



Patron: Sharron Davies MBE



## **ASPSC Parents Meeting Thursday 02/03/16**

Lecture Theatre Bath University (West 8)

18:30-19:45

This meeting was called to keep parents of swimmers informed about current matters arising at the club and in an effort to improve communication and increase openness and transparency. It was felt by the committee that it was important to inform parents of the purpose of the framework document and progress of some of the items contained therein which included likely future changes at ASPSC.

The framework document previously issued to all parents was used as a starting point for the meeting. It was confirmed that point 1 on framework document has now been completed from a club point of view as confirmed by the club's Welfare Officer.

Sylvia Sinclair (SS) requested the current committee acknowledge mistakes were made regarding the actions taken when John Dougall (JDL) was absent from coaching. SS asked if an apology would be forthcoming. JM stated that it was generally accepted that mistakes were made on both sides. It was explained by JM that the framework document was created to facilitate the return of JD to poolside and contained a number of items that both the committee and JD felt were essential to be addressed. The contents were agreed at and following a meeting between JDL, his representative Brian McGuinness, JM and Matt Lawman (ML).

Actions - JM agreed to ask the committee whether a further apology would be forthcoming. JM agreed to resend framework document with minutes of this meeting (see attached).



Patron: Sharron Dunn

JM confirmed that point 2 on the framework document had been completed and the Tax advice implemented. It was stated that further work is required to ensure that JDL contract is fit for purpose going forward.

The ASPSC committee held a network club committee meeting on 8th February 2016, which was attended and directed in part by ET from the ASA.

Parents were advised by JM that an action outcome for all network clubs from that meeting was completion of an ASA devised questionnaire devised to gain an understanding of what the network clubs wanted to see from ASPSC going forward.

JM mentioned to parents the options for ASPSC going forward included but were not limited to:

- 1) ASPSC operating as a Swimming Club i.e. accepting any swimmers whatever their age or ability.
- 2) ASPSC operating as a pure performance programme i.e. clearly defined exit and entrance criteria designed to deliver future national champions and elite swimmers.
- 3) ASPSC to aspire to point 2 above but with compromises to ensure financial viability.

JM stated that no changes to existing membership squad structure were planned this season (i.e. before the second week in August 2016). Any new entry and exit criteria would likely be in place for the start of next season if a new model for the club was agreed, approved and implemented. The criteria would depend on the new model chosen. It was recognised that any final model will have an impact on swimmers, parents, coaches and members and that this has to be handled compassionately and carefully. JM also stated that due to the magnitude of the matter it would be the role of any post SGM committee to take forward and implement any proposed changes. It was stated that the intention, as recommended by the ASA, was for the parents and swimmers to have a one-on-one discussion with the Head Coach around May 2016 to discuss each swimmers current position and what their next steps would be. Swimmers would then be given a period of time (until at least the end of the current season) to meet any attendance or time criteria to stay in the ASPSC program or return to their home club.

Question - How will the new model fit with AS? It was made clear that any new model would need to be approved by ASA (Emily Taylor (ET) and Lindsay Dunn (LD)), JDL and the ASPSC committee.



Patron: Sharron D...

Action- ET will be collating all Network Clubs return questionnaires and will provide a report to the committee. Items raised by ET for consideration for all the home clubs included asking whether the network clubs have the ability and capacity to take any swimmers back if the new model contains criteria that some swimmers are unable to fulfil due to age, ability, regional times, attendance etc. JM agreed to share report with parents when received from ET (see attached).

Parents of two swimmers from Development wanted to know and understand why their children were given a trial and offered places in November 2015 when all this change was happening. Disappointment, upset and frustrations were evident as parents put their points across and to understand how and why they were invited to the Development squad when now they may have to return to their home clubs, which will be disappointing for them. It was stated by JDL that these changes were not a consideration for the committee in November 2015. It was also stated by JM that no swimmer can expect to have a guaranteed place in ASPSC after passing an initial trial and each swimmers position should be expected to be under review in a performance squad.

It was explained that current changes are being driven in part by expectations of some parents, network clubs and the ASPSC constitution that states it is a performance club. JDL stated that, due to the pool closure at the University last season for nearly 9 months, no changes could be progressed or managed during or shortly after that time.

Toby Young and Daryl Whiting (DW) shared historical entry to ASPSC as being invite only following criteria being met. DW stated that there is and always will be a natural 'fall out' of swimmers that are not suited to the programme.

It was stated by JM that at the moment ASPSC were operating a financially viable and sustainable model but were not delivering a performance programme or meeting with the expectations of the Network clubs.

#### Special General Meeting (SGM)

It was re-iterated by JM that it was the intention of the club to hold an SGM on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 subject to issuing formal notices. JM stated that his personal view was that he wanted to see all vacant positions and current positions up for grabs but that this was a committee decision. JM stated that many parents might not be aware that voting was restricted under the constitution to members of ASPSC only. JM stated that if parents therefore wanted to influence matters then they should become a member of ASPSC by stepping up to volunteer or take up interim committee positions.



