

**ALBATROSS DIVING CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The Abbey School Monday 30 October 2023 6:00-7:30pm**

**In Attendance:**

David Saunders, Emma West, Malcolm Green, Jane Jolly, Clive Finlay, Anne Green Jessel, Richard Jessel, Chris Beal, Catherine Weaver, Anjali Colton, Alan Oxlade, Claire Petter, Lawrence Fox, Trevor Lawrence, Vivien Gregg, Kate Butler, Alastair Petter, Selale Sogut, Mark Basham, Lewis Clamp, Kelly Jones, Fay Knight

1. **Welcome**

The meeting was opened by David Saunders as Chair who welcomed those attending. Tracy Ashdown, Club Secretary, sent her apologies for absence.

1. **Chairperson’s Report**

David proceeded to present the Chair report to the meeting.

Good evening and thank you all for coming. During this first year as Chair, I have been in awe of the continued commitment of the coaches, support of the volunteers and dedication of the divers. Together they continue to make Albatross Diving Club and outstanding beacon for sport in Reading and diving clubs everywhere.

Over the year we successfully renewed our SwimMark accreditation, updated our record keeping and rechecked all the existing records, updated the onboarding process. Submitted multiple DBS checks, updated safeguarding qualifications, and attended all the compulsory Swim England training. And I want to acknowledge the work of Emma, Tracy, Kate and Catherine in making this all happen.

We have continued to be supported and represented as a club at the Berks & South Bucks County and Southeast Regional levels including financially in the form of grants and by providing governance support.

At the start this last year we all felt the great disappointment at hearing of the delay in the new diving facilities. But despite this aversity we have continued to compete at the highest nation level, maintained the training program, recruited and train new coaches and importantly we grew the club via the learn to dive program.

We have good relationships with all our operators including GLL who will run the new pool at Rivermead. The committee has met regularly with the GLL management team and together facilitated a successful move to the new dry land facilities. We are actively planning on the next phase when the new pool opens in the middle of next year. We fully expect the learn to dive program to continue to act as a gateway for new divers and we are getting ready for the flood of interest the new pool will surely bring.

But as the Club gets bigger so does the need for more volunteers, without volunteers there would be no Albatross diving club and no access for our children to dive in Reading. Our children would not have the opportunity to meet their goals, attend competitions or enjoy diving.

We are incredibly fortunate that we have some of the best coaches in the country here and we command huge respect within GB diving which is a massive achievement for a voluntary club. Our coaches and divers attend and judge at the highest-level competitions in the UK and beyond, no mean feat for a voluntary club. Be assured this club holds its own against the larger city diving clubs and we are hugely respected.

But also, behind these coaches there is a small team of volunteers on the committee and others helping in different capacities. As older divers leave for pastures new, we should not have to expect the parents to continue in these volunteering roles. And while we greatly appreciate the likes of Emma and the huge support she provides even after her children have stopped competing; it is important we recruit new parent volunteers from the more junior squads to help provide continuity and to future proof the club.

There are many ways to get involved, from helping with individual events as Chaperones and Team managers, helping organise social activities, club kit ordering and of course joining the committee or even becoming a coach.

Your club needs your help, so please can I ask you to consider putting you name against one of the roles listed on the sheet by the door. Many hands make light work so if you are interested in helping with one of the roles that has a name on it already, please just add yours as well. In many cases there are also Swim England online courses and training to help support new volunteers alongside mentoring from existing committee members.

Additionally, we offer coach shadowing sessions. A chance to get pool side and see at first-hand how a coach runs a session, their thinking and how they interact with the divers. There are no obligations and even if you do not intend to coach you are welcome to sign up, but of course we hope you might consider this.

2024 and the new pool will be a pivotal moment for club, together we can build on from a solid base extending our reach to provide access to diving and all the benefits that brings for even more children in Reading the wider area.

Thank you

1. **Head Coach Report**

David then introduced Malcolm Green, Albatross Head Coach, who presented his report to the meeting.

Since my report at last year’s AGM, a number of changes have taken place within the club. We moved into our new dry facility at Rivermead in July but due to setbacks with the swimming pools we were disappointed not to be moving into the new diving pool as well and so continue with our existing wet programme for the time being.

In September last year we made some squad changes and introduced a new ‘Right Track’ squad and ‘Skills’ squad in preparation to build the club up again in time for moving into the new pool facility. Some of our existing Skills divers moved up to ‘Age Groups’ while some remained in the ‘Skills’ squad. They have worked hard and 7 of the 12 qualified for the National Skills event in Leeds this year retaining our presence on the National Stage at this level with Sam Roberts reaching a top 6 podium position.

