



Soundwell Swimming Club
Annual General Meeting Minutes
Thursday 14th July 2023 via Zoom

Attendees: Sarah Taylor, Emma May, Matt Chubb, Jon Wills, Emma Dodd, Simon Gale, Ashley Barnett, Andrea Brown, Sue Long, Marie Trott, Alison Dodds

Apologies: Claire Kerslake

Agenda

1. Chair's Report
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Approval of Independent Examiner
4. Head Coach's Report
5. Election of Officers/Committee/Non Committee roles
6. A.O.B

1. Chair's Report

Welcome to our AGM.

Last year when I summarized our year we were still recovering from COVID and lockdowns and trying to rebuild the Club. This year, as I look back, there are some incredible highlights, significant progress and some remaining challenges but overall great optimism for the next year.

Without stealing Jon's thunder on the detail of our swimming successes, this has been one of the most successful swimming years in the Club's history. This is in no small part to all our volunteer coaches, led by Jon Wills, our Head Coach. He has continued to develop a top-class training programme, and the results are clear to see. A huge thank you to all our coaches who work so hard with our swimmers, from the beginners through to National Potential. Without the quality of coaching throughout the squads, we would not have the swimmers achieving at the highest levels. It is heartening to see numbers in the lower squads building as we develop our Pathway programme with swimming schools across the area, led by Ashley Barnett – those are our National swimmers of tomorrow.

Swimming aside, there is much that goes on behind the scenes to make that all possible, so I'd like to focus on some of the big positives from this past year:

We have been able to hold our 2 annual Open Meets, which provide the majority of our 'subsidy' funding towards pool costs. We've settled on an excellent (albeit hot) venue at Hutton Moor, but the Meets have been very successful, and the number of volunteers helping at those Meets has increased substantially.

Our networking arrangement this year with Bristol North Swimming Club has enabled us to run some additional Level 4 Meets – the Distance Meet in December and a joint Club Champs this June. Both



events were well received, and we will be repeating them again over the next 12 months. We also held a very successful Swim Camp in Spain in October 2022, thanks to Emma Dodd and her fantastic team of Team Managers. We look forward to this year's Camp at Mount Kelly.

The majority of Club Committee roles have been filled, and that has made a tremendous difference to the running of the Club. We don't have all the roles filled, but things are really moving in the right direction. I am incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who have come forward to support in the running of the Club. We still need a Secretary and a Fundraising lead, so if you are interested, please let me know.

Our volunteer workforce has increased, with more trainee officials coming on board, and a large increase in Team Managers, who support our swimmers at Meets and at Camps. We have had a number of officials qualify or progress to Level 2 this year, and a particular congratulations to Steve Witcombe who passed his referee's exam this year. It is really important to have Team Managers from all through the Club, to ensure that we have sufficient numbers to safeguard our swimmers, and ensure that as older swimmers go off to Uni or move on that we have plenty of volunteers coming in behind those parents leaving the Club.

We have been proud to support some work on Athlete Mental Health, developed by one of our parents, Andrea Brown. With our new Welfare Officers, Claire Kerslake and Louise Phillips, we are also pleased to be developing our support to swimmer welfare, which will continue over the next year. In addition, we have set up a hardship fund for families to try to keep swimmers in the sport, and have been pleased to use the Club Shop to sell second hand swimming kit as cheaply as possible to help keep costs down.

One of the big impacts of lockdowns was the change in habits of having to drop swimmers at training or competition and not be able to stay. That had a significant impact on relationships and communication within the Club. The re-establishment of the Club Shop by Jess Chubb, Sue Long and their team has had a real impact on addressing that. It is a hub for advice and conversation, as well as sweets, and there has been a noticeable difference in engagement at Kingswood. It is a great place to go to ask questions about swimming and competitions, and it would be great to be able to open it every day we have training. We'd love more volunteers to help out – please let us know if you are interested. You will also have seen the development of our Club kit range, which has made a great difference to our team spirit and appearance. Thanks to Andrea Brown for all of her hard work this year in getting that moved along.

It wouldn't be a Soundwell AGM without me canvassing for more support! If you don't already volunteer with the Club, please do consider it. There are committee roles and poolside roles during competition such as Team Managers and Officials. All roles have different time commitments and skillsets so there is something to suit everyone. We don't leave anyone unsupported, and every volunteer that comes forward reduces the overall load and commitment we need to give. In September Swim England supervision rules changes do mean that we will need more Team Managers than ever. You don't need to commit tonight, but please reflect and get in touch if you want to discuss which roles might suit you and your skills and availability.

