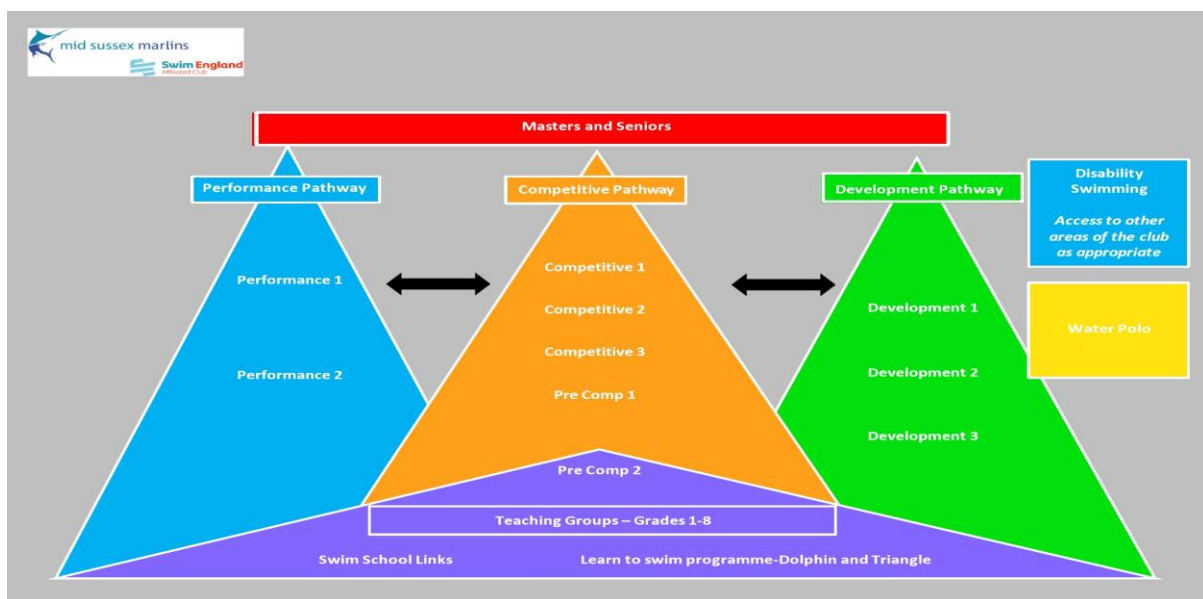


Head coach report

Dear members, I hope you are all well and now looking forward to returning to the pool and swimming club!

Since the club's last AGM and pre covid 19 we put in some fantastic results. We achieved our highest ever placing in the National swimming league (Premier division). We swept the Sussex county relay competition winning 80% of the relays with the highest ever points tally. We also achieved top club at the Sussex county championships for the 4th year in a row. 2020 was looking to be our best yet!

Another notable success was the re development of our club swimming pathway which we introduced in January 2020.



The aim of the new pathway was to provide clearer routes of passage for all levels and ambitions of swimmers and in some respects show the journeys that our swimmers can take through our club. The pathway is a work in progress and having overseen and observed its function, albeit for around 6 months its clear that we need to develop it further in relation to sessions in each area, staffing / roles and responsibilities, improving links and pathways for our para swimmers and young prospective water polo players as well as ensuring we have a flourishing swimming club teaching environment that naturally flows into our competitive pathway and development pathway. We look forward to returning to the pool, rebuilding and strengthening our clubs pathway in 2021.

The past year has clearly been difficult for all of us, the first lockdown presented a lot of challenges and unknowns and was not an easy time for our swimmers and staff. It was positive that we were able to use different locations over August to ease us back into the pool before our main leisure centres re opened. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers who helped make this happen.

Lockdown 2 and 3 have been progressively difficult for our swimmers with the stop / start nature and on behalf of the team I want to express how proud we all are of them for persevering, staying motivated and engaging with us. The online sessions that the team are providing have proved extremely popular and they are keeping us connected which is extremely important for wellbeing and mental health. The team have provided a wide variety of activities online over the past couple of months and I am extremely thankful and proud of what they have achieved so far.

