

Chairs AGM Report – 2015/6

As in prior years, the only way to start is to thank everyone that has given up their own time to do anything, no matter how small, to help over the last twelve months. The Club simply wouldn't function without you. Thank you.

The Club is run by volunteers, so help, in whatever form is always most welcome. Martin Cheesbrough joined the Committee last year and is worthy of a special mention for the stellar job he has done on the website and with online entries which helps us in so many ways. I'd also like to thank Jane Tauwhare for her work as Welfare Officer, which has now been passed to Alison Anthony and Jenny Hunt.

It's great to see a number of you embarking on a bit of training for time keeping and judging. This is really important as, given we are quite a predominant Club in London; there is an increasing obligation for us to help officiate at County and Regional events. It has to be a better option than sitting on those hard seats all day!

Ken Bailey continues to lead with the Masters, which has gone from strength to strength this year, boasting nearly 200 members, the option to swim every day, and a diverse offer catering for all types of swimmer.

Operationally, I would describe the year as 'routine'. We've managed to keep the squads full, there are in fact waiting lists at all levels, and run the finances to create a small surplus. There's more detail on the finances in Alistair's report of course; all that I would add is that with challenges like the impending closure of the pool at LEH School for refurbishment, having a little cash in the bank might help us with finding alternatives.

I'm pleased that we were able to keep fee increases very low this year, albeit all the facilities we use passed on increases significantly above RPI. A reflection of the funding pressure the Boroughs tell us they are under but none the less disappointing.

I still believe Fees at their current level are very competitive against the offer from other clubs in the area, and I maintain that on a cost/hour basis represent fantastic value for money.

One of the key risks last year was the end of the Spring Health management contract at Pools on the Park (PoTP). We were worried that the contract might be let to an aggressively commercial 3rd party, keen to force out club activity in favour of adult “fitness club memberships”. This has not happened, the operation of PoTP has in fact gone in-house to the London Borough of Richmond, who has given us assurances about the pool time we currently have. However the whole episode has highlighted that we have work to do to build a better relationship with the Council and better understand how we can help them with their targets and objectives, especially when it comes to the top down targets to increase participation amongst the non-active.

Pool time continues to be both a constraint and a risk and in the coming months we need to navigate the closure of the LEH School Pool for refurbishment. The opportunity to get some kind of roof/cover on the agenda for the outdoor pool at Richmond is a perennial ‘doable’ item but to drive this forward we would need expert input and a committed working party; neither of which exist.

When it comes to the actual swimming I’ll let you look at Ed’s report to see what happened in the pool and at the various Gala’s. Anyone that got what they were aiming for, be it a medal, a PB, a level of fitness or just a change of technique deserves to be congratulated.

Shortly after last year’s AGM we hired Dani Villaverde as our Assistant Head Coach. Dani has been a great addition to our coaching team, giving us more strength in depth and a few more options for covering our various commitments at busy times of the year. I’m also delighted to welcome Natasha Adamidou as a recent addition to the Coaching team with a focus on the Academy Squad. Did you know that we run nearly 80 different scheduled sessions per week! This is quite a commitment before even taking into consideration; Gala weekends, County, Regional and National finals. We continue to work on getting the balance right between scheduled training, competitions and outside TSC commitments. This is work-in-progress as they say.

I’ll close as I did last year. The Exec, Committee and Coaching team work hard to try and run the best Squad sessions we can across the whole Club – there’s the odd bump – and we are always looking for improvements, but by and large, I’m pretty

proud of what everyone; swimmers, coaches, helpers and volunteers alike have managed to achieve this year.

Thank you once again to everyone that has helped this year – see you at the Barbeque, at Hampton Pool on Saturday 18th June. If you haven't yet got a ticket, you can sign up – where else – on the website!