



Oxfordshire & North Buckinghamshire Counties ASA

President: Sandra Wrenn

Chairman: Mr Peter Shaw

Meeting Chair: Oliver Stockland

Meeting Secretary: Christine Rennie

Venue: Bicester Leisure Centre

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Start Time: 1900hrs

Present:

O Stockland	C Rennie	A Readhead (MAX)	A Brewer (MAX)
K Weetman (4Shires)	C Clavaud (Witney)	S Barber (Aylesbury)	H Patrick (NPSC)
S Wratten (4Shires)	K Underwood (COSC)	D Smit (COSC)	S Wynne-Jones (CMK)
I Blythe (Thame)			

Apologies:

P Shaw	S Wrenn	N Mellings	
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## 1. Swimming Secretaries Introduction

1.1. Oliver briefed everyone on the events of the County Championships and the success of the championships for 2019. Oliver stated that the objectives of the championships were to host a well-run event that enabled swimmers from all clubs to produce their best swims and times.

## 2. 2019 Championships Overview

2.1. For the first time this year, the County included 1500 and 800 metre championships as mixed events, this came at a cost, with the loss of the 100m Individual Medley as an event. As a whole, the 1500 and 800-metre events had positive feedback from those who participated and seemed to be successful. The downside to their inclusion was that licensing took longer to process due to having to make sure we kept to Swim Pathway criteria and governance and very little flexibility to reduce the number of finals or to try to keep the 100m Individual Medley. However, we got there, and it was approved. Hopefully, the coming year should be a little easier. The consequence of the inclusion of the 1500 and 800-metre events, also meant extra time required in the pools to cover. As we can only hold the event in two pools within the County, this meant an additional day in the calendar, and for the first time, we held the two of the January dates on a Saturday afternoon. Oliver had positive feedback for the events held on Saturday and is considering holding the 400-metre a Saturday too; however, Abingdon Vale has raised concern for those private schools that have Saturday Morning lessons. Oliver will be open to any feedback on this aspect from other clubs. Oliver also stated he had to make sure that the costs of the extra session held remained within a budget. He has already received notice that pool costs will increase for next year at Oxford. However, Aquavale has not yet released any intention to increase theirs but have agreed to invest in improving the facility. To cover the costs, Oliver would like to recommend all entry fees, and admission costs remain the same for the 2020 Championships, as this year the figures show that the Counties have made more than expected.

2.2. Issues on the day – these included the floor at Oxford, which up until the night before of the first gala was stuck and could not be dropped to the 2m depth. This was resolved in the morning of the gala, albeit in the background Oliver has planned a course of action to let all swimmers, clubs, and coaches know if the event had needed to be cancelled. Fortunately, all not required.

2.3. Entries were released two weeks earlier than previous years. The plan for the 2020 Championships is again to release these two weeks before Christmas and to let people know the release date in advance.

2.4. Volunteers were also sought using direct proportional representation of the clubs swims for each gala.

2.5. Paperless entries were accepted for the first time. This year there was a 50:50 split on clubs that used this facility. Oliver would like to go completely paperless and is working with Team Unify to enable this for the 2020 Championships. The Promotors conditions state that clubs have a two-week review window to amend their paperless entry for omissions and errors

2.6. Presentations – These were moved at Aquavale to the start end / large Screen end of the pool. Medals remained for collection at the other end of the pool. Apart from the logistics of getting the trophies ready in advance of these, it seemed to be very successful, so will remain for the 2020 Championships.

2.7. Oliver also stated it was important for the County to publically remember all of those who had lost their lives during the year who had served the ONB or ONB Club. This will remain in the programme going forward.

2.8. Other improvements to be sought – Is it possible to go without bottled water for volunteers and officials? Something to be considered with the issue of an ONB Bottle to be refilled?

### **3. Programme for the 2020 Championships**

3.1. Meet Dates Saturday 11th January 2020 – Oxford Leys

Saturday 18th January 2020 – Oxford Leys

Saturday 25th or Sunday 26th January 2020 - Aquavale

8th/9th February 2020 - Aquavale

15th/16th February 2020 – Aquavale

Oliver has noted the 2019 Championships started early and with some of the feedback he received would propose the dates be moved a week to assist clubs in providing volunteers and for swimmers to have a recovery from Christmas for training.

