



Warriors of Warrington Swimming Club

Chairman's Report for 2017/2018

Once again I'd like to welcome you all to our AGM.

This has been my fifth year as chair and my tenth as a serving committee member. I would like to start by thanking everyone on the committee for remaining focused and delivering the goods during some exceptionally challenging times. The easy option would have been to walk away. I am incredibly grateful for everyone's support in ensuring that the job has continued to get done.

Broadly speaking we have kept within budget and as a consequence our finances remain healthy. We therefore have no plans to increase membership fees for the 2018/19 season.

We have considered increasing the amount we pay coaches for attending external galas. To send a coach to every gala and pay them the minimum wage would lead to an increase in membership fees of around 70%, which we feel is unacceptable. We have looked at how other clubs operate, many rely on volunteers and others pay an annual salary with a condition that they attend so many galas. To date this issue hasn't been resolved with our coaching team and as a consequence we have struggled to get coaches to attend external galas. I am well aware that this has been a source of significant frustration for many swimmers and parents

Livewire will be increasing the amount they charge us for hire of their facilities. We are still negotiating with them so final costs are yet to be agreed. We expect to be able to absorb these costs next year.

A lot of work has gone into setting up the Swim Active System. Membership processes are now paperless, as are Badge Gala entries, thus saving many hours of volunteer time. The capabilities of the Swim Active system don't end there and we may roll out further paperless systems during 2018/19.

We were experiencing problems with email and to overcome this we have moved to a new provider and changed the email addresses. Whilst this required a fairly significant amount of work the change has gone relatively smoothly.

The introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) sets higher standards for consent and handling data. To help us understand the requirements of the new laws we have recruited a volunteer whose specific role is GDPR. A lot of work has already been completed in this area and we expect that GDPR will become a stand alone committee position for 2018/19. Consent now means all members have to positively 'opt in'.

To ensure membership numbers remain healthy we need to get our recruitment and retention processes right. Our main source of recruitment is via the Livewire Learn to Swim Scheme. This has been successful and we expect it to continue being successful.

Retention of swimmers on the other hand has been a problem for us. We have introduced an exit survey for members leaving the club to try and help us understand the reasons for swimmers deciding to leave. By getting this information we hope to be able to take action and keep as many swimmers as possible in the future.

When it comes to decision making we often rely on 'gut feeling' however to help us make better decisions in the future we have carried out a general survey of all swimmers and members. These results will be carefully analysed and conclusions will be drawn to assist us with setting future direction.

I believe that it is important that we aim to create an environment whereby swimmers can feel safe, be happy and thrive, the surveys will help us achieve this.

Another reason for carrying out the surveys is that we have had to deal with a large increase in complaints. If we are able to get things right in the first place we hope to avoid the need for members to make a complaint.

Most complaints have emerged from issues around training, which historically Warriors has always dealt with. This has now changed, as it is Livewire that provide squad training and therefore it is right that they deal with any issues that arise during these training sessions. They have now adopted Wavepower in its entirety and appointed a designated person to handle complaints.

Dealing with complaints can sometimes be difficult, especially when they become personal. Complaints of this nature has led to differences of opinion between the coaching team and the committee. We are working towards resolving these differences of opinion and hope that a solution can be found.

I'd like to thank those committee members that are stepping down and those that have put themselves forward to take over. We have lots of new enthusiasm coming into the committee so hopefully we'll achieve a lot during the next twelve months.

The input from all volunteers is very much valued and appreciated. It is the volunteers that work tirelessly in the background to keep the cogs turning and we are always in need of new volunteers. The more people that help us out the easier it is to turn the cogs!

Finally a massive Thank You to everyone that has supported the club during the last twelve months.

Steve Ravenscroft

Chairman

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