Henleaze Swimming Club
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Sunday 5th October, 17:00 St Peters Church Hall, Henleaze

Attendees: 91 in room, 10 joining via Zoom
For verified poll results please see Appendix 1.

1. Welcome by Ros Miller (RM), Club Chair

RM welcomed all attendees, both in person and on zoom to the 2025 Annual General Meeting of Henleaze Swimming Club. RM apologized for the rescheduled meeting due to the weather and explained that next year it would be preferable to hold the meeting at the lake, but this would be looked at closer to the time.

RM introduced the rest of the Trustees and the Operations Team to the meeting.

Ellie Day-Zylinski – a Trustee for the past year and takes a lead on Human Resource items.
Alan Giles – a long time serving Trustee who leads on Safeguarding
Nicola Harwin – Vice Chair of the Board and has been a Trustee for 4 years. Nicola leads Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work.
Andy Lambert – the Treasurer of the Club who has been a trustee for the last 2 years
Simon Bannister – a trustee for 3 years who leads on IT and is also the Chair elect.
Julian Pyrke – a Trustee for the past year with lead responsibility on Legal and Constitutional Issues.
Daphne Hall – working as a Trustee for the past 4 years, generally supporting the Board in all work and specifically EDI.
Bronwen Lewis – a member of the Finance Committee, and formerly the Club's Treasurer, who has been a Trustee for 4 years
Charles Booth – previously Vice Chair who has been a Trustee for 6 years
Ian Duncan – a Trustee for the last year, with lead responsibility for facilities development
Valerie Harland – leads on Fund Raising and has been a Trustee for a year.

Josie Evans – General Manager
Esther Brooker – Deputy General Manager
Kate Davis – Clerk providing administrative support to the Club and specifically the Board of Trustees.

RM explained the process of voting in terms of the questions highlighted on the agenda with the option to vote Yes, No or Abstain.

2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM – Ros Miller, Club Chair.

A vote was taken to approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM). The results are summarised in Appendix 1, with no matters arising.

3. Members' Annual Report 2024 - Ros Miller, Club Chair.

The 2024 Member's Annual Report had been circulated for information with the AGM invitation and agenda. RM highlighted that the report gave a full review of the year's activity at the Club and that any questions regarding this would be taken at the end of the meeting.

4. Financial Aspects of the Members Report, Andy Lambert, Treasurer.

AL started by thanking Bronwen Lewis for her work as Treasurer until she stepped down from the role at the end of last year. Bronwen had been central to developing the internal Financial Reporting and implementing the financial software package, Xero. In addition, Bronwen played an important role in developing a number of financial processes and procedures for the Club. Bronwen continues to serve as a trustee and as a member of the Finance Subcommittee.

AL highlighted there was a lot of financial information in the members' report but had a few key items that warranted emphasis to the membership.

- The Club has continued to develop budgeting, reserves and treasury policies, reporting and other financial processes, to improve information for Trustees and members, to allow better financial planning, provide more data for decision making and to safeguard the Club's assets.
- In September 2024 a new bank account with Charity Bank was opened, to reduce exposure to a single bank, access higher rates of interest and on ethical grounds. The Club is currently in the process of opening another account, with Triodos bank.
- Since the last AGM, the Club has completed a change of the accounting reference date ("Year End") from 30 September to 31 March. This was to align the Trustee Annual Report and AGM reporting cycles and to enable the Club to budget more effectively when information about increases in the National Living wage is available. The last accounting period reported was therefore the 18 months ending on 31 March 2025. Going forward, there will be accounting periods of 1 year ending on 31 March, so the next period will be the year to 31 March 2026.

AL moved on to discuss the Income Statements

- The result for the 18-month period to March 25 was a surplus of £54K. Although exceeding budget, the surplus was lower than for the year preceding it, mainly because the 18-month period included 2 winter seasons, during which the club operates at a loss. The surplus will be carried forward and will form part of the funding for future capital improvements to the Club's facilities.
- Summer and winter membership numbers increased last year and accordingly fee income was higher than the previous periods.
- Community Access and guest fees also increased and Bank Interest received was higher due to placing more funds in high interest accounts.
- Wages are the biggest cost for the Club and the bulk of our wages are at National Living Wage rates, which increased on average by >10% versus 2023. The higher staff costs also represent the additional resources in the Executive team, which have supported the growth and development of the Club.

