

Firstly, I would like to say that I think you have all done very well in the past year in maintaining the very high standards and busy schedule that we have come to expect from our club. We have managed to take part and perform well in all of our usual yearly gala's, attend the annual NASCH Woodlarks camp, hold all of our usual social events and still found time to fund raise. It's difficult to pick out highlights from such a busy year to talk about because obviously some of you would have enjoyed certain times whilst others would have preferred something different but there was a very exciting gala at Plymouth in July where we performed well with a depleted team. Although, our swimmers won 15 gold and several other medals, the Junior Endeavour Trophy and the Junior Team Trophy outright we finished 3rd overall with the top 3 teams separated by only 4 points . That has to be sport at its best and why we take part.

At last year's AGM, I promised that the Committee would look at 3 different areas over the forthcoming year. Of particular concern was the clubs Lifeguard situation which meant that we were down to four volunteer Lifeguards on our rota but worryingly threatening to decrease when three of their qualifications come up for renewal at the beginning of this year. Unfortunately, despite giving it a lot of attention and contacting the Volunteer Office who put an advertisement in the Western Gazette last year we have not been able to recruit any new ones and unfortunately John Corner has decided that it is time for him to retire from Lifeguarding. I fully understand and support John's decision and I would like to publically thank him, on behalf of the club, for the decades of involvement that he has had not only Lifeguarding but in every other way as part of our club. He has already said that he will say involved in the future in some other small way.

Tracey Wilson is also unable to renew her qualification at the present time so the overall Lifeguard situation leaves us in a very vulnerable position where it looks as though we are going to have to start paying to hire Lifeguards at Sherborne for the first time in the very near future. This is immensely disappointing to me as for as long as I can remember it has always been a large part of the club to train and have its own Lifeguards but the problem seems to be that the Lifeguard qualification has, in recent years, become a professional qualification which takes individuals a considerable amount of time and money to qualify and then when they've got it they expect to be paid by a leisure centre or similar for their services. We were always going to be ok as long as we had our own 'aging' Lifeguard force, that had been with us for literally decades, but as they leave will be very difficult, if not impossible, to replace. The second thing that we said we would look at was the condition of the club minibus. Basically, the bus is about 15 years old now and although relatively low mileage and in good mechanical condition, because it has been regularly serviced etc, it has become very tatty internally especially the condition of the seats. We have had the seats refurbished in the last 5 years and we do not really understand why they deteriorate at the rate they do but we think that it has something to do with the sun shining on the bus when its parked up for long periods during the week rather than any form of misuse. The minibus has been the main discussion at our last 3 or 4 Committee meetings where we have been trying to decide what to do i.e whether we spend a considerable amount of money trying to tidy it up again or whether we can afford to replace it. There obviously comes a point in time where further repair is uneconomical but on the other hand the club has numerous other expenses and we want to be really sure that we can afford a replacement before we commit. The third priority from last year was to try to increase our fund raising a little on the previous year and you'll have to wait for Graeme's report in a minute to find out how we've faired against that one! What I will say though is that the Committee have been overwhelmed by the donations that the club has received in the past year which is a

testament to you all. It is mainly because local people and organisations think so highly of the club and its members and the service that we provide that they choose us to donate their money to us.

We currently have 97 members which unfortunately is 14 less than a year ago. We recruited 9 new members in 2015 compared with 14 in the previous year but sadly we have only had 1 person coming forward wanting to volunteer in the last year compared with 4 the year before.

Unfortunately none of them are still with us. Even though our membership has dropped, at the moment the club is desperately low on Lifeguards, bus drivers and pool helpers meaning that we are all having to carry out our rota duties more often than we would like. Just because it is difficult isn't an excuse, we need to work really hard over the next year to recruit more members and volunteers and try to stem the general decline in our numbers that will inevitably make our club far more expensive to run per member in the future. I think that there are a couple of reasons why we don't seem to be able to keep our volunteers, pool helpers in particular, and that is because when they volunteer they think that they are going to be kept more busy looking after far less able swimmers than is sometimes the case when they've been with us for a couple of weeks. Sadly, the other reason I believe is that we now ask them to pay the same amount as our other members when helping in the water. It's only my opinion but I think that people who volunteer to work for a charity whilst not expecting to get paid for their services do not expect it to cost them anything either. I'm well aware of why we introduced this clause into our constitution a year ago and that was because some believed that the system was being abused with volunteers just enrolling for a free swim every week but it's something we may need to think about again in the future if it becomes a straight choice between attracting more pool helpers, who have the potential to become Lifeguards and Drivers, or paying another organisation to provide them even if we could get say Sherborne school to agree to provide Lifeguards for us on an indefinite basis.

Unfortunately, it's not just members and volunteers that we are short of. We also need more of you to come forward and help run the club by serving on the committee. For many years now every time that we have lost a Committee Member it has not been possible to replace them and it has meant sharing their workload around the rest of the remaining Committee members and it's easy to see that there will become a point in the not too distant future where this can no longer be sustained and it will become impossible for the club to continue. This year we need a President, a Secretary and possibly a Transport Manager.

Unfortunately, since our last AGM we have lost our Vice Chairman Clive Strickland. Clive was a very loyal Committee Member who didn't miss many meetings and was very effective in keeping an eye on what was happening at our sessions and feeding back through our Committee meetings whether all our members appeared to be happy and enjoying their selves or if there were any problems. We all miss him a lot. We have also lost 2 other valued members Alan Wilson and Doreen Palmer in the last year who will also be very sadly missed.

