



WYRE FOREST SWIMMING CLUB


Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 30th March 2022 – Holy trinity School

Present: Becki Rowley, Stew Parker, Brian McGuinness, Maria Stead; Isabel Vanderheeren, Laura Colley, Kelle Westwood, Hannah Grover, Emily Hoare, Kerrie Kilgour, Carly Ellis, Olivia Ellis, Jill Price, Michelle Westwood, Katy Fallon, Richard Lye, Lisa Lye, Leon Westwood, Neal Derbyshire, Karen Hayes, Simon Denton

Agenda item	Notes
Apologies	Laura Duffy
Minutes from Last AGM 5 th May 2021	The minutes were approved. Proposed SD, Seconded IV
Matter Arising	one not covered within this year's reports
Life members	None proposed
Chairs report	<p><i>Chairman report submitted by SP as interim Chair</i></p> <p><i>I was appointed the position of WFSC (Wyre Forest Swimming Club) Acting Chairperson on the 11th of March 2022. I am not a suitable position to reflect on the last 12 months but am very keen to embrace the challenges we have ahead of. I'm thankful to be following Mike in this role and look forward to continuing to build on the work he and the committee have begun.</i></p> <p><i>I joined this post amidst a Learn to Swim resourcing challenge that disrupted our 1-2-1 schedule and jeopardised the club's ability to deliver our LTS programme. I'd like to thank Brian for promptly finding the team we have now. I would like to praise the Learn to Swim teachers for quickly re-establishing themselves as a team and delivering a great service. I personally have received positive feedback about the team and given we are still in the early stages of a new team forming I am confident the positivity is only going to increase.</i></p> <p><i>It was a pleasure to represent the club in this role when we finally had the chance to host our Annual Ball last weekend. I consider myself privileged to work with the team that make Club Champs, our Open Meets, and the Annual Ball such great events.</i></p> <p><i>I've been involved with WFSC for many years now in various capacities with a swimmer in Gold and another in Academy 1. It's always a pleasure to share our swimmers' experiences. From Learn to Swim, through Academies and the Squads I can recall so many times when our swimmers achieve their firsts. It's these moments that make all the effort which goes into the club by so many volunteers and the coaching teams all worthwhile.</i></p> <p><i>The achievements of Rob during his time in Dubai and joining Lillie Grover and Martha Stead as GB qualifiers demonstrates to those following in their footsteps (or stroke) what is possible when you believe and work hard. Our swimmers are truly a credit to themselves, their families, and our club!</i></p> <p><i>On behalf of WFSC, I would like to thank Brian and the coaching & teaching teams for their continued commitment to our swimmers. In the background there are also</i></p>



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	<p><i>those who give up so much of their time to support the club in many ways and again WFSC owes a huge thank you for their continued support.</i></p> <p><i>We are, however far from recovered following the pandemic and the club remains financially vulnerable. We still need help from anyone who is offering their time or specialist services to support the club.</i></p> <p><i>I have already reached out to our County and Regional Swim England representatives and look forward to working with them moving forward. We have some immediate topics that need addressing during April. This will allow the newly appointed officers, committee, and trustees to establish themselves as a team. Then, the next 11 months will focus on the challenges which will take WFSC into a positive new chapter.</i></p>
Finance report	<p>Finance report attached</p> <p> finance report.pptx</p> <p>The accounts for the year ended 30th September 2020 were shared by SD – See attached</p> <p>SD noted that Accounts are with auditors- so the report presented at the AGM was still in draft form and maybe subject to change following auditor's findings and recommendations.</p> <p>SD reiterated that it has been a difficult year – the club accounts are showing a tiny surplus this year.</p> <p>Simon D explained some of the difficulties around the finance this year and the issues that helped us with balancing the books</p> <p>There are remaining challenges for the year ahead which will need to be addressed as part of next year's committee planning.</p> <p>Questions asked</p> <p>During COVID did we have to pay for pool costs? Simon confirmed we only pay for usage for the pool. We did get a discount on the school pools costs following closure, however all charges have now gone back to pre-covid.</p> <p>Going ahead we also have to take into account the rise of fuel costs on future costs to pool – there is no indication from any of the pools when these costs will be passed on as part of the hire.</p> <p>Furlough</p> <p>Did we claim the government bonus per employee we kept on during COVID (£1000)? – this question could not be answered as the committee in charge of 20/21 took on responsibility after COVID arrangements and only have partial information available.</p> <p>SP raised that there are several issues that will need to be picked up with HMRC –</p>



