



Swim England

Hertfordshire



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2019-2020**

## General

This annual report covers the year from April 2019 to March 2020. The Annual Council Meeting takes place in July, with the county financial year end being 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The annual report provides mainly a governance report; news items and full reports on the competitions which have taken place within the year being posted to the website, in a timely fashion following the event, rather than being included in the annual report.

The Management Board has met four times in the year to oversee the development and delivery of swimming within the county. Within the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, three members resigned from the Management Board. Thanks are extended to Murray Devine, Graham Huggett and Marcello Tontodonati for their work whilst members of the Board. There were seven vacancies on the Management Board following the Annual Council Meeting 2019. Subsequently, two vacancies have been filled, following the submission of nomination forms, leaving five vacancies. There is no doubt that the management of the county affairs would be better served with a full complement of Board members. At present the governance of the county lies in the hands of ten members of the Management Board – this is not ideal in any way. There are only four meetings (2 hours maximum), plus the Annual Council Meeting, and so the time-commitment is minimal. It would be SO helpful have a full complement of members and be able to share the load and responsibilities. It is hoped that the vacancies will be filled at the Annual Council Meeting.

Unfortunately, the perception is that a wealth of experience is required. This is definitely not the case. What *is* required is people with positive ideas and a commitment to the development of swimming in the county. If the few people, who do bother to contribute, did not do so, then our athletes would have no competitions and development! The idea that other people know far more than you, should not be a factor in making a commitment. Knowledge and experience are built up by doing a job, and full support to a newcomer would most certainly be given by those who have the experience and knowledge. The time-commitment for a member of the Board or a committee is minimal over the year, and any role undertaken to help organise events need not be onerous timewise if the load can be spread.

The club development group, the disability committee, the synchronised swimming committee and the swimming committee have met on a regular basis. In the absence of a manager, Ian Mackenzie has ensured that the club development group still met, and that the Development Weekend took place. There has been no water polo committee this year, and no water polo manager either. The diving committee met once in July 2019, but the committee was suspended by the Management Board in October 2019. Hertfordshire has a representative on the Swim England East Region committees, which seek to ensure development and competition for the athletes of all disciplines.

The website has gradually been added to during the year. The discipline managers are responsible for sending the webmaster news items and reports on competitions and development camps etc. Facebook and twitter has also used by the county to engage the membership with county events etc.

The forums have continued this year. They provide the opportunity for interaction and communication between the clubs and coaches, and also with the county. The aim is to get everyone talking to each other, sharing best practice and addressing problems encountered. Attendance has often been minimal, but worthwhile for those who were there. Representatives from ALL clubs of ALL disciplines can attend for the benefit of our clubs and athletes.

Sheila Mackenzie has again been the Hertfordshire representative on the Swim England East Region Management Board this year, and she will take issues to the region on your behalf, if necessary. Ian Mackenzie continues as an elected member of the Swim England East Region Management Board. Until his resignation in December 2019, he was a Director and Trustee of Swim England. Ian became Swim England President in October 2019 and he will remain in that prestigious role until May 2021.

Throughout the year, clubs in the county continued to benefit from the supportive work of the regional staff, two of whom have had/continue to have strong links with Hertfordshire clubs as volunteers. Leanne Brace, the Regional Development Manager and Amy Bryant, the Regional Development Officer, have continued to support clubs with the SwimMark process, the provision of courses and their funding, as well as supporting our athletes through the organisation of development days and camps. Kevin Pickard, the Regional Swimming Talent Officer, has also continued to work hard in support of, and for the benefit of, our coaches and athletes. Sadly, Amy Bryant resigned her post with the Swim England East Region in March, to further her career working for English Athletics, however she will still continue in her volunteering role in the county, as the synchronised swimming coach at Hatfield SC.

Again, this year many of the county's athletes have qualified to compete at national and international level, and their achievements are applauded.

Aquatic disciplines continue to flourish in Hertfordshire. Please consider carefully whether you could contribute to this success by giving a small amount of your time to your county, either on the discipline committees or on the Management Board, so that the county can go on to even better things in the coming year.

## **Hertfordshire Aquatics - the 50m pool project**

The 50m pool project has taken a turn for the better this year. Having appeared during 2019 to be making little progress working with Swim England and Sport England, behind the scenes progress was being made in garnering support for the project.

2020 has seen massive inroads being made. We have taken on a new business planner and have some new faces on the team from the architects.

