



Head Coaches Report to the AGM 2017

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for their support this year. We have seen many changes in the coaching team and the squad structure this year but I believe that with the hard work and at times difficult decisions that have been made this year will benefit the club for many years to come.

I would like to particularly thank Sara Dilks. Without Sara TSC would undoubtedly grind to a halt and not have progressed the way it has. She has been such a great support to me and the club over the last year. Sara works tirelessly with determination most certainly above and beyond the role of chairman to help make changes and progress TSC. She is determined to help make the changes to drive the club forward.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be the Head Coach of this swimming club and have thoroughly enjoy the chance to work with talented swimmers. In the past 12 months there have been many challenges particularly with the departures of many of the senior youth swimmers which has taken experience and success from the pool. However the success of our younger swimmers in both the county championships and regionals has shown that the club has much talent for the future. The focus in 2017 is to continue developing this talent and find more with the talented next generation of swimmers at Tiverton Swimming Club. This will take time but it is a long cycle and we all need to support each other on this journey.

The Head Coach is only as strong as the team behind them and I wish to extend my gratitude to the volunteer coaching team that continue to support me and provide an excellent standard of teaching and coaching to all levels of the club.

This year saw a major change, a restructuring of some of the squads (SD and above). This was a complicated process and after a few little problems the squads seem to be working well. The first 6 month review of squads resulted in a bit of squad movement.

Tony Dilks has done a great job on the TSC website. The website is now updated and all the information is now up to date. All the squad information, coach details, meet information, competition calendar and lots other useful information can be found on the website.

This year has seen us join the Exeter hub network. This gives us access to support from Exeter SC, our performance swimmers have been able to access long course and land training with Exeter SC at Mount Kelly. As part of the Exeter hub we have also joined with Dawlish SC for long course training on a Thursday evening at Mount Kelly. In the run up to regionals we are joining Dawlish for another 10 weeks training at Mount Kelly, we have 10 regional swimmers taking part in this opportunity.

In February we introduced land training at EVLC on a Sunday 4-5pm for the competitive swimmers. This has been well attended and is currently running at capacity which is very positive. It is

something we have been wanting to do for some time and it is really good we have got it up and running. Land training is a key part of the swimmers training and it will improve their swimming.

We have had some change in the coaching team this year. We have two ex-swimmers, Rosie Jones and Jasmine Swanston, complete their level 1 coaching and now help coach some of the younger swimmers. John Bishop, a level 1 & 2 swimming teacher, has joined us from Exeter SC to help coach on a Tuesday evening and Teresa Smith has completed her level 2 coaching and continues being a key coach in CSA.

During the last 12 months we have seen great success in the pool and I would like to take a few paragraphs to reflect upon these before outlining our key areas for focus in the coming 12 months.

The 2016-2017 season started with our own Tiverton Sparkler which brought about a lot of success and fast swimming for our swimmers so early in the season. It still is an area of concern though that our own open meet in our own pool still only sees an entry of less than half of those registered to compete.

In Autumn of 2016 we competed as a club in the National Arena League Division 2 and finished an excellent 6th place overall. This was an excellent success for a small club especially given the shortfall of swimmers in the certain age groups. This is a particularly significant success as we entered a team of 100% TSC swimmers. This did put a significant strain on certain swimmers and next time we will join with our hub club Exeter and borrow swimmers to assist in the areas we are short of swimmers.

During the last 6 months the club has been active in various open meets. A big thank you goes to Sally Tovey who has been particularly successful at pushing and increasing the number of our swimmers entering these meets. I would still like to encourage more people to attend competitions in the coming 12 months.

In October 2016 we had two swimmers, Jack Aldridge and Sam Arrowsmith, selected for the Devon team at the Inter county competition in Sheffield.

In January the club competed in the Devon County Championships. This year produced the most entries we have had for some time. There were some excellent results with Sam Arrowsmith, Jack Aldridge, Gemma and Jodie Dilks standing out. There were also several first time finalists.

Overall the results of the County Championships showed a total entry of 18 swimmers totalling 84 best times, 1 championship final, 52 age group finals and 25 medals.

We entered three teams in the Devon County relays in March. The U13 girls won bronze in the IM relay and the U15 boys won double silver in the freestyle and IM relays.

The masters swimming group continues to grow and with the expert guidance of Steve Carder they continue with their success resulting from their continued focus and commitment. I hope that they can pass this knowledge onto the younger swimmers. The masters group have also been involved in open water swimming events which are becoming more popular.

In October Rebecca Jenkinson took part in the ASA National Masters Short course championships in Sheffield narrowly missing out on a medal in the 100 Bk finishing 4th. Sue Haigh has had another successful season recently gaining British records for 200m SC & LC, 800m LC, 1500m LC and British and European records for 400 SC & LC freestyle. Four swimmers were part of the Devon country masters team that won the regional shield and came 5th in the national team event in November.

Over the next 12 months the target of the coaching team is to ensure that swimmers are enjoying their swimming, enjoying success, understanding their bodies and enable swimmers to be in the right training group to meet their needs. We also aim to encourage more of our senior swimmers to moving into coaching and teaching on poolside to help with the younger swimmers and their development.

The club always needs more help and I am sure there are people who want to help. Please offer that help even if it is only for 1 hour. It will help us and help you to understand what direction we are going in. The more people we have helping the more individual attention can be given to those that need it.

Tiverton Swimming Club is a competitive swimming club. Without the success that competition provides the name of the club is not broadcast throughout the local community and the wider county and region. If this club ceases to be competitive then I believe that the club in its current form will not survive. If swimmers do not wish to be competitive then we as a club should still embrace that decision but those swimmers should not prevent the development of those that do.

As a swimming club we have access to limited pool time but we do have the potential to still achieve great success, swimmers need to make the most of every opportunity that they are given.

I passionately believe in what we are aiming to achieve. It is a long journey and the results are achieved after hard work and dedication, there are no quick short cuts. The future of this club is bright we have some very talented swimmers.

Lucy Walton

Head Coach Tiverton Swimming Club

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