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	<p>this will be one of them. Steward identified that the club is missing specialist HR advice and therefore is exploring avenues we get this expertise as part of the team.</p> <p>Post-meeting update for Covid bonus. Scheme has closed and it was highly unlikely the club would have been eligible due the earnings requirements</p>
Head Coaches report	<p>BM presented the Head Coaches report – see attached</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p><i>2 years ago at this point we had just gone into Lockdown #1, and at this point 1 year ago we were preparing to come out of Lockdown #3. These were terrible times and ones that we will be affected by for some time to come. We are still rebuilding from then and the effects will take another 12 months to truly respond to. What we have experienced here, is what has been experienced everywhere and I have represented coaches & assisted programmes the length & breadth of the UK, who have suffered as a result of the effects of Covid systematically let alone personally. Patience continues to be the key although the demands of the sport have been the same as ever. This report therefore is actually a story of trying to run in two directions at the same time.</i></p> <p><u>The return(s)</u></p> <p><i>After Lockdown #1 in 2020 we were helping people to return to swimming within the confines and regulations that were in place nationally & locally. Restrictive numbers meant that there were no competitions, no club champs, no leagues and no counties. It also meant you as parents suffering in the cold & wet as you watched your children through the windows or via live streams when we could at internal events we set up with the points gala, Level X and such like.</i></p> <p><i>After the last major Lockdown (#3) we returned to training on 12 April 2021. As an example of the disparity which had occurred in our sport, on the 13th the GB Olympic Trials commenced in London. This happened because the elite had been given special concessions to train & race, when the rest of us, who like them (or unlike them) had paid an affiliation fee but were not allowed to do what they could do ie swim!</i></p> <p><i>This was grossly unfair and meant that we were all playing catch up from that point. I am proud to say, that what we have achieved is remarkable given what has followed and I am extremely proud of my coaching team and the swimmers (let alone you as parents), for doing what was necessary to get the results to place the name of WFSC on a lot of people's lips. That was not the case when I took over in 2016 – where one SE staff member actually said to me, why are you bothering with them??</i></p>



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Hopefully they now know why and I hope you understand why I am ambivalent to advice given to me by those representing the NGB – they don't always know best!

The results

Our first two forays back into competition were the virtual Nuneaton & Arena Junior Leagues. Can I give credit to Rosie & Chris for their part in these events, but particularly Ruth who chased, harried and prepared teams for these virtual League matches which saw spectacular results for WFSC with us being amongst the best teams in the County and the West Midlands at these events – well done all!

I know how hard Ruth worked on this and she deserves particular credit for the results we enjoyed.

We also had, after seven short weeks, Rob enjoying the joys of (a) my driving & (b) Glasgow when he participated in the British Swimming event in that city for elite juniors and seniors. This was not the high glamour of national level sport. We went to a hotel, we stayed in our rooms for fear of being kicked out of the meet. We left our rooms to eat or travel to the pool to train or compete. We returned to the hotel, go to our rooms and then stay there again until our next release period!!

Despite all this Rob swam with great credit after such a short time setting lifetime bests in both the 100 Free (52.95) & 200 Free (1:58.02) [both long course times].*

*(*At Swansea he equalled that time then went a converted 52.34 last night – so lets hope for even better things in Sheffield next week!)*

Rob was on the reserve list for selection for the GB Junior Team for the European Junior Championships that year as a result of these swims and made a great impression upon Patrick Miley, the father & coach of Hannah Miley who studied his performances and saw that he has great potential.

