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# **Annual Report of County Activities 2024-25**

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## 1. Chair

I have now been in post for two years. In that time we have held many successful competitions for our athletes and made funding awards to a number of athletes and clubs.

We have once again provided financial support for some of our athletes to enable them to attend international competitions as part of National teams. I am proud that as a County we continue to assist our athletes wherever we can.

I was pleased to be present to see our County swimmers take part in the National County Teams Competition in Sheffield. Led by our County Coach, Matt Burnham, and our County Team Manager, Hannah Davies, we finished a creditable fifth in Division One.

I attended the London Region AGM as a representative of Surrey County. London Region is now a fully incorporated body with the closure of the unincorporated Association (Swim England London). The Region will now be known as Swim England London Limited. Debra Harris (Artistic Swimming) was appointed as President for 2025/26. Michael Laniyan (Newham) was appointed Vice-President. Alan Thurlow and myself remain on the London Board and we are both members of the Swim England Members' Forum.

Jeni Colbourne attended the South East Region AGM on the County's behalf. She reported that South East Region remains the largest of the Regions with 22% of the membership and 169 clubs. Peter Rycroft (Amersham) was appointed President. The post of Vice-President remains vacant. South East Regional Chair, Sara Todd, was recently elected to the Board of Swim England.

Both Regions continue to struggle with a lack of suitable competition pools and a lack of volunteers, both for the technical roles and Field of Play. It continues to be the case that the events we put on for our athletes would not happen without the teams of volunteers supporting the organisers. It is therefore imperative that



our clubs encourage their members to volunteer as officials and as field-of-play personnel.

As I said when I took on this role, I will only remain in post for a maximum of two more years. I am looking to our membership to step forward and to carry the Surrey County torch into the future. We need new people to join us on the Management Committee to provide some sort of succession planning, which will enable them to step into the roles which must be filled in order for the County to exist. Please think about what you can give to the County and make yourself known to any member of the current team.

Diane Gamble



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## 2. President

I was honoured to have been elected as President, and eagerly looked forward to my year in office. The year has been most enjoyable, and I have been given an insight into the breadth of talent and commitment across the County. Thank you also to last year's outgoing President, Carmen, for her support and kindness, and to Carole for stepping in when I wasn't free to fulfil some of my duties. The events I was able to attend in 2024/25 were:

Surrey Relays, LAC – September 2024

Inter-counties, Ponds Forge, Sheffield – October 2024

Surrey Diving Skills competition, Spectrum, Guildford – January 2025

Surrey Age Group championships, SSP – January/February 2025

Surrey Schools, Spectrum, Guildford – various dates

I was also thrilled to sign certificates for a great number of new County swimming records. Nearly all of my activities as President were at swimming events. A notable exception was being invited to the diving skills competition in Guildford – but more about that later!

I recognise that the role of President is limited to turning up at events, but we are the County's representative across all the disciplines, and are a cheerleader for all athletes – young and old – to do their best at their sport. I do feel that we may be missing opportunities to raise the profile of the County as a whole, through the activities of, or even just promotion of the County President. But that also has to be the choice of the incumbent.

One of my favourite events was the Inter-County swimming championships – a truly unique experience: two competitions running side by side made for an exciting but very noisy day. I was able to address the swimmers and wish them luck as we were leaving to go to the pool, and was delighted to support them throughout.

I think both President and athletes might benefit from being introduced earlier in the swimmers' journey in the County team and, to further enhance the relationship, perhaps even encourage the President to fully participate in the



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team activities onsite – and even at the pre-championships away-day, if practical and acceptable.

I also very much enjoyed presentation of medals at the County Age Group swimming championships this year, which not only publicly recognised the successes of the swimmers but was also a visual endorsement of a sliver of the work that goes on behind the scenes by the County. It is a format that I fully support and I hope it will continue.

Sadly, there was no opportunity for me to attend events in open water swimming, water polo or artistic swimming, although I have just recently been invited to attend the London Region Open Water Swimming championships at London Docklands at the beginning of July, which I will attend as a guest instead of as President.

I am delighted to hand over to Christina, a very worthy president for 2025/26, and I wish her well.

I was honoured to be invited to attend the Surrey Diving Skills competition at Guildford Spectrum in January, and I was made to feel extremely welcome. Having come hot-foot from the Surrey Swimming championships just up the road, I was aware that the whole diving event was being set up – in a blink of an eye – by just two people. As I watched the set-up swiftly unfold, similarities and contrasts with the swimming were clear. An understanding of the needs of athletes, coaches, parents and officials ran parallel with their expertise in the technology needed to run the meet efficiently. Clearly, this wasn't their first time running this competition, but throughout they fielded questions from all sides, and still found time to make me feel so warmly welcome and even made the effort to explain the rules, scoring and results so that I understood what I was watching. The divers were a delight to watch and I became an instant fan.

I am delighted to present this year's President's Plate to Fran Diaz Romero and Andy Hewat for the magic they perform at these diving competitions and their commitment, kindness and hard work.

Nicola Brett

### **3. Swimming**

We held our County Relay gala on 8 September 2024 at the London Aquatics Centre. This followed feedback from spectators and coaches after the 2023 gala held at K2 in Crawley. It was felt that K2 was not large enough to cater for our swimmers and spectators.

The relay gala is now run short course at the beginning of the season to provide a fun “back to the pool” event after the summer holidays and before other short course licenced galas begin.

We had over 1,000 spectators across the two sessions and over 800 swimmers took part. The support from the galleries was very noisy which gave the event a very energetic atmosphere. This year’s gala is on 14 September 2025. Please come along and enjoy the experience of a packed Olympic pool; or you could volunteer! The volunteering links are now open [here](#) on the meet page on the Surrey website.

We held the County Championships on 18/19 January and 1/2 February 2025. This is the first year that we adopted a consideration time in addition to a qualifying time. We received 3,783 entries covering 808 athletes from 28 Clubs and accepted 3,665. The rejected entries totalled 118 and were from the 1500m, 800m, 400IM, and 200IM. This compares to 2024 when we had 3,778 entries covering 805 athletes from the same 28 Clubs.

We ran a reserve list for the 1500m and 800m events which worked well and allowed rejected swimmers to fill lanes when we had withdrawals. However, this did require swimmers or their parents advising the events team that they were withdrawing. This did not happen in all cases and three swimmers missed out on a swim as a result.

We reintroduced medal presentations this year which has been well received by coaches and swimmers alike. The timing and the protocols adopted were



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improved for the second weekend and will be continued for the 2026 championships.

We awarded the Burvill Cup for the first time this year, in honour of Julie Burvill, to the most improved club at the Championships based on the percentage increase in Tinlin points from the previous year.

We launched a communication channel aimed at coaches, team managers, swimmers and parents using Telegram. This enabled the events team to broadcast important messages about the event and changes to protocols. Not all coaches joined this social media app but those that did found it useful. We will be launching a separate channel for the long distance waitlist in 2026 for swimmers and their parents to encourage an immediate response if we get a withdrawal.

We had a few technical difficulties during the first weekend with the equipment at Surrey Sports Park. The secondary strobe on the start box stopped working during Saturday and did not work at all during Sunday. This prevented us providing a secondary strobe for a deaf swimmer. The events team decided that the risk to us of not being able to run the second weekend due to an equipment failure was high enough to warrant the purchase by us of a Swiss Timing start box. We obtained the approval of our Treasurer and Chair and successfully deployed the start box for the second weekend. No technical issues arose in the second weekend. The start box will be used for all our swimming events going forward.

We have confirmed dates of 24/25 January and 7/8 February for the 2026 Championships.

Alan Thurlow

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## 4. Team Manager

The development pathway at county level is for 12-year-olds (age as at end of year) and is based on times recorded on rankings for the 200IM event. This has produced a huge increase in swimmers swimming this event nationally. Selection is not only based on their times but also on their age within the year (the year is split in two, those born Jan-June and then July-Dec). This allows the younger swimmers a chance to partake in these programmes. This year 36 swimmers were selected from 14 Surrey Clubs (the most selected to date).

Dan Burnham, our County Coach, led the programme and we had six skills coaches from 5 clubs: Jaz, Kirstie, Lorna, Nick, Sadie and Sam.

The in-person camps took place in November and June and concentrated on stroke skill development and turns, especially for the individual medley. Two pool sessions in a day and land training certainly tested a few swimmers, but with lots of exercises and interaction they managed to keep their focus.

In March, a Zoom evening was held which centred on health, diet and mental attitude.



At the end of the last camp, the Jules Burvill award was presented to Evie from Dorking.

This award is given to the swimmer, chosen by the coaches and team managers, who engages with the



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programme and develops from the learning. There were several swimmers in contention for the award but Evie captured the attention of the coaches and Team managers.

Dan said, “I have enjoyed my first year as County Coach and would like to thank the skills coaches, team managers and Stuart for their support. The swimmers this year really worked hard, and their enthusiasm showed in their behaviour. I am looking forward to working with a new group next season.”

I would like to thank Dan on his first year as County Coach. You have really filled the big shoes left by Stuart. I would also like to thank Justine Ryan and Amanda Partridge who have both assisted me in the role of Team Manager, which has allowed the County to run these events.

My report from the 2024 National County Team Championships, which was posted previously on the website, can be found [here](#).

Hannah Davies



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## 5. Masters

The Masters year started with the GB Long Course Championships attended by a number of our County. Following this our County Masters took place on June 29th at SSP. We are pretty much at full capacity with around 1100 individual swims. After a temperamental AOE behaved itself, we went on to enjoy a full day of swimming spiced up with several British Records.

Woking took the Ladies' trophy, but a resurgent and numerically superior Croydon took all the other Team trophies. We look forward to an even busier schedule this year!

Our Inter County Team almost reached what has seemed an untouchable peak over the years. Laura Kerrigan had marshalled the strongest team ever, only to lose by 8.5 points to Devon. Before the national scoring consolidation, we were second to Hampshire in our Regional Heat but pushed them into third place nationally. It was enjoyable to watch the protests!

As 2024 closed, the British Masters Decathlon saw Woking's Gina Heyn and Michelle Ware once again take the top two places while Mike Hodgson was edged into second place.

London hosted the recent 2025 GB Masters for the first time in many years. Woking once again posted numerous successes including British and European Records. Surrey Officials were also in attendance to help make this a really successful event.

The World Aquatics Masters take place later this year and we wish our competing members well.

As the year turns full circle and the Sun is highest in the sky, we, like the Druids, conduct our rituals and elect a President. Our President for the forthcoming year, Prof Christina Victor, is one of our finest Masters. We wish her well in the upcoming year and thank her and all her fellow Officials and Volunteers for their great support.

Jim Boucher



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## 6. Water Polo

The Surrey Water Polo League is superbly administered by Stuart Marsh and remains a well-supported competition by both teams and officials alike. All results and fixtures are visible [here](#) on “League Republic” and once input, match scores generate the league standings.

The competition comprises three divisions of Men’s teams with the lower divisions populated by a healthy mix of second teams and aspiring clubs. It is these lower divisions where many of our younger players develop, playing with and against senior players.

The County also runs a handicap knock-out event during the season with handicaps based on the previous season’s league standings. The County does not run Ladies’ or junior events as these are well covered by the London League.

Congratulations to last season’s winning teams:

Division One: Sutton & Cheam

Division Two: Croydon Amphibians II

Division Three: Kingston II

Tom Dwyer Handicap KO: Avondale

The League also provides a healthy environment for up and coming referees to learn their trade. Many of these referees are recently qualified and the Surrey League, being friendly in nature, is the ideal place to develop the skills and gain the experience required to progress.

Sutton and Cheam S.C. remain the dominant club in the County finishing sixth in the recently completed British Water Polo League and will rejoin the League in Division One when it restarts in September. Croydon have also maintained their BWPL status and will start next season in Division Three. Standout individual is Mhari Nurthen, who is currently part of the GB Ladies squad that has qualified for the World Championships in Singapore in July.

## **7. Schools**

Our first event of the season was last September with the Secondary Schools' Team event held at Guildford, Spectrum. Several Surrey schools were selected to swim at the ESSA national event at Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Birmingham on Saturday 16th November 2024.

Although predominantly dominated by Mount Kelly, Millfield and Repton, Guildford High School were placed 3rd to them, in the girls' junior freestyle and third in the medley event. In the intermediate girls' freestyle event, Guildford High placed second in the freestyle event and third in the medley.

Mention should also be made of Reigate Grammar, St Catherine's, Reed's, Notre Dame, Royal Grammar School, Woking High, St John the Baptist, Tormead, George Abbot, St Teresa's and St John's who all had qualifying teams attending, and The Hawthorns who had a team selected as reserves.

The Secondary Schools individual championships were held in January but unfortunately ESSA did not hold the annual Interdivisional in March, reportedly due to the fact the format is going to change for future Interdivisional competitions. Sadly, it is not going to happen again in 2026 as funding has been withdrawn.

ESSA have been holding a Summer Open Championships since 2019. This year it was held at K2 in Crawley over the weekend of 21st and 22nd June, although few Surrey swimmers took part in this. This is an individual event where swimmers represent themselves. They may enter directly, through their club or their school. It is open to all secondary school aged swimmers, and primary school swimmers that have reached the age of nine by the last day of the championships, including Para swimmers.

Our next event was the ESSA Primary Teams held in March with selected winning teams taking part in the South East Divisional round in May. The National round was held on Saturday 14th June at Sheffield and was attended



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by several winning Surrey primary schools – Boxgrove Primary, Guildford High School, Halstead St Andrew in Woking, Notre Dame in Cobham, St Catherine's Bramley, St Teresa's and St Hilary's in Godalming.

The results of last year's competition and this year's competition are not on the ESSA website as yet.

In March, the annual lifesaving competition, It's a Fish Out, for Primary Schools was held in Dorking with 23 out of a maximum 24 teams taking part. Boxgrove Primary School won overall. I am aware that some of the information I give out to schools is outdated, so I shall be reviewing what I send out to schools next year to include the "float to live" technique.

Both Surrey County ASA and SSSA each supported three swimmers, Ami Jones, Harry Robinson and Ella Silano, with bursaries of £250 per swimmer, to contribute towards their expenses for selection at the Under 15 World Games at Serbia in April.

Finally huge thanks must go to the Surrey officials who regularly support us, for without them, none of our schools' galas would take place. Thank you also to Michael Trotman from Guildford who has helped us this season with the electronics at Guildford. He has made a huge difference to both swimmers and the referees when running our galas!

All dates for next season will be found [here](#) on the Surrey County ASA website.

Carole Chaplin



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## 8. Disability

I am pleased to report that during the last year there was one para-training day arranged by the South East Region, which I attended.

It took place on 1st June 2025 at ACS International School Cobham, Surrey. Unfortunately, Surrey had no swimmers taking part.

The South East Region is hoping to run another para-training day near the end of this year.

Paul Finch

## **9. Artistic Swimming**

2024-2025 has been another great year for Artistic Swimming. Despite only having one artistic swimming club affiliated to Surrey – Kingston Artistic Swimming Club (KASC) – they continue to go from strength to strength, with membership remaining high and a constant stream of new members wishing to try out the sport.

The year commenced with the club attending the National Combo Cup competition. We placed sixth in Division One and seventh in Division Two. Fab results all round at what was a very high standard of competition.

Next came the Masters National Championships. Our duetists, Ellie Holland and Amelia Farr, placed 11th in the 18-24yr age group, followed by our Masters Team who placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the Combination Team 25-39yr age group. Brilliant results for our masters, who dedicate most of their time coaching the club's junior swimmers.

After 17 years of coaching at Kingston, our Head Coach Collette stepped down to spend more time with her family. The club are grateful for the years of dedication she has given to the club and to the swimmers.

From August through to December, the majority of our swimmers focus their attention on improving stamina, skill base, technical ability, execution and flexibility to ensure progress through our competitive grade system. A record number of grades were achieved this year, which are vital qualifications, as higher grades act as entry levels for higher divisional regional and national competitions.

This year, four swimmers – Bianca, Leyna, Lilia and Miranda – travelled to Mallorca to take part in a training camp led by world-renowned coach, Andrea Fuentes. What a fantastic opportunity to learn from a leading choreographer of our sport!

In November some of our swimmers attended the invitational Rushmoor Hill Figure Comp. Our swimmers did us proud achieving excellent results all round.



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We were sad to learn of the passing of Ray Geier, a Surrey Honorary Life Vice President, who passed away in November due to alzheimer's disease. Ray dedicated his life to the sport as a coach and referee and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

February arrived and the club attended the London Regional Figure competition with an impressive entry of 38 swimmers. With almost half of the total entries, we were the largest club entry by far. For some swimmers this was their first time competing at regional level. We were delighted to receive many medals across the board. Well done to everyone who competed.

This year, KASC swimmers qualified for their first ever National Age Group competition. Jodie Blake and Mabel Harrop competed in the 12&under category placing 54th and 62nd, whilst Lilia Camilleri and Aoife Comber placed 84th and 94th in the 13-15yr category. A fantastic achievement for the club and swimmers involved.

