

## **Head Coaches Report to the AGM 2018**

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for their support this year. We have seen some exciting changes in the coaching team – we have said good bye to a coach but welcomed many new members to the coaching team which is very positive to the future of coaching at TSC.

I would again like to particularly thank Sara Dilks. Without Sara TSC would undoubtedly grind to a halt and not continue to progress the way it has. On a personal note Sara has been such a great support to me 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. I don't think we, as a club, realise how lucky we are to have Sara as our club chairman.

The last 12 months have been very exciting. We have more swimmers swimming in the pool from the learn to swim right through to the top performance end. We have had some older swimmers join the performance end of the club which was a very welcome addition to the Arena team. The focus in 2018 is to continue developing the talent of the 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 the first full year of the new club structure. There were as expected a few teething problems but overall it has been successful. It is not perfect but as we are limited by pool time it is important to make the best use of the time we have available.

Tony Dilks did an amazing job in very difficult circumstances when our annual meet – The Tiverton sparkler was so ridiculously oversubscribed. Tony had the very unenviable task of sorting the entries and processing the scratches and the fallout that produced. Here's hoping this year's meet is an easier job for him!

Since joining the Exeter hub network we have been able to access swimmer development sessions which weren't available to us before. We have swimmers who access the long course and land training with Exeter SC at Mount Kelly. Last year we joined with Dawlish SC for long course training on a Thursday evening at Mount Kelly which was very successful. Once again in the run up to regionals we are joining Dawlish for further long course training as part of regional preparation.

Land training at EVLC on a Sunday 4-5pm for the competitive swimmers has continued to be popular. We have been very lucky to have Chris Davies take the lead on these sessions, this has been very positive and the swimmers love the varied sessions. This has been well attended and is currently running at or near capacity which is very positive. Land training is a key part of the swimmers training and it will improve their swimming.

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

In autumn of 2017 we competed as a club in the National Arena League Division 2 and finished an excellent 6<sup>th</sup> place overall. This was an excellent success for a small club especially given the shortfall of swimmers in the certain age groups. This was the second year we have entered a team of 100% TSC swimmers. We had the added bonus this year of having some new older swimmers which enabled us to be more competitive in the older age group and if you were there made for some very exciting racing.

During the last 12 months the club has been active in various open meets. A big thank you goes to Sally Tovey who again has been particularly successful at increasing the number of our swimmers entering these meets and coordinating the increasingly complicated process.

In January 2018 the club competed in the Devon County Championships. This year produced another high number of entries. There were some excellent performances with Sam Arrowsmith, Jack Aldridge, Gemma and Jodie Dilks and Emma Declerk standing out. There were also many first time finalists, medallists and county qualifiers.

A summary of the results for the County Championships - a total entry of 17 swimmers making 83 finals, 3 championship finals (2 x Jodie, 1 x Sam), winning 43 medals and many PB's. Quite impressive for a club of our size.

Due to the snow in February the Devon County relays were cancelled. Hopefully it will be rescheduled for later in the year. Again due to the snow we fielded a slightly depleted team for Interclub. The swimmers once again showed that they will always give everything especially in a team event and swam to finish an excellent 5<sup>th</sup> place.

My head coach highlight came in August 2017. This saw the first national swimmer from TSC for many years. Jack Aldridge qualified for the English summer nationals in Sheffield to swim 100Br. I was fortunate enough to accompany Jack to Sheffield; it was an experience neither of us (or Mark and Mandy) will forget. For his first experience of swimming at this level Jack was very composed, swam well taking everything in his stride and is focused on going to Nationals again this year.

The masters swimming group continues to change and we now have a group of committed competitive swimmers. There is now a cross over in training between the junior and masters swimmers which helps to bring on all swimmers and create closer links between the older and younger swimmers.

The masters swimmers continue to compete in various events from open water swimming to pool competitions achieving excellent results. Five of our masters swimmers – Kitty, Rebecca, Andrea, Sue & Graham represented Devon in the Masters inter counties competition helping the Devon team finish top in the region. Three swimmers took part in a 4K open water event at Wimbleball Lake where Andrea Norris won her age group.

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 would like to encourage some of our senior swimmers to help coaching and teaching poolside with the younger swimmers.

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.

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 April 2018**