Rob has been a great ambassador for WFSC, has been a symbol of what is possible with this Club, an outstanding role model for others (most of the time), but most of all he continues to be the nice local lad despite all that he has achieved since. He is a credit to this Club and to his family and I am proud to have been associated with him as his coach, when he (hopefully) continues his swimming & academic career at Bath Uni in the Autumn, under the guidance of one of my former swimmers and a former National Head Coach of Sweden and (I'll say this quietly) Russia.

Competition began to gradually have a phased return and our hard work through the barren lockdown periods began to bear fruit at the WM Regional Festival in Coventry where only the SE Performance Hub clubs of Coventry, RWS & City of Birmingham out performed us and even then only just. I even managed to sneak parents in to see their children swim! The future stars began to show through!



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After continued regulatory problems in accessing facilities and the never ending closure of KCS, we eventually returned to training and a competition plan of sorts began to emerge through August & September.

I cannot give enough credit all involved in getting "Back to the Blocks" run. The Colleys & others worked tirelessly on this despite great challenges and we ran one of the first Club Meets in Britain. There were still challenges due to Covid, but we overcame them but a huge round of applause to all that made it happen.

When we consider that WCSA then cancelled their Development Gala, a week later, it shows what an achievement it was for WFSC to have run our event.

We returned to a new season in the revised Arena League was a challenge. Our previous successes mean we are in amongst the big guns now, and after a rocky Rd#1 we developed through the rounds to finish a creditable mid-table despite our meagre reserves in some areas and that many of our age groups had young swimmers involved. Roll on this October!

I upped the training programme and we were close to returning to training intensities and levels pre covid so swimmers were tired in October as we entered our first big meet in Birmingham where there were tears, not quite tantrums but still solid performances across the board against some big programmes from around the UK.

We followed this with our training camp at Uppingham College in Rutland, alongside our friends from Pershore. This would not have been possible without the outstanding job done by our two Team Managers Hannah Grover & Maria Stead, during what was still a tricky covid period.

I stated at the Awards Ball on Saturday my eternal gratitude to Becki Rowley in setting up our first trips to Swansea and Cyprus, but Hannah & Maria have taken this to another level. Not only did they ensure the safety of all concerned but dealt with the inevitable covid issues which arose professionally and quietly with no drama, despite the best efforts of some of the girls who became a tad excited when a test they had been done almost 15 hours previously had become a bit blurry!

The camp itself was an outstanding success. The venue was excellent, with very good facilities that met our needs, space for study and the food was good and plentiful. The results at the WM Regional Winter Champs a week after showed its benefit as we had more swimmers make senior & junior finals and record massive best times again against top opposition. Unfortunately no medals were given to anyone which was a shame.

Further regulatory changes allowed us to increase numbers on deck so that we could run Club Champs to allow swimmers a chance to attain qualifying standards for WCSA County Champs and Rock the Blocks in Wolverhampton. We also had swimmers attend further open meets in Coventry and Rob, Lillie



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& Martha entered the busy, busy, busy bear pit that was Winter Nationals at Ponds Forge. A tad busier than Glasgow had been earlier in the year. All swam well but most importantly gained further experience.

I'm afraid that it would be remiss of me to not mention that this was becoming one of the most challenging periods in my professional life as a coach. Myself and my coaching team circulated correspondence at that time so what I am saying is not a secret or talking out of turn.

Whilst we fully recognise that those on the Committee were still coming to terms with some of ridiculous behaviours of previous officers, I have said it to them and to those advising them, that they were getting bad advice from people who knew little if anything of WFSC, its issues and potential.

As I said earlier, because someone wears an NGB badge or title does not actually mean that what they say is sacrosanct. I have worked with many for years, they often come to me for advice!

