

Chairman's Report 2013

Colin Vickery

To make it a little more interesting for those of you who regularly attend the AGM's, this year I have decided to format the Chairman's Report slightly differently than in previous years. Rather than just have one long report, I have split it down into sections for each of the clubs activities rather like we do at our monthly Committee Meetings. So for instance there's a subsection on transport where I can talk about the minibus for a while and then another on membership and so on where I can outline the issues surrounding each and then we can answer any questions and discuss anything in more detail during AOB at the end of the meeting if you so desire. I'm not going to say too much about the clubs finances because our Treasurer Graeme always provides an excellent report at each AGM except to thank Graeme and Oldmill Accountancy for the fantastic service that they have provided us with again in the past year. So let's start with Transport.

Transport

Tracey Wilson is the Apollo Clubs first point of contact regarding all matters Transport and has again done a fantastic job in the past year making sure that all of us with transport needs are catered for and ensuring that we all get to all of the club sessions and other events on time and then of course home again safely afterwards for which we owe her our most grateful thanks. A couple of years ago now we had decided to repair the 7 poorest conditioned seats on the minibus and the work on the last of those completed during the last year. The problem is that the other seats, which were in a reasonable condition in the beginning, have deteriorated quite quickly during the time since we started so it can look like we are fighting a losing battle. Apart from the seats the minibus is well maintained and mechanically in very good condition but at the end of the day it is 11 or 12 years old. When the time is right, I think that we should really ramp up our minibus fundraising activities in a very serious / focused effort, perhaps with the formation of a Sub Committee to replace it, but in the current national recession I believe that attempting to fund a new minibus would be frustrating to say the least if not impossible so in the near future we must decide what to do about the remaining damaged seats. The taxi service that we introduced sometime ago to supplement our minibus for Sherborne on a Tuesday evening seems to be working well and saving the club a lot of precious money. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteer drivers for their efforts over the last year and welcome a new driver Adam Hawkins who has joined us since last year's AGM and I'm also pleased to say that we have recruited another volunteer driver during the past week.

Alan Robus came out for a test drive with me last Wednesday and has asked to be added to the rota as soon as we can sort out the relevant paperwork.

Social

The social side of the club has fared very well again culminating with the brilliant Christmas Party held at the Milford Hall on the afternoon of 15 December which followed the Ottery St Mary Nurseries trip at the end of November, the Woodlarks Camp at the end of May and of course the Table top sale in the Quedam earlier in the year and at the Lysander Road Scout Hall on 1st December. We also attended the 'Haveago day' again last year on 13th May. One point I would like to make here is that we seem to get far more people along to the parties and trips than we do to support our fund raising events such as the table top sales and this is why your Committee have enclosed a letter in every members AGM envelopes this year asking every member to make a little more effort with the fundraising events over the next year. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to help organise anything, although you would be very welcome in this respect, but please at least treat these events as Social events in the future and just turn up and have a chat, see if there is anything you fancy and buy a Coffee. If everyone of us does that at least once during the coming year then I feel that we would have all done at least something to try to keep any increase in membership fees to a minimum when next year's AGM comes around. As our Social Secretary, thank you Jean Noake (and Vic) for everything that you have done for the Apollo Club over the past year and everyone else who helped with the table top sales and party and trips etc.

Swimming

Jackie Drake has been our Swimming Rep for many years now, apart from a spell a few years ago, when Jackie Rowbottom held the position for a significant time. The Swimming Rep is a very important person in any swimming club and I would like to publicly thank Jackie for the brilliant job she has made of it over the past year. As well as getting involved with two Swimathons etc our club has taken part in several regional galas in the past year. At the beginning of the year we came 4th overall winning 18 medals and 2 trophies at Keynsham then we won the gala at Street for the first time since 1995 before braving the floods to compete at the fantastic new Life Centre in Plymouth on 7th July where our team took no less than 5 gold medals and at the end of October it was our turn to host our regional gala where we won the overall event. A very successful year for the club competitively. Unfortunately, due to building work at Sherborne school our Xmas gala that was to have taken place in December has had to be moved to the 7th April this year when I hope to show off both the new lane ropes and the new swim team 'T' shirts for the first time which were the subject Yeovil Lions Club and Council donations last year.

Unfortunately, the Goldenstone's session of Saturday 19th and Sherborne session of Tuesday 22nd January both fell victim to the weather but so far this year they have been the only times that we have had to cancel. The Saturday session was closed well in advance with members notified but I have to admit that the Tuesday one caught us out a little bit. By mid afternoon on the 22nd the previous weekends snow had all washed away and the forecast was only for some sleet with above freezing temperatures but by the time I collected the minibus at 5:30 heavy snow had began to fall again and Yeovil was grid locked. By 6:30 I still hadn't managed to get anybody on board at which point I had to return the bus to SMV and battle my way to Sherborne for 7 o'clock as I was down to Lifeguard but only a few members turned up who were keen to return home ahead of the weather so the session was cancelled.

