

Minutes

Minutes from the Northumberland and Durham Club Network Meeting
Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Venue: Online Meeting - Teams
Time: 19:15 – 20:15

Attendees:

Sarah Small – Swim England North East (SS)
Darren Maxwell – Derwentside and Gateshead (DM)
Carol Huntley – Ashington (CH)
Dawn Peart – NDSA Board (DP)
Sarah Judson – Durham City (SJ)
Brian Denholm – NST (BD)
Sarah Baylis – RISE North East (SB)
Eric Henderson – Sedgefield Water Polo Club (EH)
Chris Stonehouse – City of Sunderland Swimming Club (CS)
Chris Philpott – Peterlee Swimming Club (CP)
Ross Wilson – Alnwick Dolphins (RW)
Michelle Scott – NST (MS)
Mark Oldfield – Alnwick Dolphins (MO)
Tracy Donnelly – NDSA Board (TD)

Apologies:

Mark Seymour – Tynedale (MS)
Vicky Alderson – Sedgefield Water Polo Club (VA)
Simon Kestle – Darlington Swimming and Diving Club (SK)
Adele Graham – King – Sunderland Dive Team (AG-K)
Alicia Ryan – Tynedale (AR)

1. Welcome

SS thanked everyone for attending the meeting, first combined club network meeting, slightly different format to past club network meetings. Opportunity to share with clubs within the county not just within individual networks, also an opportunity to connect with NDSA board.

Plan is for the individual networks to meet twice a year on their own, or combined with another network, and then for all the networks to combine for whole network meeting, twice a year.

2. Sport Welfare Officer Update

SB gave an update on the work done by the Sport Welfare Officers within the county.

Here is the link to book on to any of their workshops (all free) and please pass on to anyone who may be interested in your club. [Buy tickets – Rise North East](#). Monday's is the club welfare officer workshop and Wednesday is preventing suicide

FREE Online Active Bystander Training for Aquatics Clubs, Wednesday 24th September 2025, 7pm: <https://asaner.org.uk/free-active-bystander-training-for-northumberland-and-durham-clubs/>

SB working with Eating Distress North East to produce some resources for aquatics clubs and parents. Can also run workshops on this topic if that would be of interest, please let SB know.

SB contact details are sarah.baylis@risenortheast.co.uk and please feel free to contact her if she can be of any help. If she doesn't cover your area, she can connect you with the Sport Welfare Officer who does. Anything you would like to see delivered in clubs, let SB know.

Swim England Welfare Officer information page:
<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/welfare-officers-toolkit/>

3. NDSA Board update / questions to the board

TD – DP has agreed to take on position of Chair of Management Board.

Finalising team for Inter-counties – Matt Allison NST will be lead coach this year, previously led by Becki McGuire (Morpeth).

Finalising beacon programme, hub sessions to run in Sunderland later in the season.

Ever closer to finalising incorporation status - once in place will come out the clubs with articles and new rules for everyone to have sight of.

DP – look forwards to meeting everyone throughout seasons. Always up for a coffee and chat, email address ndsachair@asaner.org.uk. In Spain atm, can meet when home.

BH – Have Chris Leighton and Tom Harforth stepped down from the Beacon? DP – Yes, both have left the programme. Have met with Matty Allison, Paul Woodley and Becky McGuire who will jointly run the programme. Expression of interest been sent to coaches within the county, 7 coaches coming along to support from 27th September onwards. Hoping to have parents meeting on 27th as well. Up until December 2025 going to go with the 3 Lead Coaches will see how it goes, review if Head Coach / 1 Lead Coach is needed and then if required go out to advert.

4. Updates from Swim England and Swim England North East

- **FREE Parents in Sport Workshop** – September 18th, 7:30pm focus on Performance Sport Parenting: <https://asaner.org.uk/event/a-performance-sports-parenting-workshop/>. This workshop is aimed at parents of children aged from 13 to 16 years of age who are progressing through their respective aquatic discipline pathway at either a county, regional or national level.
- **NER Online Athlete Development workshops for 2025 – 2026 season**, dates and times have been confirmed: <https://asaner.org.uk/athlete-development-workshops-2/>. Development of athletes aged from 11 to 16 years from across all our aquatic disciplines, **Nutrition, An Introduction to Sports Psychology and Goal Setting and Developing a Performance Lifestyle.**
- **Swim England Club Health Tracker** – only a handful of clubs from within N&D have accessed. Great tool to help grow your club, enables region and Swim England to provide you with bespoke support where possible, and helps to identify an common

themes / trends: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-club-health-tracker/>.