In my role as Executive Director of the British Swimming Coaches Association (BSCA), I have advised coaches & clubs through the challenges of the last two years. This has often happened because their Club Committees & Officers have come to me to seek support & advice. It was therefore ironic that whilst I was doing that for others, across the country, that our own Committee would not discuss matters with me & the coaches, as they had effectively been told to take a vow of silence by the Region. This made things far more difficult than they needed to have been.

Myself, Ruth & Chris were days from walking away.

It is my opinion that there were some on the Committee who were involved in such for political means. Given that WFSC provides a service and opportunities for predominantly children, then they should take a long hard look at themselves in the mirror.

As a result my frustrations were sky high and it is fair to say that at times I showed it. I have said & written things to people that were unprofessional and that shouldn't have been said. If I have upset anyone by doing so, I sincerely apologise.

Despite all that in the background, as a team we got on the job with the swimmers and we came out of the 2022 WCSA County Championships with possibly the best results the Club has ever achieved. This is what I put on Facebook:

"WCSA Championships 2022 - after a lockdown, after ALL the problems the Club has encountered the results are in:

4 Senior County Titles

Martha Stead – 1500 free, 100 & 200 Back;

Lillie Grover 100 Fly

14 County Junior Titles

Isabella Hoare – 200, 400, 800 Free, 200 IM, 200 Breast;

Lillie Grover – 50, 100 Free, 50, 100, 200 Butterfly, 100, 200 Back



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Brecon Westwood – 1500 Free

Shay Parker – 800 Free

51 Age Group Gold ~ 37 Age Group Silver ~ 22 Age Group Bronze

110 medals in total

180 top 8 finishes

102 Regional Qualifying Times achieved so far

(NB: this with Rob on England duty!!!)

Even more pleasing to me were the comments from three different coaches from three different clubs independently, who said, “Your Club is not recognisable from what it once was!”, “You should be really proud. It’s not just that you’re winning, it’s the style that you’re winning with. Well done!” and finally “ I’ve had my swimmers watching WF swimmers these last weekends, because you’re swimmers are so great in the water, that the way I want ours to swim too!”

I can assure you – no money passed hands – I am Scottish after all!

We have continued to tot up the Regional QT’s with closing date mid April.

Of course we also had the honour of having a WF swimmer representing England in Dubai at the same time as Counties with Rob Darbyshire experiencing training in fantastic facilities and how others train from across the UK then improving his performances through the Meet.

Well done Rob.

Moving on to the Long Course season, still early phase, we had prep at Rushmoor in Aldershot, then onto Swansea where the bar was raised again, then onto Derventio in Sheffield where we again showed great progress.

At present we have Lillie, Lily Colley & Martha on GB NQW ranking, Lily C again, Rob & Isabella on England rankings – so it could be a busy summer!!!

Next week we have Rob, Martha & Lillie representing us in Sheffield at the GB Swimming Champs, which is the final selection meet for Commonwealth Games, and selection meet for European Junior Champs and World Youth Championships.

When I joined WF all those years ago, making nationals was a dream with County & Regional success being the main descriptor of success. How far we’ve come, with Rob swimming for England on the DiSE programme, Martha & Jez winning medals at Welsh Summer Nationals, Lillie Grover, Brecon Westwood & Lily Colley on England programmes and Bella Hoare nationally ranked.

At LTS & Academy levels of the Club we have seen progress, most notably with the appointment of Jacqui Haldane, along with several new teachers to compliment our current cohort. I visited our lessons last Saturday; they were exciting, vibrant, noisy and fun. Well done all and this is just the beginning.