Patron: Sharron D...

There was discussion and debate about the legitimacy of the current committee with the constitution being referenced. Clause 7.5 of the constitution was identified by JM as being the clause relied on for the recent appointment of committee members in the interim period up to the proposed SGM. JM stated that in his and Matt Lawman's (ML) opinion Quorum had not been lost when recent changes were implemented. JM also advised parents that at the network club committee meeting it was agreed that whether or not various positions on the AS committee were validly filled, or quorum lost, the vast majority of Network Clubs and ET agreed that a sensible way forward was for all committee members to stay in position until the upcoming SGM.

This is documented in the network committee meeting minutes. The new committee will be elected into positions as permitted by the constitution at the SGM and will have a mandate to take forward the remaining items on the framework document which includes any changes to the club structure.

JM confirmed that he will not be standing for election due to work commitments and reiterated his desire for the club to have a truly independent Chair.

JM explained that ASPSC currently operates under two committees however this format was being reviewed in conjunction with the network clubs and the ASA with particular reference to decision making, the day to day running of the club, how it should be done and who should be included and involved and to what degree.

Wendy Hood (WH) brought the discussion back to the swimmers. She emphasised the importance of parental support for both the existing and new committee members to ensure they can do their jobs without interference so that the programme (in whatever format) continues and swimmers can continue with their training. Kyp Harrison (KH) stated that it is the constitution that will guide the club and it should be clear about what the clubs vision is moving forward.

#### General discussion

- Open meets provide essential, financial stability and success of the club.
- Streamlining ASPSC with the Network clubs to have an easily identifiable route to and from/in and out of each (if or when applicable). Attendance needed from swimmers to show commitment to programme and criteria needs to be re-established for exit and entry.
- Network Clubs feeling the pinch of having swimmers leave their clubs, which affect their finances.
- Discussions about network clubs and which ones can deliver programmes for their swimmers to regional level and above. Some clubs may be able to provide 'extra' pool time for smaller clubs and work in collaboration with others



Patron: Sharron Davies MBE



to develop their swimmers at club level. Different ASPSC models discussed as examples only.

- Funding/Finances. Karen Bowen informed the parents that Somerset ASA provide ASPSC with £2.5K but do not receive any funding or contribution from Wiltshire.

Ann Cookson, Maggie Dorsman and Adrian Sharman contributed to the funding and finance discussion. This was debated between parents with previously discussed issues being raised again. JDL stated that in his experience funding could on occasion be dependent on results with national times of swimmers used as a measure of success and on-going secured funding.

JM stated that historically £50k was originally provided by B&NES but that was no longer available due to cuts. Daryl Whiting added to the discussion with regards to the commitment required from swimmers and their families to a performance programme.

Financial concerns raised if the Network Clubs want a performance only club. Marion McNab asked whether any Network Clubs could consider a financial contribution to ensure the viability of a performance only club. JM stated that this was asked by ET in her questionnaire to network clubs.

Ric Ward acknowledged the repetitive nature of discussion(s) and asked how will we/the club move forward with this?

JM re-iterated that the idea is that the SGM will identify a new committee with a mandate to drive the club forward. They will have the results from the questionnaire issued by ET at the next Network Club meeting 14/03/16 and will be tasked to move the new model forward whatever form that takes in terms of the structure of the new committee and the new squad. This will need parental understanding and support as Wendy Hood highlighted. The decision making process will include advice and guidance from LD, ET, the network clubs, the ASA and the ASPSC Head Coach. Parents should note that their home clubs have their own committees that make decisions on the clubs behalf.

The budget will be an ASPSC committee decision- i.e. can any new model be implemented and sustained without compromising the future of the club? The financial viability of the club will be integral to any decision on squad structure and numbers.

Financial modelling of the various squad options would be reviewed by all network clubs who have been provided with all of the ASPSC financial information. Some options propose an increase in swimmer fees. Chris Hardick pointed out that this would likely exclude some swimmers from the programme if they cannot afford an



Patron: Sharron D...

increase. Parents expressed general concern if talent is lost due to an increase in fees.

Question- What is the current annual income needed by the club currently per year?

JM - circa £100K per annum.

JM stated that any decision to change the squad structure and size will not be an easy one because it requires the need to balance a performance model and finances. JDL advised parents that the number of lanes, swimmers per lane and coach to swimmer ratios all effect and define the programme he is tasked with delivering and that this has to be balanced with costs and income.

JM reminded parents that ASPSC is their club and parents need to continue to offer help as volunteers. The open meets need massive amounts of work before, during and after as Nat Gordon will verify. JM thanked parents that have stepped forward in the last month or so and also those that helped at the last Grand Prix even though they had no swimmers competing (Fionna and Graham Keen we given as an example).

Karen Bowen can be contacted if anyone is interested in Team Manager 2 training (Team Manager 1 must be completed first before you enquire).

Close of meeting – 7.45pm Jamie McNeil