AL finished by discussing the Balance Sheet (which records the Club's assets, liabilities and reserves)

- The accounting period closed with Total Funds of £705K (2023: £651K). The key assets were tangible assets (mainly land) of £344K (2023: 382K) and cash of £657K (2023: 274K), and the main liability was deferred income of £329K (2023: Nil).
- The increase in cash balance and deferred income both stem from the change of the accounting reference date. On 31 March the Club has typically received most of the summer subscriptions, so the cash balance is high. The subscriptions received relate to the summer season starting at the end of April/beginning of May, so this income is deferred at 31 March. This contrasts with the position at 30 September, when cash balances are lower after the summer season and the subscriptions income does not need to be deferred.

● Funds carried forward include a General Reserve, which is a contingency providing financial security against the consequences of unanticipated events, for example a water quality issue that might prevent us being able to open the lake. During the period, the Trustees reviewed the level of the reserve and increased it from £75,000 to £120,000.
AL concluded that the Club is in a healthy financial position and is compliant with its charitable and legal obligations.

RM finished by thanking Andy Lambert and Josie Evans for all their hard work in improving dramatically the financial reporting and planning in the last year.

5. Approval of new Trustees for the Board, Ros Miller (RM)

RM informed all the members that she would be standing down as a Trustee and Chair of the Board from the end of October after being a Trustee for 9 years and Chair of the Board for the last 5. RM told the group how it has been a huge privilege to be a trustee of the Club, enabling her to understand the inner workings of the Club and contributing to it and that she had worked with many lovely people.

RM was delighted to announce that Simon Bannister would be taking over the role as Chair from 1st November. Simon joined the Board in 2022 and has been involved in leading on IT for the Club which had kept him busy and the Club is very grateful that he has agreed to take on this role.

SB introduced himself telling the members that it was an honour to take on the role of Chair to the Board. He had learnt a lot as a Trustee and from RM and thanked RM personally as he is inheriting a Board of great quality. SB hopes over the next few years to lead and to continue to make the lake a better place.

RM moved on to discuss the appointment of a New Trustee to the Board. She explained that a call had gone out to members earlier in the year for someone to take on the specific responsibilities for Environment, Grounds and Water Quality. Following the recruitment process, RM was pleased (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) to recommend Patric Bulmer for appointment to the Board.

RM introduced Patric Bulmer to the members and then the meeting moved to the formal process of appointing the new Trustee following approval by the membership.

A vote was taken for Patric Bulmer to be approved to join the Board from 1st November 2025 (when RM steps down). Results are included in Appendix 1.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiners

RM explained the Club has been through a process of reviewing the Club’s Independent Examiners (Corrigan’s) assessing proposals from other potential supplies, but the outcome was the decision to retain Corrigan’s in this role and remained for the upcoming year. But as with other suppliers, this will continue to be reviewed regularly.

The appointment of Independent Examiners, Corrigan’s, was voted on with results included in Appendix 1.

7. Lifetime Honorary Membership Awards

Alan Giles informed the members that under the Governance of the Club and included in Article 14.12, members can be recommended by the Board to receive Honorary life Membership. This year there were two nominations, Ros Miller and Carol Freeman and AG went on to say a short piece about each.

Ros had been a Trustee since January 2016 attending regular Board meetings, acting as Chair from 2021 and with RM as Chair, she had enabled effective and collaborative expression of opinions. She had also been involved in many other pieces of work through other Sub Committees. Her support to the Management Team on general day-to-day matters was also greatly appreciated. Her major involvement was the progression of the main Governance document for the Club, including the Articles which had been a huge piece of work to complete and had previously been approved by the membership for implementation. The Board would like to recommend RM for Honorary Life membership for all her work as a Trustee and Chair of the Board.

Carol Freeman joined the meeting via Zoom. Carol is wife of the late Mark Thompson who sadly died earlier this year and as many members attended one of Mark's Memorials, they would have heard about Mark's huge contribution to the lake over many years. He had been awarded Honorary Life Membership in 2023. Carol had also been a member of the previous Executive Committee many years ago but had stepped down as Mark took over. Carol had always been a great supporter of Mark and his lake work. Sadly, Mark hardly had time to use his Honorary Life membership, but the Board knows that Carol's support was so important and wanted to recommend her nomination for Honorary Life Membership.

