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## Chair report to AGM

This report details the work of the governing committee for Alton and District swimming club for the period of November 2019 to November 2020.

This has been my first year as Chair of the club and it has been a year like no other. When I took on the role I was daunted but excited about the prospect of leading the club forward and working with its members and staff, little did I know that a few months in we would be hit by a global pandemic that would change all of our lives. The structure of this report is going to be dominated by Covid 19 and our response to it.

I would like to start by saying thank you to all of our volunteers, our club cannot function without a willing team of volunteers and as always many of you have stepped up to the task. While our club is coach led we are overseen by a governing committee. Before the pandemic the committee was enjoying working with our head coach Luke to recruit new members and we were flying high on the opening of the new centre at Alton. Many of you were involved in that and although it feels like a different world now I would like to thank you for all of your hard work at that time.

Since lockdown in March we have worked in a smaller sub committee to try and find our way through all of the new restrictions and guidance. I'm sure those involved in that process will agree with me that this has been the hardest thing that most of us have ever had to do. I want to thank that group of individuals who have gone above and beyond, working many, many hours every day, often under very frustrating circumstances, to achieve the best they can for our swimmers.

Pre Covid we had a great number of team managers, timekeepers and judges who supported our swimmers in their endeavours. Many of those redirected their attentions to the much needed role of Covid rep and we even recruited a few more new faces. Without these Covid reps tirelessly sticking by their squad we would not have been able to return to swimming. Thank you for your ongoing commitment.

I would also like to thank our coaches and teachers, all of whom have been very patient and flexible during these ever changing times. Schedules, locations and hours have changed every month and those involved in delivering the sessions have always managed to make it possible. Luke has led the team through all of this and managed the challenge with great skill and expertise. Since writing this we are now under a second lockdown which required immediate planning and once again everyone stepped up to the task.

Throughout lockdown our swimmers were offered daily land training sessions via Instagram and Zoom. Luke prepared and coached these sessions but by his side was our trusty 'Demo Dan'. Thanks Dan for being such a feature in our daily lockdown lives, it won't be forgotten. Again since writing this plans are now underway for more of the same during our second lockdown and Luke is hoping to add Zoom tutorials to our offering.

We have also had a small team who have focused their attentions on seeking funds for the club. This has been challenging to say the least, every club in the country is looking for support to get through lockdown financially. We are lucky enough to have reserves to draw upon but are always on the lookout for grants to strengthen our



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return to the pool. Zoe Goros did a great job of rallying interest and raising some sponsorship during the lockdown period by walking/running for the club, many miles were covered and Zoe raised over a thousand pounds. Thank you Zoe, the funds have been put to good use!

One person deserves a special mention and that is Davina who right back in March volunteered to take on the role of Covid Lead. I know that everyone will join me in recognising the indescribable amount of work and commitment Davina has given to this. Davina has attended countless meetings, produced risk assessments, managed volunteers, liaised with pool centres and far more besides. Without Davina we would not be in the positive position that we are in today. So thank you Davina from the bottom of my heart, without you I would not have got through this year.

I'm now reflecting on the passage that I wrote a couple of weeks ago:

"Which leads me on to our ongoing recovery as a club since lockdown. We now have session for all of our squads. We have close to as much pool time as we had pre lockdown. We have staff working with and responding to the needs of our swimmers. We have an upcoming virtual competition. We are able to run trial sessions for new swimmers and subsequently welcome them into the club. We are in a very positive position going forward and I feel very proud of our club and it's achievements over this very difficult year. "

Currently this is not the position we find ourselves in but I continue to feel proud of all that we had achieved and have high hopes that in December we will be able to get back to where we were.

Our finances this year have been at the centre of all of our plans. Like the rest of the country, and indeed globe, we have had to make unprecedented changes to our financial model to keep the club viable. We have had to draw on our reserves in a way that has never been needed before, it is thanks to the efforts of Steve and also previous club treasurers that we were in a secure enough position to be able to do this. We have worked hard to minimise the impact while balancing the fact that reserves are there for exactly this kind of crisis. The treasurer's report reflects the details of this and how and why certain decisions have been taken over the last few months. Thank you Steve for being a calm and stable force throughout this process. I would also like to thank Allison Williams for many dedicated years as assistant treasurer, you will be greatly missed.

Pre Covid we were enjoying all of our usual competitions. We were performing very well and led by Luke our swimmers were meeting ever higher standards. Our success at team galas and particularly The National Arena League are evidence of how far we've come and our team spirit was loud and passionate at all events. We are now signed up to take part in Level X Racing which means even in these testing times our swimmers will have a purpose and be able to compete in a virtual way, we actually began a few tentative sessions of Level X before shutting down on November 5th. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we hope that in the near future we will be able to pick this up again.

Again I will reflect on what I wrote just a few short weeks ago:

"As we now move forward there is hope that we can settle into a 'new normal'. As we find a new way of working we can establish a training timetable that will work for increasing periods of time, a fee structure that we know will support the club going forward and a network of volunteers that know their roles and require less input to maintain those. The coming months will hopefully be less intense than recent months and we can see some of the benefits of all of our hard work."

My sincere hope is that in December we will pick ourselves up and be back very quickly to operating under the 'new normal' that we had achieved.



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I'm afraid as my year as Chair comes to an end I am going to be standing down from the role. I have found it very rewarding and learnt a lot in the process, sometimes surprising myself by actually enjoying the role. I am so proud of what the club has achieved through this unprecedented year and am only stepping down due to a huge change in family circumstances which means I can no longer give the role the attention that it requires. I wish the club and committee all the success in the future. My family and I will remain avid supporters of the club and I will continue to help the club in any way possible as we move on.

Lisa Tolliday