



Swim England

Hertfordshire



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022**

## General

The annual report covers the calendar year 2022.

It has been a year of assessment and recovery for our sport in general. Numbers of athletes, officials and volunteers were affected by the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, and facilities became more expensive to hire, with many reducing their availability as well. With increased costs, and , in some cases, fewer athletes and fewer volunteers, many clubs faced a difficult time as to their viability.

The county swimming championships and age-groups competition took place in January 2022. A team representing Swim England Hertfordshire competed at the National Inter-County Team Championships at Ponds Forge in October 2022. Artistic swimming held age-group competitions within regional competitions in April 2022, and there was an age-group competition for junior water polo athletes in June 2022. Water polo competition was also provided in the Hertfordshire & District Water Polo League. The county's diving athletes competed at regional competitions, but there were no county championships in 2022. There was no county masters competition in 2022, but a team from the county competed at the Swim England East Region Inter-County Masters Championships in October 2022. Open water championships are normally provided within the regional championships, but, as there was no-one in the county prepared to organise and deliver them, the county championships did not take place. Athletes did however compete in the regional event.

With training and development being provided online when required, a specific county development weekend was not organised in 2022. Disability athletes had access to development through the regional training sessions. The 1-direction swimming development camps did not take place in 2022, as there were difficulties in appointing coaching staff.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, there were 33 clubs in Hertfordshire. Beaumont Diving Academy and Dacorum Diving deliver the discipline of diving. Aqualina (Stevenage), Dacorum and Potters Bar are the artistic swimming clubs, and artistic swimming is also delivered through Hatfield Swimming Club. The discipline of water polo is delivered by Watford Water Polo Club , and through the Hertford and Hitchin Swimming Clubs. There is one club specifically for masters swimmers – that is St Albans Masters. Hartham Masters decided in 2022 not to renew affiliation to Swim England. There is also the Hertfordshire Aquatics Club, which has been set up by the county in conjunction with the 50m pool project.

Committee and Management Board meetings have continued to be held online, because of the saving of room hire cost, and also the saving of time spent travelling to those meetings. Through Swim England and Swim England East Region, online theory training has been possible for volunteers and officials, and forums and development have also been available online.

The Management Board has met four times in the year. There were three vacancies on the Management Board following the Annual Council Meeting 2022. 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 twelve 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 to 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 all its aspects, 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 artistic swimming committee and the swimming committee have met online during the year. Minutes of the meetings which were held are available on the website. The disability committee has not met, and unfortunately the number of committee members gradually declined during the year, resulting in the current situation of a disability manager, but no committee. There has been no water polo committee this year, and no water polo manager either. There has also been no diving committee or diving manager. The disciplines of water polo and diving in Hertfordshire, whilst having no county committee, are, however, well-engaged within regional groups.

Ian Mackenzie took on the prestigious role of Swim England President in October 2019, and should have finished his term in May 2021, but because of the continuation of Covid-19 restrictions and the impact on competition in our sport, his term of office was extended to May 2022.

Bryan Thompson became the Swim England Hertfordshire President in March 2022.

Ian Mackenzie has continued as one of the Directors of Swim England East Region. Counties no longer have county-specific representatives, but there are three elected members on the Regional Operations Committee. These members are elected by the Members of the Members' Forum who come from all the counties in the region. Sheila Mackenzie is one of those elected members of the Regional Operations Committee.

Swim England Hertfordshire has a county representative on the Swim England East Region leadership groups for disability, masters and open water, whilst artistic swimming, water polo and diving leadership groups are open to representatives for all the clubs of those respective disciplines.

Clubs in the county continued to benefit from the supportive work of the regional staff, and online forums have been provided for club and county volunteers. Training for officials, coaches and team managers has been available online. The Swim England Hertfordshire website and Facebook and twitter continue to be used by the county to engage with the membership.

As we move to through the rest of 2023, please consider carefully whether you could contribute by giving a small amount of your time to your county, either on the discipline committees or on the Management Board.

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

During 2022 the core project team continued to meet weekly, with the whole team meeting monthly.

In February 2022, Simon Lever, Bryan Thompson and Ian Mackenzie were invited to visit the Merthyr Pools facility in Italy, including visits to several local pools, showcasing their new developments and some of their renovation projects as well. Simon and Bryan went, but Ian was not available because of Swim England Presidential commitments. The visit was a very useful fact-gathering exercise.

Bryan and Kate McKnight held a face-to-face meeting with the new college Principal and their Finance Director. This highlighted a change in direction from the college, requiring us to revisit our proposal to the college and rework our profit and loss accounts. Following this meeting we focussed on preparing the outline business case to present to the college. This was submitted for their review in November 2022.

At this point we discovered there had been another change in personnel at the college and their Finance Director had changed. We contacted the new Director early in 2023 and were pleased with the outcome of the meeting, where the college confirmed their interest in having the facility on their site.

In September 2022, the college hosted a planning meeting along with a presentation on their “aspirational developments”. We were pleased to see that the pool featured in their plans. We were also invited to attend their inaugural Sports Industry Board meeting which is looking at opportunities for their students. Again, at this meeting, the pool was mentioned in a very positive light. This could prove useful for our clubs as the college have students on Sports Coaching courses who require work experience.

We are currently looking at funding. We need to raise approximately £25,000,000, although we are trying to get that figure down. In February 2023 we held a meeting with a county councillor, a councillor from Welwyn & Hatfield, and the Welwyn & Hatfield Sports Partnership officer. Representatives from St. Albans Council were invited, but unfortunately could not attend. The meeting was positive, especially from the county councillor, however our intention of getting some financing from them was not successful. That said, they are supportive and suggested various options they think we should pursue.