We now have a couple of potential business models in place which allow much more funding to be raised, as well as skeletal designs which reduce build costs. All in all this is a big step forward, as we are now in a position where the project looks as though it is now affordable.

We have started looking at the flow of people through the building, and are putting together an operational picture of the facility to help with some of the finer detail.

We have begun to hold more regular meetings and issue updates following each meeting. We have contacted all the swimming clubs in the county and asked for the potential use they might want to make of the pool for training. A number of clubs have responded, and this allows us to look at what timeframes we have to provide income from sources other than clubs.

At the end of June (post submission of this report) we have a meeting with the landowners, after which we will hopefully have further updates.

## Competitive Swimming

The swimming committee has met four times in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. This year the county records database has been further updated. Efforts have been made to share the workload of this committee, but the major workload remains with the swimming manager, Bryan Thompson.

There is a sub-committee - the Events Management Group (EMG) – which is responsible for the delivery of the County Swimming Championships, under the strong leadership of the swimming manager. The EMG is a small group of people (7), who work extremely hard throughout the year to provide the Championships. It really is a mammoth effort behind the scenes to deliver this major event. The number of man-hours that go into the preparation for this event is almost incalculable, but there are numerous meetings and an awful lot of work between meetings.

The set-up and break-down has become increasingly complicated over the last few years, and massive thanks need to go out to the small band of volunteers who give up their Friday evenings to set everything up, and then stay on after the racing on Sunday to take everything down again.

Extra pairs of hands would be extremely welcome, especially on the Friday evenings, as those who work from 5.30pm-11pm on the Friday, then have to work all day on Saturday and Sunday, and then have to set-down on Sunday after the competition. More sharing this workload would be much appreciated.

During the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, athletes from Hertfordshire clubs took part, as members of a Swim Hertfordshire team, in the following:

- Regional Inter-County competition - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2019
- Junior Inter-County competition - 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019
- National Inter-County Team Championships - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Team managers and coaches are needed for these events, and it continues to be a challenge to identify people willing to take on these roles. This was particularly the case for the team manager roles. The county has a huge number of qualified team managers, but, unfortunately, volunteers are reluctant to step forward. This makes the job of managing and organising county teams for competitions much more difficult than it should be.

Hertfordshire athletes also took part in the following:

- Swim England national initiative 1-Direction Camp - for 11yr-olds and 12yr-olds on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Swim England Hertfordshire County Swimming Championships and Age-Group Competition 2020 – 11<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## Masters

Masters is overseen by the swimming committee, with Louise Hughes continuing in the role of masters' manager.

Athletes from the county, in varying numbers, took part in the following events during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020:

- British Masters Championships 2019 in Swansea – a British relay record and a Swim England East Region long course record being notable achievements this event
- FINA World Masters Championships in Gwangju

- Masters European Games in Turin
- Swim England East Region Championships – Newmarket
- Swim England Masters Short Course Championships in Sheffield – six Swim England East Region records achieved
- South East Region Long Course Masters in Crawley – two Swim England East Region records were achieved
- Swim England East Region development day in Norwich in March
- British Swimming Masters Decathlon Competition 2019 – Chris Dunn (Hatfield) was the regional winner, and was 4<sup>th</sup> in the national rankings for this competition

More details can be found on the website

## **Open Water**

The discipline of open water is overseen by the swimming committee, with Janet Warrington in the role of open water manager.

Athletes and coaches from Hertfordshire took part in the following events:

- A two-day development camp was delivered by Swim England East Region in June 2019.
- The 2019 Swim England East Region Open Water Championships took place in July at Whitlingham Country Park (Norwich), and, as usual, on the same occasion, Hertfordshire swimmers competed for the Swim England Hertfordshire Open Water Championships 2019.
- A seminar on open water coaching was delivered by Mike Parker, Swim England Open Water Talent Officer, in February at the University of Hertfordshire, as part of the Swim England Hertfordshire Development Weekend.

Details and reports on the events, as well as details of athletes' achievements are available on the website.

## **Club Development Group**

The committee has met once in this year. Ian Mackenzie has continued to stand in as interim manager. Some meetings were cancelled because of committee members' other commitments. It is, however, important that the committee continues, and thus supports the county to generate the necessary courses and continued professional development for our volunteers, as well as delivering the Development Weekend. The swimming officials are catered for by Jonathan Pope, and his report is elsewhere in this annual report.

Team manager, safeguarding and coaching courses are all supported by Swim England East Region. The region is also very supportive of the county at its Development Weekend. A report on the very successful weekend is on the website.