3.2 The programme for the coming year will remain the same for the 800/1500m events. The relay age group for 10/11/12 years combined will also continue. Comments were received over the finals sessions with some conflict for the swimmers. There are five finals for the 200m events over two weekends, so inevitably there will be one-weekend when one session has two finals in it. A discussion was had to discuss how to segregate certain events to allow swimmers to recover from one before swimming the other. In particular the 50m Breaststroke and 200m Breaststroke finals. Oliver will look at swapping event 32 with 34 and event 54 with 56 to see if this will help. Also to look at events 40 & 41 and 18 & 19 to swap, so it will allow those swimmers to have more than 15 minutes between one gala finishing and warm up starting. It may be in this case; the lunch break will increase slightly. Maxwell's Head Coach had asked for the 400m to occur before the 800m & 1500m galas, however, with the dates now being a week later on the 2020 Calendar, Oliver deemed this would solve the issue of the early start raised.

3.3 A Webex was conducted by Oliver a week before closing date to assist the clubs with entries. This was to try to encourage paperless entries. Going forward with paperless entries for 2020, the clubs will be expected to complete a Club Acknowledgement document plus to the paperless file with summary documents to include an application for coaches passes.

3.4 Entry times are ratified through Rankings by Oliver, and this year the process took around 12-16 hours. It uses Swimming Sports System conversions only. The Team Names on the files this year did not cause any issues on the uploading of data, so hopefully, next year will be the same. 800/1500 mixed age groups, a question was raised regarding splitting into a senior and junior event to allow more opportunity for juniors to swim – Oliver is mindful of the timings for this event but will look and consider if this can be done within the timeframe and cost. Another suggestion was to move the age group relays around so the older swimmers for that gala swim first – Oliver has made a note of this too. Entry Fees will remain the same for the 2020 Championships.

3.5 Split of entry this year was 60:40 Girls to Boys. Some finals were not full, and the comment was made. Oliver did state that for instance in the 100m Fly in one age group there were only five people eligible with any time. Oliver had therefore considered what the entry times should be based on. His proposal is as follows: To take the 8th fastest swimmer of the event from the previous County Championships from either heat or final and to place this time as the Accepted Time. The Considered Time will then be discounted to get 16 entries per age group. Regionals use a similar system, and they then cut if too many swimmers become eligible. The target is to get 16, so there are no more than 320 swimmers on poolside at the main championships. By doing this, it is hoped to get a more even balance between male and female swimmers and maybe fuller finals, making the competition more interesting for the younger swimmers. A comment was made that you can't reject a swimmer that has a faster time as a younger age group if it is an accepted time for an older age group for Regionals – Oliver will look at this more closely regarding the Regional Licence.

3.6 Closing Date will be on 9th December 2019.

Qualifying Period Proposal will be to have all events including the 800 & 1500 the same. This will be from the 1st day after the 2019 Championships completed to 9th December 2019.

#### **4. Officials/Volunteers**

4.1. Officials – It was agreed that Officials should not have to apply to volunteer for the County Championships. Karen Underwood will look at the way we invite Officials to officiate and for J1 Trainees to be invited as their course now requires relevant experience at a Level 1 or 2 event, Counties being included. A proposal to purchase software to enable this process will be submitted to Peter Shaw in due course, which has the facility to make this process easier for Officials and the capability for each Lead Referee for each gala to monitor the availability of Officials. A discussion was had over the consistency of how different referees asked Officials to present the Lap Cards for the swimmers. Karen will ensure the procedure will be consistent for the 2020 Championships. Expenses for Officials are payable to all Licensed Officials, but not those on a J1 Workbook. This has not been advertised in the past and adds further expense to the competition. Instruction to Officials for the 2020 Championships will be worded to encourage those who are there in support of a swimmer to waive the expense. A discussion was also had over the possibility if you Officiate for one session, then you should have free admission to the other galas for that day, providing you have waived your expenses – Oliver and Karen to liaise before the 2020 Championships.

4.2 Volunteers – This was the first year Christine Rennie took on the role of allocating volunteers. Some smaller clubs this year were asked to cover more sessions than in the previous year. Comment made by Four Shires that they were expected to cover a lot of admissions roles, was taken on board and further improvements to providing varied roles will be looked at for the 2020 Championships. Christine expressed her thanks to all, in making sure all areas were covered for 2019, helping to make the event such a success. Also many thanks to Deb Smit, Jayne Jones and Sue Surman for all of their hard work in coordinating the volunteers on the day and trying to make sure every parent had an opportunity not to miss their child swim.