We were hoping to train 5 Lifeguards this year but unfortunately for various reasons was not possible. Unfortunately James OBrien and Zoe are unable to commit to another two years so will come off of the list very soon. I think that it is very important to have ample names on the Lifeguard rota so that in times of illness and holidays etc we do not get caught out. Being able to provide adequate Lifeguard cover for Sherborne is my main concern at the moment. Sherborne school are quite rightly becoming very strict about us having two qualified Lifeguards turn up on time for every session. We will really need to find a few people willing to train as Lifeguards in the near future as I would really like us to always have minimum of 8 club Lifeguards and 8 volunteer drivers then we shouldn't have too many problems. The Pool Lifeguard is a professional qualification and very useful for somebody to have outside the club so if you know anybody who would be interested in training please ask them to put their name forward.

Sailing

Paul Wilson is the clubs sailing rep and looks after us on the water over at Sutton Bingham each week in the summer and although I didn't attend every week I gather that, despite the weather, the actual sailing last summer was as good as any previous year. I may have mentioned to one or two of you before that my family owned a sailing dingy when I was a boy so I can well appreciate how lucky we are to be able to be transported to Sutton Bingham on a free minibus every week in the summer and 10 minutes after turning up are out on the water with a qualified instructor for half an hour then when we've had enough all we have to do is find a way of taking off our lifejackets, return to the club house to tackle a cup of tea and piece of cake before being dropped off at our door steps before bedtime. There's none of the lifting of the boat on and off trailers or roof racks, driving 30 miles to the coast only to find that the sea is too rough when you get there or alternatively the considerable expense of private membership of belonging to a club to sail on inland waters that I so vividly remember from my childhood days. I'm sure that you appreciate just how lucky we are to have Paul take us sailing regularly and would join me in thanking him for everything he

does for us. With the help of Trevor he has even refurbished our storage box at Sutton Bingham since last season finished of which I've seen some photographs that indicate a very top class job has been carried out.

Membership

Sheila Drake is the clubs nominated person to deal with all membership matters. Membership at the moment stands at about 110 and although it is a slight reduction on last year this time I don't think that we have seen a reduction in those attending the swimming and sailing sessions. Strangely, we've always seemed to have had twice as many members as we can account for actually attending our swimming and sailing sessions each week and it's just possible that whereas in the past people were happy to pay their membership fees even if they weren't participating very much in our activities, in the current times, they may now be thinking twice about how they are spending their money. However, there is a psychological barrier here and I would like to think that we will dig in very deep to ensure that we don't let the membership figure drop below 100. Sheila did write to a well known person last year and asked them to be our President but unfortunately it was not possible for them to support us from their home in London but we will keep on trying to recruit somebody else as President. I really think it is important to have somebody of some standing in the community. Sheila, thank you very much for all your services to the club in the last year.

Publicity

Sarah Hull is our Publicity Rep and as well as pulling together all of the table top sales and helping out whilst we haven't had a Secretary she has also been publicising the club wherever she can. On the 16th of September she arranged for us to exhibit at the *ThisAbility* event at Bucklers Mead School. Unfortunately, through no fault of Sara's, we did not manage to capitalise on the Olympic year quite as much as I would have liked. Although we nominated 3 of our helpers to carry the Olympic torch there were probably hundreds of thousands of nominees across the country and we were unlucky. They say that the Legacy of the Olympics will benefit clubs and charities for years to come and we must make sure that we make the most of that. Thankyou very much for everything Sarah.

Other Matters

As in previous years, The Apollo Club has been very well supported by the whole of the local community both in facilitating our swimming and sailing sessions and also, although on a reduced scale with donations. I would like to thank everybody who has helped the club in anyway whatsoever in the past year and especially Old Mill Accountancy and the Volunteer Bureau for the excellent free service that they continue to offer us.

That just leaves me to thank Clive Strickland (Vice Chairman) and Gill Allen (in charge of the Cashiers) who are both Committee members, Lynda Sharpe the Club Protection Officer, Iris Hoskins for the news letter and those non Committee members who help just as much Joan, Bev, Daphne, Mary you know who you all are and also Mike Searl who looks after our website from Bristol.

Graeme is about to stand up and present the 2012 accounts in detail but I like him too much to be unkind enough to leave it to him to inform you of the increases which for the following year unfortunately need to be £1 on membership and 20p on an adult swim. A junior swim will remain the same as last year. I should say at this point that we are trying to get at least 30 swimmers at every session and are starting to hit that target more frequently recently. Please make a mental note of the numbers each week and help us to achieve that.

As you can see for all of us on the Committee it has been an extremely busy year and there will be no let up but for those of you who enjoy and need your swimming I hope that your next year with the club will be your best ever.

Thank You