



Northumberland and Durham Swimming Association Minutes of the ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING held on Wednesday 13 May 2026

The meeting opened at 6.35pm

There were 25 voting delegates and 12 non-voting in attendance and the meeting was quorate

1. N&D Management Board Chair, Mrs Dawn Peart, welcomed delegates and guests to the final ACM of Northumberland & Durham SA as the County has now (as of May 2026) incorporated as Northumberland & Durham Aquatics Ltd.

Mrs Peart then introduced the members of the NDSA Board of Management and thanked them for their support and assistance since she took on the role of Chair in September 2025. She also thanked the previous chair, Mrs Nicola Atherton and departing Board Members, Mr Howard Leighton, Mr Chris Leighton and Mr Ray Gordon for their contribution to the county.

The Secretary then gave a brief overview of the huge contribution Ray Gordon has made to N&D and his service to the Management Board for over 25 years, describing him as a fountain of information who was always ready to put his vast knowledge and experience at the disposal of the county. She described Ray as straight-talking, honest in his views and opinions and whilst he could appear intimidating until you got to know him, he was always worth listening to and, in most things, inevitably right. He has stepped down due to deteriorating health and will be greatly missed.

She said the Board wanted to propose Ray's significance to N&D was recognized and celebrated by appointing him as Honorary Life President of the county. This was upheld unanimously by attendees.

2. Apologies: Mr & Mrs Gordon, Mrs D Gibson, Mrs K Smith, Mr & Mrs Johnston, Ms B McGuire, Mrs N Hughes, Mrs R Dunphy-Brook & Mr S Morris (MASC), Mr B Denholm (NST), Mrs J Murden (AquaJets)

3. **Minutes of the previous AC meeting** (held online on 21 May 2025)

These had been circulated as part of the Agenda and there had been no questions raised. There were no questions raised by attendees and these minutes were accepted by Council.
(prop D Peart, seconded G Robinson)

4. **Correspondence** – none received by midnight on 6 May 2025.

5. **Treasurers report**

The accounts had been circulated, with confirmation they'd been reviewed by the IE, Mr G Currie.

The Treasurer reported that although the County had a healthy surplus at the present time, it was already seeing increased expenditure. There had been extra costs to run the Championships such as increased medal costs and the introduction of parking charges as SAC and one-off legal costs in relation to Incorporation. Going forward it was expected that pool hire costs will increase and the County will be allocating additional funding to all disciplines and continuing to support the Beacon programme.

6. **Election of officers**

Only 1 nomination had been received for each place on the Management Board so no voting was required.

The following people have been elected:

Chair	Mrs D Peart (NST)
Secretary	Mrs T Donnelly (NTyne/ D&G)
Treasurer	Mr G Robinson (D&G)

Board Members – Mr D Low (DCA), Mr D Maxwell (D&G), Mr C Cook (MASC), Mr C Hulme (Peterlee), Mrs L Mclelland (GSSC), Mrs A Graham-King (Sunderland Diving), Mr E Henderson (Sedgefield WP), Ms B Maguire (Morpeth SC).

Para-Swimming will also be represented on the Board by Ms J Barber (Hetton SC) / Mr K Hall (Teesdale TS)

The nominations for Mr Cook and Mr Hulme were received after the published closing date so delegates were asked for any objections to those nomination – none raised.

Following election/appointment in previous years the following all remain in post:

Elected Past Presidents

Mr D Beadle (since 2015)

Mrs D Gibson (since 2015)

Mr W R Gordon (since 2015) – now elected at Life President

The Board will continue to invite Mrs S Small (SENER) to attend meetings as the non-voting regional representative.

