



WELWYN GARDEN SWIMMING CLUB

(Affiliated to Swim England East Region, Swim England Hertfordshire & RLSS)

2021 WGSC AGM Reports

Chairman's Report - Peter Jasko

This year has been a challenging one for Welwyn Garden Swimming Club. Our main pool at Monks Walk was out of action for the full year. This would have been a great strain had not Covid caused all swimming to stop for extended periods of time.

Monks Walk pool closed because a one-way valve failed causing the machine room to be flooded and all the equipment to be damaged. They were slow to submit their insurance claim and start the works, but even had they been much more efficient, it is doubtful if we could have swum there before the current lockdown. We are hopeful that the pool will reopen after Easter but are awaiting formal confirmation.

Covid caused all swimming to stop during the lockdown periods. We were able to resume between August and December on Tuesdays and Sundays.

Tuesday sessions were held at St Chris' school in Letchworth. Although not ideal - it was a late session, an expensive pool and twice as far as our other pools - this session did give us some much needed extra pool time. Thanks go to Cath Ellerd-Elliot who contacted every nearby pool to find one that could accommodate us.

The Sunday session at Hatfield was in the afternoon rather than our usual evening slot and we were limited on numbers to 55. We were forced to run a lottery system to ensure a fair distribution of the swimming places.

Restarting swimming under Covid was a mammoth task. We established a four-person Covid sub-committee. We had to carry out pool visits, read frequently changing Swim England Covid guidance, prepare Covid risk assessments and appoint and train Covid Liaison Officers, who checked sessions were run in a Covid secure manner.

Unfortunately we were unable to restart lifesaving, nor was it possible to hold any of the usual or planned lifesaving events. Hence no lifesaving report for this year. Restarting lifesaving is a priority for us as this lockdown ends - it is dependent on Monks Walk pool reopening.

We were unable to hold any competitions, not even our 2020 Club Championships. The planned WGC centenary events weren't held and will not be carried over to this year.

The club finances have taken a dent. The loss for the 2020 calendar year at £1,500 understates the loss from Covid because the fees we collected in September ended up being higher than they should, in the light of additional pool closures.

Those who renewed membership in September (we postponed renewal from April) will be given a credit of £50 for the lost swimming in January - March 2021, though land training on Wednesdays via Zoom resumed during those months.

The current membership is some 131, with 43 fewer swimming members (95 versus 138) than at this time a year ago. Of these 91 are category 1 swimmers, 4 are category 2 swimmers and the remainder (36) are the category 3 people who support the club.

Looking forward to the coming year, we need to expand our membership. Fortunately we have a long waiting list, as we did not accept any new members during the year, to avoid putting further pressure on the limited swimming places. Only by increasing our membership back to pre-Covid levels can we get close to break even on our running costs.

I am pleased to say that most committee members are standing for re-election. Only three are not. Catriona Byres is retiring after 10 stalwart years on the committee. We thank her for her dedication and will miss her advice. Audrey Archer missed the nomination deadline by a day - we can co-opt her back on to the committee at the next committee meeting. Nadine Green is standing down for a year due to home commitments.

There are no other role changes. The full list of who holds which role is on our website.

We updated our constitution in November 2020 to meet new Swim England rules. This was a mostly paper pushing exercise.

We renewed our SwimMark accreditation at the beginning of this month. This is Swim England's standard for clubs, recognising governance, sustainability and effectiveness.

It has been a tough year for the club - a dreadful year, really. But viewed in context, we have done okay and will be able to get going again strongly once Covid restrictions recede.

We look to 2021 as a year to rebuild our club and make it even stronger than before!

Peter Jasko
Chairman

Treasurer's Report - Cath Ellerd-Elliott

The accounts this year show we have made a loss of £1,515, with total income of £16,041 and expenditure of £17,556. Both income and costs have reduced during 2020 as a result of Covid 19.

The committee decided not to collect membership fees in April as a result of the uncertainty over training and costs. In September we reviewed the costs for the year and as a result reduced the annual membership fee for 2020. We also offered swimmers the option to suspend their membership. Membership (including Swim England fees collection) has decreased by £17,094. This is due to revised lower fees and a drop in paying members, but with limited pool capacity we have not recruited new members.

The 2020 loss is lower than the true financial position as we collected fees in September based on swimming as normal until end March. However we were then unable to swim part November and Jan-March. We are planning to offer a refund or reduction in 2021 fees for existing members. This loss of approximately £3500 will show in 2021 accounts and will be covered by club savings.

We were unable to run our annual Isabel and Goldstone galas during 2020.

