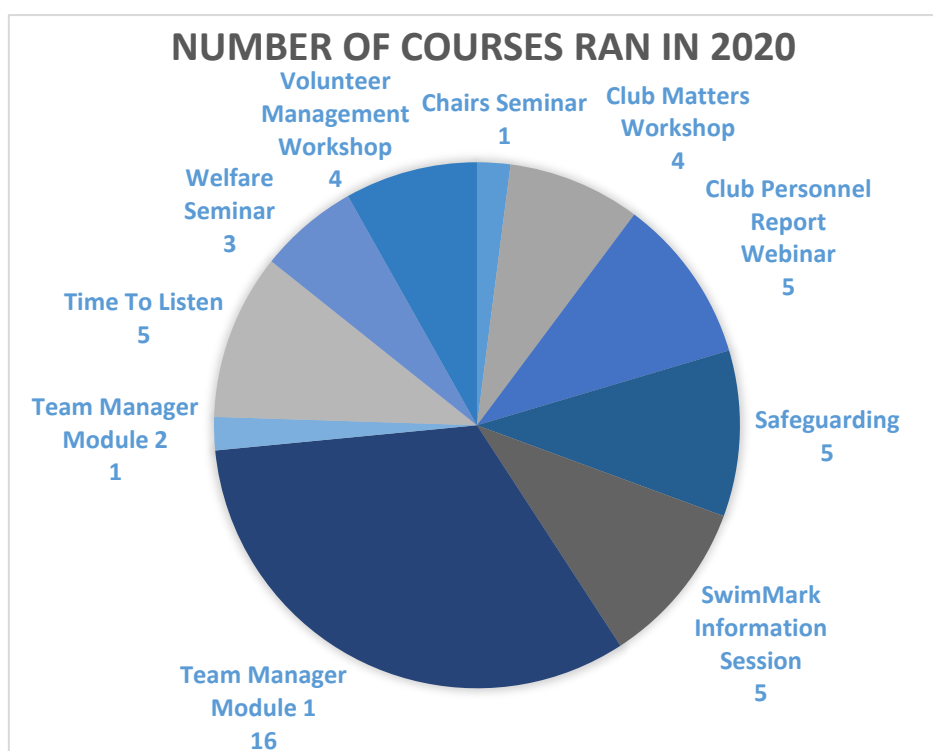
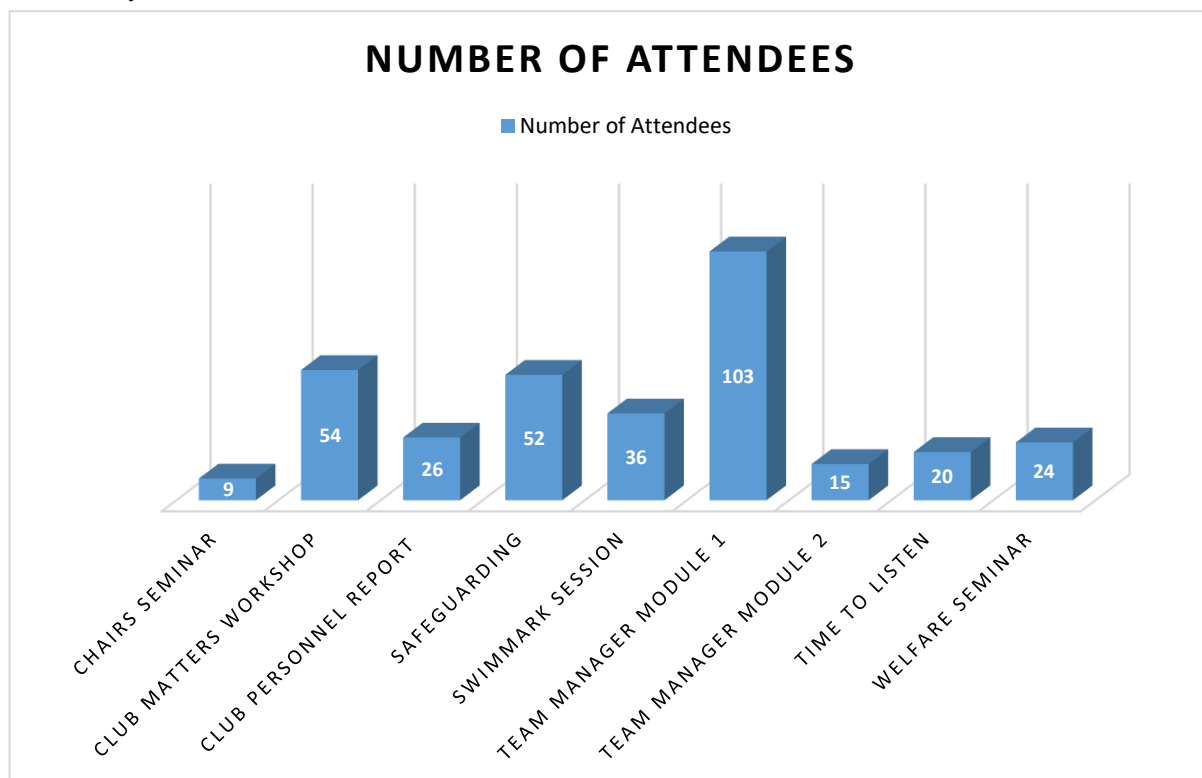