Communication with clubs continues to be a challenge. Four members of the committee have links with quartiles of county clubs, and they communicate with the workforce co-ordinators in each club, getting information to and from the clubs.

Club, officials' and coaches' forums have continued. The coaches' forum is reasonably well attended, but numbers attending could be higher. Officials' forums are well attended. The numbers attending club forums are disappointingly low. The solution to this lack of interest and support is yet to be found, but a joint club/ coaches' forum did have more attendees.

## **Disability Swimming**

Disability and Para swimming continue in Hertfordshire, with athletes starting on their swimming journey, and other athletes taking the next step regionally, nationally and internationally.

The disability committee has met twice in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The county is represented on the regional disability committee.

Swim England East Region continues to provide regional training sessions for disability athletes, and one of these sessions was held during the Swim England Hertfordshire Development Weekend in February 2020.

## **Diving**

The diving committee has met once in July 2019. The county does not have a county representative at the regional diving committee, as the county diving manager, who was the representative, has moved out of the county and no longer coaches diving. Remaining committee members have been able to attend scheduled county meetings, or find alternative dates, and a scheduled county competition was cancelled because one of the two clubs in the county had booked an event on that day.

There has been concern for some time about the discipline. The Management Board had concerns about the development of athletes, coaches and officials, and the delivery of county events. In October 2019, the Management Board suspended the diving committee, and advised that no stand-alone county championships would be held until further notice. The Management Board further advised that county championships results were to be extracted from Swim England East Region events, similar to the way in which the disciplines of open water and synchronised swimming operate the county championships.

The discipline of diving continues at the two Swim England Hertfordshire diving clubs, and athletes from Hertfordshire took part in Swim England national events and in Swim England East Region events during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

## SwimMark

The SwimMark accreditation is regarded by Swim England as a mark of a well-run club, with systems in place for the support and benefit of its members, especially its athletes. The following clubs are SwimMark accredited as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020.

Aqualina Synchronised SC	Beaumont Diving Academy
Bishops Stortford SC	Borehamwood SC
Cheshunt SC	City of St. Albans ASC
Dacorum Diving Club	Harpenden SC
Hatfield SC	Hemel Hempstead SC
Hertford SC	Hitchin SC
Hoddesdon SC	Letchworth ASC
Potters Bar SC	Stevenage SC
Tring ASC	Verulam ASC
Ware SC	Watford SC
Watford Water Polo Club	Welwyn Garden SC

There is no doubt that the governance and succession planning of the club benefit from the accreditation, and this then benefits the athletes. For this reason, it should be the aim of all clubs to be SwimMark accredited.

## Swimming Officials

The training of Swimming Technical Officials in the county continues to meet the key performance indicators, set by Swim England, Swim England East Region and Swim England Hertfordshire, to provide sufficient licensed Judge Level 1, Judge Level 2, Judge Level 2S and Referees to staff the annual county championships and other swimming meets.

January 2020 saw the introduction by Swim England of the new online Judge Level 1 course. This new course is an excellent training design to fit in with volunteers' busy lives, and enables candidates to study from home and progress at their own pace, in readiness for pool deck experience. Consequently, the county restricted the sign-up of candidates for the old-style course to ensure that existing candidates had sufficient time available to pass the course before the cut-off point of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

This plan has worked very well and the county volunteers have been able to offer more mentoring and assessments over the last twelve months which has further reinforced the county's position regarding the number of officials available. This also positions the county well moving forward into the future.

Unfortunately, the latter part of the reporting year has been restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic across the country, which resulted in all swimming activities ceasing, including the training and assessment opportunities. However, Swim England has extended cut-off times, enabling those candidates who have not yet finished workbooks to complete them once there is a return to some degree of normality in the future – this will be communicated as current restrictions ease.

All candidates on the old-style Judge Level 1 courses who have completed the course competencies will no longer require assessments, bringing these candidates into line with the new online course. In support of this change, I have been personally contacting officials waiting for assessment, to inform them that they have now passed their Judge Level 1, and these will be processed by Swim England once they return to work.

