

## Chair's report AGM 2022

Last year's Chair's report was full of talk of Covid shutdowns and hard work in getting the club back into the pool – I for one am thankful that since Easter 2021 there have been no further shutdowns and we have got all of the club sessions up and running with a degree of normality.

All of the club's sections returned to the pool at the same time, and as I said at the November presentation evening, we did not prioritise any part of the club above another. Listening to other clubs across the East Midlands Swimming Region, it is clear that some did – and I hope for them that a short term disenfranchising of younger swimmers doesn't materialise into a loss or exit of swimmers over the next few years. For us our numbers are strong, and whilst the club has lost some swimmers as a result of Covid, it is clear that the challenge for us will be that as swimmers develop and continue to move into the Competition squads that the club can still provide the pooltime that racing swimmers require to succeed, and that they don't exit the club leaving a competitive void at the top. Sadly, our swimmers who were accessing the Derwentio Excel extra pooltime as part of their talent squad across Derbyshire, have been sidelined by the organisation. This is extremely upsetting for us as a club as a positive pathway has been removed with no real ability to see future development on this.

But I don't want this to be an AGM of moans: we have a lot to look forward to as a club with the County and Regional gala on the near horizon. With a week to go before the Derbyshire County SC Champs training is going really well and swimmers have qualified right across the range of events over the 12 sessions. A fantastic achievement to get county qualifying times when there have been so few licensed galas and we were unable to use Level X times. It is due to the hard work across the club in having enough (only just enough!) qualified judges that we were able to host our own licensed Club Champs and two rounds of Time Trials. This recently high number of judges within the club is always in the balance, and we must continue to recruit and provide training for older swimmers and parents if we are going to be able to continue run internal licensed meets. My thanks must at this point go to all the recently qualified officials in the club – but especially to Richard who's qualification as a starter means we can run Level 4 galas in-house. Coaching towards the county champs has also been extremely positive and many swimmers have qualified well under the county times – indeed, we already have swimmers with regional times this season and hope to see more gained over the next few weekends.

There continues to be investment in the poolside staff in the club – this is the key asset we have as a club and it is so important that we prioritise the children's ability to swim and their development into racing swimmers. I know swimmers and their parents make decisions on whether to continue on that swimmer pathway to racing – but right from stage 1 of the learn to swim programme it is our mission to produce swimmers who have the essential skills to be the best in the water that they can be. So over this last year three club members have qualified as Level 1 Assistant Teachers and currently another club member is on the Level 2 Coach Course. Looking at last year's AGM notes this tallies with the priorities stated. However, access to these courses was problematic as Covid still looms large over face to face delivery of CPD and training. In the short term going forward we are supporting two assistant teachers in becoming Level 1 Assistant Coaches and a current poolside volunteer/helper to become a Level 1 Assistant Teacher. This will occur in due course as Swim England releases more courses.

Two things have really impressed me (above the norm) as Chair this year: one is that we stepped forward as club and answered a need to help the youth in our community with their swimming, and the other is our young person's volunteer programme in-house every Sunday and Tuesday. With a lack of swimming available to Yr5 and 6 school children the club provided this much needed tuition as part of our Sunday morning sessions last spring and through the summer. I can't thank the

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teachers and club helpers/committee members enough for the work they did (in the building and also outside) in providing a service to the community at cost. My second point is the 'forward looking' programme put in place at Christmas that gives the older swimmers in the club experience of helping younger swimmers. Those extra pairs of eyes and the ability to help will make the younger swimmers develop much quicker, whilst still being guided by the qualified teachers and coaches in the club. Keeping our swimmers fully engaged in the world of swimming will help them see that swimming is for life, whilst also securing the future of the club with the next group of teachers and coaches.

More detail will come from the club's Treasurer on the finances of the club – but I would like to acknowledge that we have overspent in 2021 year by more than a few pounds. Speaking to other Derbyshire club Chairs it is clear that we are not the only swimming club to have done so – however, we must always take care with our budget in light of increases in the cost of pooltime.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all of the poolside team of teachers, coaches any anyone who volunteers. Our swimmers get better because of their hard work, attention to detail and enthusiasm. I would like also to thank all the parents that are involved in being officials and timekeepers – our ability to run internal licensed galas would halt without you all. I'd finally like to thank all members of the committee who volunteer to run the club and provide governance and stability on a day to day basis – many thanks go to the outgoing Secretary for all of their hard work over the last few years, and I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the new incoming Secretary.