Our Age Group Divers also qualified for their national event, some for the first time and others continuing with their success, notably Joe becoming National champion on all 3 boards. Our presence at the British Junior Elites also continued with 2 of our divers competing.

With the loss of 2 of our Level 2 coaches recently, we have had to make more squad and coach changes. Chris now oversees the Age Group and Elite Squads with me overseeing the Right Track and Skills Squads. We are utilising newly qualified Level 1 coaches and poolside helpers where needed to help with the coaching of these squads to create smaller groups within to benefit the divers. There is unlikely to be any further changes to the coaching of these squads until we at least move into the new pool in the middle of next year. This will take the divers through the qualifying process and competing at next year’s national events.

The club has a total of 80 divers spread across ‘Learn to Dive’ and the squads, a remarkable achievement given our forced and varied pool training facilities for the last 5 and a half years as well as returning from the challenging 2-year period of 2020 and 2021.

Our ‘Learn to Dive’ programme is thriving, with ‘Tasters’ being run weekly and almost at pool and coach ratio capacity. Learn to Dive sessions run Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays led by a mix of Level 2, Level 1 and poolside helpers making the sessions as fluent as possible. These are perhaps the most important sessions we run, both for finance reasons and for ensuring the future of our squad divers.

Over the last year we have supported the qualification of additional Level 1 Assistant Coaches, Level 2 Dive Coaches, Level 1 Judges, and qualified Lifeguards, this all helps to enable club sessions to run smoothly and to benefit all the divers. Having additional coaches and judges all helps to aid our existing coaches at competitions and in training, more volunteers for this are always welcome.

It is a busy end to the calendar year now as we start the new competition season with the Southampton Invitationals last week, Peter Waterfield Novice next week, our first International trip for 4 years at the end of November where 16 divers will compete at the Irish National Championships in Dublin and the English Schools National Diving Championships in December in Manchester where we have 5 divers competing.

We have much to be grateful for, not least the support of our parents, divers and all our volunteers in committee, coaching, life guarding and other roles. As you have heard from David we are, and always have been since we started as a stand-alone club in 1978, an entirely volunteer run club. We are the only club run by volunteers that competes in this country at all national levels: Skills, Age Groups and GB Junior Elite. We hold consistent spots on competition podiums and won 3 top awards at the 2022 Reading Sports Personality Awards in the categories of Junior Team of the Year, Coach of the Year and Junior Sports Personality of the Year. Our Squad divers were recognised for their consistent top placings at national events last year, Matt Pipe was recognised for his contribution to community sport as a coach and James West for his outstanding presence at national level in competitive sport in gymnastics, diving, and powerlifting.

We now look forward to the coming year. We have a thriving club and a new pool ahead where we will be continuing our journey. We are 45 years young, and we will develop and grow together. Thank you.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

David introduced Emma who presented the Treasurer’s report.

Welcome. We present the accounts for year-ended 31 March 2023 which reflect the first full year of training and competition since our return post pandemic.

The accounts for the year have been independently reviewed by Steve Breach and were attached to the invitation email. You will have seen that at the close of the last financial year we were holding cash balances of around £21,000 having fallen marginally over the year reflecting our return to competition but without the significant rise in Learn to Dive numbers that we are now welcoming. Reserves held by the club are used to fund expenditure outside of the daily operation of the club we are fortunate to continue to enjoy a strong relationship with third parties with whom we have hire arrangements and, whilst pool hire has increased alongside energy and cost of living rises, so too have our membership numbers with the growth allowing us to manage our bottom line.

As we look forward to the opening of the new pool next summer, we are mindful that the club structure may need to be altered. As you all know we are currently an entirely volunteer-run club without staff costs, but this may alter to grow capacity to meet demand. Additionally, or even without structural change, we are not currently in possession of the new pool hire and dry training costs and so are not able to predict our fee structure going forward. We have made the decision, with the reserves we have and the known expenditure, to keep our fees at the current level throughout the club. We will, however, be removing the absorption of Swim England membership fees, which include annual insurance, from the structure and invoicing these separately to members before their renewal in March/ April as they are renewed. This separation of this cost is in line with other clubs with whom we have consulted.

Learn to Dive Membership and Insurance is £15pa

Squad competitive divers Membership and Insurance is £35pa

We will vote for this change after taking any questions in respect of the club’s finances which I now welcome.