In this financial year 2019/20:

Timekeepers - trained and passed	-	51	(-27 on previous year)
Of which - young timekeepers	-	19	(-2 on previous year)

There has been an unprecedented increase in successful candidates, as shown in the following numbers who have passed their assessment at the following judge levels:

Judge Level 1	-	38 of which 2 young officials	(+21 on previous year)
Judge Level 2	-	6	(+0 on previous year)
Judge Level 2S	-	3	(-3 on previous year)
Referee	-	0	

Total young officials passing assessment: 2

Also, the following numbers of officials underwent training in the following judge levels – these figures are lower due to the strategic decision of reducing Judge Level 1 courses due to the new online course being released:

Judge Level 1	-	0	(-42 on previous year)
Judge Level 2	-	10	(-8 on previous year)
Judge Level 2S	-	6	(+0 on previous year)
Referee	-	0	

Total young officials in training: 2 (-2 on previous year)

The county has offered several online training opportunities in this reporting period, to underpin the commitment to getting candidates through the assessment for their qualifications. This has been offered using Microsoft Teams and has worked exceptionally well. This new delivery has reduced the county's carbon footprint by reducing the number of miles driven to deliver and receive training. This approach has also supported a flexible approach, so candidates can take advantage of the time saved in travelling.

Officials have been kept up to date with regular circulars, newsletters, using "Mailchimp" and Swim England Hertfordshire Facebook page, and with information on the Swim England Hertfordshire website.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses have also been run in the county, with above average attendance, to deliver mandatory elements required for re-licensing. This has been achieved by offering these courses as part of the Hertfordshire Officials' Forum. Thanks are extended to all who have assisted in organising and delivering the course content.

CPDs have been delivered to smaller groups to aid individuals who require re-licensing during the year. This has been passed to Swim England, so those core databases are updated.

FINA Rules 2017 - 25 officials attended various courses 2019/2020

The Contemporary Issues course is now available online through the Institute of Swimming, at no cost.

The Guide to Refereeing course for J2S officials, to help them fulfil a referee's role, was delivered at the Swim England Hertfordshire Development Weekend, with good attendance. Swim England continue to offer this training as an online option for Judge Level 2S to enhance the standard of knowledge amongst this group of officials, especially as they could find themselves running level 4 licenced meets and having to fulfill the associated paperwork requirements as well as responsibilities of the role.



The county has again run several galas during the year, and officials have volunteered their services. This has enabled mentoring and training to be provided for officials wishing to enhance their qualifications.

This year's County Championships again saw an excellent turnout of officials:

90 officials volunteered to work over the sessions  
27 officials volunteered to work per session on average  
26 officials received mentoring  
18 officials were successful in their assessment

The Swim England training requirements for judges courses have been met, and all assessments have been conducted in compliance with the guidelines.

Swim England Hertfordshire, as part of Swim England East Region, supports the national changes in training delivery moving away from face-to-face delivery to online training, which came into force from January 2020.

Lastly, I would like to thank those who have supported the county this reporting period in delivering training, presenting courses, and conducting assessments, volunteering their time for the benefit of those who are undertaking Swim England qualifications to support our athletes in the county in attaining qualifying times for regional and national events.

Jonathan Pope  
Swimming Officials' Co-ordinator

## **Synchronised Swimming**

The synchronised swimming committee has met three times this year. As there are only five clubs involved in the discipline of synchronised swimming, the committee structure has been adapted, so that there is a representative from each of the clubs, with one other non-voting representative of each club being entitled to attend.

Athletes from Hertfordshire have taken part in the following events during the year.

- Swim England Synchronised Swimming Combo Cup in July 2019 at the London Aquatic Centre - athletes from Hatfield and Aqualina competed
- Swim England National Masters Championships in November 2019 at K2 Crawley - athletes from Cheshunt and Aqualina were part of a team composed of athletes from clubs across Swim England East Region
- Swim England National Age-Groups 2020 - competitors from Aqualina and Hatfield took part
- Swim England East Region Age-Groups and Masters Championships were held on the 8th February
  
- Three successful and well-attended Development Days

On the website, more details can be found of the successes of the athletes at the above events

Max Sewell (Aqualina) has become one of the first two boys ever to make selection for the GB Synchro Development Squad

## **Water Polo**

There has been no county water polo committee throughout this year, and no water polo manager either. However, Peter Mole has continued to provide the link between the county and the discipline.

The discipline of water polo continues however in the county at Watford Water Polo Club, at Hatfield SC, Hertford SC and Hitchin SC.

