

Haverfordwest Seals Annual General Meeting
February 18th 2014
Mariners Hotel, Haverfordwest

Meeting included – Sue Christopher (Freddy & Travis), Richard Thompson (Caitlin & Finn), Matthew Lewis, Becky Hill (James & Katy), Nicala Harding (Jordan & Lucy), Rita Akay (Baris), Jonathan & Suzanne Twigg (Louisa), Debbie Watson (Cara), Karen Russell-Stretch (Alice), Mev Williams (Kelsey), Sunita Agarwal (Nihar Vajrala), Coral & Quintin Fitzsimmons (Kian & Arron), Mary-Lee Mathias (Holly), Jo Griffiths (Emily), Rachel Lewis (Dean Kelly), Alberto & Ann Girolami (Rebecca & Antonio), Russell Heaton (Dylan), Sarah Stace (Daniel), Alec Williams (Fion), Andy Bradley (Liam & Jess), Pauline Louchart (Margot), Dave Cooke (Ieuan, Mared & Huw), Simon Mottram (Ben & Abbie), Gary Meopham (Beth), Jenny Webb (Tomas & Jac), Joanne Trueman (Lily), Eilidh McCartney (Catriona & Ishbel), Mr. Barrett & Geraldine O'Donnell (Sean Barrett), Jules King (Dylan Dawes), Sharon Davies (Owen & Catrin Rogers)

Apologies – John Rees (Erin & Jack), Helen Llewellyn (Owen & Nia), Camilla Cooke

- Richard Thompson (acting Chair), opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
- Minutes approved from 2013 (AG & SM seconded). Jonathan Twigg stated he did not agree with last year's minutes but did not want to take the matter further.
- No matters arising from previous minutes.
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- **Chairperson's report**. No Chair for 2013/2014. Acting Chair Richard Thompson pointed out to the floor that there were some minor technical infringements of the constitution in the arranging of this year's AGM (Notice not given 21 days prior as stated in Constitution, (1st notice given 4/2/14), nominations & motions for inclusion in the agenda, not received within the given timeframe of the Constitution, i.e. 28 days). Richard asked the floor that despite these infringements, would everyone agree to continue the meeting as a true & proper AGM. Richard also pointed out that our constitution did not let parents of swimmers under 18 years of age vote by proxy on their behalf, if present at the meeting. He suggested we allow parents to vote on behalf of their children. The current members allowed to vote under the original constitution rules agreed both of these points and the meeting continued.
- **President's Report**. Given by Matthew Lewis (attached)
- **Treasurer's report** given by Gary Meopham (attached). Balance stands at £4,064. Gary repeated last year's request of members paying gala fees promptly on ENTERING a gala and that all outstanding fees must be paid by renewal each year. He also pointed out that our 1 big outgoing each year was engraving for Club Champs Trophies (£450 approx.) and that funds must be replaced somehow each year. The current accountants were recommended by Gary for 2014/2015. Gary thanked everyone for his support as he handed over and stepped down as Treasurer after 4 years.
- **Membership secretary update**. Nicala Harding – 82 swimming members. 8 more than last year, 7 more waiting for trial March 2014. (32 age 10yrs & under, 50 over 10yrs, 27 non-swimming members = total 109). WASA fees increase £2 for 2014. Club fee will stay at £10. PCC have put up Direct Debit for training April 2014.
- **Lead Coaches Report** Richard Thompson, copy attached.
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- **Amendments to the Constitution**
Voting Members under the age of 18 – parents in attendance to have proxy vote at meetings. Amendment passed by vote.

Suggested changes by Jonathan Twigg

Objects

2.6 Haverfordwest Seals is a competitive swimming club; swimming members must have a current (valid in last 12 months) time by virtue of competition galas; to ensure placement (through meeting the set squad criteria) in an appropriate squad.

DC pointed out that the coaching & general committee had not had chance to discuss the implications of this new amendment and that it was more of a coaching issue than a constitutional issue. RT pointed out it was already in our Squad Criteria. It was suggested that we should be careful as to what we put into our constitution as it would be legally binding, and this may not suit our swimmers in the future.

The amendment was rejected by vote.

2.7 Haverfordwest Seals is a competitive swimming club; any swimmer entering a gala through the name of Haverfordwest Seals will be entitled to be supported by the Club without equivocation: thus an appropriate person will nominated to be on the

pool deck on behalf of the Club (i.e. a pool pass will be provided and paid for by the Club).

Committee felt this was an operational matter, not constitutional, to be decided on a committee basis year to year. This matter has already been raised by JT for discussion at committee within the last few months, and was rejected. The amendment was rejected by vote.

