

LITTLEHAMPTON WAVE LIFE SAVING CLUB
ANNUAL REPORT
COVERING THE PERIOD
September 2019 – December 2020



Starting.

The Wave Sports complex opening in April 2019 and despite making overtures to form a Life Saving Club before that happened, there was sadly no suitable space available on day one. Come July, it became clear that The Arun Dolphins SC found they didn't need to hire all 8 lanes in their Wednesday evening slot, having previously had 6 at the old pool, and so I was made an offer to take up the spare two lanes to enable a life saving club to be formed. Following meetings with The Wave management team, planning began and our pool space was to be made available on the understanding that, in due time, those who reached age 16 would be encouraged to apply to The Wave to qualify as Pool LG's, and The Wave would encourage older youngsters from their Rookie Groups to join the LSC.

A start date in mid-September was fixed with 2 lanes of the pool from 7- 8 pm and a room for dry work from 8-9 pm each Wednesday. All that remained then was to create a life saving club from scratch – no money, no equipment, no members, just me!

A huge number of favours was called in from people I knew and a Committee formed, mainly from other Committee Members of Horsham LSC. An inaugural meeting was held to form The Littlehampton Wave Life Saving Club, the constitution of which looked remarkably similar to that which I'd drafted a long time ago, of Horsham LSC!

An application to securing some funding from West Sussex CC was successful but would take some time and required opening a bank account. This proved easier said than done but eventually we had something in place and at WSCC wheels at last started to turn.

The first class

Meantime, local advertising attracted a starter class of 7 enrollers that included one adult, Jo Jex, who I'd met at Penguins Swim School summer sea swim courses. Jo wished to take a refresher Bronze Medallion before eventually helping with some teaching.

Not enough members to break even on pool hire costs, but it was a start.

In the absence of any funding yet to hand, a loan from HLSC allowed us to secure a supply of course books for the first class to use and we had the loan of a number of CPR manikins, and other kit, until such time as we had our own.

Funding and Equipment

In November the WSCC Grant came through and by that time I'd secure a small donation from Littlehampton Lions, Waitrose, 4 donations from groups I'd given presentations to, a Grant of £400 from Sussex RLSS, and a £400 donation from Rustington Freemasons Lodge that was matched by Sussex Provincial Freemasons.

These enabled us to subsidise pool hire costs (RLSS Sussex Br) and purchase a manikin 'family' (WSCC), a 'nest' of 4 adult manikins (Freemasons) as well as some other necessities in the way of antiseptic wipes, ropes etc (Partly Littlehampton Lions) and repay the HLSC loan (Waitrose) . We were on our way!

2019 Exam successes

By the time we broke for Christmas all 7 of the first class had successfully passed the Basic Life Support and Bronze Medallion exams albeit one BM exam had to await the 12th birthday of one member to meet the exam criteria.

Contact with the three schools our members attended resulted in some presentations at school and hopefully generated some interest which we hope will in due course produce some new members. We were also able to get a 'post' on the Angmering School web site.

2020

Classes

When we returned after Christmas, we had 3 new members who were then looked after by Jo Jex whilst the 6 remaining of the 1st class pushed on with the Silver Medallion syllabus. Sadly we lost one soon after when she felt the swimming ability required was beyond her.

Jo Jex enrolled with a Course at Horsham to qualify as a Survive and Save Instructor but sadly this was not completed before the March lockdown and is still suspended.

Jo and I also attended a RLSS Regional Conference in Rochester which among other things enabled her secure her Safeguarding accreditation as Asst. Club Welfare Officer, and me to renew my 2 year periodic Safeguarding accreditation as Club Welfare Officer for both Wave and HLSC.

The National Lottery help

At the end of 2019, aided by some wonderful assistance from a facilitator, 'Fitwell Associates', we put forward an application for funding to The National Lottery, more in hope than expectation as we applied for the maximum £10,000. This was to cover a wide range of support from pool hire costs to a lot of much needed equipment. Our successful application which was agreed in February, meant it took a lot of pressure off, as we then knew we had funds to cover pool hire at least until the end of 2021 in the event that class numbers did not pick up.

The objective must in the long run to be self-sufficient on pool hire. To achieve this, whilst keeping pool hire fees at a reasonable level and with the limited pool space we have, will always be a challenge. We then also set about securing more of our own equipment. Some of this has been bought but then the lockdown arrived and so some has been put on hold.

March Lockdown

In the middle of March, we were well on the way to be ready to take more exams, and then everything came to a halt when the Covid-19 virus struck and the pool closed, and remained so, until mid August. Fortunately both groups had passed the relevant 'core' sections of Bronze & Silver before the lockdown.

