

Hackney Aquatics AGM 2018 – Chair's report

2017/18 has been a strong year for the club in the pool and out of it.

This was capped off at the London Region swimming awards, where HAC won 2 of the 5 awards:

- The Jeff Cook Salver for the most significant contribution to the sport in the London region.
- The Flo Barnes Trophy for the outstanding female poolside volunteer(s) of the year.

In the pool

- We have continued to send more swimmers to counties, regionals and nationals, swimming more races, more finals and winning more medals.
- Our Masters won 10 golds at the Middlesex county championships.
- We have held on to our promotion in M11 while winning our division in the Arena League with entirely home-grown talent.
- We ran our summer development gala very successfully for the second year and plan two invitational galas next year.
- We expanded our range of holiday swim clinics and ran a camp abroad, including GCSE support.
- Our Academy has grown exponentially to 80 swimmers.
- Our non-competitive club squads were launched in 2015 and now have 49 swimmers.
- We have 364 swimmers in total, an increase of >200 since 2015.
- For more details, see the Head Coach's report.
- I would like to record a vote of thanks to Chris Ogden for the many grueling hours he put in as Competition Secretary.
- I would like to record a vote of thanks to our superb coaching team, about whom Rick will speak more.
- I would like to record a special vote of thanks to Naomi Depeza, who has been with the club for the last 5 years and done as much as anyone to instill a love of swimming in to all the youngsters joining the club, acting as a coach, mentor and mother-figure. We will all miss Naomi greatly.
- Finally, I would like to draw attention to the continued support of the Council, in particular Ian Holland and Ladi Ajayi, and GLL, particularly Kieran Charles, the manager of Clissold, who make a lot of pool time available to us, of which other members of the public are jealous. We need to continue to earn that support and put back in to the community, from which we benefit generously.

In the community

- We have reached out to an ever more **diverse** group.
 - In 2015 we had 14 age group swimmers from BAME backgrounds. The number is now 44. In addition, we have increased our swimmers from Turkish and Polish backgrounds from 2 and 0 in 2015 to 7 and 10. Over 1/3 of our young volunteers are from BAME backgrounds.
 - 16 Masters swimmers (around 20%) are over 55.
 - 60% swimmers are female and the junior masters squad has enabled us to buck the national drop off rate for female athletes at 16, with 2 in 2015 now being 16.
 - We are very proud of the tolerant religious mix. We have built excellent relationships with the Orthodox Jewish swimming club.
 - Symptomatic of the success born of our diversity is the Boys u-16 regional bronze-medal winning relay team, with 3 BAME swimmers and comprising all 3 Abrahamic religions.
 - 5 age group swimmers have a stated disability. This is the main area we are conscious we need to do much more.
- We have had a significant impact socio-economically
 - We supported 30 swimmers with significant concessions to enable them to swim. This is 3x the number targeted by the Council in return for a grant to help us do this.
 - We have begun building up our Access Fund, which has @ £3,000 currently.
 - Our Community Day raised over £2,000 for each of the Access Fund and the North London Hospice.
 - Since 2015 we have trained over 35 Young Volunteers, with 5 progressing to their Level-2 qualifications.
 - Since 2015 we have almost trebled the number of registered community volunteers to 54, with another 20 unregistered.
 - Our volunteers helped out at the Hackney Primary Schools Gala.
 - Richard and Naomi led a strong performance for the borough at the London Youth Games.
 - I would like to propose a vote of thanks to all the incredible volunteers, who's freely given time has made all the activities this season possible, not least the Friday Desk team who make the club so welcoming and accessible to new and existing members.
 - I would like to propose a vote of thanks to Marnie Rose and Jo Phillimore, who have done a brilliant job, running our now Award-winning Young Volunteer Programme.

- I would like to propose a vote of thanks to Ruth Giradet, the membership secretary, who has driven our outreach, which has made us all so proud to be members of this club.