2.8 Haverfordwest Seals is a competitive swimming club; any swimmer who is competing in a recognised swimming gala, travelling to or from such a gala will have their attendance mark credited as '**present**' for any session(s) missed.

This was agreed in general as a fair point and one that would be considered at coaches/Lead Coaches level. Again it was felt that this was not a constitutional matter. The amendment was rejected by vote.

Committee

7.11 The Management committee shall receive a written report from the Lead Coaches committee at least bi monthly. Any squad changes recommended by this committee must be ratified by the Management committee before such recommendations are implemented.

KRS suggested that the Lead Coaches needed to be trusted to do their job without it being taken back to committee. RT suggested moves between squads could be held up with red tape waiting for the next committee meeting which could be 8 weeks away. RT also pointed out that it helps detach decision making from the committee. JW pointed out that we had Parent Liaison Officers who could be approached at any time by parents who wished to bring any matters to the attention of the committee.

The amendment was rejected by vote.

7.12 Haverfordwest Seals is a competitive swimming club; attendance at swimming sessions shall be monitored in line with the squad criteria by the coaching committee and a written report received bi-monthly by the Management committee.

It was pointed out that Lead Coaches meetings were held every 3-6 months where squad allocation and attendance was discussed and changes made accordingly. Lead Coaches felt that to be tied to producing a written report for committee was not a good use of volunteer time.

The amendment was rejected by vote.

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• **AOB**

• **Squad restructure.** RT pointed out that after 1 year from our major squad restructure, things needed some change as some aspects were clearly not working. He suggested some 'tweaking' by the new committee and coaches. (As in Lead Coaches Report).

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• **Nominations for Officers**

Position	Nomination/volunteer
Chair	
Vice Chair	
Treasurer	Jenny Webb, seconded BH
Secretary	
Membership Secretary	Coral Howlin, seconded AG
Head Coach	Pauline Louchart, seconded DW
Club welfare Officer	Ann Girolami, seconded BH
Child Protection Officer	Karen Russell-Stretch, seconded SC
President	Matthew Lewis to be voted in
County Rep	Sue Christopher, seconded BH Nicala Harding, seconded SC Jonathan Twigg, seconded J Griffiths
Parent Liaison Officers	Jenny Webb, seconded AG

	Becky Hill, seconded DC Jonathan Twigg, seconded J Griffiths
Team Manager	Pauline Louchart, seconded JW
Fixture Secretary	Debbie Watson, seconded JW
Deputy Fixture Sec	Dave Cooke, seconded AG
Committee members	Nicala Harding, seconded DW

Other Roles

New Swimmer coordinator	Sue Christopher
Shop	Jules King (needs assistant)
Website	Debbie Watson (needs assistant)
Club Champs Organiser	
Notice board	
Photographer (? To take photos of club captains, committee etc. when needed)	
People willing to take on small tasks	Helen Llewellyn
Newsletter	Sue Christopher
Social Secretary	

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- Jonathan Twigg withdrew his offer for the 2 roles of County Rep & Parent Liaison Officer and instead wanted to be considered for general committee member. He stated this was what he meant in the 1st instance but the committee had misunderstood his offer to mean Parent Liaison Officer.
- SC objected to this position which was immediately suggested by JT as being a personal issue. DC offered to put it to the floor for vote. RT as chair would be in his right to order a ballot as stated in our Constitution (9. AGM, 9.6 "The person presiding shall have the discretion to call a ballot if appropriate"). DW pointed out that JT had been the subject of many issues arising that had to be sorted out at committee level over the past 12 months. RT pointed out that it was not a personal issue but whether the committee could work together as a team and that the general feeling seemed to suggest otherwise. RT then suggested to JT that we could put it to a vote if he so wished.
- JT continued to state that he had been nominated & seconded in good time so he had a right to his committee place. JT then left the meeting.
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- Further discussion then continued as to the lack of any volunteer to be Club Secretary and the fact that the club could not run without one. SC agree to withdraw her resignation and continue as Secretary until a replacement could be found. Agreed.