- Swim England information on **Club Growth and Retention**: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/club-growth/>
- **Swim England Club Link Programme**, funding still available: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/growth-club-links/>. This year, funding has been used to running diving sessions in Northumberland with City of Sunderland Dive Team and Water Polo sessions with Sedgefield Water Polo club.
- **Swim England Club Development National Forums**, Wednesday 19th November starting at 6.30pm, to register to attend / for more information, click on the following link: <https://forms.swimming.org/secdforum/>.
- **NDSA Competition Planning meeting** for swimming competitions for the 2026 – 2027 season, 23rd October, Darlington Dolphin Centre, 7pm start. Please ensure you have sent SS competition dates in advance of the meeting for consideration and if possible, send a representative from the club to the meeting.
- **Latest funding opportunities**: <https://asaner.org.uk/funding-opportunities-22/> and <https://asaner.org.uk/funding-opportunities-23/>
- **Swim England Artistic Swimming Officials Newsletter**: <https://asaner.org.uk/swim-england-artistic-swimming-officials-newsletter/> and **North East Artistic Swimming Newsletter**: <https://asaner.org.uk/artistic-swimming-newsletter/>.
- Updates from Swim England within their **Member News e-bulletin**, ensure OMS is up to date if you want to receive these.
- Region has **FREE electronic monthly newsletter**, more information on this can be found here: <https://asaner.org.uk/bulletin-testing-2/>.
- **CIO constitution update** - The Charity commission has now approved Swim England amendments to the CIO constitution and an update can be found on their website. Any questions please email lizzie.butcher@swimming.org.

5. NDSA Beacon Programme and Hub updates

Criteria has been finalised and selected athletes should receive an invite within the next 7 days. Selected athletes clubs and coaches will be notified of selections. Selection criteria will be available to view on the NER website.

First session will be Saturday the 20th September 2025, open policy for coaches to attend to support the sessions. Please let Tracy Donnelly know if you have a coach who would be interested in supporting the programme.

Plans are in place for the Durham, Tees Valley and Northumberland hub. Invites for these will be coordinated by the hub coaches.

NDSA Development camp – organisation of this is in progress, Lindsay Kinlen has been appointed as the Head Coach. Selection policy for county camps can be found here: <https://asaner.org.uk/mdocs-posts/county-development-swimming-selection-criteria-guidelines-2025-2026/>. Invites will be sent out within the next couple of weeks. Sessions on the 6th December 2025 and 16th May 2026 at the Sunderland Aquatics Centre.

6. Updates from county clubs

Sedgefield – Club Links Programme, intro sessions to water polo for younger swimmers starting this weekend, 17 people booked to attend. Female only sessions starting up first weekend of November. Have been looking for a head coach, looking for recruitment

guidance – anyone able to support? SJ – talked through what Durham have done previously – to share with EH: sedgefieldpolochairman@hotmail.com.

Durham – Just back to training after summer break, DCC would like to take more pool time back from the club, which is causing friction.

Sunderland – Putting an additional 1 day gala in October for non NER swimmers, 50/100/200IM, short races to gain experience. Opened for entries last weekend. Have a new HC who has just stated with us.

Newcastle – Head Coach Matt Allison part of Swim England Youth Performance squad, have had swimmers selected onto Swim England national programmes. Struggling with pool time, GLL want water pool time back. West Denton pool build not started, projected finish end 2027. Angelo Giani Contini training in Loughborough represented GB at world Uni games, highlights pathway and importance of keeping young athletes in the water.

Alnwick – Successful end of year Scottish and English champs, one of the best seasons. Challenges – offering continued pathways, keeping athletes interested in swimming, need more pool time and coaching resources. RW – all volunteer coaches, looking at mentor coaches to come in and support. Would love more pool time for swim fit type sessions to keep older swimmers in the pool. Looking at collaboration with Morpeth and Tynedale, hub sessions are great, need more long course access if possible.

SJ – Durham runs a Young Volunteer programme where young athletes train and volunteer and this has been successful and keeps them engaged in the sport and training.

Derwentside & Gateshead 1 swimmer at Youth Olympics, Lyndon Longhonre just broken world record for first quadruple amputee to complete an Ironman Triathlon in less than 24 hours. Consett pool is shut again, challenge now with pool time. Paul Woodley is now coaching performance squad coach for Sunderland and D&G based out of Sunderland. Both clubs coming together, financially works well as sharing cost and resources, another L3 / Senior Coach has come in to support from another club in county. Hoping to create a pathway for athletes.

Ashington – Looking at sessions that aren't well attended, planning galas for swimmers to attend this season.

Peterlee – CP working with Derwentside and Gateshead and Sunderland as another L3 coach. Peterlee only just back in the water. Over the summer have had interest from people wanting to join the club, nearly at capacity with the pool time we currently have. Top squads feed into pathway with Derwentside and Gateshead and Sunderland to move people along to stop bottle neck.

7. Workforce development

- **Team Manager Courses** – please email Linda at Linda.Tjaguns@swimming.org if you are unable to find a course on our website events calendar to book onto.
- **Time to Listen courses** – please email Linda at Linda.Tjaguns@swimming.org if you are unable to find a course on our website events calendar to book onto.
- **Swim England England Good Club Governance workshops** continue to run, important for club affiliation.
- **Buddle, Club Development workshops** including Financial Management, Leadership and governance, Future planning and raising money : <https://asaner.org.uk/club-development-workshops/>.

8. Club Affiliation

- At the **next panel**, 9 clubs within the county are due their Club Affiliation: *Aqua Force, Ashington, Blyth, Chester-Le-Street, Hartlepool, Sunderland City Dive Team, Tynemouth Diving Club, Consett and Transplant Swimming UK.*
- Please ensure contact details are up to date on OMS.
- As a reminder, please check the portal for updates to any templates.

9. AOB

FREE photocopier for a club to use, in good working order, let SS know if interested!



10. Date for next meeting

SS to share individual network meeting dates, next combined network meeting planned for Spring 2026.

Action Points	Who
Distribute meeting minutes	SS
Schedule next club network meetings	SS