The trustees recommended both Ros Miller and Carol Freeman to be granted Honorary Life Membership.

Votes were taken for each of the above, the results are included in Appendix 1.

8. External Speaker – Georgie Duckworth, Author of Wild Swimming Walks, Bristol and Bath

Georgie Duckworth, a journalist, writer and Outdoor Enthusiast spoke about her passion for Wild Swimming and introduced her recently published book, Wild Swimming walks in Bristol and Bath.

8. Member Questions to the Trustees

Question 1 (received via email)

PLEASE can the lake consult with Disabled members on making the venue accessible? I attended at the weekend to find the accessible toilet had gone, to be moved much further up. I had to wait until I had finished my session to park nearer, only to find it was locked. The staff said I had to walk up to the gate to get a key. This completely defeats the object of having an accessible toilet. Not all Disabled people are wheelchair users, some people have chronic pain conditions and long-term health conditions which make this toilet virtually un-useable, it also takes up a potential blue badge parking space.

Having the accessible toilet near the swimming/changing areas has meant I could be at the lake but without the toilet being nearer I'm not sure that I can now use the area that I've paid for. Even for wheelchair users it means wheeling across uneven ground and navigating a very steep slope to get up to the toilet. It is hard work wheeling across uneven ground. This is not empowering for Disabled people.

Response (Nicola Harwin, Vice Chair, and a lead Trustee for EDI, on behalf of the Equalities Working Group).
NH noted that members would be aware from consultation with, and reports to members over the last year, that the Club has been actively working to improve access to and facilities at the Club for disabled people, which has been extremely poor until recently.
The intention in the future is to have fully accessible, level access change space, with seamless access to parking, changing, shower and toilet facilities for people with disabilities, and with accessible signage and markings for all Lake facilities etc. Trustees and Operations staff have engaged in consultation with a Bristol disabled people's organisation, Disability Inc. and the Lake wider usage groups to review what we can do now and what needs to be done in future.
Last year, we put in place a short term, rented accessible portaloo, which has now been replaced with the bigger accessible toilet and shower facility, which is being rented from a specialist provider and which conforms to industry standards including ramp access. This is located as recommended by Disability Inc - next to the current blue badge parking spot. (There is also another level access toilet near to the main toilet and shower facilities). Since installation, there has been positive feedback from members who are wheelchair users, as well as helpful feedback about improvements needed to the facility, internally, and access to it.
Entry to the toilet itself needs improving as the facility has been kept locked to ensure it is always available for members with mobility impairments, who can ask any members of staff to get them the key or radio to staff on the desk to bring it. We are aware that this is not ideal and are actively investigating the possibility of getting radar key access and other measures. There are also issues with uneven ground access to the facility – we are hoping to find an interim measure that can address this. In the long term our intention is that all the improved showers and toilets facilities will be level access and once we have a properly costed and realisable plan, we will consult on this with members.

Question 2 (from the room)
Can the Board consider a review of the classification of swim sessions as generally classified as 'a relaxed swim' and it would be good to have clear information so that it is understood by swimmers and staff as to what this means.

Response (RM)
RM responded that this will need to be considered by the Board as to information that is given about the swim sessions and that the Board can look into this in the coming months and make some decisions.

Question 3 (from the room)
Would the Lake consider running a moonlit swim. The member has been to one at West Country Water Park and was a very enjoyable event and would be something that would be good to have at the lake. The appreciated that this would need a lot of planning and resource.

Response (JE)
This is something that has been considered as JE is aware of the event and its success at West Country Water Park (WCWP) however, the lake is a very different set up. WCWP is shallow and they have excellent lighting where there is swimming whereas the lake is very deep and far away from a light source.
JE will contact with WCWP to see if their event can be translated to the lake and what relevant Risk Assessments are needed. In the meantime, the lake is considering a very early swim to coincide with the Summer Solstice which will be easier to run at the lake.

Question 4 (from the room)
Initially suggested that the What3words for the lake is clearly available at all the lifeguard stations as had to call 999 at the recent incident and didn't know these or the postcode of the lake.

