Report / 2014

I read this report with some sadness, as this will be my last AGM has Head Coach, as you know, at the end of August this year I will be retiring from coaching after 38 years as a professional.

I joined Winsford Swimming Club at the beginning of 2003 after spending 27 years plus coaching in the South East, I had no intention of moving north simply because of the success I had with swimmers in reaching and winning national titles where I was. When I became British Youth coach and later World Class Skills coach, I could see no further than M25 as to coaching anywhere else, but as they say, it’s funny old world and a phone call to a friend of mine, who happen to work with me at Brentwood in Essex who recently moved north and was working with Vale Royal Council, mentioned to me that Winsford Swimming Club were looking for a head coach, but that on its own would not be finically viable for me to travel north, so a joint coaching position was made between Winsford ASC and Knutsford SC which eventually sealed my fate and as they say, the rest is history.

Looking back over the past 11 years, I can reflect on what has been a fairly successful period in my time as coach to both Winsford ASC & Knutsford SC, changing attitudes and adopting new ideas has resulted in both clubs being able to produce swimmers to perform at the right level that suits their individual needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee past and old, especially Barry Keeling for his persistence in making my position possible; Barry was instrumental and the driving force behind a bold and very ambitious project to make South Cheshire assessable for talented athletes, with the intension of making Winsford a hub of coaching excellence.

What we have achieved at Winsford is truly remarkable; the history books will show that this club is now a top flight swimming club with a great team of people working tirelessly in the frontline of delivering and in the background of organising...we have grown into what is considered to be a highly motivated outfit with ambitions to become even more effective.

This season, so far, as been one of mixed emotion for me, having made the decision to retire, my thoughts of spending more time with my family and doing things I’ve always wanted to do (within reason) seems unreal and so final and yet, there is still a part of me that wants to stay involved in swimming, so, I do intend to remain a member of Winsford ASC and to help out where ever possible, as long as it doesn’t involved taking early morning training!

I want to briefly mention the season thus far, as you know, at last year’s national’s championships we had for the third time since I joined a relay team competing at this event and two swimmers representing Winsford in a number of individual events which included a 2K open water swim, resulting in the success at these championships for one swimmer, was a selection onto the English Talent Programme for the second year in a row.

The club for the first time in its history had made the final of the Arena Northwest Primer league and most recently, a group of swimmers went on a week’s training camp led by Dan Goodwin, as for me, I will be taking a very small group of swimmers to sunny Cyprus for some very intense training in an attempt to mould together another national relay team....well someone has to do it!

Competitions have seen a rise in personal success, but as a team, the club were runners up at this year’s North-Midlands championships and won its first Crusader gala under Dan’s leadership. Our next major event will be the County Championships; our swimmers will be put to the test yet again and with training being tailor made for swimmers to perform at their best, we should be in for an exciting time.

The club is now in the process of looking for a new assistant head coach and finding one with the same level of commitment and calibre as Dan’s Goodwins is going to be extremely difficult, Dan has been responsible for developing our younger swimmer to compete at the top of their physical and mental ability with good effect.

Dan has been with me for about 3 years and has gained sufficient knowledge in both club management and coaching awareness to take this club forward, I am confident that Dan will continue with the level of performance that has embraced this club over the years.

I want to end this report, by thanking all the swimmers past and present who have had to endure my cockney wit and coaching methods over the years. I arrived at a club with no direction, but I will leave a club in good shape, successful and progressive.

Good luck to you all.

Dave Pettengell

Head Coach