Welcome to our 2020 recap newsletter, it's certain to say that 2020 was a strange year, but one that proved extremely productive for the West Midland's Region in continuing support to our clubs and members. Please feel free to circulate this further within your club.

➤ **Course and Workshop Updates –**

When Covid-19 and lockdown was thrust upon us in March 2020, as a Region, we felt it imperative to keep our staff in place and provide a service to our members. In a time of confusion and worry we worked closely with Swim England to review and put online a number of different training and learning opportunities and ensure these were accessible to as many people as possible during this time. Please see below the courses and workshops that we held last year.



In total the Region ran 49 volunteer workshops last year which adds up to **108.75 hours** devoted to the development of our club members.

In January 2020 we were able to run one face to face TM2 workshop, the workshop has now been reviewed and will be launched online and available to members as of February 2021. In April 2020 Swim England launched their very own online Safeguarding training and as a Region we were able to run 5 Safeguarding courses. The SwimMark Information Sessions and Team Manager 1 workshops were also launched online in April. Later in the year the Welfare Seminar, Club Personnel Report Webinar and Time to Listen workshops were all launched online.

Throughout last year, we were able to host several Club Matters workshops, each of which covered a different topic; Leadership Teams, Volunteer Experience, Business Planning and Legal Structures.

In 2020 we were able to deliver 4 Volunteer Management workshops across the 4 counties for our Volunteer/Workforce Coordinators, this workshop was hosted by Claire Coleman, Head of Development, and it encouraged lots of good discussions around recruitment, retention and planning for the future.

In December we piloted a Club Chairperson Information Workshop. The workshop covered what makes a 'good' Chair, the roles and responsibilities of the Chair, how to deal with internal disputes in line with Swim England regulations, governance and leadership, codes of conduct, developing your club and understanding where support is available. This workshop is due to launch in February 2021 and we hope we can roll out this workshop to more clubs in the Region.

In addition to the above training and learning opportunities going online in 2020, Swim England also made the following opportunities available online for members:

- Officials modules
- Introduction to Water Polo
- Coaching and Teaching Theory certificates part 1
- Athletes can access the England Talent YouTube videos giving advice and information during lockdown
- A variety of online virtual camps for athletes in Swimming/Para-Swimming



➤ Lockdown Heroes –

Lockdown for everyone in the world of aquatics has been tough. 2020 was a stressful year for many clubs and club members, but Swim England West Midlands wanted to recognise the incredible efforts of our volunteers across the sport, who support one another in so many ways. We awarded 71 volunteers with a lockdown hero certificate and a 2020 volunteer badge. Thank you to all our club volunteers for the time they have taken to volunteer during such a difficult and unprecedented year.



➤ Clubs Return to Water Survey –

As part of Swim England's ongoing support for clubs we asked each club to complete a quick survey and update the survey whenever their situation changed, for example a change in pool time or a change in communication with the pool operator. Clubs completing this survey enabled us to create a tracker to continually monitor the situation for each club within each region and provide support as necessary. Amazingly we had a 95% completion rate which is

outstanding and a big thank you to all clubs for completing, based on the results we were able to list clubs by priority level and offer 1:1 support to the 10 clubs in the region who had not yet returned to the water at all, 3 of these clubs took us up on that opportunity and engaged in a zoom call with us to discuss the issues faced and agree a plan of action to combat these. All clubs were also contacted directly by Swim England as a result of completing the survey.

➤ Forums –

During the first March lockdown last year, and after, it was important for us to keep in regular contact with our clubs and we felt the best way to do this was by hosting regular Club Forums, Coach Forums and Covid Lead Support Groups for our club members to attend.

Club Forum:

Launched online: **March 2020**
Number delivered in the region: **40**
Number of attendee's: **115**
Number of clubs engaged: **55**

Our Club Forum enabled us to give our clubs updates on current guidance from Swim England, it allowed clubs to raise any concerns / queries they had, it gave clubs a chance to share what they have been doing during the pandemic and outlined to us how we could best support clubs. The forum is aimed at Club Chairs or a relevant alternative representative from the club. We are still running these Forums monthly on the first Monday of each month at 12pm and 7pm, if you wish to sign up please email westmidland@swimming.org

Coach Forum:

Launched online: **April 2020**
Number delivered in the region: **16**
Number of coaches attended: **94**
Number of clubs engaged: **48**

Throughout last year, in partnership with the East Midlands, we hosted a Midlands Coach Forum for coaches from East Midlands and West Midlands clubs. Each Forum focused on a different topic and was presented by coaches across the Midlands and by Swim England staff. This forum is still running and is ran on a monthly basis, on the first Thursday of each month, if you are coach interested in attending please email midlands@swimming.org

A quote in red text on a light blue background that resembles a speech bubble or a stylized map outline.