The following appointees were confirmed as remaining in their roles:

Honorary Solicitor: Ms V Dobbie

Championships Manager Swimming; Mrs B Maskell

Swimming Officials Advisor: Mrs C Johnston

Masters Swimming Advisor: Mrs J Edwards

Welfare Officer Mrs Tracy Donnelly

Medical Adviser: Vacant - To be appointed by the Board

7. Report by Chair of the Management Board

This had been circulated in the Agenda. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the numerous clubs she had been able to visit and highlight some of the events attended including training sessions and competitions and discussions with suppliers, especially NESS Swimwear, who have generously provided the County with some new banners showing the new N&D Aquatics name. She highlighted some successes in the last few months – completing Incorporation, finalizing a MoU with SENER and agreement of the costs for their continued support services, the continued success of the Beacon programme, supporting Gateshead Artistic Swimming to run their first county competition and supporting both the first Masters development day and a county masters competition, both of which had huge support.

Looking forward, The Chair highlighted that 2027 will be the 130th anniversary of the establishment of Northumberland & Durham as an ASA (now SE) affiliated County and the Board will be keen to hear from clubs, athletes & parents about ways we can mark and celebrate this and engage more with our members. Future focus will include continuing to support clubs with governance and safeguarding, looking at ways to increase athlete retention, support and develop our workforce and coaches, recognize and celebrate our members, invest in our digital infrastructure with our own county website and more community engagement. She also pledged to make the Board more visible and accessible.

In line with 2027 being our 130th anniversary the Board are delighted to announce that we have been successful in reinstating the roles of County President & President-Elect.

Our President for 2026/27 is Mrs Nicola Hughes, a member of Durham City Aquatics and the President-Elect is Mrs Joan Edwards of Derwentside&Gateshead.

We will be marking Mrs Hughes's election at the Festival of Aquatics on 6 June at SAC.

8. Beacon Programme Report – P Woodley

The Beacon programme continues to provide the county's leading swimmers with access to high quality long-course training at Sunderland Aquatics Centre. Originally established in 2008 with funding from SE, the programme has been funded by N&D County for the last 12 years and continues to play an important role in supporting athlete development across the county.

Selection onto the programme is based on high performance standards including GBR senior and junior international selection, national finalists at the 2025 Aquatics GB Summer Nationals, top 15 British rankings and includes selected Parawimmers from the World Class Programme. This year there are 35 swimmers on the programme and it offers 3 sessions each week.

Sessions are delivered in stroke specific groups e.g. Wednesday is split as freestyle/backstroke – IM/fly – breaststroke. The sessions on Thursdays and Saturdays are also delivered as stroke specific. All sessions have good attendance but Saturday remains the busiest session.

At the start of this season the county were challenged by the departure of two senior coaches from the sport, one of whom, Chris Leighton, had a long association with the programme. The remaining lead coaches – myself, Becki Maguire and Matty Allison continued to deliver the sessions with support from several club coaches, including Martin Hall, who has now joined long-term and is a pivotal member of the team, particularly since Matty also had to step down from the programme. Without Martin's support and that of the club coaches who assisted when available we would have struggled to maintain the current delivery standard. We would encourage more of our county coaches to become involved in the programme whenever possible, irrespective of whether or not they have swimmers in the group. Coach engagement remains important to the future development of the programme.

In addition to the Beacon, the county also supports a number of 'Hub' sessions that operate on a rotational basis with attendance offered to clubs in the county networks.

- Tees Valley Hub currently has 41 athletes attending and has delivered 5 sessions this season
- Northumberland has 17 athletes signed up and has delivered 9 sessions
- Durham also has 17 athletes signed up and has provided 5 sessions
- There is currently no take-up from Tyne&Wear and we have been unable to run any Parawimming Hub sessions this season, although hopefully they will resume in the near future.

I'd like to finish by thanking all our swimmers and their parents for their continued support and understanding through this transitional, and challenging, season. We are working extremely hard to continue delivering high-quality sessions that complement the swimmers' home club training so together we can help our athletes progress to the next level.

9. Championship Report – Mrs B Maskell

This had been circulated with the Agenda. There were no questions and the report was accepted. The Chair thanked Mrs Maskell and her team (Richard Burns, Craig Brotherton, Tracy Barnett) and volunteers for delivering another hugely successful championship.

