

---

## CHAIR'S STATEMENT: HACKNEY AQUATICS AGM 2017

---

### Thanks

Thank you very much to everybody who has taken the time to attend tonight. It is very good to see you here.

I would also like to thank all the members of the committee, volunteers, parents, children and coaches for their tremendous efforts over the last year to make this club go from strength to strength.

### Agenda and certain items

I hope everyone has a copy of the Agenda.

The first task of the meeting is to approve the minutes of last year's meeting. In the absence of any comments, please can I have a show of hands on this.

As Rick can't be with us, I will speak together to his report and mine. As Pauline resigned earlier in the year and we have not had anybody volunteer to take over the role of treasurer, I will also include a commentary on our financial position. Following that I will move to the resolutions at agenda items 3, 4 and 5.

### The last 12 months

Rick's report highlights in detail what a remarkable year the club experienced last year. [The chair went through the list set out in the head coach's report.]

From the committee's point of view the focus is always on protecting and, where possible, enhancing the Club's philosophy. This last year we encapsulated that philosophy in the phrase '*a club for life*.'

A '*club for life*' means the following things:

- We are a **club**: we actively aspire for the absolute best for each other, provide as much as we can for our range of different needs, take care of one another, open our doors to newcomers - whatever their background or circumstances. The committee is particularly proud of the transformation in our diversity in the last two years. Rick and Ruth Giradet are aiming to launch further initiatives this year, so if anyone is interested in this aspect of the club please let us know.
- **For Life**: we want to provide for people at all times that they are interested in swimming – not just when they are competing at an elite level – and we want their experience at the club to enhance their lives, not just in the pool, but **even more so**, out of it too. Friendship, life skills, job opportunities underpin our programme as much as technical excellence at swimming, which is also, of course, a model for how to excel more broadly. Again, if there is anyone who feels they can help us improve our offering in this regard, please do come forward.

The financial position of the club remains our Achilles' heel.

The accounts for the last 12 months show a considerable improvement on the previous year, where an emergency grant of £25,000 was needed to stabilise the finances of the club.

Three notable points are:

- Income marginally exceed outgoings, adding £831 to our balance sheet.
- We managed to cover pool and staff costs from subscriptions, which is a golden rule, if the club is to avoid the financial turbulence of the past. That remains very challenging to do and we require our growth forecasts to be met and costs to be very tightly managed again this year to stay within that rule without further subscription increases. Next year, as the council grant supporting our outreach to less affluent members, falls away, we need replacement sources of funding, or we further run the risk of not meeting this rule.
- Our reserves remain weak and, as the club grows, even if it makes a small profit, the reserve relative to overall activity shrinks further. This is a major focus for me this year.

A final point on finance is that for the first time this season we will have the benefit of real time, electronic registers that will show us the cost-benefit of each session and enable us to model and predict our financial exposure much better. Ruth Giradet deserves, as ever, a huge thank you for making this happen.

I can't overestimate the importance of getting the financial side of the club right and what a difficult balancing act it is. We desperately need a treasurer to take on this area with the focus it requires. If anyone here would be willing to volunteer that would mitigate a significant risk in the operation of the club.

### Rick's leadership

Enormous amounts of hard work have been put in to this club by too many people to mention them all, but once again thank you to all of you.

It is not typically the fortune of great leaders to be appreciated in their time but we need to realise how fortunate we are to have our indefatigable head coach, Rick Hall. He has revolutionised this club from top to bottom, all the while a young man aware of his weaknesses and doing everything to also developing himself. He is the outstanding coach in London swimming, which is why the Middlesex county committee unanimously asked him to become their head coach all the clubs with vacancies try to poach him. But he has continued to commit himself to making this club special first and foremost and I would like to conclude by putting on record our thanks for his loyalty in doing so.