Going forward It is clear that we need to steadily and carefully rebuild each part of the club and gradually increase our membership closer to where it was a year ago. This will be easier to do when lane limits are raised. We must remember all clubs are going through similar experiences so its important that we are dynamic with our approach, open to new ideas, appealing to new members / ex members and that we look forward and see this as an opportunity to get better and do better. There is much we can improve and build upon and the team and I will be working with the club board to ensure we make that happen.

On a personal level I want to see us rediscover the “club feel /atmosphere” that covid 19 and its restrictions have taken away and recreate a welcoming and positive environment where team comes first. A happy team is a successful team!

I must express my thanks to our staff, the coaches, teachers and poolside volunteers who have adapted to continual change over the past year, been prepared to travel to different locations and venues to take training and commit to numerous schedule changes and different ways of working.

I would like to thank Sarah Johnson our outgoing club treasurer who has volunteered countless hours behind the scenes as well as regularly volunteering poolside for team events and timekeeping over the past few years. The team greatly appreciate your work and support.

We thank Angela Curry, our former open meet secretary who stepped down from her role last year and will be greatly missed. Angela worked extremely well with the team and volunteered a lot of her time to ensuring our meet entries were in order, the coaches, parents and swimmers had the information they needed and that our large and frequent meet entries were in order.

Lastly on behalf of the team I would like to thank all those who have volunteered their time from Chairman, board, welfare officers, poolside covid support and parent volunteers. We appreciate all that you have done and going forward we need you all more than ever to continue to thrive and succeed as a club.

Wishing for a more positive 2021 and beyond

Stephen Murphy

Head Coach

Mid Sussex Marlins



**Sussex County Champions
2017, 2018, 2019, 2020**





PARA SWIMMING REPORT, AGM 2020

What a different year! Sadly, there is very little activity to report on, as the para-section only managed eight pool sessions from the end of March, due to the Covid situation. We have also had to merge the two squads of Starfish and Dolphins, and move our training time to Saturday evenings, 6-7pm at The Dolphin Pool in Haywards Heath.

On the few occasions that we were able to swim, we saw an average of 16 swimmers, out of a possible 23 who had signed up for the session. Several other members had to reluctantly suspend their membership due to being in the vulnerable category, or because the new session time didn't suit them.

On a positive note, we have been holding regular Zoom Catch Up sessions for the squad, and some of those who haven't been able to swim, have joined in on those, so that they can keep in contact with the group. Max Donnelly, one of our amazing young helpers, has put together a monthly Quiz, which has been very well received by those attending - there is a remarkable degree of competitiveness within the group!

Special mention goes to Alfie Penfold, who has been selected to be part of the 2020-21 Swim England Para-Swimming Talent Programme. Unfortunately, all the sessions so far have been on line, but hopefully Alfie will have the opportunity to see some of the other swimmers on the programme in the flesh, very soon. Louis Moyes joined Alfie in the few training sessions they have been able to have in the pool this year, as he was also hoping to be able to compete in the para-nationals, for which he had qualified. The boys have been ably supported and coached by Nic Piper, who has signed up to the Stage 1 - Para swimming national coach development programme, which is great for the Club, and for para-swimming generally.

A very special mention goes to Carolyn Heeley, who has so ably run Starfish and been a huge support to the para-swimming section over many years. Carolyn always planned to retire from her role at the end of 2020, but unfortunately this date was brought forward due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to Carolyn for all her help and support over the years – she is greatly missed!

Further thanks go to our wonderful helpers who attend our sessions each week, and without whom we couldn't function. Their support is fantastic and I, for one, am hugely grateful to them for their commitment and enthusiasm. I know the swimmers feel the same too. Hopefully, 2021 will allow us to be back in the pool regularly so that we can report on more activity next year!

Pauline Draper, Para Swim Lead



Masters Section Report

Sitting down to write this report it strikes me how easily the miserable haze of this past year has obscured the huge success already achieved and promises of even more to come that we were enjoying one year ago on the 25th February 2020.

Following our last AGM the Masters were straight in to a busy period of competition as three days later 43 Marlins Masters were at the Pavilions in Horsham for the Sussex County Masters Championships – a record number of swimmers from a single club in the history of the event! From 203 individual events, Marlins amassed a huge total of 76 Gold, 51 Silver and 35 Bronze medals – Picking up 25 Championship records and 19 new Club records in the process. Most importantly, Marlins Masters managed to dethrone a strong Hastings Seagulls team to win both the top Club trophy and the relay trophy - completing the Clubs clean sweep of every available trophy from the County following the great success of the Junior sections earlier in the year.

From County Championships to short course National Championships a little over a month later. Marlins delivered in Sheffield, picking up 4 Gold, 14 Silver and 8 Bronze medals, an impressive 59 top 10 places from 85 individual swims saw Marlins finish as ninth placed club overall, from a total of 232 clubs represented.

2020 started every bit as well as could be hoped. A short trip to Crawley for the South East Regional Masters Championships at which a combination of individual events and relays resulted in a total of 25 Gold, 16 Silver and 20 Bronze medals. 19 Club records, 3 British Records, 1 European Record and 1 New World Record!

As a result of the age groups available in the competition the Marlins 4x100 Freestyle team of **Alison Gwynn, Rose Dudeney, Mary Johnson, and Sally Mills** were entered in the 240+ age group, despite their combined age of 280 years, this quirk led to a bizarre situation where the ladies total time of 5:38.02 earned them a Silver medal to go with their **NEW WORLD RECORD!** Breaking European and British records at the same time.

In the 4x50 Freestyle, the same team (who this time were pipped to the Gold by Marlins 240-year-old team) picked up a Silver medal in the 240+ age group to go with their **NEW BRITISH RECORD!** In the individual 100 Butterfly **Sally Mills** made it a hat-trick when she took not only the Gold medal, but also a **NEW BRITISH RECORD!**

So that leaves us where I began this report, a year ago - 25th February 2020. All of the efforts of the previous few months was to be a perfect springboard for further success in April for the National Long Course Championships, and in June for a trip to Budapest for the European Championships. Instead, we had Masters swimming in lakes and in the English Channel just to remember what 'wet' felt like.



A return to the pools in September was only made possible due to a great deal of work behind the scenes and I would like to offer thanks to everybody involved in that, as well as the individuals who gave their time to fill the necessary 'Covid Poolside Support' role to allow others to swim, and the team of Masters coaches and volunteers who helped to get things going again.

Looking forwards, I hope it is not too long before we can all work together to get things going again, again...

Andrew Hamerton
Lead Masters Coach



Teaching Group Report 2020

Well, what a year! I had been off poolside for three months following a hip replacement and was welcomed back three weeks later after returning with lockdown. Certainly, in all my years in swimming I have never known a period like this.

Obviously due to Covid we have been unable to hold any of the Dev galas but the winners from the previous year were:

Best Girl: Charlotte Spencer

Best Boy: Freddie Searle

The trophies were presented to the swimmers on our return to the pool last year. Well done to you both.

What will happen to the Dev gala series this year we will have to wait and see, or we may have to change the format, as this does help us choose potential squad swimmers.

We have had a few swimmers leave since lockdown, but we did manage to hold a large intake session in December to recruit some new members, so a big welcome to them, and hopefully they will get some water time soon!

Thankfully nearly all our teachers and helpers have returned, for which I am truly grateful as without their help and loyalty we as a club would struggle, so thank you to you all.

Despite Covid, on return to the pool there have been some positives we have gained out of this:

1. Forty five minute lessons for Grades 1-3. The extra water time has helped the swimmers progress better in their lessons, and hopefully this will be something we will be able to continue with going forward.
2. The way our water time now is managed has helped us with manage any staffing issues.
3. Parents coming forward to help as Covid officers, has been lovely to see, some of which have now expressed a wish to come on board as pool side helpers and maybe train as teachers.

I would like to thank Les and the board for all their support, Kerry for all her help in the running of the section, and finally again to all the teachers/helpers.