Finally, I'll just touch briefly on some of the challenges we face:



Finances: pool costs increased again this year, and we are doing all we can to keep fees stable. However, the Club does subsidise pool costs considerably, the higher you go within the Club to ensure swimmers can progress to the highest level. We are continuing to chase down sponsorship, grants and do fundraising activities through the year to support that, but our Reserves were completely completed during COVID and we do need to try to build them up. We are non-profit making, and we are acutely aware that swimming is an expensive sport, so try to do all we can to alleviate the cost. We can only do that with support, so if you know of any local businesses (or any millionaires) that might want to support us, please let us know. If your employers do a local giving scheme, please nominate us.

Pools: Unlike many clubs, we came out of COVID lockdown with only minimal reductions in our pool time. We have excellent relationships with our pool providers at Winterbourne, Kingswood and Bath University, but they too face pressures. Winterbourne and Kingswood are aging pools, and inevitably things can go wrong and we sometimes have to cancel sessions at short notice. In addition, both those pools are facing a shortage (which is echoed nationwide) of lifeguards. We appreciate that cancelled sessions are frustrating, and we do all we can to avoid them, but sometimes it is outside our control. We continue to seek additional time, but none is available, so we must use all the sessions we have as best we can. Results this year would indicate that these issues haven't had a significant impact on our swimmers.

Teachers: whilst we are fortunate to having a fantastic coaching team, we are losing 3 of our Learn to Swim teachers this summer. There is a nationwide shortage of swim teachers, and whilst we have tried to recruit, moving from volunteer to paid roles, we have had little take-up. Our Learn to Swim Academy is a vital feeder into our Skills Development squad, and we are working hard to provide continuity of lessons, building up our teaching team over the next 12 months.

Finally, I'll close by thanking you all for your support. Our coaches, committee members and volunteers are fantastic, and make this such a great club to be a part of. As swim parents you are also supporting the Club and your swimmer with every trip to training and competition, every day sat in a hot pool on an uncomfortable seat, cheering your swimmer on. And particularly, thank you to our swimmers. They have done us proud this year, and it really has been a pleasure for all of us to see their faces at competitions, and see the friendships that are developing in squads and continuing across the years as they progress through the Club.

We are losing a couple of our older swimmers this year to University. I'd like to wish Jake Gaunt every success as he goes to the University of British Columbia to continue his studies and his swimming, and to Eleanor Howlett as she goes to Bath University. Many of our swimmers who go to Uni do come back to swim with us during their holidays, and that shows the bond between swimmer and Club and we very much hope we will be seeing both Eleanor and Jake back with us in the near future.

2. Treasurer's Report

The annual accounts were circulated to all parents before the AGM.



Year on Year Movements

Squad Numbers

- Academy swimmers year on year dropped from 115 to 107
- Squad swimmers increased from 107 last year to 117 this year

Income

- Income went up by 17%, fee increases ranged from 10%-20% depending on the squad, and the mix of swimmers paying in the year has driven that increase
- £4k short of where we planned to land the year, this was driven by a couple of factors
 - Overall squad numbers especially in the lower squads were lower than expected
 - Masters Squad was introduced, low uptake reaching only a max of 4 people at best
- Change in Bristol North using Kingswood nearing the end of the year. Decision was made to cancel the Masters squad, and saw a trial for County Development squad to use that time instead of Bristol North. This was not charged to that squad as it was a trial. This will be charged 23/24
- New kit range introduced the end of the financial year
- Shop introduced this year, with c. £900 of profit! Small amount of kit and the second hand kit sales included in that.
- £14k of savings had to be used at the start of the year, to help pay the bills due to timings of galas etc

Pool Hire

- 13% pool hire increases.
- Coaching fees increased, driven by additional competitions and less volunteer coaches
- Team Unify costs increased by £200, which we chose to absorb as fee increases had already been put in place
- Cost of kit is offset by income
- Training - £300 of training after Covid

Balance Sheet

- Main change is the £14k taken out, to pay for bills

Looking forwards, little bit less volunteers, so will need to be paid, and increases in pool fees are likely to come through. The bottom end of the squads are hoping to be filled with the introduction of Pathway scheme which Ashley Barnett is leading on.

Comments/Questions

Ashley Barnett commented – 12 spaces offered out from last pathway, which should mean all lower squads are full.

Andrea Brown Question - £4k shortfall. What didn't happen in the year? 3 or 4 initiatives that didn't work well, Masters was the first one, only 3 or 4 take up vs a full lane. Filling up the bottom squads is key... they pay more per hour, and we have had a bigger gap at the bottom end. Also assumed we were going to get in a few more from Bristol North to help fill the squads



3. **Approval of Ind Examiner**

Rachael Pickard approved the financial statement. RP does not have any connection with the club. The Meeting passed their thanks to her for her examination of the accounts. The Meeting unanimously voted for Rachael to be the Club's Independent Examiner for a further year.