We have other thoughts on funding and are pursuing these.

We will endeavour to keep you updated with our developments, but please don't lose sight of this project it is huge for the county, and indeed for the sport, and will benefit every club in the county.

## **SwimMark and Club Affiliation**

All clubs are required to have SwimMark or Club Affiliation (formerly known as Stronger Affiliation).

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 were SwimMark accredited as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022:-

Aqualina (Stevenage) Artistic SC	Beaumont Diving Academy
Berkhamsted SC	Bishops Stortford SC
Borehamwood SC	Bushey ASC
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.

A Club Affiliation is more basic accreditation than SwimMark and requires fewer governance processes to be in place.

The following clubs have Club Affiliation:-

Borough of Broxbourne Swim Squad	Broxbourne SC
Buntingford SC	Dacorum Synchronised SC
Hertfordshire Aquatics Club	Kings Langley SC
Potters Bar Artistic SC	Royston SC
St Albans Masters SC	

## **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.

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

The trophy is awarded, at the sole discretion of the President, for conspicuous service to Swim England Hertfordshire .

These two awards were not presented at the Annual Council Meeting in March 2022, as the sport had been affected by the restrictions on activity owing to the coronavirus pandemic in the period in question.

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

The sword is awarded annually for achievement in the sport of swimming.

At the Annual Council Meeting in March 2022, the Wilkinson Sword was awarded jointly to Louise Fiddes and Grace Harvey for their great achievements as members of Team GB at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

## **Finance Officer's report**

### **For the year ended 31 December 2022**

The latest set of accounts for the county are being distributed separately with the notice inviting you to the Annual Council Meeting. These accounts are subject to approval by the Management Board and are currently with the Independent Examiner for his confirmation.

The accounts for the period ended 31 December 2021 have been approved by the Independent Examiner.

The county returned to a more normal level of activity for the year, although there was still some hangover from the closures due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Membership income for paying members increased by £2,071 (13%).

Membership fees are charged at £3.00 for Club Train (previously Category 1) membership and £3.50 for Club Compete (previously Category 2) membership. These figures did not change during the year. Any memberships taken out between October and December each year are charged at 50% of the full membership fee. The fees are collected by Swim England and remitted to the county.

A breakdown of the numbers is as follows:

	2022	2021
Club Train members	2,586	3,047
Club Compete members	2,893	1,878
Total "in pool" membership	5,479	4,925
Fees received	£17,884	£15,813

Membership numbers for 2022 were only 10% down on the figures for 2019, the last full year before the pandemic and hopefully the numbers for 2023 will increase sufficiently so that we can achieve pre-pandemic levels of membership for 2023.

Club Support (previously Category 3) membership is for volunteers and there is no membership fee to the county for them. The number of Club Support members at the end of 2022 was 1463 (2021 – 1,458).

2023 is looking to continue the growth seen in 2022.

Simon Lever FCA  
February 2023

## **President's addendum**

A year has gone – I'm not sure where, but it has.

In 2022 I accepted the nomination as President of Swim England Hertfordshire. It was about time; as it has been offered before, but I have always been too busy.

2022 has been a very turbulent time in world history. The invasion of Ukraine spurred me to raise money to support the people of Ukraine by selling hats branded #SwimWithUkraine. This venture raised over £2000 for the DEC Appeal; not a huge amount, but every little helps. It has been great to see some of the hats being worn at various events I have attended.

I have been honoured to be your President for the last 12 months; to visit other disciplines which I am not directly involved with, and to meet our athletes, coaches, volunteers all of whom work hard for the county and for our sport.

Over the year I have attended events at club, county, region and national level and been welcomed at all. I have bumped into our Regional President, Helen Stephens, on several occasions and been happy to help her with presentations. At this year's County Swimming Championships it was a pleasure to be able to host Helen and then the National President and his wife, both of whom stepped up to help with our presentations.

I have covered most of the county at various events. It has been really rewarding to see so many athletes, young and not so young, happy to receive an award, a few kind words, and a handshake.

I did not get to as many events as I would have liked, life and being heavily involved in organising events curtailed my availability for some.

Being tracked down at County Swimming Championships to put “the bling” on and be photographed handing over medals and pennants made me realise that the athletes really do appreciate it.

Ware, Letchworth, Luton, Stevenage, Sheffield, Watford, Bedford and Borehamwood have all been visited in an official capacity.

The county has some outstanding people involved at all levels from athletes to administrators.

As I hand over the chain of office to Jane O’Brien I can reflect on a different year to normal; one where I have taken time out to look at our sport from a different perspective and to realise that it is truly a sport that brings people together in a spirit of friendly competition, teaching valuable lessons for life.

Thank you for honouring me with the title of Swim England Hertfordshire President 2022-23.

## **Appreciation**

The county could not function successfully if it were not for the many volunteers who give their time freely to support our athletes. As always, the support of volunteers working in their clubs and/or working on county committees, is greatly appreciated.

Finally, sincere thanks to all the officers, Board members and others elected to the various committees, who have given their time and expertise, and have made great efforts to continue to ensure that support and initiatives are in place, for the ultimate benefit of our athletes.

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

**Sheila Mackenzie**

**Secretary**



**Swim England**

**Hertfordshire**

[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:

Artistic Swimming:

Swimming, including Masters and Open Water: Water Polo

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