

7. Chairman's Report

Opening

First of all, I would like to thank all the present committee members for their significant contribution in the running of the club this year. It is fair to say that this has been a challenging year. At times characters have been questioned and visions put to the test. I have to commend the committee on the way they have handled these difficult periods.

Constantly striving to show constraint and integrity. I can only admire their resolve when we consider that they gain no benefits from being on this committee other than the knowledge that they have played their part in the success and development of the club's young swimmers.

Without their sacrifice, and the sacrifices of the many other parents that volunteer their free time, the club would simply not exist. And let's not forget that this time is given up freely when they do have families and real jobs of their own to consider.

But this has been a committee that has stood strong in its belief that REN 96 is a club for all its members. Changes were identified from club surveys and acted upon. They have had the courage to dare to believe that this club can rise back to the position of being one of the best clubs in Scotland. And they have pursued high level development coaches that it is believed can make this vision a reality. Scottish Swimming have reciprocated this belief through their commitment of financial support over the next three years.

I would also like to express particular thanks to Linda Andrews who has supported the club in the position of Treasurer for the past six years. Linda has now come to the end of her term on the committee, but will

be leaving the club in a very strong financial position for its future endeavours.

She has been actively involved in just about everything that the club has achieved. From meet entries, Lanzarote organisation, coach hiring and progression, development opportunities for swimmers, fundraising and the list just goes on. On a personal level, as Chairman, Linda has been a great support to me while at times being my greatest adversary. She has never been one to shy away from a debate and has demonstrated her resolve many times at the committee meetings. But when you have Linda on side you could wish for no greater ally to help you achieve your goal.

I am pleased to say Linda will still carry on being involved in the club's finances until the new Treasurer is brought up to speed.

Coaches

I would also like to thank all our current coaching staff for their considerable contributions over the last year. We need to recognise that this has been a traumatic period for these coaches. As change brings with it uncertainty. While the club has entered a new dynamic it is fair to say that communication has not been where it should have been. Part of this can be put down to "entering the unknown" and the recent challenges put to the committee. But never the less, our current coaches have been left in limbo somewhat and it is my hope that after tonight we can remove that concern by finally agreeing on a financial solution to their hours. It is my belief that these guys have stood by the club in our time of need and we as members should endeavour to reciprocate this loyalty.

Club's direction

REN 96 is, at its core, a competitive swimming and Waterpolo club. We have just recently been reminded of that fact by the club's partners and it has been indicated that remaining as such would be at the centre of their future investment. East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure are keen to maintain the club's competitive status and hence, fulfilling their commitment of a level of service excellence to their constituents. While Renfrewshire Leisure have also indicated that they would be expecting greater involvement from the club in the Learn to Swim pathway for Renfrewshire swimmers.

As a club, REN 96 has taken the first steps to achieving these commitments. By employing our two new Development Coaches, Jimmy Orr and Ross McCafferty, the pathway for change has been initiated. It will now be up to the future Club's Management Team to support these initiatives and assist the new Development Team, and current Coaches, in returning REN 96 Swim Team back to the force within Scottish Swimming it used to be.

I can also inform you that the club has also been approached by Renfrewshire Leisure with the view of taking over the Renfrewshire Barracudas. This would be an important step forward for the club in fulfilling their commitment to securing the pathway for the young swimmers of the region.

Advancement

At last year's AGM I commented on the strength of the then 13-15 year old swimmers and how this bodes well for future success of the club. Sandy will talk in more detail about the club's progression and successes in his presentation. However, it is fair to say that this strength

has been diminishing somewhat with the departure of a number of key swimmers recently. As sad as this is, the foundations to the club are still strong. We are holding open discussion on such developments as the timetable and the way we will use our self employed coaches. We still have a number of senior swimmers who are progressing well. Their relationship with the two new coaches is starting to form and there have been a number of advancements in their technical abilities and speed training. Aspirations are high for next years SNAG's and these swimmers seem to have found a new spark for the sport they have given so much too.

We are also starting to see great improvements in the 9-12 year olds swimmers. These younger swimmers put up an amazing display of courage taking 1st placed in the Clyde coast mini league this year and second place in the Winter League. Beating accomplished teams such as City of Glasgow and South Ayrshire. They have also done extremely well throughout the years scheduled competitions. There have been a number of medals and point brought back to the club. These swimmer will be the rising stars for REN 96 and we are now seeing a broad selection of strength across all the age groups producing a solid platform of progression for the future.

It is my hope that REN 96 will continue to strive towards excellence, while at the same time making the club a positive reflection for our young swimmers.

Waterpolo

2019 has been another successful year for the water polo section.

The squad, started in 2005, and has made great strides in both league and cups matches with some very exciting games.

It is with great pride that the club can boast that 50% of the Scottish National Squad players are made up from REN 96 Waterpolo players. Much of this is down to the commitment and hard work of the Head & Deputy Head coaches Steve Burgoyne and Craig Hutchison.

This year the players have represented REN in:

- BWMF Cup in Spain
- Irish inter-regional in Bangor
- National Age Groups in Sunderland
- Inter-regional tournament in Walsall

Along with league and cup matches both at home, The RCP Edinburgh, NSA Stirling and of course TX in Glasgow.

The squads younger players are also coming along fantastically well and developing into a team of the future. The Squad is delighted to have the youngest registered water polo players in Scotland.

It is hoped that next year the Squad will:

- Enter teams across all age groups. In the under 15, under 17 and under 19 league and cups
- Compete in BWMF in Spain
- Compete in the “man up festival of water polo “ Liverpool docks (yes outside)
- Develop and start a mini polo league for under 12s in the west working with the district and all other west clubs.
- Populate the national teams

As the squad grows and with the ongoing support and additional training opportunities there is a very realistic pathway for some of the REN players into team GB.

Parents

This year Steven Hood and I have had the pleasure of working with some of the most amazing parent volunteers. Parents continually step forward and offer their services even if their children are not swimming, to support the club's activities and making the overall experience better for all our swimmers. This, I have to say, was highlighted at this years REN Open. When on the day of the competition a number of parents that didn't have swimmer competing offered their services to save the day. It was generally accepted throughout most of the clubs that attended this years Open that this particular competition was one of the best run events of the annual calendar. I can't help but be continually impressed by the selfless dedication these parents show.

I cannot thank you all enough for your support in making these events such a success.

Finally, I would like to thank Claire Borden for coming forward for the role of Club Secretary, Brian Hughes as Treasurer and Lianne Scott and Julie Keough who have taken up the position of Press & Publicity Officers. Thank you guys.

I firmly believe that the future for REN 96 is bright. The infrastructure for change has been put in place and there is a commitment within the committee to see this change through. REN 96 truly has the opportunity to advance and grow.