10. Artistic Swimming Report – Mrs L Mclelland

The report was circulated with the Agenda and it was noted that it contained a lot of information about the progress and success of the club and members, the appointment of a new head Coach, increased competitive participation and that the club ran their first 'county' competition in November 2025 and plan to run another event this year.

11. Diving Report – Mrs A Graham-King

Tynemouth Diving Club: Operating out of Tynemouth Pool the Club continues to offer Learn to Dive (LTD), Squad and Masters sessions, however they remain non-competitive due to the lack of facilities they feel that they can offer. They do not wish to change this however Sunderland continues to have a close relationship with the Club. Sunderland attended their internal Club competition in 2025 and we opened this up to the Sunderland adult divers. They were allowed to participate as 'guests' under Tynemouth's insurance. This was a great event and offered Sunderland divers with no competition experience a fun, non-pressurised environment to participate. Like other Clubs in the north-east they continue to struggle with coaching cover and but aim to develop their older divers into coaching positions.

They did have some remedial board issues earlier in the year, however they have been resolved.

Sunderland City Dive Team: Sunderland started 2025 with a reduction in Squad size again – the knock on effect of this is always reduced fee income which ultimately impacted on ability to compete in competition. However regardless of this the following competitions were attended:

- Shipley Novices
- Steel City Skills
- NER Qualifiers (Leg 4 Syd Boothroyd Trophy)

- White Rose Skills
- Santa Skills

CPD & Qualifications:

- 2 new Level 1 Coaches gained qualification
- 2 new Judge 1 gained qualification (one parent and one L1 Coach)

All qualification costs and associated expenses were covered by SCDT. There were hurdles in facilitating engagement from Everyone Active which took from November to February (2026) and senior level intervention was necessary for the process to be completed. This has delayed the candidates gaining experience, however both new Coaches (Yvie Brown and Gabriel King) will be supporting the Club at the Festival of Aquatics in 2026.

Committee: The Welfare Officer (Joanne Norton) notified the Committee of her intention to stand down at the AGM in 2026 due to her son wishing to move towards coaching upon reaching the age of 16. This will mean that going forward we will need to engage a new WO.

Additional Club Activities:

Festival of Aquatics – June 2025: As a Club, Sunderland engaged with the NER and supported the delivery of the Festival of Aquatics. Thanks is extended to Sarah Small for her continued efforts in taking this event forward and actively promoting the minority aquatic disciplines. There were a small number of transfers into the LTD programme – and it also achieved great cross-engagement between the different aquatics activities. Tesco Community Fund also very kindly supported the event.

Club Links Programme – Easter 2025: As a Club Sunderland engaged in the Club Links programme during the Easter Holidays delivering poolside diving activities at both Hexham and Cramlington pools where they don't have access to full diving facilities.

This followed on from Sarah Smalls Club promotional development activities and Mark Seymour from Places Leisure expressing an interest in being able to deliver different holiday activities for their customers.

The NER supported the cost of a 12" Poolside Block which meant that Coaches were able to engage children in basic diving Skills and skill chains. One child transferred to the LTD programme in Tynemouth which is always a positive outcome.

Everyone Active: We continue to have our challenges with Everyone Active as a service provider due to their control over divers entering out Club Squads – however the LTD programme did expand and grow throughout the year and adult diving is still supported.

Darlington Diving Club (operating under Darlington ASC): Darlington continue to operate under the wing of Darlington ASC and have a fully subscribed LTD programme delivered at the Dolphin Centre in Darlington.

Diving Squads: Throughout 2025 Darlington started to develop a new Skills Squad driven by Chris Copper who was newly qualified as a Level 2 Coach in 2024. They didn't compete fully in the 2025 season however attended Shipley Novices and Santa Skills towards the end of the year.