This is a club for swimmers of all abilities and ages and hopefully will continue like this after all that has gone on over the past year, and for many years ahead.

I hope everyone stays safe and look forward to seeing everyone when we return to some sort of normality soon.

Stuart Ward
Head of Teaching Groups

Mid Sussex Marlins Water Polo Section – Annual Report for AGM February 2021

Like much of the club the Water Polo section has been severely disrupted by COVID-19.

DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Prior to the start of the pandemic we were seeing higher numbers turning up to our Sunday night training and these held up reasonably well when we returned after the first lockdown.

We have had some challenges maintaining our coaching numbers and the Club has agreed to begin paying water polo coaches for the first time to help us to secure the qualified coaches that we need.

For our Wednesday night training sessions we are still facing the challenge of transitioning junior players through to the senior men's team. However a number of young players have begun attending and we hope to build further on this.

COMPETITIONS

Senior Ladies: British Water Polo League

The Senior Ladies finished the National Championship 2 league in fourth place after the final fixtures of the 2019 season were completed in December 2019.

It remains a huge achievement that the Marlins retains its place among the top 12 clubs in the country, competing at the highest level.

COVID-19 sadly meant the 2020 season never took place, but the ladies team remains a vibrant and successful part of our club.

Senior Mens Team

Our Senior Men's team continues to compete well in the Sussex League and finished the 2019 season firmly in mid-table.

The 2020 season was disrupted by COVID-19, but the men's team have stayed in touch with each other through a regular quiz night, which many have actually found more enjoyable than playing water polo.

Awards

In conclusion:

Water polo has been particularly affected by COVID-19 because, even when the lockdown was released, there remained significant restrictions on how the game could be played.

We will therefore have a significant rebuilding job to do once restrictions have finally lifted, but we feel confident that the strength and commitment of our members will ensure we are able to do this.

As ever, we are always on the lookout for new players and volunteers so please do put yourself forward if you're interested in finding out more or getting in the pool.



Welfare Report

Welfare Officers: Zoe Meyer, Vicky Davies, Daphne Coutroubis-Greenwood

Since the last AGM in autumn 2019 we have welcomed two new Welfare Officers to the team. Vicky Davies (a Primary Teacher and a Masters swimmer with children swimming with the Club in squads, teaching groups and water polo), and Daphne Coutroubis-Greenwood (a GP with children swimming in teaching groups). We would like to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte Hoey very much for her dedication and support as a Welfare Officer from 2017-2019.

In the time since our last report the Welfare Team have investigated several incidents. These incidents took place before the first lockdown and were mainly to do with behaviour in the Changing Rooms. Pre Covid-19 we continued to run interactive workshops with swimmers where we thought they could help resolve current, and prevent future, incidents. We have received positive feedback from these.

The move to the new Pathway for the squads in January 2020 was managed sensitively with swimmers and Welfare had no issues highlighted to us. This was a great improvement on the moves communicated in August 2019 which had distressed some swimmers and their families.

Welfare was pleased to contribute to getting club protocols and procedures in place to enable the Club to begin operating again safely and as quickly as possible after the first wave of Covid-19. It was/is disappointing that the Club has no Covid-19 lead in place but despite this it was good to see all the different sections of the Club working together to get the Club operating again. Once reopened Welfare had no incidents reported and, as far as we are aware, by and large swimmers did keep to covid rules. We would particularly like to thank Coaches, Teachers and Covid Volunteers for doing their very best to ensure covid rules were followed (not an easy task).

Finally Welfare would like to thank the Squad and Para Swimmer Coaching teams for their efforts to keep in touch with swimmers during the 2nd and 3rd lockdowns. Welfare believe this will have helped swimmers and their families to look after their physical and mental wellbeing during these very difficult times.

Of particular interest we think involving Club Captains, and other swimmers, in running quizzes on Friday evenings has been great. On all Welfare courses we are asked to try to encourage our Clubs to involve our members in the running of our Club and this is a brilliant way to start doing this. It would be great if we could find a way to continue with this kind of involvement once we are back in the pool.

The Welfare Team