I am pleased to say that we had another very successful sailing season last year. The cost and arrangements of being a corporate member of Sutton Bingham Sailing Club were not adversely impacted by the sale of the clubs Wayfarer sailing dinghy the previous year and our members enjoyed many Thursday evenings on Sutton Bingham last summer along with several of the trips to Poole to sail in the sea that have in recent years become a regular event in the calendar.

Again this year, I would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who have done so much for the club during the past year:

Sherborne Boys School Leisure Centre especially Gary Shackle the Centre Manager and Brian Higgins who does all of our Lifeguard training sessions at Sherborne. Goldenstones and Sutton Bingham Sailing Club and the Yeovil Volunteer Office. We have a special guest Leonie Girling from the SSVCA with us this evening. I am delighted to welcome Leonie along to our AGM this year and she has kindly to offer to give us a little talk later on about her organisation. I think that it is very important that we link up with organisations like the Volunteer Office as much as we can as it can be mutually beneficial with us helping one another. Quite apart from the obvious advantage of them referring volunteer helpers to us they are very often sending me notification of forums and other events inviting us to get involved. Unfortunately, for those of us working 5 days a week it is very difficult so we have not played much of a part in the past but I'm hoping that if Leonie tells us a little more about it some of you may pop along to some of the events and start integrating with other organisations in our area in the future.

Thank you to Graeme Tate our Treasurer. Graeme has recently taken a slightly different career path but Old Mill Accountants were of course continuing to provide us with a free service for much of the past year. We are very pleased that Graeme is happy to continue as our Treasurer. Graeme assures me that he still has good links with Old Mill so we can look forward to continuing our friendship with them in the future and of course we thank them for all that they have done for Apollo in the past. We will send them a letter from the club thanking them.

I would again like to thank all of those organisations and individuals that have made donations to our club in the past year.

Tracey Wilson our Transport Manager. As in previous years, Tracey has again organised much more than just transport. She is one of the clubs minibus bus drivers and also one of our Lifeguards. Tracey has recently indicated that she would like a change from looking after the clubs transport and I can understand why people like a change and would prefer to see Committee Members change their roles than leave the Committee altogether but at the same time a dedicated Transport Manager is vitally important if we are to replace our minibus and I wouldn't like the club to spend out all that money if there was no one dedicated to oversee the deal and look after the new bus properly after we had taken delivery be that Tracey or someone else. If Tracey does give up Transport I hope that all of the clubs drivers will understand that it was her wish to do so and that they will continue to drive for us in the future.

Sarah Hull our Publicity Rep. She has also been doubling up with Secretarial tasks and is always willing to help with just about everything. She organised the library window display back in January and is always printing and distributing posters and flyers of our events such as the regular table tops etc.

Gill Allen our Cashiering Rep and a very important part of the Committee. I'm very aware that it's the quieter ones like Gill working away in the background week after week, almost going unnoticed, that keep the club going. Gill is regularly on the desk at Goldenstones on Saturday mornings.

Jackie Drake our Swimming Rep. With Jackie galas just seem to happen. Of course I didn't need to but I was quietly fretting a little bit because I was away at the time of our interclub gala last year but I needn't have worried because I understand it went very well. Also due to us using all of our

Committee meeting time in December to discuss other matters such as the minibus there was no real input from the Committee in terms of organising the Christmas gala but again on the day it went off without a hitch. Jackie also drives our minibus.

Sheila Drake our Membership Rep. She has done her absolute best to keep our membership numbers as high as possible. Sheila also helps on the desk at our sessions, announcements on the poolside and normally chairs our AGM. Sheila has said that she would like a change to Vice Chairman. I am pleased to say that a perfect replacement has been nominated to replace her as Membership Rep.

Paul Wilson our Sailing Rep. Without a very competent sailing coach we would not be able to take our members out on the water at Sutton Bingham and on sailing trips to the coast each year. He has provided a valuable input to our discussions regards the minibus options for our Committee meetings recently. Paul is on holiday in Australia at the moment but we all hope that he will continue to attend Committee meetings regularly on his return at the beginning of March.

Jean Noake has been the clubs Social Rep for many years, stretching back to when her husband Vic was Chairman. She always attends and makes significant contributions to the Committee meetings and she made sure that the Ottery St Mary trip went ahead again at the end of last year which was enjoyed by all of us who attended. We desperately need Jean on the Committee to help keep the rest of us in order.

Again this year, I would like to thank the many of you who are not on the Committee but have helped at all of our social and fundraising events. There's always a danger that in mentioning names that I will accidentally forget to mention somebody but I think it's important to read out those that I know help in this way year after year. So thank you to Mary Barker, Daphne Wilson, Edith Roberts, Iris Hoskins, Joan and Bev Owen, Liz Wilson, Helen and Malcolm Campbell, Jane Burrell, David March, John Corner and Andy Marsh our Lifeguards. Mike Searl who maintains our Website, Our Drivers Ed Breadon, Adam Hawkins and Simon Rowbottom also Lynda Sharp our Club Protection Officer. There will be others and you know who you are so thank you also.

I hope that you all enjoy the Club over the next year and that it proves to be a great health benefit to you all.