

Something like 14 years ago the children were having one to one swimming lessons at the Holiday Inn because we wanted to make sure that they were safe around water. David Hannah the coach told us that he had taken Rhiannon as far as he could and she was fine, because Rhiannon has swam for St Josephs in the primary schools gala and Rhiannon was competitive he suggested that we look at joining a club. He said there were two to choose from, from a parents perspective you could choose from Guildford City if you wanted to learn a language or do an open university degree (because you would spend so many hours poolside) or Wey Valley if you wanted something less intensive and more family friendly.

So we came down to the club one evening and the then Chair/lead coach made Rhiannon swim more or less non-stop for an hour. Rhiannon got out of the water in floods of tears and I thanked the coach for their time but turned down the offer of a place with the club and said that competitive swimming was not for us. Through floods of tears Rhiannon pleaded with me to join the club, not the first or the last time that I have failed to understand a woman's mood!

So thanks to the primary schools gala and Wey Valley's good reputation locally and some bloody mindedness on Rhiannon's behalf the club gained four average swimmers and the support of myself and Michelle.

If we look at where the club is now the headline pitch that David gave us about Wey Valley all those years ago does still ring true today. We are a community club providing swimming opportunities for all and we reach out to the local community through the two schools galas and the Surrey Youth Games.

We are blessed with you, a wonderful group of parents, prepared to give up a portion of your time to provide the children with so many swimming opportunities throughout the year. There are many in this room who deserve special thank yous, I think that I should send Ann round to give you all a special Ann hug one by one!

Sometimes what we do goes beyond swimming to include things like the tour, last year we took 42 swimmers to the IOW. Hopefully this will continue as a yearly fixture in the calendar and perhaps someone can take on the role of organising masterclasses with Olympians because the children missed out on this last year and I do think that they are worthwhile things to do that can have a lasting effect on the children.

Last year we finished the AGM one committee member short and I was very grateful to Helen Badiaya for stepping up and taking over Welfare from Sharon Giles to bring the committee up to the correct number.

Will will run through what has been happening in the water but I would like to express our gratitude as parents to Will and all of the teachers and coaches for the hours that they put in poolside with the children.

Will is 8/9 months into his Wey Valley career so to a certain extent he is still finding his feet and doing everything for the first time. Tonight for example is his first AGM, then we have his first Summer Sprints and so on. But I feel that he has hit the ground running, none of us should underestimate how daunting it would have been taking over from a Head Coach who had been around the club for so long and had stamped his DNA all over the club. But this is an evolution and not a revolution and it is down to everyone in the club to work with Will and his team to help them make the most of opportunities and to ensure that the children achieve their potential both in training and in galas.

Over the past year we have started to work more closely with Cranleigh Swimming Club and there are undoubted benefits to this. It has certainly helped us on a competitive level and helped the children to have access to opportunities to achieve PBs.

Working with other clubs is sensible, it happens in other sports so why not in swimming? Sharing officials, volunteers, training, coaches and sometimes swimmers makes sense and is beneficial for our children.

The ASA are encouraging clubs to work more closely together to share resources, in our ASA region there are now 20 networks where clubs work together in a formal way. There is one forming in the Guildford area and your committee has been looking closely at the pros and cons of joining the network. Other clubs involved are Cranleigh, Guildford City, Godalming and Elmbridge. Potential benefits include closed meets together, joint training for coaches, officials and young volunteers and better communication between clubs which has been an issue for years.

Having meet with the other clubs involved on a couple of occasions my personal recommendation to the new committee is to join the new network and be on the inside and part of this new grouping rather than sit on the outside and miss out on the opportunities.

Sadly we are losing someone who has been with the club for almost exactly the same amount of time as myself, in that time she has dealt with all of your children's ASA memberships, she has trained as an official and supported us at many a gala both home and away and she has spent numerous hours poolside teaching our children how to swim better. The club has been a better place because of her and I am not sure about the children's comments that she has the best shoes on poolside but they certainly will be difficult shoes to fill in the future. So if I may I would like to present a small gift from myself to Heather Edwards to thank her for everything that she has done for us and if you could show your appreciation too please.

I am grateful to Tamara and Vicky for taking over the schools galas from me, it is nice to know that they are in safe hands. Many of your children have been through the Surrey Youth Games and have benefited from that unique experience. I am hoping that someone will come forward and take that off my hands too because I would hate it to be lost to Guildford City or one of the private schools next year.

Over the years we have been very, very lucky as a club to have Mark Edwards as a volunteer, the amount of work he gets through for the club is more than a lot of full time jobs and I am not sure if people realise just how thoughtful and dedicated he is to the role. We have benefited for several years from his careful financial management making Wey Valley the best value swimming club in Surrey. Remember that Mark and the committee are not just planning for next week, next month or next term, they are thinking about the next year and what will happen the year after that to ensure that Wey Valley remains in such remarkable good health for the next generation of swimmers coming through.

During my time with the club I have had the pleasure and honour of meeting hundreds of wonderful parents who have done so much for the club and the children but I would just like to pay tribute before I go to Bob Cox and Ann Tizzard who are just as interested and passionate about swimming now as they have been for more years than some parents in this room have been alive!

In two years' time the club that Ann founded back in 1979 will turn 40, hopefully by then you will be planning your future at the new Spectrum with more pool time (possible if you are prepared to plan and fight for it) and creating even more opportunities for the next generation of children to make Wey Valley their home.

My children did not win medals at the counties, they did not qualify for regionals and if they won any age group cups I am not sure. But I do know that they are better people for having been part of Wey Valley, they are fitter and because of this they are better academically, and they performed better at other sports too, they have probably got more confidence in themselves as individuals and now that the two eldest are living independent lives they have turned back to swimming as a means of keeping fit. I know that through Wey Valley I have hopefully given my children the gift of fitness and better health that will now last them a lifetime. That is all I can ask as a parent. In return I have helped out a bit poolside over the years and I have got a lot of satisfaction from it personally and I urge all of you to get involved as much as you can with the club, you will not regret it.

I have not managed to learn a foreign language and I still do not have a degree but I have a life full of wonderful memories from volunteering with Wey Valley and I don't regret a minute of it.

Thank you for having me!