



Tiverton Swimming Club

Head Coaches Report to the AGM 2021

This has been the strangest swimming time anyone has ever known, and I would like to thank the committee and volunteers for their support this year and adapting so seamlessly to all the changes we have made often at short notice.

I would like to particularly thank Sara Dilks who once again has managed to steer TSC through another year of exceptional challenges and who has sat through every Zoom meeting throughout lockdown! On a personal note, Sara continues to be a great support to me. 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.

Covid-19 stopped everything. Training stopped on 17th March 2020. We had no idea for how long, all those competitions we had been training so hard for gone. I continued coaching but in a completely different way – generating information for parents and swimmers, running Zoom sessions to keep swimmers engaged and active, setting tasks to keep swimmers motivated and feel part of a squad. I managed to complete some CPD which was a positive of the time away from the pool. This was very challenging as there was no guide with how to manage this situation or how long it would go on for.

Finally in August we got the green light to return to the pool in an open-air setting. We fortunately managed to get some sessions at Wiveliscombe Community pool. 40 swimmers over 4 weeks had a minimum of 1 session, most getting 3 sessions.

The return to EVLC was successful. It looked very different – arriving beach ready, socially distanced lanes, swimmers constantly having to listen to me through their headsets and then leaving the pool still in their costumes to get changed at home. We mastered this and all the swimmers were making real progress. To try engaging and motivate swimmers, Swim England introduced Level X racing. This was a national competition between all club swimmers to give them some racing. We managed to get one session in (50's and 100IM) before we went into the 2nd lockdown.

Level X gave TSC some really good results and a bit of fun racing again – The Masters section did particularly well 18 Age group national medals: 6 Gold, 8 silvers and 4 Bronzes. Not a bad result from the 7 swimmers who took part!

The second lockdown halted the rest of the level X series and saw us return to Zoom sessions, thankfully this time it was 4 weeks, and we were back in the pool. Training resumed and we were progressing well in the pool then..... lockdown 3 stopped everything. Once again resorting to Zoom sessions – 1 social and one HIIT session a week with Ben.

Jodie had qualified to swim in the British Championships in April 2020 which was cancelled but was able to carry her time over to this year's British Championships. With the adjustments to entry time requirements due to lack of competition over the last 12 months it meant that Jodie now qualified for 6 events, Gemma 4 events and Sam 1 event to be held in London in April 2021. Sadly, due to the



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reduction in size of the event this year they will not be racing, but as a club we are proud they achieved qualification.

Due to no racing, we lost our annual fund raiser, so we had to come up with an alternative way of raising money for the club. Sara set up a crowd funding page and we raised £5575 which has been so vital to the financial support to TSC. Thank you to everyone who donated and helped support TSC in our hour of need.

We had our second Ashford Grant money come in and we purchased 6 backstroke wedges. These fit on our racing blocks and are fantastic and will be an important part of our training equipment.

I am in the process of writing the SE Club award programme for TSC. This is a programme which is based on skills and progresses swimmers through competitive swimming skills. This will be for swimmers from CSA to Performance. There are 5 badges which get awarded on completion of the level. Hopefully, these will start being rolled out over the next few months once we are settled back into the pool.

Over the next 12 months the target of the coaching team is to adapt to the strange new way of coaching, ensure that swimmers are safe and enjoying their swimming. We do not know what competing is going to look like over the next year, but we will do everything we can to bring competition to the 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.

By Lucy Walton, prepared for Annual General Meeting on 31st March 2021.