

Club Vision Statement

March 2019 - Susie Foster



Triathlon is a growing sport in the UK and throughout the western world. Until recently it has largely been considered an elite activity for young fit people mostly men.

In recent years the sport has grown exponentially and it has drawn in people of all ages and there are some high profile triathletes and paratriathletes in the public eye. It is still largely a middle class white activity and due to the equipment needed and the cost of the races is not inclusive of those on a lower income. The 'requirement' to wear lycra bodysuits also has the potential to put off those who are more overweight or those with body issues.

Swans Tri Club was launched in October 2018 by a group of passionate triathletes and parents of triathletes with a vision to make triathlon more accessible, inclusive and fun for people of all sorts, backgrounds and shapes and sizes. From 10 founder members we are now up to nearly 40 members aged from 7-67. We are affiliated with British Triathlon and British Cycling and have been featured in our local press and on Radio York.

Members are regular runners and volunteers at our local Parkrun and we are participating in a Cycling Hub initiative with our local Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Team. Several of our members are also involved with Selby Cycle Club and we hope to develop this link further in future. One of our talented Juniors is competing in the Yorkshire Series. We also have two GB qualified Triathletes and we have arranged an evening session where one of the young Elite Triathletes training in Leeds is coming to talk to club members and friends.

Thinking into the future we believe we are uniquely placed to be able to include athletes with disabilities and mental health issues. As well as a GP with a special interest in mental health and learning disabilities we have among our members a musculoskeletal physiotherapist and a paediatric physiotherapist. We also have one non competing member who is a Psychiatric Nurse and another member who has completed a mental health and wellbeing in sport course and is a qualified TRiM practitioner, training which enables her to help distressed individuals and support them through recovery. We hope we will be able to use our skills and experience to bring people into the sport who might find it helpful to restore confidence and well being. To that end we want to train one of our members in mental health first aid to complement the physical first aid training that several of us already have.

All our training sessions are open to non members and we train at all levels together. We offer reduced session costs to families training together and those on lower incomes. Child welfare is paramount and our Welfare Officer is a former social worker, and other members also have child safeguarding training and experience through their work. We have seen that children participating bring their parents and that children find the role models of other adult triathletes

inspiring. Two of our triathletes mums are working through a couch to 5K plan with a view to joining in sessions and racing. One of our Triathlete Dads has started running and now wants to become a run coach. Our Head Coach has started a weekly running club in a local primary school and we would love to be able to share more of our skills and enthusiasm with our local community. After Parkrun we have a monthly bacon butty morning at one of our members homes and donations for food go towards helping our GB Triathletes to pay for their official kit. We plan to add more fundraising events like this in future.

We have discovered that the cost of competitions can be reduced if some club members give their time to volunteer at events which offer free places to volunteers and our head coach and some other club members have arranged to volunteer for two days this year to fund free places for some of our young triathletes. We would love to be able to share our passion for this sport with others in our community.

What do we need to make this happen?

We need to be able to help fund more training for our volunteers. We have several members who would be willing to step up and offer their time and skills as coaches, run or ride leaders, safety crew, but the training is expensive and most of our members are on limited incomes.

We need to be able to make the cycling more affordable. Decent bikes are expensive and kids grow so fast. We would like to have a 'bike library' with a few adult bikes but mostly kids bikes which they could borrow for a season. One of our members has completed a bike mechanic course so he could keep them road worthy. We have a couple of bikes which have been donated so far and have started informally swapping bikes but are exploring funding to provide the resources to make this work on a larger scale.

Most of our events take place in open water which needs further specialist equipment. Each athlete needs a well fitting wetsuit and in training sessions children need floatation aids which are towed behind them to assist in making them more visible and also gives them something to hold on to if they need a rest. The same issue with bikes occurs here in that wetsuits are expensive and kids grow out of them every season. A wetsuit library would mean that anyone could come along and participate. We have a number of Open Water Activators who have been trained by the British Triathlon Federation in assisting with wetsuit fitting. We also need safety equipment such as kayaks, life jackets, binoculars and radios for communication between safety crew.

From the very beginning we saw ourselves as a small club with big aspirations. We have set up solid foundations for the club to grow and are already seeing numbers and enthusiasm grow. We are looking forward to making our first race season a great one. We have applied for grant funding in the hope that we will be able to provide trained volunteers to do more coaching both in the club and in local schools, to grow our junior and youth membership and to encourage our

talented members to participate in more regional events and also qualify for national and international events.

What is the timescale for all this?

In the next year we hope to have funding in place to be able to increase our pool of trained volunteers and set up our wetsuit and bike libraries. We will have another Level 1 coach and more Activators. We will have at least two trained Ride Leaders thanks to Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and hopefully two Run Leaders who will be trained to facilitate the Couch to 5K programme.

In the next two years we will have another Level 2 coach and our existing Head Coach hopes to have further training in Strength and Conditioning. We hope to be delivering a second school based run club and providing regular novice sessions such as the C25K and local cycle rides in partnership with IHL. We hope to be able to put on an event such as a fun run to celebrate the clubs activities and encourage others to join us.

In the next 5 years we hope to double our membership and be delivering a variety of sessions throughout the week, to have increased numbers of triathletes from a variety of backgrounds and to have a well established lending library for club kit as well as bikes and wetsuits. We will be well known in the local community and have close links with other local sports clubs. We hope to have a regular event in the local calendar and support the events put on by other local clubs.