The member also wanted to comment on how they are aware that the lake needs to improve facilities and be more compliant but feels that it is important not to lose the nature of the lake as this is a very special place to many people. More recently the lake is busier, and fees have gone up and there are plans for the big development, but they are concerned that the lake doesn't become too municipal and modern.

Response (RM)
RM reminded the lake members that all the trustees are members of the lake and so would never want to do anything to threaten the heritage of the lake and the place that everyone loves.

SB then addressed the room about work he had been leading to develop a Vision and set of 6 Principles for the lake. These have been defined and will be always considered when taking small and large decisions about the development of the lake. One of these principles is Culture, ensuring the continuity of the culture of the lake that we all know and love. SB confirmed that in his first act as Chair he will be sending out to all members the Vision and an overview of the principles and why these are so important to us all as we go through the period of change. Everyone understands that the changes are required but it will be important to adhere to these principles to ensure that all the development work is undertaken properly on behalf of all members.

Question 5 (from the room)
Member is aware of Security being more of an issue this year that in the past and asked if the Board knew why this was the case and whether there are plans to increase security any further.

Response (JE)
RM initially noted that there are two types of important security in relation to the lake – firstly to ensure the security of staff and also to protect the security of the lake water and grounds.

JE noted that the Club has always had visitors in the summer (particularly when really hot) wanting a swim, not understanding that the lake is a member only facility and staff have been able to deal with this safely. However, over the last 2-3 years, there have been larger groups of families turning up who are particularly unpleasant, don't listen to staff and are very hard to deal with (this year included a large family with babies who came in and set up a BBQ where police had to be involved). The staff can deal with the lower-level situations, but it is these extreme encounters where is it essential that staff are protected and looked after.

There were also concerns about intrusions during the night. Security guards fed back regularly that there were drive-bys in the night by cars with no number plates and the lake was seen as a potential hot spot for people to come, settle and stay, which would be disastrous for the Club.

The Club has learnt a lot this year and is aware of times it is likely that people will turn up and cause problems. There were 4 heat waves this summer, so it was particularly difficult but have worked closely with the security company to predict when extra security is required. Unfortunately, this is a reality of where we are at the moment, and the Club will be better prepared this year and will have budgeted for the extra security that is needed.

Question 6 (from the room)
What are the plans to improve the toilet and shower facilities at the Lake.

Response
The Members Annual Report includes, in the first section, the current plans for this improvement. There is no costed plan available yet, but the information included in the report should be able to answer your question about this.

Question 7 (in the room)
The Member was pleased to see the plans for the redevelopment of the toilets and showers but with the cost of this, how can the Club also afford another sauna?

Response (RM)
Last year, following the results of the members' survey, it was clear there is a need for the redevelopment of the toilets and the showers and also for improved staff facilities. There were also a considerable number of people asking for an additional sauna. This became something that had to be looked at by the Club from a Health and safety point of view, particularly over the winter swimming as the current sauna is at capacity. Looking at the overall development plan and it was decided that the addition of a second sauna could sit outside of this and be a separate piece of development and this wouldn't take the funds from the overall plan. This overall plan will take longer to deliver as it is a much bigger project and needs to be done all at the same time. So felt it was possible to deal with the sauna outside of this as a decreet project and so this has been taken forward.   The new sauna will be fully accessible.

Question 8 (in the room)
Could an extra opening day be considered during the Winter season e.g. a Friday? This will help with capacity for those working during the week and also to give more opportunities to swim to ensure members stay acclimatised.

Response (JE)
The Club would like to be able to open as much as possible during the winter but opening the extra day has both cost and staffing implications. Currently the Club has budgeted for the days which are open but once more information is known about the Winter swimming subscription income then there will be a discussion with the Trustees about whether there is possibility of opening any more. If extra days are wanted going forward, then this will need to be budgeted for and factored into the Winter swimming fees going forward but also keen to keep these fees as low as possible.

Question 9 (in the room)
The member is concerned that despite the Supreme Court Judgement, the Trustees had agreed to plan for mixed sex toilets in the new development. This would be a big change for members and the member wanted to know if women had been consulted about this and if not how have women's privacy and dignity been considered and their safeguarding.

Response (RM)
The plan is not for mixed sex facilities but for single cubicles and this is specifically considering the Supreme court judgement. There was a discussion about continues provision of single sex facilities and the member was invited to get in contact with Nicola Harwin to discuss this further.