4. **Head Coach Report**

First off, I would like to thank the committee and volunteers for their tireless work over the last couple of years to allow the club to thrive and grow. The club will look fuller after the summer break as Ashley has been working hard developing the Circadian pathway. Several swimmers have been offered places and lots more to come. The continued hard work of the academy team has also been on show, with swimmers progressing into the competitive program. Due to the success in the pool we have also experienced increased demand from swimmers wanting to join the club.

We have had the opportunity to build on networks this year. Soundwell and Bristol North set up several joint training sessions at the start of the season. This developed into a training scheme where regional level swimmers from BN came to train once per month and has now expanded to full time training. This also led to a very successful joint Club Champs, which we will be running again next year.

I wish to pass on my thanks to Claire, who stepped down from coaching but couldn't escape and is now our Welfare Officer. I would also like to thank Simon for stepping into the role with such enthusiasm.

Club level

Again, we held another great Club Champs. This time joint with BN. Lots of new swimmers have been give the-well needed opportunity to compete within a safe, friendly, and familiar environment. Big thanks to all the organisers and volunteers who helped make these possible.

We also managed to run two open meets this year which were a great success. These brought in essential funds for the club and were run very successfully. A massive thank you again goes out to all the organisers and volunteers who helped.

County Level Competition

This was a very interesting meet with the change in allocation of medals etc.

- Age group 38 gold, 28 silver, 26 bronze.
- Championship – 2 gold, 9 silver, 3 bronze.
- Relays – 7 gold, 5 silver, 2 bronze
- Final medals and points were not published.

Three Counties

Harriet, EVB, Sam, Lucy T were all selected to compete at the Three Counties Championships.



Regional level competition

Regionals

Very strong performance in total from the 30 qualifiers we had at this year's regionals. We totalled 27 medals up from 16 medals last year.

- 9 gold, 8 silver, 10 bronze
- 77 finals

Open water

9 swimmers 2 gold – 2 silver – 1 bronze

National level competition

Winter

- 5 Qualifiers – Jake, Heather, Rhys, Alice, Amber
- 18 races and 10 PBs

British Champs

2 Qualifiers – priority Paris final for Heather 50 bk placing 4th & Junior final for Jake placing 2nd

Summer nationals

NEW CLUB RECORD OF 15 INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS!!

British Summer Champs	English Summer Nationals	Open Water
Roger	Josh	Josh
Harry	Rhys	India
Rhys	Harriet	Alfie
Jake	Jade	
Heather	Amber	
Harriet	Heather	
Jack	Harry T	
	Harry K	
	Alice	
	Jack	
	India	

National Talent Pathway

Phase one – Rhys, Josh, Roger, Harry Harriet

Phase two - Rhys, Josh, Roger, Harry



Arena League

- Strong 3 rounds from Soundwell placing just outside the regional final in 11th.
- The arena league teams were a great success, and we will be looking to run the same this coming season.

Junior arena

- 3 rounds have been completed and we are awaiting final results, but a great show from our younger swimmers.
- I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the committee that will be leaving their posts as lots of time has been given to allow for the smooth running of the club and competitions.
- A special mention should also go out to the tireless work of the coaching team. Their hard work passion and enthusiasm enables all of these young swimmers to achieve their dreams. There wouldn't be a swimming club without your help.
- We do run on volunteers and the club relies on parent power to continue, if you have any skills, you feel may benefit the club please come forward.

5. Executive Officers

Sarah Taylor was reappointed as Chair and was voted back in by those attending

Matt Chubb was reappointed as Treasurer and was voted back in by those attending

There were no nominees for the role of Secretary, which remains vacant

Other Roles

Emma Dodd was re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

Rachel Thomas was re-appointed as Assistant Treasurer

Maxine Adams was appointed as Workforce Coordinator

Claire Kerslake was appointed as Welfare Officer

Louise Phillips was appointed as Assistant Welfare Officer

Sarah England was appointed as Competition Secretary

Sue Long was appointed as Membership Secretary

Steve Witcombe was appointed as Officials Co-ordinator

Barbara Gaunt was reappointed as Swim Mark Co-ordinator

Sonja Dalgarno was re-appointed as Pool Bookings Co-ordinator

The role of Fundraising Co-ordinator had no nominations and is vacant



6. **A.O.B**

There was nothing raised

Sarah thanked everyone who attended and reminded everyone that committee meetings are held monthly from September and that all are welcome to attend.

Sarah advised that minutes from each committee meeting are shared via the parents zone of the website and asked everyone to read them if unable to attend to keep up to date with club info.