Appointed Committee 2014

Chairman	vacant
Vice Chair	vacant
Membership Secretary	Coral Howlin
Child Welfare Officer	Karen Russell-Stretch
Club Welfare Officer	Ann Girolami
Treasurer	Jenny Webb
Head Coach	Pauline Louchart
Secretary	Sue Christopher
County Rep	Sue Christopher, Nicala Harding
Team Manager	Pauline Louchart
Fixture Secretary	Debbie Watson (cannot commit to monthly meetings)
Deputy Fixture Secretary	Dave Cooke
President	Matthew Lewis
Parent Liaison Officers	Becky Hill, Jenny Webb
Committee members	Nicala Harding, Richard Thompson, Jo Trueman

Non Committee Roles

New Swimmers Coordinator	Sue Christopher
Newsletter	Sue Christopher
Website Coordinator	Matthew Lewis, Debbie Watson
Shop Coordinator	Jules King, Jo Trueman
Social Secretary	Jo Griffiths & Mary-Lee Mathias
Club Champs Organiser	Debbie Watson & Matthew Lewis
Notice Board	Ann Girolami
People willing to take on small tasks	Geraldine O'Donnell, Helen Llewellyn

Thanks to Tony Jones, Gary Meopham, and Rita Akay for their support during the last year who will no longer be committee members due to family commitments. Thanks to Todd Watson for all his hard work on our website.

Date of next Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 10th February 2014 TBC

Date of next committee meeting Tuesday 18th February, immediately after AGM.

Meeting finished 9pm
Minutes S Christopher
24/2/14

President's Report

Lead Coaches reports

I have decided not to stand for re-election to this post. The last 2 years have been a period of great change for the club. I have enjoyed contributing to that change and I feel that the club would benefit from a Lead coach who can continue to provide continued commitment and focus as the club continues to evolve.

One year ago we adopted a new squad structure after an open and democratic debate. We are at the stage when that structure should be reviewed by the new Club committee, with guidance from the full coaching group and the Lead coaches committee. The new structure isn't perfect, and none will be. I believe that some 'tweaking' to this structure, with the benefit of our experience of it, will be beneficial. It has delivered a vibrant and healthy lower squad structure with good attendance and performance by these swimmers. The skills development of these swimmers and their gala performances have both improved with the opportunities provided by the additional hours in the new structure. This is almost entirely due to the excellent coaching they receive from a small number of dedicated parents. However many of these squads still swim in sessions with what I feel are unacceptably full lanes for optimal swimming development. This also imposes significant coaching challenges.

The top squads suffered during the restructuring with the adoption of very difficult swim session's times (Youth squad). Despite this the squad has remained coherent and focused with decent attendance despite the session times and the other important life commitments swimmers of this age have. Many swimmers have continued to improve their competition times and post PB's. They continue to contribute richly to the swim club at team events and in other aquatic based sports. During this last 12 months we have had GB age group squad members in both Triathlon and Water polo.

Development squad 3 is an area where the new Lead coaches will have to concentrate their thoughts. We have for the first time in a number of years had a swimmer progress through the club to the County swim squad (Louisa Twigg). We have congratulated her on this achievement and hope she will serve as a role model for other swimmers. We also have another swimmer on the verge of this attainment. This squad has been unfortunate in losing the services of the professional County assistant coach. It does not look likely this post will be replaced in the near future. This squad has also lost a Lead coach this year. These factors have led to a lack of direction and drive within this squad. This should be our premier swim squad that most swimmers aspire to attain. The process of review of this squad has started and must be continued by the Lead coach's committee.

External factors will influence our decisions. A recent meeting with Council Leisure representatives have made it clear that resources are under severe pressure. The Assistant swim development post will not be replaced unless there is significant growth (25%) in Pembrokeshire swimming club members. Our club has grown over the last 12 months but rate of rise is slow. We are negotiating some changes which may improve the swim session times offered and avoid late evening/early morning sessions back to back. We also hope to be able to offer some earlier

sessions before 6.00pm.

Once again the swimming objectives of the club have been raised (constitution items). Without even considering the many important attributes the 'less' competitive swimmer brings to the club, it is absolutely clear to me that the club cannot grow to the numbers required by the PCC without accommodating swimmers whose prime goal is not County squad selection. Swimming for a number of years within a club, gaining all the benefits of taking part in this sport and contributing to the club in the various ways available should be an adequate goal. From my observations of Pembrokeshire swimming over a number of years there are not enough young swimmers whose primary goal is swimming at County squad level to justify Haverfordwest Seals adopting this as its prime purpose. However, I firmly believe that the club should provide a pathway for those swimmers who wish to pursue this goal to achieve it. I believe that the structure we have in place does so (a few tweaks aside). A talented swimmer within the club can access 7 hours swimming with the club and if good enough can bolster this with 3.5 hours with the County swimming structure. Whatever Long Term Athlete development says (incidentally this is currently undergoing review by Swim Wales) I feel a talented swimmer should progress with this regime. The most important variable factor which the club can modify is good coaching. This must be our major focus.

