



Honorary Secretary's Report for the Year Ending 31st December 2016

Membership

2016 has seen membership numbers increase across all our groups and, in addition to a healthy waiting list for places in our swimming lessons, we have seen increased demand for places in our squads.

Current membership stands at around 250 swimmers across our four weekly Teaching sessions, with a further 170 swimmers across our six competitive squads. This includes the establishment of our newest squad, Junior Club Squad, which has provided a place for those children who wish to continue to develop their skills to a competitive level to access the coaching in our Training section, where the focus is on developing technique and learning race skills. These numbers compare with 270 in Teaching and 129 in Training a year ago. Our coaches and Teaching Coordinator continue to monitor attendance to ensure that as many children as possible get the opportunity to access our sessions, and our sessions remain full.

Further members swim in our Masters section, which has also seen a constant stream of new enquiries.

Administration

A higher membership brings the challenge of additional administration, from dealing with new enquiries, processing payment and documentation from new members, managing correspondence regarding movements within Teaching and into and within Training, and dealing with leavers, whilst liaising with the Treasurer to ensure that the correct payment is received. With the help of Erwin Dorland, we also ensure that all current swimmers are registered correctly with the ASA.

One of the key changes the committee made in 2016 to support my ability to manage the administration of the club (as well as family life and doing my day job) was the appointment of our Teaching Coordinator, Shelley Postchild, to oversee this section of the club.

Shelley has overseen the introduction of new criteria across all our coloured hat groups, formulated in discussion with our Head Coach, Josh Spencer, and refined following consultation with all our volunteer teachers. Shelley has also been the driving force behind the process and structure we now have in place around new joiners and promotions in the Teaching Section.

I liaise with Shelley closely to keep our teaching groups full and ensure that all membership records and communications remain up-to-date. Shelley also takes responsibility for ensuring that all our Teaching sessions are appropriately staffed, with the correct ratios of teachers and lifeguards, ensuring that we can comply with the various Pool Operating Procedures and Emergency Operating Procedures, in liaison with Nick Gibbons, our Swim21 Coordinator. Teachers are provided with regular information about how each session will run, and giving them the opportunity to feed back their thoughts about their swimmers' progress monthly.

I would like to thank Shelley for her hard work and dedication in bringing our Teaching section to a position where it now runs smoothly, but would also like to thank all the volunteer teachers and poolside helpers who have embraced the new criteria to achieve an improvement in the standard or technique across all our Teaching sessions, for the benefit of all our swimmers.

Thank you also to Carol Brown who oversees the administration of our Masters section, dealing with new enquiries, membership and payments.

Pools

The arrangements for each of the six pools we utilise on a weekly basis is agreed separately, requiring bookings to be managed individually through regular communication, and meetings where necessary on matters concerning the facilities.

In May 2016, a new timetable was introduced with agreement from all our groups, bringing cost savings, whilst allowing us to extend our training provision and increase membership.

Most of our pools have brought challenges through the year, from isolated cancellations to closures for longer periods of time due to repairs needing to take place, all of which have had an impact on our sessions, but which were out of our control. The pre-Christmas maintenance closure at St Peter's pool in December was a particularly challenging time, and the committee worked hard in the weeks prior to the closure to secure additional pool time to minimise the disruption to our timetable. We are very grateful for the patience shown by all our parents and swimmers during this period.

A further challenge is ensuring that our sessions continue to run in line with the requirements of each pool venue, from specific access times and other safeguarding measures, to shoes, bags and general tidiness, and the committee would like to thank everyone for their help with this and for respecting the facilities we use so that we can continue to access them.

Coaches/Teachers/Poolside Helpers/Officials/Shop

We are now very fortunate to have a strong coaching team, led by Head Coach, Josh Spencer, and the committee will continue to look to strengthen the team further. I would like to thank them all for their coaching and commitment both at our training sessions and at the galas they attend with our swimmers, which can be very long days.

Josh has taken time to coach sessions with each of our squads and has also supported the swimmers and teachers in our Teaching section by regularly attending the quarterly Speed Awards, giving feedback about technique and selecting swimmers for our squads. The contribution of all the coaches, our Teaching Coordinator, and all our Teachers has ensured that there is now a better structure, from Teaching and across the Training Programme that Josh has overseen.

The departure of Matthew Holmes as Club Squad coach, in addition to the longstanding commitment from Lucy Stotten and Carol Brown coming to an end, and the establishment of our new Junior Club Squad, has seen changes to our team. There have been gaps to fill along the way and we are very fortunate to have a group of volunteer teachers and coaches who have been willing to step in and take additional sessions so that our teaching and training can continue. I would like to say a big thank you to them all for their ongoing support. Particular thanks go to those volunteer coaches who have covered sessions for Club Squad and Junior Club Squad through the latter part of the year.

I would also like to thank our team of volunteer Teachers who show enthusiasm and a dedication to teaching children to swim by giving their time. We have welcomed several new volunteers to the Teaching team through the year, but are always happy to hear from anyone interested in volunteering in this section of the club, where training can be arranged.

Jean, who runs the YCBC Club Shop, has continued to provide an invaluable service to the Club by taking orders for all YCBC branded/personalised merchandise, and for providing kit to our squads, and the committee would like to pass on their thanks for her ongoing commitment. This is particularly useful to swimmers moving from Teaching to our Training section when there is a lot of new information to take in.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Officials – those who attended the Timekeeper course last year, who could put their skills into practice at our gala in Leeds and at the Club Championships, and also those who are qualified Judges, and who are able to officiate on behalf of YCBC at our events, league events, and other galas in the region. We are pleased to have welcomed a further two qualified judges to our team of officials and, again, enquiries from anyone interested in training to volunteer as an official and supporting the club in this way would be very welcome.

Events

We had a change of venue for our annual gala this year, which was held in late September at the John Charles Centre in Leeds. There was a great atmosphere, and we received many complements for how well the gala ran, and how well organised it was. This would not have been possible without the support of all the willing volunteers from across the club who helped as officials, timekeepers, marshalls, team managers, the announcer, and those who helped with the electronics, took payment, organized the raffle and handed out medals and refreshments. Thank you all for stepping forward to volunteer.

Similar comments apply to the Sprint Awards which run quarterly within our Teaching Section, thanks to the help of parents to record the times achieved by our swimmers, and to our annual Club Championships, which took place in late November, and which also ran smoothly thanks to our many willing volunteers, ensuring that this was an enjoyable experience for all our swimmers and spectators.

As you know, our Presentation Evening took place in January, with a different format to previous years. This was very well attended, with over 200 people there to celebrate the top girls and boys by age group across the events at our Club Championships, alongside Individual Achievement Awards and Recognition Awards presented to swimmers from our Training Squads and our Teaching Section.

The committee are discussing ways to preserve the part of the club's history represented by the old club trophies which have been handed down through the years. They will be collected in due course, when we have identified some storage, and as we continue to explore the options for holding at least some of these in a club trophy cabinet so they remain visible to both our members and to the wider public.

As Honorary Secretary, I am looking forward to another challenging and rewarding year with the continuing support of our members, Teachers and Coaches, and my colleagues on the Committee. I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their support, encouragement and guidance during the past year, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them to find ways that we can be more proactive, and work smarter, for the benefit of all our swimmers.

Alison Pickup
Honorary Secretary