



Warriors of Warrington Swimming Club

# Chairman Report for 2019 AGM

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This is my 6th Chairman's Report that I have had the privilege to present to you at the AGM and it will also be my final report as I will be stepping down, after serving 11 years on the committee.

Subject to the approval of the membership my successor will be Stephen Gayter. I'm sure members will join me in congratulating him, and I have no doubt that the club will enter a new and exciting phase under his leadership.

I am pleased to inform members that the complaints made to Swim England, have now been dealt with.

This has been a difficult and time consuming process. We attempted reconciliation through mediation, but unfortunately that was unsuccessful. The complainant advised Swim England that he wanted to proceed to arbitration hearing through the ASA Judicial process. The complainant made three separate complaints and contained within these complaints were numerous allegations, many of which we felt were malicious. The club, and I personally, had to respond by producing a detailed evidence bundle.

Following the hearing and upon receiving the Arbitration Determination, we were pleased to learn that NO sanctions were to be taken against myself or the club. The Complainant did not accept the outcome and appealed. The subsequent Appeal was rejected.

Both parties were instructed not to disclose the nature of the complaints so I am unable to share with you any of the detail. However given the anxieties expressed at last years AGM, I hope members will take comfort from the fact that no sanctions were taken against us.

Despite having to deal with this incredibly time consuming process, it has also been a case of business as usual. Committee members have had to work tirelessly to ensure that the club continues to function to cover the day to day tasks.

Members will now be familiar with the Swim Active system and this continues to evolve as we aim to go completely paperless. Whilst this will, and has reduced volunteer time, the process of getting to where we are has not been easy and we still have work to do. The website recently came under a sustained attack which resulted in it going down for a period of time. The website contains no personal data, so no breaches occurred, however it did cause significant disruption and a lot of effort and time went into getting things back to normal. Going forward the club may want to consider a new supported website.

We have had an incredibly successful year with our home galas. The Percy Mason meet was attended with a record of number of swimmers and consequently raised a record amount of

money. The Club Championships and Badge Galas have all, also done very well. We now aim to run all our galas with at least a Level 4 license. The only way that this is possible is by having qualified officials on the pool deck. I am particularly grateful to all those that make this happen.

In addition to our home galas swimmers have all had opportunities to attend external galas, rarely does a weekend pass without a gala. Keeping on top of the gala programme is challenging.

Whenever the club attends an external meet we always try and ensure that swimmers are looked after by suitable Team Managers. All Team Managers have to be DBS checked, however going forward they will also have had to have completed a Safeguarding and Team Manager course. These will have to be accredited courses, recognised by Swim England. Unfortunately in house training will no longer be sufficient so we urge members to look out for these training courses and book themselves onto one.

Financially we have had a good year so there are no plans to increase membership fees. The Treasurer will outline further details regarding club finances in her report.

Unfortunately we have not been able to produce a new Head Coach Contract. This was a piece of work that I would have liked completed before this AGM, but this has not been possible. It is my opinion that the club will need to seek a professional service to complete this task.

It saddens me to see our talented homegrown swimmers join other clubs. During the last two years we have lost far too many. The exit survey results have been analysed and show a variety of reasons behind people deciding to leave. It is extremely important that we do what we can to ensure that future home grown talent remains at our club. Despite this, membership numbers are strong, we have a lot of new, exciting and talented younger swimmers.

In addition to the exit survey members will recall that last year we carried out a general survey. This survey highlighted several areas where the club can improve. We have consequently been giving members regular newsletter updates via email and set up a Facebook page. A gala guidance section has also been introduced on the website. We have also discussed the survey results with Livewire.

On a more positive note the club has agreed to run a Swim Camp to Cyprus next February. Swim Camps in the past have been incredibly successful for swimmers and not just from a swimming perspective. The overall aim, of course, is to improve performance in the pool, however the swim camp is much more than this, it will give swimmers something to look forward to and to gain some independence whilst in a safe environment. New and strong friendships are formed that often last way beyond swimming.

Organising such an event requires a lot of time and effort and I am very grateful to those that have researched, planned and organised this trip.

As I step down you will note that I don't name any individuals in my reports. That is because I appreciate everyone's efforts in helping to run the club and if I named everyone this report would be lengthy and boring. The grafters know who they are, I thank them all massively.

There is one person though whom I believe is vital in keeping the clubs profile at a high level. Those on the committee know him well. Like many of us he joined the committee when his

children were swimming, the difference is, his swimmers are now in their 40's! He has remained on our committee without a break ever since and has stuck it out, through thick and thin. He also sits on several other committees helping to support our sport. Members will have seen him on the pool deck refereeing our galas. He has an eagle eye for detail, (which can be frustrating!) but helps us to ensure that things get done correctly. The club is very fortunate to have him as our President, Jim Wilks. To lose Jim would be a huge blow for the club. I really appreciate all that he has done to support me and would like to thank him for all of his contributions.

A lot has been achieved during the last 11 years, the finances are much stronger, we raised money for the electronic timing equipment and have introduced the swim active system, not to mention success in the pool!

Whilst every club has its ups and downs, the continuous cycle of improvement must continue and there is no doubt that the club is entering a new phase. Interest in how it is run is at an all time high. Never in my 11 years have we had to have an election for any position on the committee. We now have a situation whereby pretty much all the coaches have put their names down for committee positions. I welcome their interest as other successful clubs have coaches doing a committee roles. Members need to think very carefully about what each candidate has to offer when voting.

Finally I would like to thank the committee and all the other volunteers (often invisible) for making things happen that ultimately leads to keeping our sport successful and in providing a safe, enjoyable environment for swimmers to thrive.