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## Carole Chaplin – Honorary Life Vice-President

Carole Chaplin had plenty to be cheerful about at this year's annual council meeting. Not only was the former primary school and swimming teacher made an honorary life vice-president, but she was also told she had passed her swimming referee theory with flying colours.

Carole learnt to swim when she was eight. "I swam recreationally, never competitively, apart from school galas," she said. "I had weekly lessons in a pool in Lincoln with two other school friends in my teenage years. I moved to the Wirral when I was 16 and didn't do as much swimming until I went to Chester teacher training college, where they had a pool which I used regularly."

She landed her first teaching job at a school in Sutton. A few years later she moved to another Sutton school that had its own outdoor pool. At the time the local education authority was willing to fund teachers swimming training, so she worked for her ASA swimming teacher qualification and advanced teacher later.

At her third school she would take pupils for swimming lessons to Cheam Baths. She also taught after school for Cheam Ladies SC at Sutton High School.

Around this time Carole joined the London Borough of Sutton Swimming Association [LBSSA] committee. She organised annual galas for primary schools on the Carshalton side of the borough, then for primary schools on the Sutton side of the borough. Many of them eventually dropped out, leaving just one gala that both Carshalton and Sutton primary schools attended.

From there, Carole was invited to be the LBSSA representative on the Surrey Schools' Swimming Association [SSSA] committee. She became treasurer not long after, a role she still holds some 40 years later. She also doubled up as general-secretary for a while. She is officials secretary too, responsible for pool bookings and organising volunteer officials.

From early on in her teaching career Carole attended a lot of galas. She has been officiating for around 40 years. She trained under the auspices of Dennis Griffiths, a veteran county official, championships organiser and twice past president. "I wore my navy C&A blazer with the Surrey crest sewn onto the pocket with pride," she said. As well as SSSA and county meets, she supports the Arena League and local club opens.

After a career break with two daughters, Carole ran her own swim school for a few years in Dorking. Her kids attended Newdigate Infant School which has an outdoor heated pool. She quickly got involved and 23 years later she is still involved, being its main caretaker, teaching all the swimming until this year, when she finally decided it was time to stop. She ran crash courses and has taught hundreds of children to swim there over the years.

"Carole is very committed to swimming," SSSA committee member Irene Holden said. "She always has a smile on her face and is very approachable. She will help anyone out if they have a problem. She gets things sorted quickly and efficiently without a fuss".