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	<p><i>Can I thank everyone who has backed all us coaches this year, thank Ruth, Chris, Rosie previously and Jacqui again. We've come through the worst and can look positively to the future with plans in place for the 22/23 season which will again provide more children with more opportunities to learn & thrive from there swimming opportunities with WFSC.</i></p> <p><i>What a Club we are!!</i></p> <p>Questions asked: What support has the club in place to support the needs of swimmers with additional needs? BG responded that this is mainly supported through one to one's.</p> <p>We are looking to develop our inclusiveness through a number of avenues including training for our coaches and pool helpers help understand the different needs and how these can best be supported</p> <p>We aim to be an inclusive club and are keen to work with parents to ensure we meet the needs of children.</p> <p>We will explore how we can capture the needs, work with parents, and provide relevant support to swimmers so they feel they belong in the club and achieve their potential.</p>
Members report	<p>BR provided a membership update Currently we have 253 including LTS 134 – this is up from 240 Lts is up from 122</p> <p>Since new LTS teacher has started we have taken action to maximise pool time and as a result have no waiting list for LTS.</p> <p>We are also exploring how we can incentives our learn to swim helpers to retain them and make them feel valued in the support they give our little Acorns.</p> <p>Emily H is taking a lead on promoting our swimming offer in schools</p> <p>A question was asked on how we measure Customer satisfaction. In the past we have done a starters and leavers questionnaire. We recognise we must be more proactive in how we capture and respond to feedback to ensure we can recruit and retain swimmers</p> <p>Jill P will be taking up parent satisfaction surveys going forward.</p> <p>EH raised that it would be helpful if we can capture the school our swimmers go to so it makes it easier to celebrate children success and promote our offer.</p> <p>KF raised we may be able to use CPD offer for teachers in schools – we could have discussion with schools around their swimming programme and how we support</p>



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	<p>teachers and promote our club</p> <p>SP also raised that we have started positive discussions with the leisure centre to see how we could get children to progress from the leisure centre to our club and collaboration programmes we could run.</p>
Social report/volunteer report	<p>IV presented the social/volunteering/fundraising report</p>  <p>volunteer & fundraising report.doc</p>
Election of club president	<p>We have had no nomination for this role</p>
Election of club officers and committee	<p>The following have been nominated with no other nominations:</p> <p>Chair – Steward Parker (Seconded by Simon Denton)</p> <p>Vice-Chair – Simon Denton (seconded by Stuart Parker)</p> <p>Secretary – Isabel Vanderheeren (seconded by Karen Hayes)</p> <p>Finance Officer – Simon Denton (seconded by Steward Parker)</p> <p>Membership Secretary – Maria Stead (seconded by Emily Hoare)</p> <p>Welfare officer (female) – Kelle Westwood (seconded by Hannah Grover)</p> <p>Welfare officer (Male) – Neal Darbyshire (seconded by Kelle Westwood)</p> <p>Competition officer – Laura Colley (seconded by Leon Westwood)</p> <p>Officials Coordinator - Becki Rowley (seconded by Carole Walters)</p> <p>Marketing/Press officer – Emily Hoare (seconded by Karen Hays)</p> <p>Volunteer Coordinator – Karen Hayes (seconded by Emily Hoare)</p> <p>Parent liaison Officer – Jill Price (seconded by Kelle Westwood)</p> <p>Swim Mark coordinator – Hannah Grover (seconded by Isabel Vanderheeren)</p> <p>All positions were accepted by everyone present</p> <p>Only the fundraising role remains vacant.</p> <p>We would like to take the opportunity to thank Carole Walters for her years of contribution to the club as membership Secretary.</p>
Election of examiner of Accounts	<p>Heaven and co proposed by SD and seconded by SP</p>
AOB	<p>Stew raised that as chair he has drafted a strategy to take the club forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April will be about establishing the new committee and agreeing the constitution - Three areas for the strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Club compliance – ensure we have all policies and procedures are in place to comply with SwimMark o Finance



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○ Performance

IV stressed the importance of ongoing communication with parents on the running of the club.

SD raised that the current constitution is out of date – this is a priority going forward to modernise it and allow us as a club to effective more effectively. We will be working closely with swim England on this.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm