**The Last 12 Months**

We think this has been a really successful 12 months, albeit with some challenges on the way.

* We had a record number of swimmers qualify for the Essex Age Group Championships, swimming a record number of events.
* We had 5 swimmers qualify for the East Region Championships
* We have continued to recruit and attract new swimmers at all age groups
* We have seen more Club records broken in 12 months than ever before
* We have overcome the full and final loss of the Walden/Friends’ School pool with extra time at Lord Butler and a re-jig of our training groups
* We have 1 more qualified coach and another waiting for a training course to be arranged in the local area
* The Club’s financials continue to be in a good state.

The biggest challenge has been adjusting to being a “one pool club” and what that has meant for the amount of swimming time we can access and the knock-on effect that has on training and coaching techniques and ambitions. We have continued to review this over the last 3 months and you will hear about our coaching goals in a new “Approach to Coaching” guide we plan to launch at the start of the new swimming year – early September.

**“We” the Committee**

All UK swimming clubs have an Executive Committee (this is required by Swim England) comprising Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Seals then has additional committee members largely comprised of the individuals that perform the other essential roles that you need in a swimming club: Child Welfare, Head Coach, League Managers (i.e. ESL/EML), Trials Manager, Open Meet Manager, etc.

In addition, at Seals we are incredibly lucky to have our President continue to play a very active role in the club and be a member of the Committee.

All the individuals that perform these roles are shown on the website and also here:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Current Incumbent** |
| Chairman | Andy Dunham |
| Secretary | Claire Hopkins (looking to step down) |
| Treasurer | Steve Haynes |
| President | Jan Bright |
| Child Welfare | Claire Denyer (looking to step down) |
| Head Coach | David Lowe |
| Team Managers | Nicola McAuley (ESL), Leefy Hindle (EML) |
| Trials Manager | Vacant |
| Open Meet Manager | John Stirling |

**Members Information Guide**

We currently have information on the website that sets out the Club’s objectives and its ethos in respect of behaviour and training.

However, following a review over the last few months the Committee have determined that we need to formalise our ethos in respect of behaviour and training into “Seals’ Codes of Conduct”. There is a code for pretty much everyone – committee, coaches, swimmers, and parents.

We have then pulled all of this together into a single guide which is included with this email and available on the website. We expect everyone to read this carefully and to then fully comply with these Codes with immediate effect.

We have used this opportunity to review our objectives and on reflection we believe the current Mission Statement really captures everything we want Saffron Seals to be.

As such, the Club’s goals are to:

* Encourage swimmers to be safe and confident in the water
* Encourage swimmers to enjoy their swimming, improve their skills and realise their potential
* Encourage swimmers to compete successfully, be able to lose graciously and, in doing so, develop a sense of responsibility and team spirit

But most of all ….

* Enable swimmers to enjoy membership of a social swimming club with more than a hint of competition.

Please take some time to read this document and we can discuss your thoughts at the Open Forum in September.

**Swimmers Guide**

Swimming, like almost all sports, has its own language. To help de-mystify this we have pulled together our “Swimming Guide”. This is attached and is also available on the website.

If there is anything we can add to this guide please let us know.

**Coaching and Pool Time**

The Executive Committee has spent a fair bit of time over the last few months discussing with David what are the right swimming ambitions for the Club, especially given we can only access one pool, and what is the right structure for the coaching team and the training groups to help achieve this.

We are very aware that each swimmer has a different motivation and goal and that the training and competition we provide needs to try and meet all of these ambitions. Not an easy task!

We also know we can do a much better job of sharing our thinking and the training goals so that you – parents, swimmers, volunteers – better understand what is happening and why!

To help this we have drafted a guide called “Approach to Coaching”. David needs to get the input of the coaching team into this and into his training plan for the 2019-20 season. This will happen over the summer so that we are ready to communicate both in early September.

This may lead to some changes in training groups and when some trainings groups swim but we will let you know in advance of any changes.

If you would like to know more about the qualifications and experience of our coaches then please look at the website.

**We Need Your Help**

Seals is a not-for-profit swimming club run by volunteers.

To help the Club continue to provide a fantastic swimming and social opportunity to the young people of Saffron Walden and surrounding villages we urgently need a new influx of parents.

Whether it is helping poolside or supporting the running of the Club there is an opportunity. Most of the time it simply requires a few hours commitment each month and you will be fully supported (and trained if needed) in the role.

It is a great way to learn some new skills or just get involved in a great club, however if you would like to know more just ask any of the current Committee.

However, to put it in bluntly, without volunteers and a positive, collaborative, supporting parent team there is no Saffron Seals. We therefore have two current pleas:

1. Please volunteer and help us keep the Club running and improving
2. Please provide helpful and constructive feedback; we are unpaid volunteers and we will miss things that you notice – but please make your feedback supportive and pleasant.

**Happy Holidays**

The summer holidays are here – even for Seals. We will have a break from swimming finishing on Friday 26 July and starting again on Tuesday 13 August. We will probably also take a break for the August Bank Holiday.

Thank you so much for your help and support over the last 12 months and we look-forward to the new Swimming Season in September. In the meantime have a great Summer.