In April, our Rockets and Masters teams attend a senior and masters international competition - the Artistic Swimming Malta Open National Championships. Our Soloist Bianca Mocanu placed seventh in the Senior Free Solo, whilst duetists Leyna Belzekas and Zia Davies placed sixth in the Senior Free Duet. Ellie Holland and Amelia Farr placed first in the Masters Technical Duet and second in the Masters Free Duet. Our Senior Team of Leyna Belzekas, Lilia Camilleri, Aoife Comber, Zia Davies, Miranda Docherty, Florrie Hunt, Bianca Mocanu and Ella Wilson placed third in the Senior Free Team. Fantastic results, girls – especially as this was some swimmers' first international competition.

Last but not least, I am pleased to report that KASC attended their first Senior National Championships competition. Our Senior Rockets team placed 12th with their Free Routine and the Duet placed 15th with their Free Duet. An amazing achievement for the club and testament to the dedication and hard work of swimmers and coaches involved.



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With the London Regional Routine comp due imminently and our National Combo Cup and Master Championships due in July, the club are busy perfecting choreography, highlights and elements across all their respective competitive teams. We wish them well for the next few months!

Collette Crow

## **10. Diving**

The annual diving skills competition took place at Guildford Spectrum on Saturday 18 January, running parallel once again during the afternoon of the first day of the county swimming championships.

Overall entry numbers were similar to the previous year, with five 'guest' clubs joining us from outside the county: Amersham Swimming Club, Havering Cormorants Diving Club, Luton Diving Club, Maidstone Diving Team and Tunbridge Wells Diving Club. I am grateful to them for entering and helping to boost numbers, making for a more well-rounded competition experience for the athletes.

We were lucky enough this year to muster up just enough officials to be able to run the meet with three-station circuits. This format is one of the most interesting for spectators, with the scoreboard split three ways as groups of divers compete simultaneously on poolside, 1m and 3m. Participants perform two rounds at each station and then rotate around the pool until all three have been completed (six rounds in total). The winner is the diver with the highest combined-points-total from all three stations added together.

Medals were awarded to the top three county female and open competitors in each age category and to any 'guests' who ranked in the top three overall of their event. Thanks to Nicola, the county president, for joining us for the duration and presenting medals. We hope you enjoyed something different to your regular discipline and that we were able to enlighten you a little on ours.

Elsewhere, the county was saddened by the closure of Morden Park Diving Club in the second half of last year. Their shutdown was understood to be due to a coaching shortage and an ageing, diminishing volunteer workforce no longer able to take the club forward. This now takes the number of diving clubs in the county down to three: two in Surrey-London and one in Surrey-South East.



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On a more upbeat note, there have been some noteworthy county divers' successes at national level over the past 12 months.

At the Swim England Diving National Age Group Championships, held for the first time at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre in the West Midlands, last June, nine Surrey divers ranked top six in at least one of their events. Making it to the podium were Star Diving Club Guildford's Lily Houzego (D Female – 10/11), Florence Brindley (C Female – 12/13), Sophia Harris (C Female – 12/13), Tegan Fookes (A Female – 16/18) and Alex Cookson (A Open – 16/18). Also medalling was South West London Diving Club's Cai Tobin (D Open – 10/11).

At the Swim England Diving National Skills Finals, hosted by the East Region last July in Southend, five county divers made it onto the podium: Pollyanna Johnson (E Female – 8/9), Barnabas Quin (D1 Open – 10), Elodie Ladds (D2 Female – 11), Scarlet Quinton (B Female – 14/15) and Isla Llewellyn-Smith (B Female – 14/15). All were from Star Diving Club.

Last November, Lily Houzego and Cai Tobin competed at the Swim England Diving Talent Games in Leeds. The two-day competition, targeted at divers between eight and 11 years old, involved dry-land skills on day one and pool-based skills on day two. Lily came first in the pool and fifth overall in her age group, and was subsequently selected to attend a number of Swim England Diving Youth Development Squad (formerly Team Z) camps.

A mention must also be given to George Abbot sixth-former Lily Chandler, who represented the South East Division last December at the English Schools' Swimming Association Inter-Divisional Diving Championships. At this national meet at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, she won the female senior title for a second time.

This only leaves me on behalf of our discipline to thank county members for their continued support and I look forward to another dive-tastic year.

Francisco Diaz Romero