



Chairperson's Report 2018-2019 Season

Dear Swimmers, Parents and Coaches,

It's been a busy and exciting year for the new CSSC committee who were placed on a steep learning curve in the month of September.

The current committee is a strong team who have worked exceptionally well together, with a singular agenda for the betterment and longevity of the club and all its young members. This has been reflected in feedback received and we are humbled by the positivity.

The committee play a pivotal role in the running of the club, fund raising and organising events. The involvement and feedback from the coaching staff, parents and members is always welcome and forms the basis of the committee's ongoing success.

Many of the objectives of this committee were based on the information given to us by you through our **Parent Survey** at the beginning of the season. As a result, we have tried to improve communications, maintain financial stability and formulate a strategic plan, improve the social aspect of the club and tried to widen the scope of the accolades for all our members so that all would feel equally valued.

We have also tried to instil a sense of ownership of our club to all our stakeholders and a sense of responsibility in our swimmers through our Club Captain system and the active involvement of our older swimmers in various events.

Membership Details

County Sligo Swimming Club remains as popular as ever. The new committee had been working hard to increase the number of swimmers in the club. In September 2018 we were 74% capacity (132 swimmers) and finish the season with 91% capacity (168 swimmers). We have 23 hours of swimming per week and 3 hours of land training.

Coaches

Sadly we have said goodbye to Elaine Stafford and Shona Keaveney this season, we wish them well in their new endeavours. We would like to welcome Carrie McDaid and Gary O'Hehir to the coaching team.



Club Captains

Democratically Carrie McDaid and Paddy McPartlin were elected and proved to be terrific assets to the club and role models for our younger members while being ably assisted and supported by many of their peers.

Communication Strategy

Raising the Club Profile

We developed an information flyer to promote the club and distributed it to 67 primary schools and 13 secondary schools in Sligo County reaching out to over 12,000 students in January 2019.

Facebook

The club continues to use Facebook to promote itself within the community and to keep members up to date on club news, relevant information, pictures and events.

Website

The club launched the new website at the beginning of the season. The purpose of the new website was to update the underlying technology and to rebrand with a fresh look and feel.

The website has been a work in progress for a number of years, and a lot of work was put into the content and branding well before our time so we need to thank Trevor McDaid and his team for all of the ground work they put in to making it such a success.

The website has proven very successful as a 'one stop shop' for all club information for both our existing members, and for new members looking to join.

Fundraising/ Social events

Many events took place this year. Following our survey, we consciously tried not to burden parents for money unless there was a social aspect attached to an event.

Christmas Gala

The Christmas Gala took place on the 15th December and was a great fun event for swimmers, and a social get together for the parents and families. We had swimmers from Nippers up to Group 3 participating and a visit from Santa with a chocolate gift.

Family Table Quiz

The Family Table Quiz took place in Lola Montez (Embassy Rooms) on the 20th February and was a great success with lots of fun questions for all age groups.



Fun Raising Bag Packing at Dunnes Stores

The Bag Packing at Dunnes Stores was a resounding success and the club was complimented on our professionalism and efficiency. It was great to see some of our teenage swimmers from Groups 3 and 4 rise to the occasion, and great to have our younger swimmers with their parents wearing club gear.

Coffee Morning at Bank of Ireland

Bank of Ireland on Stephen Street hosted an all-day coffee morning for the club to go towards our new land training equipment.

Sligo Fund Raising Gala

The Sligo Fund Raising Gala took place on the 5th May. It was a huge success with over 250 swimmers from 8 clubs attending. It was our first year that events were opened up to the Nipper Age Group from other clubs and we had a great turn out. Each of the Nippers received a certificate with their name, event and time on it.

Golden Ticket

The Golden Ticket, as part of the medium-term strategy, was a huge success for the club. Along with raising funds, the club was also able to raise its profile on social media, through the newspaper coverage and in the community. We sold 145 tickets to 118 local businesses with over €14,500 committed!

Club Awards Night

Another great night was had by all. The venue was fun and the food cones were a treat. It was a fun relaxed event where the coaching team got to acknowledge deserving swimmers and following the suggestion from parents, we introduced some extra awards and we acknowledged our coaches and parents. It provided an opportunity for the committee to thank parents for their support this year.

Business Development

Corporate Sponsor

A priority for the committee was to increase revenue coming into the club to match the increased running costs. From December to March, the committee spent 4 months meeting with the business community to try and secure a single sponsor for the club, but the time to secure such a sponsor at a level of investment to put the club on a firm financial footing to go forward was too short and we could not deliver in time.

Some of the organisations had already committed their Community Partnership budgets to the end of 2018 and we were too late for applications. The alternative was to look for smaller investment from many individual businesses by running a Golden Ticket initiative, which had proved successful for many other clubs.



Business Development Strategy

One of the aims for this year was to put in place a growth and development plan for the Club. Under the present committee a strategic plan has been developed with short, medium and long term goals. In the medium term, the 2 Season Sponsor from the Golden Ticket gives the club an immediate revenue boost and allows us time to pursue a long-term single sponsor for 2021.

Gala Participation

County Sligo Swimming Club aims to be primarily a competitive swimming club and as such, swimmers are encouraged to participate in open galas. Participation in galas has very positive advantages for swimmer and club:

- It allows swimmers and coach to gauge where they are in comparison to swimmers from other clubs and also to monitor improvements in their performance
- It improves focus and concentration
- It promotes team spirit for swimmers when competing alongside other club members
- It raises the profile of the club.

Winning a medal at a gala is always a plus, but whereas only 3 swimmers can podium in any event, every swimmer can win by achieving a personal best time.

Good personal performance is the positive reinforcement by which all swimmers need to continue to push themselves to improve.

Clubmark

Clubmark is an accredited quality mark for Swim Ireland affiliated clubs, and all clubs must be affiliated by November 2019. The accreditation programme focuses on attaining and keeping pace with best practice and introducing best-in-field ideas. Our Club Development Officer is working with the coaching team and committee to complete the Clubmark application forms and supporting documentation.

Team Unify

In January of this year, the committee sought support with the roll-out of Team Unify. As part of this process, initial research identified that:

- The Team Unify product did not offer online payments functionality in the Republic of Ireland jurisdiction, and that the vendors were unable to confirm any timeline for the introduction of such functionality. The club would have to incur



the additional cost of adopting additional third-party payments software in order to provide parents with the option of online payments for galas, fees and fundraising.

- It was confirmed that a competing product - Swim Club Manager, did offer online payments in Ireland, and it was agreed by the committee that further research into this product would be completed.
- In addition to online payments, the Swim Club Manager platform offers all the required functionality to support the efficient management of a swim club. The platform has been adopted by other Irish clubs, and is approximately 30% less expensive.
- A series of workshops with the various club functions was also undertaken, with a view to validating how the adoption of either product would benefit the running of club.

This committee is in the final consultation phase of selecting a product and a decision is imminent.

Election of Committee Members

We would like to thank all parents who have put their name forward for nomination. We reserve the right to co-opt members on to the committee during the year in accordance with our constitution.

Thanks to Coaches, Parents and Committee Members

We would like to thank the present committee members who have worked so hard during the year to maintain financial stability, improve communications and to grow and develop the club in a positive space.

To our head coach and all the coaching staff, the committee remain thankful for your guidance and ever supportive of your dedication, and hard work.

A big thanks to Eithne and all the Sligo Sports Centre staff for their poolside help and their assistance at home galas.

To all club committee members and parents who help out poolside at galas - your efforts are greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all those involved with the club who have voluntarily given of their time and expertise.

Mike Mitchell and John O'Grady