Pool hire costs of £5,848 were much lower than 2019 as a result of pool closures due to Covid 19. In addition a mechanical issue flooding the plant room at Monks Walk meant that it has not been available since March 2020. Local pool space is very difficult to find – even before Covid, but we managed to get some mid-week training at St Chris in Letchworth.

This year the club has provided funding for the following training:

- 2 x NRASTC (National Rescue Award)
- 1 x Level 2 training
- Safeguarding

The club has paid for or contributed to the cost of the following:

- Storage unit for gala equipment
- Swim Club Manager
- Presentation evening Jan 2020
- Head Coach fees
- Affiliation to Swim England and IOS (Coaches and helpers)

The accounts have been examined and signed off by Stuart Smith and he has confirmed he has agreed to examine the 2021 accounts.

Fees for 2021

The committee have looked at the membership fees for the coming year and have decided on a small increase of £10 per swimmer to the fees agreed March 2020.

We have budgeted assuming the club will be able to train throughout the year from 12th April and have assumed that Monks Walk will be available for midweek sessions.

The fees for 2021/2022 and refund/reduction for 2020 paying members will be as follows:

Number paying Swimmers per family	2021 Fee after 15th April or using GoCardless	2021 Fee if full payment before 15th April	2020 Refund/Reduction
1	£ 290.00	£ 285.00	£ 50.00
2	£ 535.00	£ 525.00	£ 87.50
3	£ 590.00	£ 580.00	£ 98.75
4	£ 645.00	£ 635.00	£ 110.00
5	£ 695.00	£ 685.00	£ 121.25
6	£ 745.00	£ 735.00	£ 133.75
Lifesaving	£ 145.00	£ 142.50	

Based on current 72 current paying swimmers these fees will result in a loss of approximately £6300 (including loss from 2020 refund). However we are planning to recruit new members from the waiting list to reduce this loss.

Cath Ellerd-Elliott
Treasurer

Head Coach Report - Scott Clelow

I did not expect this year to be as successful as previous years due to the unprecedented pandemic that has impacted everyone over the last year. Thus you may be glad to hear, my speech will be shorter than usual! On a plus side we are still reigning champions, retaining both the Isabel and Goldstone gala, possibly the first in the clubs history?

However looking back, we did have some great success in the Stevenage Development meet. We had 6 swimmers enter, and of the 18 swims, 17 were PB's, which is fantastic and can't ask for much more! This resulted in an impressive medal haul of 13 medals, 7 1st, 4 2nd, 2 3rd.

Mya Consdanti had a clean sweep for her events, 1st Back, 1st fly, 1st 50m free.

Sophie Green had an impressive showing of 1st back, 1st 50m free, 1st 100m free, 2nd IM

Ethan Brown 1st Back, 4th 50m free, close to another medal, 0.03s off 3rd!

Dexter Rigby competed in every event bar 1 of the night and walked away with 2nd IM, 2nd breast, 3rd 100m free, 3rd 50m free, 4th Back,

Cameron Hennis 2nd Back, strong performance in a competitive age group, 6th 50m free.

Bobbi Murphy 4th 50m free, just out of the medals on the touch! 6th Breast.

I hope all the swimmers enjoyed the experience, and will be encouraged to attend further events in the future!

We also swam in the HML, which I mentioned last year that we had been 'promoted' due to restructuring of the leagues. This is always a step up for us distance-wise in most age groups. Also with the challenge of being unable to field a full squad, leading to many swimmers swimming up age groups. Swimmers rose to the challenge and competed without any negativity, a true test of character. Great team spirit was shown throughout. We finished 6th, 5th & 2nd. The 3rd round was 'swam virtually' which included the swimmers fastest times in the first 2 rounds swam against each other.

Obviously with the Pandemic forcing swimming pools to close, we had to adapt. We added a weekly land based exercise session for all swimmers. Initially 2 sessions, one targeted at younger swimmers, and another tailored towards older swimmers. The participation dwindled, so the decision was made to combine the sessions. Hopefully those who have attended each week have enjoyed it and seen some improvements, in their physical and mental health. Also providing routine. As it has panned out this seems to be more than many other swimming clubs were offering during this time.

We returned back to the swimming pools for a short period when we were allowed to do so, which was great to be back in the water! Trying to make the sessions low intensity, getting swimmers back into shape, while also trying to make them engaging and enjoyable.

On various zoom calls with other coaches in the region, the discussion has not been about how to get the best out of the swimmers, or make the next Olympian, but fundamentally, getting swimmers back in the water (reducing the amount of swimmers lost from the sport).

With this in mind, my philosophy for when we are allowed back in the water, is for swimmers to fall back in love with the sport, and enjoy it! Then we can build on that and work towards competitions when we are allowed to participate in them.

I look forward to seeing many old faces back and welcome any new ones that join us on the way.

Scott Clelow
Head Coach