The back office

- Managing an organisation the size and activity level of Hackney is incredibly challenging for a volunteer-based leadership. The task list is pages long, including the following categories:
 - Financial management and control
 - Membership registers, queries and management
 - ASA registrations and renewals
 - Swim 21 detailed annual compliance
 - Staff management - now at 16 individuals
 - Volunteer co-ordination
 - Stakeholder management, particularly with the Council and GLL.
 - Competition entries on behalf of all swimmers
 - Safeguarding
 - Officials training and co-ordination
 - Events organizing, from galas and swim camps to the community day and club parties
 - Kit sales
- We have introduced important technologies to make the processes as efficient as possible
 - PaySubs transformed our membership management, financial control and bad debt
 - Team Unify has significantly reduced the workload around gala entries, registers and swimmer performance tracking.
 - It has also enabled us to move from PaySubs to Go Cardless, saving @£4,000 a year.
 - Notwithstanding the Head Coach and key committee members have been doing an unsustainable 20 hours a week on top of their day jobs.
- Club has taken a decision to invest in administrative support
 - Additional administration hours for coaches at a lower administration rate
 - Hire book-keeping assistance.

- The membership fee is designed to secure a reliable revenue stream to put towards these hours and technology costs.
- In the meantime, I would like to propose a vote of thanks to Roger Braybrooks, Nicola Taggart, Katie Clough and Bridget Atherton who have put in many unsung hours of committee work on all our behalf.

Finance

- Please see the accounts supplied.
- The most pleasing aspect is that for the first time in at least 6 years the club has made a meaningful contribution to reserves of £7,876, although £3,151 of these are restricted to funding concessions via the Access Fund.
- This is despite holding membership fees for the year and losing a number of Masters members during the closure of the Lido.
- Our galas, swim clinics, the community day, the first ever commercial sponsorship deal with Marsh & Parsons and the Hackney Council grant, due to expire in March 2019, have all made this possible.
- For all their work, I would like to propose a vote of thanks to all our volunteers, in particular Jen Dixon for overseeing our galas, An Porter and now Johanna Kaschke, who have coordinated our officials, Sakina Syed, who has led our sponsorship drive and Richard Beard, who led the community day. An area where we have struggled has been kit, which has actually made a loss. But thanks to Hester Hettinga taking this on, we hope to reverse that in the coming season.
- Although £22,376 of reserves sounds healthy, it actually remains dangerously low, at only 1.5 months' running costs. The club must continue to build towards a minimum of 3 months and ideally 6 months.
- The club has been working towards two golden rules, designed to guarantee its financial stability:
 - **Subscription Income should cover coaching and pool costs.** We are nearly there, with a deficit of £3,760 this year. For 2018/19 inevitably we have seen wage pressure, a 40% hike in the hire rate at the Lido and inflation of our other costs. We have also lost many members, as we always do, at the end of the season. So we need to do our sums during the first quarter to see if we can continue to hold dues. One good omen is that we had 26 trialists tonight.
 - **Basic administration costs should be covered by a membership fee.** We kept our basic administration costs to £5,868 last year. We will reduce the PaySubs component significantly this year, but administrative and book-keeping assistance (currently weighing up options) are likely to leave a manageable deficit for the first year of our membership fee.

Conclusion

Community sports clubs like Hackney Aquatics make a profound difference to their community and we should be so proud to be part of this club, whose contribution was recognized by London Swimming this week. Lara, Sophia and I have made so many good friends here and for most of us that will be the most enduring and valuable legacy we can offer.

But, as largely volunteer managed organisations, community clubs can easily lose their way under pressure of resources and individuals' time. We are so lucky to have the dedicated leadership of Rick and his team, of the committee members serving for another year and the new members offering to join. We are in the hands of great people, who care about all the swimmers in this club, (not just the elite few) and as we move on to the votes, I hope you will show them your confidence.

Thank you

Jeremy Tobias-Tarsh

Chair