Athletes from Hertfordshire took part in the following:

- Hertfordshire and District Water Polo League – six clubs took part – one of them being from Spalding in Lincolnshire
- Over 50s tournament – teams from Berkshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Surrey entered
- Swim England National Talent Squads – girls and boys born in the years 2001 to 2006
- Swim England East Region Grand Prix Tournament – Chelmsford - 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Development of juniors in the discipline is minimal, but there is some activity at Hertford SC and Hitchin SC. Watford WPC continues to thrive, and development continues here linked with Haberdashers' Aske's School.

## **Awards**

### ***Roy Rogers Memorial Trophy***

The trophy is awarded to the person, team or club who has made a significant contribution to the sport of swimming. This year the Roy Rogers Memorial Trophy was awarded to Bryan Thompson.

### ***The President's Plate***

The trophy is awarded, at the sole discretion of the President, for conspicuous service to Swim England Hertfordshire. This year the President's Plate was presented to Jane O'Brien.

### ***The Wilkinson Sword***

The sword is awarded annually for achievement in the sport of swimming. This year there were no nominations for the Wilkinson Sword.

## **Appreciation**

The county could not function successfully if it were not for the many volunteers who give their time freely to support our athletes. Help is always appreciated, whatever is the role you undertake, whether it is at your club, at competitions for your club, or at county events, and whether it is 'technical' or 'non-technical' support, it needs to be there, so thank you to all of you who work for the benefit of our athletes.

Tom Brennan has been the county President this year. Tom has represented the county and supported our athletes at competitions and events, presenting medals and trophies. He has also supported the county by attending Management Board meetings. Thank you, Tom!

Finally, sincere thanks to all the officers, board members and others elected to the various committees, who have given their time and expertise, freely, to develop the disciplines and the county association, in support of the member clubs and athletes.

**For, and on behalf, of the Swim England Hertfordshire Management Board**

**Sheila Mackenzie**

**Secretary**

## President's Addendum

Firstly, I would like to say what a privilege and an honour it has been to serve the county as President for the year. Unfortunately, the latter part of my presidential year was impacted by the unprecedented times brought about by the coronavirus. Nevertheless, I have enjoyed the year, and will look back upon it with fond memories.

My first month was extremely busy with the Synchronised Swimming Combo Cup, and a Swim England Hertfordshire Synchronised Swimming Development Day, mixed in with my first two presidential engagements. These were an Inter-county swimming competition at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, on the 7<sup>TH</sup> July, and then my first experience of an open water event at Whitlingham Park in Norwich on the 21<sup>st</sup> July. This was truly an eye-opener for me, and a great event to witness first-hand.

The next event that cannot go unmentioned is the Swim England Hertfordshire County Swimming Championships 2020. After returning from a short trip to France on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January, I joined the event on day two and managed to attend every session thereafter barring one. Being predominantly involved in synchronised swimming, and my last experience of this event being some 12 years ago, I was amazed to see the transformation of this event. The swimmers receive a fantastic experience which I am sure will last a lifetime for many of them.

Another memorable event was a trip to Spalding Water Polo Club to award them their medals for winning the Hertfordshire and District Water Polo League. A bit of a journey to get there, but great to meet the team and experience one of their training sessions.

I was also really pleased to be able to give out medals with David Metcalf at the Swim England East Region Age-Group and Masters Synchronised Swimming Championships. It was a pleasure to be able to share some of the finer points regarding the synchronised swimming discipline with David, the Swim England East Region President.

On the weekend of the 7<sup>th</sup> March I travelled to Manchester as my own club Aqualina were taking part in the National Age-Group Championships for Artistic Swimming that weekend. I was also asked to attend the Special Olympics Swimming Competition on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> at the University of Hertfordshire. The logistics were challenging, but nevertheless achievable. My wife and I received a warm welcome when we arrived at the university pool. I have to say I have never experienced such a friendly atmosphere, and was able to meet and talk to so many of the swimmers and volunteers on poolside. At the time I had not realised that it would be my last official event, but looking back it was a fitting event to close on.

I have to finish with my thanks to the army of volunteers in Hertfordshire and beyond who made all of these events and many more happen, and without whom none of this would be possible. You are all incredible people who are so dedicated and committed to your disciplines. Please keep making that difference!

“Thank You”

Tom Brennan,  
Swim England Hertfordshire President 2019-2020



[www.swimherts.org](http://www.swimherts.org)

Keep up to date with what your county is doing

**Forums – Club, Coaches, Officials**

**Committees –**

Club Development Group: Disability: Diving:

Synchronised Swimming:

Swimming, including Masters and Open Water: Water Polo

**Events: Courses: Contacts: Galas: Competitions**