Open Water work at Southwater Lake and the Beach

However, in early July, the Government gave permission for organised open water swimming to recommence, subject to various restrictions. The RLSS also had to radically revise how significant areas of our training could be carried out whilst complying with stringent safety measures to prevent spread of infection. These proved to be extremely challenging and necessitated additional unexpected expenditure.

However, through July and August, working in conjunction with HLSC, 4 of our youngsters, 2 from each group, undertook open water training, firstly at Southwater Lake, where Horsham DC imposed additional rules to avoid spreading the virus, and later at Lancing Beach & Shoreham Harbour where we had more flexibility and space. The two groups successfully passed Stillwater and Beach Life Saving exams at Bronze & Silver levels.

Jo took a number of photos at each location during training session and these have been used to good effect for publicity.

Other activities during lockdown and 'Outreach'.

In February Jo and I ran a morning resuscitation course for 13 new volunteer helpers at Penguins Swim School at Lancing College and plans were in hand to extend this to run a Life Support 3 Course but this was cancelled due to the onset of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown

Plans were also in hand to undertake something during RLSS 'Drowning Prevention Week' in June. The 'Perry Buoy' costume was booked and permission obtained to have a stand at The Wave and in the Town Centre. None of this happened of course due to the lockdown. However, some of the members participated in creating a fun video in conjunction with HLSC. This involved members arranging to have themselves filmed by a family member, catching a poly bottle, out of shot left, and throwing onwards, out of shot right. After 'throwing on', each was the recipient of a bucket-full of water (some took this very seriously!) Afterwards all the cameos from both clubs were then spliced together to create one continuous 'relay', a water safety message was added at the beginning, and then it was posted on the RLSS web site and Facebook. In this way we had 601 shares and in total 1,119 shares and views. Quite astonishing, so 'well done' all who took part.

During the first lockdown I also produced a rope throw rescue 'tutorial' in my back garden which was also posted on Facebook and also a quiz using photos taken in and around Littlehampton sea front asking members, via e-mail, to 'spot the dangers'. We also used these as discussion points when we got back to the pool.

Just prior to starting The Wave Club I had produced an illustrated talk about the RLSS and the development of its award system and I'd been able to deliver this a couple of local groups between September and December 2019. Each of these kindly gave us a £50 donation to help towards start-up costs.

Back to the pool in August

We finally got back into the pool in late August and were able to pick up where we left off. However, when we returned we were allocated only 45 minutes wet time to allow for pool staff to sanitize before the next hirers arrived, had additional distancing pool rules and RLSS requirements to contend with, and our start time changed as well. Sadly we also lost, for different reasons, another 2 of the first class which was a great disappointment as we could ill afford to reduce membership.

The remainder of older group did successfully pass the Silver Medallion and the newer group the Bronze Medallion. The older group also successfully passed the Bronze Life Saving Sport exam and made a start on the even tougher Silver Sport exam.

2nd Lockdown

Things again came to an abrupt end at the beginning of November with another lock down although we managed to get a couple more evenings in early December and during those sessions we managed to get the 3 Silver Sport tests finished off.

Olivia's Channel 'Swim'

It was during this November 'lull' that Olivia Kidd, conscious that she needed to improve her fitness if she was to get her Silver Sport timed swim done, decided she'd run the equivalent distance of swimming the English Channel – 21 miles - whilst also seeking sponsorship for the club. Not only did she complete her run but she raised £352 towards funds and knocked 10 seconds off her timed swim to pass the Silver Sport. Let's hope the publicity generates some interested new members as well.

3rd Lockdown at the end of 2020

Things stopped again from late December and this has continued into 2021 with, at time of writing, no sign of any easement.

Summary

So, in summary, we've done pretty well from a standing start despite the lockdown interruptions!

Exam passes:-

Basic Life Support – 10

Life Support 3 (Bi-annual retake) - 1

Bronze Medallion - 10

Silver Medallion - 4

Bronze Sport - 3

Silver Sport - 3

Bronze Stillwater - 4

Silver Stillwater - 2

Beach Bronze - 4

Beach Silver - 2

Total:- 42

Finance:-

We're in a strong and, for the time being, safe position, as can be seen from the statement of accounts but we do need more members if we are to cover hire costs without subsidy or significantly increasing the quarterly fees.

Publicity:-

Before we started, and since then, we've managed to get some significant publicity through the Littlehampton Gazette and other local newspapers and in 4 of the 'All About' bi-monthly local magazines.

We've also had coverage and photos in the RLSS 'Lifesavers' quarterly magazine and featured on the RLSS Members web site and Facebook.

We've a club logo, a banner on display in The Wave foyer, and a Club Hoodie with badge and name which a number of members have purchased. All of which shows we're up and running – just need a few more runners now.

David Slade

Chairman.

24th January 2021