A couple of recommendations:

I would suggest that the Lead coach of each squad is elected by the full coaching committee (anyone who is currently coaching). Once this is done the Lead coach's committee should be allowed to go about their business without interference. This election should be once a year in April. They should continue to report to the full committee.

We must become much more active in our County Committee representation. This has been a problem for a number of years and our club is regularly not represented. This is an appropriate avenue for a number of our issues with PCC.

Finally I would like to thank all the volunteer coaches of the club. It can sometimes be a thankless task but can also be incredibly rewarding. The club is highly dependent on having a large number of coaches due to the nature of swimming. We have a number of very dedicated swim coaches who have served the club well both this year and some for many years. They are the club's most valuable resource and should be appreciated.

Richard Thompson 16/02/2014

Haverfordwest Swimming Club AGM 2014
Treasurers Report for the Year ending 31st December 2013

The audited accounts for the year ending 31st December 2013 have been prepared by our Accountants, Rees & Hayden and will be forwarded to Swim Wales upon receiving the approval of this AGM. Our Accountants have advised that the Club's receipts of £18,695 reflect an increase of just over £2,000 compared to the previous year. This is largely attributable to higher numbers of gala entries which is a very encouraging indicator. The Club's cash balance as at the year end 31st December 2013 was £4,202. I have no hesitation in recommending to the Committee that the same Accountants be appointed at the end of the current financial period.

As at today's date the club's financial situation is as follows:

Cash balance in a/c	£5,130
Less un presented Chqs	<u>£2,485</u>
Actual cash balance	£2,645
Plus outstanding gala fees	<u>£1,419</u>
Total	£4064

Can I please highlight that whilst the Club's existing practise is to incur the cost of open gala entry fees in advance of recovering those fees from the relevant individuals, the long term sustainability of this system is reliant upon the Club maintaining a healthy cash balance. This can only be achieved if swimmers/parents reimburse the Club on an on-going pro- active basis as soon as possible. I would suggest that in the event of any outstanding gala fees being owed by a swimmer as at the annual membership renewal date it would be

prudent that receipt of any such fees in full should be a condition of an individual's membership renewal being accepted.

Finally, can I please thank all Committee Members, parents and swimmers who have provided their help and support to the role of Treasurer over the last 4 years.

Gary Meopham

Treasurer

18/2/14



Haverfordwest Seals Swimming Club
AGM 2014

President's Report

Being Club President for the past year has been a pleasure and despite the ongoing challenges we face, it has been a positive year. To reference my President's Welcome to the Club Championships, we have given even our youngest swimmers an understanding of how exciting this sport can be with our enthusiastic participation in team events such as the Dyfed Club Challenge in February, our friendly against Tenby in May, the September relay gala in Pembroke (Tudor Shield) and our customary October 'Club Colours' fun gala. For the first time in years, I feel that we have a group of swimmers, volunteers and parents able to appreciate what swimming can offer at its very best, and I hope we continue to prioritise and encourage the enjoyment of swimming in this way and in other ways as we embrace a new year for the club. As Richard states in his Lead Coach's report, we cannot grow effectively as a club without also embracing swimmers for whom county or elite performance standards are not the main objective of their swimming. Happiness in swimming is what we should be promoting at all levels while still allowing a wonderful environment for aspiring elite athletes to flourish. I am thrilled that even at open meets we have injected more fun into proceedings by 'going pink' for charity in relay sessions! I'm proud to be part of a club that values a sense of enjoyment highly and I strongly believe we will help to produce more international standard athletes - like Kelsey Williams and Jordan Harding - if we continue to build on this healthy foundation of fun.

As an honorary member of the club I am in awe of the dedication I have seen from volunteers throughout the year. Their work is invaluable and makes the club what it is. I only hope that everyone involved really appreciates the time and effort invested by our volunteers, because they are our most valuable commodity. Having lost so many volunteers in the past year I hope we can all be sensitive and respectful in how we broach issues and communicate with each other. I would also like to offer my assistance as an impartial advisor/mediator for any coach or member of the committee encountering difficulties. We have a clear policy to help members with complaints but I feel more support for volunteers may be necessary. Being absent during term-time means I am detached from the 'front line' and I am determined to support any volunteer in difficulty before they reach the stage of leaving us. I hope we can all help to protect the club's most valuable assets as we look to secure a more stable future together.

I reiterate my thanks to the club's volunteers and hope 2014 is a wonderful year for us all.

Matthew Lewis

President of Haverfordwest Seals Swimming Club

Member since 1994