We record our thanks to Steve for his support in reviewing the accounts with no charge and his willingness to carry out the role of Independent Reviewer for the year ahead.

**Adoption of Changes to the Club’s Fee Structure**

As highlighted in the Treasurer’s report it is proposed that the 2022 fee structure stands but the club will now bill, annually in April, for club membership at £15pa for Lean to Dive members (Club Train) and £35pa for all Squad members (Club Compete).

Each year it is the responsibility of the Committee to review the financial sustainability of the Club considering committed expenditure and forthcoming operating costs. In addition to the investment in and maintenance of the clubs’ assets, costs are largely fixed in accordance with the timetable of sessions offered to members. In order to cover rising operating costs of pool hire and travel costs and a need to expand the number of club sessions it has been decided to no longer absorb Swim England Membership and Insurance into the monthly fee – this change is consistent with other diving clubs across the country – with a rate pursuant to competitive level of the diver.

The meeting was happy with the change in fee structure as proposed and voted unanimously in its adoption from 1 November 2023. Invoices covering membership and insurance will be issued to members registered at 31 March 2024 in April 2024. New starters will be advised of annual invoicing as part of their new starter information pack.

Action: Emma/ Tracy

1. **Adoption of 2022 Constitution**

Changes to the Club Constitution have been made to comply with Swim England requirements. The revised Constitution had been circulated to all members with the AGM Agenda for comment and were made available to the AGM meeting room. No comments had been received. The AGM were invited to ask questions, but none were forthcoming, so the room was asked to adopt the Constitution as presented. Voting was unanimous and the 2023 Albatross Diving Club Constitution adopted.

1. **Resignation of Officers**

David as Chair, Tracy as Secretary and Emma as Treasurer stood down from their positions. In advance of the meeting nominations had been sought for the positions of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. There were only 3 nominees:

Chair – David Saunders

Secretary – Tracy Ashdown

Treasurer – Emma West

The position of Head Coach is in the gift of the Coaches Meeting.

1. **Election of Officers**

In addition to the above Executive positions the AGM attendees were invited to declare at the end of the meeting if they wish to join the Committee or assist the Club in any role with the Committee structure having been circulated with the AGM papers. Copies of role descriptions were available to the meeting.

The following positions were voted upon and recorded as elected:

Chair – David Saunders - Proposed by Catherine Weaver, Seconded by Fay Knight

Secretary – Tracy Ashdown - Proposed by Kelly Jones, Seconded by Claire Petter

Treasurer – Emma West - Proposed by Clive Finlay, Seconded by Kate Butler

The position of Welfare Officer is being covered by Emma West until Catherine Weaver, who has agreed to take the role, has undergone all of the necessary training. Tracy Ashdown is now in charge of all data and certification collection for the club which includes the administration of DBS certification.

Selale Sogut volunteered the role of SwimMark Coordinator as Catherine Weaver takes the Welfare Officer role and the meeting recorded their thanks to her for her hard work in the previous year in this role.

Club reports for the website and social media are being run by Emma but parents are invited to consider whether they could contribute to this role where they are attending events. Ben Colton offered to help with communications website support and Kelly Jones with social media.

Gemma Springer was instrumental in the club getting new tracksuits in 2023. These have been issued to all competitive divers. Emma invites all club members to purchase t-shirts and hoodies twice a year. Tansy Round has volunteered to start a second hand shop for hoodies (as these do not have the divers name printed on them) as many are hardly worn.

Fay Knight offered help with fundraising and social events management.

1. **Any Other Business**

Emma then talked about how she became involved in the club 13 years ago, the changes the club and diving as a whole have experienced during this period and voiced how many people talk about the contribution to the club that you make as a volunteer but few recognise what she wanted to point out, the contribution and satisfaction reward that volunteering for the club gives to the volunteer. She talked about the many ways parents and older divers can get involved in supporting development of the club and the sport including event chaperoning and team management which allows the club to take divers away on trips, judging which frees up the coach to coach at competition without having to sit in the judges’ chairs and becoming qualified coaches to expand the offer the club can give.

The following parents signed up:

**Event Chaperone/Team Manager**

Alastair Petter, Kelly Jones, Anjali Colton, Trevor Lawrence

**Judging**

Selale Sogut, Claire Petter, Clive Finlay, Ben & Anjali Colton, Mark Basham, Kelly & Malcolm Jones, Trevor Lawrence

**Coaching Support**

Anjali Colton