



## AGM Report 2019-2020 - Chairman

Over this last year there have been many changes at the club. At about the time of the last AGM (March 2019) a new committee was formed with a new Chair, new Joint-Treasurers, Open Meet Secretary, a new Membership Secretary, a Marketing Secretary, and new Merchandise and Club Shop Secretaries. The position of Club Secretary remained vacant and the committee have worked together to fill this role over the year. There has been a huge input of energy from the parent body to run the committee and oversee the club and my thanks go to all who work consistently hard behind the scenes to keep this club moving and progressing forward. There is to be change again in the committee and my thanks go to the two outgoing members for all of their service to the club. Recently the committee has gained a new Secretary and the position of PR, Marketing and Website Secretary and the position of Volunteer Coordinator have been advertised and I hope they are filled here this evening.

January 2020 saw an increase of around 10% on fees for swimmers across the club; this was the 1<sup>st</sup> increase in 2 years. This reflects the extra expenditure on pool time for swimmers and the extra coaching costs associated with this. This year we will be investing heavily on CPD across the whole club; we have a Coaching Course booked for March and we plan to organise a course which further develops the 1 to 1 coaching styles of our coaches. The club remains in a good financial position; details of which will be housed in the Treasurers Report.

Between May and July 2019 we planned, organised and launched a change in the structure of the club. The rationale for this was twofold; to reduce the possibility of losing too many swimmers if we became limited or prevented from offering Learn to Swim Stage Lessons, and to focus more on coaching to develop racing swimmers. The club is a competitive club and proud to prepare swimmers in Buxton and the surrounding areas from age 4 years upwards for racing in galas; we needed a structure to reflect this renewed desire. The club now operates with Learn to Swim Stages 1 to 4, an Academy squad in which groups are numbered 1, 2 and 3 and a Competition Squad numbered 1, 2 and 3. In all squads above Academy 1 there has been an increase in pool time for the individual swimmer to enable development of strength, stamina and technique. The club has also now settled on naming the non-competitive swimming lanes 'Physical Training (PT) lanes', these are for older swimmers, swimmers who no longer wish to compete, or swimmers returning from injury or with exam pressures. More recently we have had a surge of interest in the Learn to Swim stages 1 to 4 and we have facilitated extra groups in the small pool. At the other end of the club we have secured a morning session on a Thursday. This is giving a much needed 4<sup>th</sup> session to many Competition 2 and 3 squad swimmers. Thanks go to the club's dedicated team of teachers and coaches who train our swimmers.

We continue to work with the pool management positively. There have been some difficulties over this year with both the old and new contractor. Air flow systems, broken pool pumps and cleaning/re-tiling have caused cancelled sessions and frustration at key preparation times for galas. We managed one of the lengthy closures (June 2019) by hiring pool time at Stockport Grammar School. This may be a further option for extra-pool time.

This last year has seen a return to the club working with Derventio Excel (DX); this is the performance pathway in Derbyshire. This channel of extra coaching and pool time has been offered by the DX committee and four of the club's Competition 3 swimmers are part of the DX Talent Group. Members of our club committee and coaching staff meet throughout the year with DX representatives to discuss a range of support options. Following the upcoming DASA County Championships in February the DX coaches will look at both inviting more suitable swimmers onto their pathway and increasing the provision to the existing four swimmers. Last spring the club developed a working relationship with Nottinghamshire based Swimstroke Coach Ian Melvin. This started very positively and Ian ran a great set of Coach the Coaches sessions, offered the committee advice on the restructure, provided 1 to 1 mentoring sessions for

the club's coaches on poolside, as well as providing coach cover when needed. Of late we have not had Ian around the pool; the frequency of his support is an item for further discussion.

Participation at galas has been excellent over this year. The club regularly sees numbers approaching and occasionally exceeding 30 swimmers (approx. 60% of Comp Squad) and we have seen excellent performances again and again. The DASA Short Course County Champs last February saw a huge participation and a good spread of medals, this also occurred in DASA Long Course Sprints in December – these are the 2 major focus meets for Buxton Swimming Club - the club looks forward to the next County Champs in 2 weeks. Last year we also saw a great team performance in the Crusader League. However, this has been a mixed blessing as it has taken a lot of effort to coordinate the three meets for this year as clubs are stretched across three Regions. This has impacted the organisation of other Open Meets in the crucial qualifying window for the East Midlands Regional Championships. I believe league swims are good fun, but they have to fit into the overall plan for the club.

The club has put itself in a strong position to organise internal time trials and club competitions by having a large number of willing volunteers. This year two more parents became officials at the higher Judge Level 2 (we now have four) – a third parent is a trainee Judge Level 2; four Judge level 1's have nearly completed the course (when they do we will have a total of six J1's) and two parents have embarked on training to become official starters – this is the Judge Level 2s qualification. There were also a good number of timekeepers trained up this year, ideal for Rising Stars galas, club champs and time trials – and pleasingly some of these were from the club's older body of Young Volunteers. The club is obliged to send judges to all of the open meets and league galas that are attended – as always, thanks go to all of the parents for their commitment in this essential aspect of being a swimming club. Moving forward there needs to be recruitment of parents from the Academy 3 and Competition 1 areas of the club if we are to continue to offer internal competitions; this needs to be as Team Managers, Officials and Coaches.

The key priorities for Buxton Swimming Club during 2020 are:

- review the current club pathway as the first year of implementation draws to a close;
- ensure enough coaches exist within the club to enable cover, staff who leave and possible expansion;
- plan a rolling programme of access to training for volunteer roles within the club (Team Managers, Young Volunteers and Officials);
- creating a rolling gala plan which communicates clear target meets for a level of swimmer;
- explore the possibility of gaining extra pooltime at either Buxton or another local pool to increase either group water time or scope for the club.

Richie Ralph  
February 2020