

Biographies of HSC trustees 2023 / 2024

Ros Miller – Chair of board of trustees

I am a solicitor, specialising in company law, and as part of that role I regularly advise boards on governance issues. As Chair I have overall responsibility for the effective operation of the board of trustees and I also provide strategic and management support to the Club's Operations Team. I have been a trustee since 2016 and Chair for the last 3 years. Through my professional work, I have a particular interest in the Club's constitutional structures and documents.

I have loved outdoor swimming since I was a child and I've swum in some amazing places as an adult. However, every time I walk through the gates to the Lake I can't believe how lucky I am to swim here. I'm proud to be supporting the Club through my role as a trustee and I'm so pleased to see our fantastic group of paid staff and volunteer trustees working to develop the Club's operations and facilities for the future.

Simon Bannister

I am a very keen swimmer and I am never happier than when I am wet. Swimming and the Lake help me manage my mental health from my chosen career and I want to use the skills I have learnt to benefit our club. I see technology as an enabler which I hope will help keep the lake the special place it is. You can often find me hitting the boards as this is one of my favourite things to do as well as a swim to the bay on a sunny day.

A bit about me professionally, I have 24 years of IT Industry experience from being an IT Support Technician in 1998 to being a Chief Information Officer (CIO) for an AIM listed PLC today. I am accountable for the functional IT Operations (22 members of staff) and Governance for the Group of companies (c180m revenue). I have written and managed the delivery of the Group IT strategy and its associated yearly budget (5m). I believe that these skills stand me in good stead to help the club as the IT aligned Trustee for the benefit of us all.

Charles Booth

I have been a member of the Swimming Club since the mid-1990s and have always loved it as a local haven, sharing it with family – as my daughters grew up - and friends and other lake members.

My professional background is in local government and then higher education – I worked for Bristol Business School for almost 30 years; retiring as an Associate Professor in January 2021. I am a trustee of another Bristol charity, and have been a trustee of the Swimming Club since 2019. I am presently carrying out a review to investigate possible new systems and structures for the management of the Club, and particularly looking at the roles and responsibilities of managers and trustees. Like the other trustees I am immensely proud of the Club's achievements and development over the past few years, particularly of the way we have weathered the challenges presented by the pandemic, and of our resolute pursuit of our charitable objectives, supporting greater access and diversity at the lake.

Alan Giles

Since childhood I have always swum outdoors, initially at Tooting Bec Lido, South London and then at The Lake after moving to Bristol.

I fully appreciate the great benefits, mental and physical, of open water swimming and how fortunate we are at Henleaze Lake to have such a beautiful environment.

In the past I organised the Gloucester County Open Water Championships at the Lake to provide opportunities for County Club swimmers, adults and juniors, to participate in open water swimming .

I was a practising chartered accountant until retirement a few years ago.

I have served as a Trustee since the establishment of the Charity, and I have been involved with sub-committee work as and when required.

Bearing in mind the public benefit responsibilities which the Club has as a charity, I have been pleased greater usage of the Lake has been achieved all year round. I fully support greater communication, access and diversity at the Lake and improved use of the Club grounds.

Daphne Hall

I have worked in the advice sector for over 30 years first as an adviser with Citizens Advice and then as a welfare rights adviser at a psychiatric hospital and at Bristol City Council. Since 2014, I have worked for a small charity (rightsnet) that runs a specialist social welfare law website (covering social security, employment, housing, debt and community care law) that serves the advice sector.

I am also the Vice Chair of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) - an umbrella organisation of welfare rights organisations across the UK. I represent NAWRA as a stakeholder in meetings with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and I have also given evidence to Parliamentary Committees to help them hold the DWP to account.

I think I bring to the Board an understanding of employment issues, particularly in relation to rights and responsibilities as well as skills in liaison and communication. I also have a keen interest in increasing our social prescribing and our wider usage membership to bring the benefits of the lake to as many people as possible.

I have lived in Henleaze since 1998 and am a huge fan of outdoor swimming. I applied to join the lake as soon as we moved here and have been a member I think since 2000. The lake is hugely important to me as I know it is to all its members - a place of serenity in the middle of the city. I want to use my skills to help maintain and enhance the lake and its surroundings, to bring together the lake community, and to enable as many people as possible to share in such a special place.

Bethan Harris

I am a facilitator and sustainability strategist, with over 15 years' experience working with teams, communities and organisations to take action on social and environmental issues, ranging from loneliness in cities and workplace mental health, through to climate change and youth voter turnout. A lot of my work also focuses on helping people connect to nature and wellbeing. I joined the board in late 2022 to bring a specific focus on inclusion and diversity to the lake.

I first discovered wild swimming in 2010 after the loss of my father in my early twenties. Since then swimming has been a constant source of positive wellbeing in my life. Whilst the benefits of wild swimming are well documented, sadly it is a hobby that benefits far too few people. I'm interested to explore opportunities for people from underrepresented backgrounds to participate in swimming in this very special place as well as how we can make the lake more welcoming to everyone who uses it.

Nicola Harwin – Vice Chair

A Bristol resident for 45 years, I've been a Winter Dipper and Lake member for the last 7, and was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2021.

I have over 40 years' experience in the charity sector, 25 of those at national level with Women's Aid, the national domestic violence charity, including organisational and strategic development, financial management, fundraising, training and resource development, HR, and communications. As CEO, I worked with internal and external stakeholders – local membership services, service users, staff, government, funders, politicians, legislators, media, research bodies, and a wide range of other organisations both in the UK and internationally.

Now retired from full-time work, I work part-time at Fairfield School and UWE as an exam invigilator, sing with four wonderful Bristol choirs (I'm the concert manager for Gurt Lush Choir), as well as supporting local and international fundraising initiatives for community projects.

I am fully committed to helping maintain the Lake as a special and unique resource for the Bristol community and enjoy using my skills and experience to support the governance and development of the Club. As a member of the Board's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, I welcome the commitment to increase diversity and to widen access, and am supporting the work of the management team and the Board to achieve that objective.

Bronwen Lewis

I have been a member of Henleaze Lake since 2005 and am a keen Winter Dipper. When I was young, I used to swim competitively and at school I swam the Channel in a relay. For some time I didn't swim much, but being a member of the Lake changed this and I now swim as often as I can, usually outdoors, mainly in the Lake - and it keeps me sane! I have worked in urban regeneration, organisational change (people, process, premises and technology) and safety culture for public and private sector organisations.

As a management consultant I help organisations to change, with a particular focus on engaging people in the change process. I was a school governor for 10 years; I was Chair of Governors at Christchurch Primary School and also a governor at Cotham School where I was Chair of the Finance Committee.

I became a Trustee of the Lake in 2021 and am enjoying being part of the team working to develop and deliver the strategic aims and objectives, while protecting the unique character of the Lake.