Question 10 (in the room)
The member had been interested to hear that the Winter Swimming operates at a loss and feels that £75 for the fees seems very cheap and why wouldn't the Club consider increasing the fees (and then may also be able to open another day too).

Response (AL)
There are fixed costs for the Club that run through the full year, e.g. insurance, rates and Operations team salaries. The fee for the Winter swimming does cover the cost of staffing this (e.g. lifeguards) and also contributes towards the fixed costs so although runs at a loss, it still benefits the overall finances of the Club.

The Trustees are keen to strike a balance when setting fees, recognising the Club doesn't want to lose money and also would like to have some money to go towards the capital development project. When setting the fees, there is consideration about members being able to come less during winter as well.

Question 11 (in the room)
Member was concerned that the Board will be following Indoor Swimming Pool Regulations when considering the redevelopment which could change the lake into a Sports Centre.

Response (RM)
RM assured the room that this was not the case, these regulations do not apply to the Club and are therefore not being followed as the development is planned and undertaken.

Question 12 (in the room)
The Member had heard there is a longstanding policy at the Club not to give staff employment references. Why does this policy stand and can it be looked at again?

Response (JE)
JE assured the members that this is not a policy and that any reference received is always responded to. Any individual staff who feel this has been an issue for them should be encouraged to contact JE about this as she is unable to comment on individual cases.

Question 13 (in the room)
Member wanted to make a comment in relation to the Lifeguards and staff working at the lake particularly on behalf of two members unable to attend. They felt that the conduct of the lifeguards and how the members are treated at the lake is very positive. Members value the inclusive nature of the lake. The lifeguards undertake a difficult job in a very positive way and wanted to record that this is very much appreciated by many members of the lake.

Question 14 (in the room)
The member had observed from the Members Annual report that there are now many community groups using the lake and was conscious that they weren't represented at the AGM and it would be good for members to understand how the site is being used by the Community Groups.

Response (RM/JE)
The attendance at the AGM is for Full Members of the lake only. Which is why they can't attend the AGM. However, JE has met recently with the facilitators of Open Minds Active and the Social Prescribing Group who are preparing a report following the summer season, planning to include wellness information, wellbeing scores of those attending and also the effects the lake has had on the members of their groups. Once these are received by JE, they will be shared more widely if they can be. There is also a small section in the Members Annual report in the EDI section, which has information about the kinds of wider usage groups coming to the lake.

Question 15 (in the room)
With regards to the plans for the new sauna, the member can see that there is a large number of people in support of the new sauna but is the Board confident that there aren't an equally large number of people who don't see a new sauna as part of the ethos of the lake.

Response (RM)
These decisions are not taken by a vote and so this data isn't available. However, these decisions are made by the Board after they have asked questions, reviewed data and looked at the overall bigger picture and issues and what developments should be taking place. These are strategic decisions the Board has to make looking at the overall need and usage at the Lake.

The meeting was closed by Ros Miller at 6.30pm after commenting how great it was to see so many people attending the AGM.

Any further questions not answered at the AGM can be directed to Josie Evans via email.

Appendix 1:
Total votes cast at AGM in room, on zoom and via proxy vote
5th October 2025

Attendees: 91 in room, 10 joining via Zoom

		YES	NO	ABSTAIN
1	Do the members adopt the 2024 draft minutes as a true record?	Room- 50 Zoom- 9 Proxy- 8	Room – 0 Zoom – 0 Proxy - 0	Room- 18 Zoom- 1 Proxy- 0
2	Does the meeting approve the election of Patrick Bulmer as a trustee and director of Henleaze Swimming Club?	Room- 82 Zoom- 9 Proxy- 8	Room – 0 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 0	Room- 1 Zoom- 1 Proxy- 0
3	Do the membership wish to re-appoint Corrigan Associates Bristol LLP as the Club's Independent Examiners?	Room- 80 Zoom- 8 Proxy- 8	Room- 1 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 0	Room- 2 Zoom- 2 Proxy- 0
4	Life membership Ros Miller	Room- 85 Zoom- 10 Proxy- 8	Room- 0 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 0	Room- 0 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 0
5	Life membership Carol Freeman	Room- 86 Zoom – 10 Proxy- 7	Room- 0 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 0	Room- 1 Zoom- 0 Proxy- 1