## 5. Questions/Answers

5.1. Air Quality – Air quality at Aquavale for the main championships was deemed to be poor by coaches and swimmers alike. Aquavale blamed the fact that the vents around the pool deck were covered by people either sitting on them or covering them with bags or clothing. Oliver, on the day, was quick to get the centre staff involved to try to resolve and a concerted effort by all coaches and volunteers was made to make sure vents were left clear. However, it has been noted that Aquavale Air Filters were blocked – something Oliver will raise with the Centre at the pre-brief meeting before the 2020 Championships.

5.2. Space – Comment on how full Aquavale is and how some clubs have to jostle for space. As Aquavale has bays, individual clubs have assumed a bay from one year to the next, but the mix of swimmers may have changed. The problem is there is a capability of 320 swimmers maximum on pool deck plus spectators. If you take spectator area away for use by the swimmers, fewer parents will be able to attend and the revenue this generates also has an impact on the Championships costs. Also, to restrict the amount of “kit” allowed on to poolside as well as “big bags” may help.

5.3. Food for Officials/Coaches – Aquavale charge ONB per head for the food at a very high cost to the Championships. Jayne Jones did a fantastic job in monitoring the food presented and providing biscuits for intervals to mitigate some of the expense. Recently, Jayne reviewed with Maxwell for their meet and provided packaged individual sandwiches with a bag of crisps. This went down well, so may be considered for the 2020 Championships. Oliver will liaise with Jayne nearer the time.

5.4. Medals – Oliver admitted the quality of the County Medals are poor and in particular the 3rd place medal and medals for 4th to 8th are virtually the same. Oliver will source, alongside Kim Parfitt who did a splendid job ordering everything, a better quality medal for 2020. Another possible alternative was raised, that pendants could be issued rather than medals – to be reviewed. Trophies were a success and will remain the same for 2020. A question as to if Age Group Relays could receive medals was raised – Oliver will review at the spread of Age Groups and the Medals given before the 2020 Championships.

5.5. Meet Mobile – Oliver hopes this will be available for 2020. The only concern he has is there is a lot of manually amended events especially surrounding the 200m finals and Multiclassification results. Amanda Readhead, Maxwell, stated she had a workaround to help this and will liaise with Oliver to try to enable Meet Mobile to be available.

5.6. Withdrawals – Withdrawals are different for 50/100 and 200 events currently. Oliver is to look to either make them active or non-active withdrawals and not a mix of both.

5.7. Disqualification on the Scoreboard – It was agreed that these should not be shown.

5.8. Finalists – The finalists for each event are published in the Spin Room. Coaches and Team Managers asked if they could have access to them on pool deck. Oliver stated this would congest pool deck in certain places and may cause a Health and Safety Issue. Also, the intervals are when the volunteers in the Meet Room are extremely busy collating the next session sheets, paperwork for Officials and updating relay application, so it would be impractical for the sheets to be issued to each club.

## 5.9. Other items

Merchandise – Swim Caps have historically not been dated, as stock can then be used from one year to the next. A suggestion was made by CMK for swimmers to be able to get a County Hoodie or T-Shirt too. They proposed to use Swimzee, whereby the individual orders and there is no stock issue for ONB. Stephen Wynne-Jones was asked to approach a volunteer from CMK to see if this may be available for 2020 and then to liaise with Oliver and Christine. Officials Polo shirts are charged currently, whereas other counties provide their Officials with them for free. Oliver will approach Ian Powell to see if County would be willing to fund there in future.

Car Park – The side road adjacent to Tesco which is currently used by parents as parking will not be available for the 2020 Championships due to building developments. This will cause a shortage of parking within walking distance of Aquavale. Simon Barber will ask Tesco if they are willing to section off an area of their large car park for the gala's use. Other alternatives are a further distance away in town but are still walkable.

## 6. The conclusion to the Meeting

Heather Patrick thanked Oliver and Christine for all their hard work

Sharon McNab thanked Oliver for all his support with entries

Kim Weetman stated the Two ladies Sue Surman and Jayne Jones were superb

Karen Underwood will be making an application to purchase new Lap Cards for the distances and Swim Meet Organiser at the next Executive Meeting.

Simon Barber asked if we can consider bringing back 100 Individual Medley.

Oliver thanked all who attended and for those who emailed him directly and the meeting closed at 20:56.