, our first Open Meet since 2019. It was a huge success, re-establishing the LSC Open Meet as a gala of choice for clubs in the area and making a record-breaking profit which will support the Club's financial resilience. Plans are already in place to expand the Meet to a 2-day event in 2023 and 2024.
 - We have expanded the provision of **swim coaching at local schools** - as well as St Martin's and Daneshill schools, we are now providing swim coaching to City of London Freeman's School, further bolstering the financial

strength of the Club but also helping establish LSC as the swim club of choice, attracting new members and generally enhancing our community presence and reputation.

- The **quality of the Club's governance, sustainability and effectiveness** in accordance with its Constitution, policies and procedures, the rules of Swim England and national legislation, was recently endorsed by Swim England in a health check of the Club's SwimMark quality accreditation earlier this year.
 - The Club has enjoyed fantastic **support from key sponsors, notably Belerion Capital and ICC Automotive**, which has enabled the Club to make important investments in our capabilities, including upgrading our outmoded computers and software systems so we can run efficient and effective galas and manage meet entries; procure training equipment to support the development of swimmers in line with best practice; and the purchase of specially designed Open Meet medals adding to the quality of that event.
 - As a Club, we have demonstrated how we live up to our ideals and values, by supporting 2 swimmers who arrived in our community earlier this year from difficult circumstances in their home countries but with a passion to continue swimming. I am pleased that the Committee were unanimous in wanting to help these swimmers and that we are in a position to do so.
4. So that has been a brief snapshot of the Club's year in review from the Chair's perspective. You'll hear more from Stuart and Mark shortly but before I finish, I want to turn briefly to the future. As we have seen through Covid, the Club has fantastic reserves of resilience, determination and ability. But these reserves rely wholly on the commitment and goodwill of the membership, and those who volunteer even a small amount of their time to support the activities of the Club. Without volunteers, the Club would simply not exist. LSC is a member's club, run by and on behalf of all members of the club. It exists to support its swimmers and the overwhelming majority of roles are non-paid and undertaken by volunteers:
- From my fellow Committee members (Victoria Fakkell, Mark Palmer, Hayley Moore, Jo Herman & Cate Hamilton) helping to run the Club day-to-day to the Gala Committee (Hayley Moore, Glenn Christie, Wendy Jones, Sophie Carr, Paula Morgan & Rachel Whyte) investing so much time planning and delivering Meets so swimmers have the opportunities they deserve;
 - From the Accounts and Finance Manager (Cathy Stansfield) making sure all the Club's payments and receipts and registration with Swim England are in good order to our Competition and Results Secretary (Paula Morgan) who ensures entries to swim meets are made in good time and swimmers get the chance to swim the events they want;
 - From the Social Committee (Jo Herman) and Squad Reps arranging events to the Club Kit Manager (Emma McKay) ordering and delivering swimmers hats and T-shirts;

- From the Membership Secretary (Lucy Ford) processing weekly requests to join the Club to the Webmaster (Matt Melrose) maintaining the Club website;
 - From the 'army in white', the timekeepers and technical officials enabling licensed meets to take place to the teams of parent helpers who help with gala refreshments, hand out medals, sign in and marshal swimmers, make announcements, organise raffles.
5. Without these helpers and volunteers, none of the achievements of the past 12 months would have happened. But there is scope to do more, and as the Club continues to grow in number and ambition, and as we ready ourselves to deal with whatever future challenges may be ahead, it is more important than ever that more parents step up to lend a hand and do what they can, in whatever capacity, however big or small in time and energy, to support the Club and continue offering opportunities for your children. There are descriptions of the various roles that the Club needs in order to operate on the website, but you may even identify an opportunity to support the club in other ways – all help is greatly appreciated.
6. Working together I am confident that the Club and its swimmers have the passion, resources and determination to go into the next year, moving from strength to strength, and I am looking forward to coming back next year to report on those successes and developments.

Thank you for your continued support to LSC



Clare Barras

Chair, Leatherhead Swimming Club