The National Age Group Squad led by Steve Jackson attended the following Competitions:

- Syd Boothroyd NER Grand Prix (Legs 1, 2 & 3) NAG Qualifiers
- G-STAR Trophy
- Swim England NAG Finals
- Scottish NAG Qualifiers & Thistle Trophy

Both Evan Cooper and Alexa Cooper excelled at the NAG Finals with Evan taking Gold in both 1m and 3m Group C Open and Alexa achieving 10th in 1m and 14th in 3m in the younger year of Group C.

Evan was subsequently offered a trial and entry into Team Z of the GB Talent Development pathway. Alexa has also made very progressive moves forwards since this competition and they have both moved into Junior Elite Competition in 2026.

12. Swimming Report – Ms B Maguire

The report was circulated with the Agenda. There were no questions and the report was accepted by Council

13. ParaSwimming Report – Ms J Barber

The county's para swimmer have been competing in Northumberland & Durham County Championships and the North East Regional Youth and Open Championships.

Para swimmers compete along with abled bodied swimmers. Multi Class is how the different classes can compete on a level plane. In multi class swimming each swimmer receives points for their swim, the closer to the world record in their class they achieve the more points will given, with in the structure of the event it the swimmers with the highest points not the the

fastest time who will take the medal awards. The awarding of medals also differs, it is the minus rule, if the amount swimmers competing in a specific race, if there are only three swimmers they award only two medals, if only two swimmers they award only 1 medal and if only one swimmer that swimmer needs to beat the entry to be awarded the gold medal.

Northumberland & Durham Championships 2026

At these championships there were 2 swimmers

Tia Johnson S10 Derwentside & Gateshead

50m Freestyle 32.65 607points. 1st

50m Backstroke 34.92 745 points. 1st

100m Backstroke 1.14.87 1st 707 points

200m Backstroke 2.37.65 760 points 1st

Mia Wiseman S15 Loftus Dolphins

100 Freestyle 1.04.77. 1st

100 Backstroke 1. 13. 70 2nd

NER Youth/Open 2026 Championships

Andrew Beharie S14 Ashington/NEDSC

200 Free 2.32.52 388 points rd

400free 5.32.44 402 points 3rd

50 Butterfly 30.98 491 points 1st

50m Freestyle 29.02 495 points 2nd

Scarlett Jones S14Darlington

50 Freestyle 39. 19 300points 5th

200 Freestyle 3.13.52 195 points 5th

400 Freestyle 6.48.49 279 points 6th

Tia Johnson S10 Derwentside and Gateshead

400 Freestyle. 5.26.27 530points

100 Butterfly 1.24.42 466 points 1st

50m Backstroke 34.51 786 points

100 Backstroke 1.14. 40 1st

14. Water Polo Report – Mr E Henderson

The report was printed in the Agenda and accepted by Council.

15. Masters Swimming Report – Mrs J Edwards

The report was circulated with the Agenda and accepted by Council. Masters swimmers in the county have again enjoyed a highly successful year and it was great that the County could support a Masters Development Day at SAC in January that was hugely over-subscribed and after an absence of several years, a county competition in April

16. Swimming Officials Report – Mrs C Johnston

The report was printed in the Agenda and accepted by Council.

17. Gray Award

These are made in memory of Agnes Gray, a long-serving former officer and benefactor of the County and are awarded to any member of an N&D affiliated club (or exceptionally to a non-member) whose service to swimming within the Association's area is judged by the Management Board to be deserving of recognition. Up to 4 awards may be made each year.

No nominations were received in 2025 and none for 2026 as yet. If a club/member wishes to submit a nomination they can email the information to the secretary – ndsasecretary@gmail.com

Previous recipients are

18. Athlete of the Year

The Board have nominations from all disciplines and will announce the recipients of the 2024 and 2025 awards after their meeting following the ACM.

19 Northumberland & Durham SA County Records (Swimming)

The latest version of the county records is available on the website.

20 Northumberland and Durham Counties ASA Board Minutes

No questions had been received and nothing was raised at the ACM

21 Any Other Business

There was no further business raised and the meeting closed at 7.45pm. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and requested Board members remain for a short meeting.