“Coaching is the art of inspiring change through connecting emotionally with your athletes”.

Covid Lead Support Group:

Launched online: **July 2020**
Number delivered in the region: **13**
Number of attendee's: **65**
Number of clubs engaged: **69**

The first Forum we ran a Covid Lead training session which identified the differences between the Covid Lead and the Covid Liaison, the key attributes of the Covid Lead, the responsibilities of the Covid Lead and what support was available to them, at every Forum since then we have aimed to support our Clubs through the pandemic, to share Swim England guidance and to answer any questions raised.

In 2020 we were able to communicate with our clubs for over **85.5 hours** as part of our weekly and monthly forums. Thank you for your ongoing support, we have really enjoyed engaging with you all more closely this past year.

➤ Regular Communication -

During 2020 we wanted clubs to feel as supported as possible and we are pleased that we were able to support them on a 1:1 basis via phone calls, zoom calls and emails, alongside our Forums. We also kept in regular communication with our clubs on our social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and the regional website by regularly updating these sites.

Weekly Regional Club Updates:

Each week we were able to put together an update to send out to clubs. These updates included news stories, guidance and FAQ updates, upcoming workshops and programmes, training opportunities, upcoming forums and any general reminders. Our first update was circulated to clubs on the 17th April 2020 and since then we have sent out **41 weekly updates**.



➤ Championships –

At the start of 2020 we were able to run Para-Swimming Championships and Artistic Swimming Championships.

Para-Swimming Championships:

The Midlands Para-Swimming Winter Championships 2020 took place on Saturday 4th January at Loughborough University Pool following the final para-swimming training session and was a great opportunity for the swimmers to put into practice their racing skills.

Artistic Swimming Championships:

The Midland Regional Age Group and Open Synchronised Swimming Championships take place every year for the best synchro swimmers in the East and West Midlands. The Championships features competitions for Figures, Solo, Duet and Teams for a range of age groups.

➤ Regional Para-Swimming Training Programme –

The Midlands Regional Para-Swimming Programme was set up by the West Midlands, East Midlands and Swim England Para-Swimming to engage and support swimmers across the Midlands with an impairment that can be classified under the World Para-Swimming categories to develop their skills, experience and knowledge through their journey as a Para-Swimmer.

The Regional Para-Swimming Programme Aims;

- Introduce swimmers and coaches to the Para-Swimming Pathway.
- Identify and develop talented swimmers to progress onto the Para-Swimming Pathway.
- Develop the knowledge and skills of teachers and coaches to support the Para-Swimming Pathway.

In 2020 we were able to run 1 training session on the 4th January which consisted of Land Training and Pool Training.

➤ **West Midlands Regional Conference 2020 –**

The West Midlands Regional Conference took place on Saturday 7th March at The Alan Higgs Centre in Coventry. The conference was aimed at Coaches, Teachers, Team Managers and Club Volunteers and was delivered in conjunction with Swim England Talent & Volunteering Teams, Specialist Sports Staff and Coaches. The agenda included lots of workshops and presentations.



➤ **Regional Development Day 2020 –**

On the 11th October 2020 we ran a Midlands Virtual Development Day for swimmers aged 12. Due to the current circumstances this replaced the standard development programme. In total we had 37 boys and 38 girls from across the East Midlands and West Midlands join us, congratulations to all the swimmers who were selected. The camp was held online via Zoom and included 2 land training sessions (pre pool into fundamental movements and post pool into fundamental movements), an online quiz and 4 presentations: 1 by Aimee Wilmott on puberty and performance and 1 by Max Litchfield on training through growth periods, a 'nutrition to support training' presentation and a 'building confidence' presentation. Thank you to all our coaches who helped out the day.



SwimMark

➤ **SwimMark and Stronger Affiliation –**

Over the past year our Club Development Officer, Amanda, has been working hard to support our clubs through SwimMark Full Accreditations, SwimMark Essential Health Checks and also Stronger Affiliation.

SwimMark:

SwimMark accreditation is Swim England’s quality standard for clubs. It recognises high standards of governance, sustainability and effectiveness. SwimMark helps you to achieve good governance, grow membership, develop volunteers and ensure your activity is sustainability and in line with your club objectives. We are pleased to announce that 60 clubs achieved SwimMark this year.

Stronger Affiliation:

By introducing a Stronger Affiliation process, Swim England is able to:

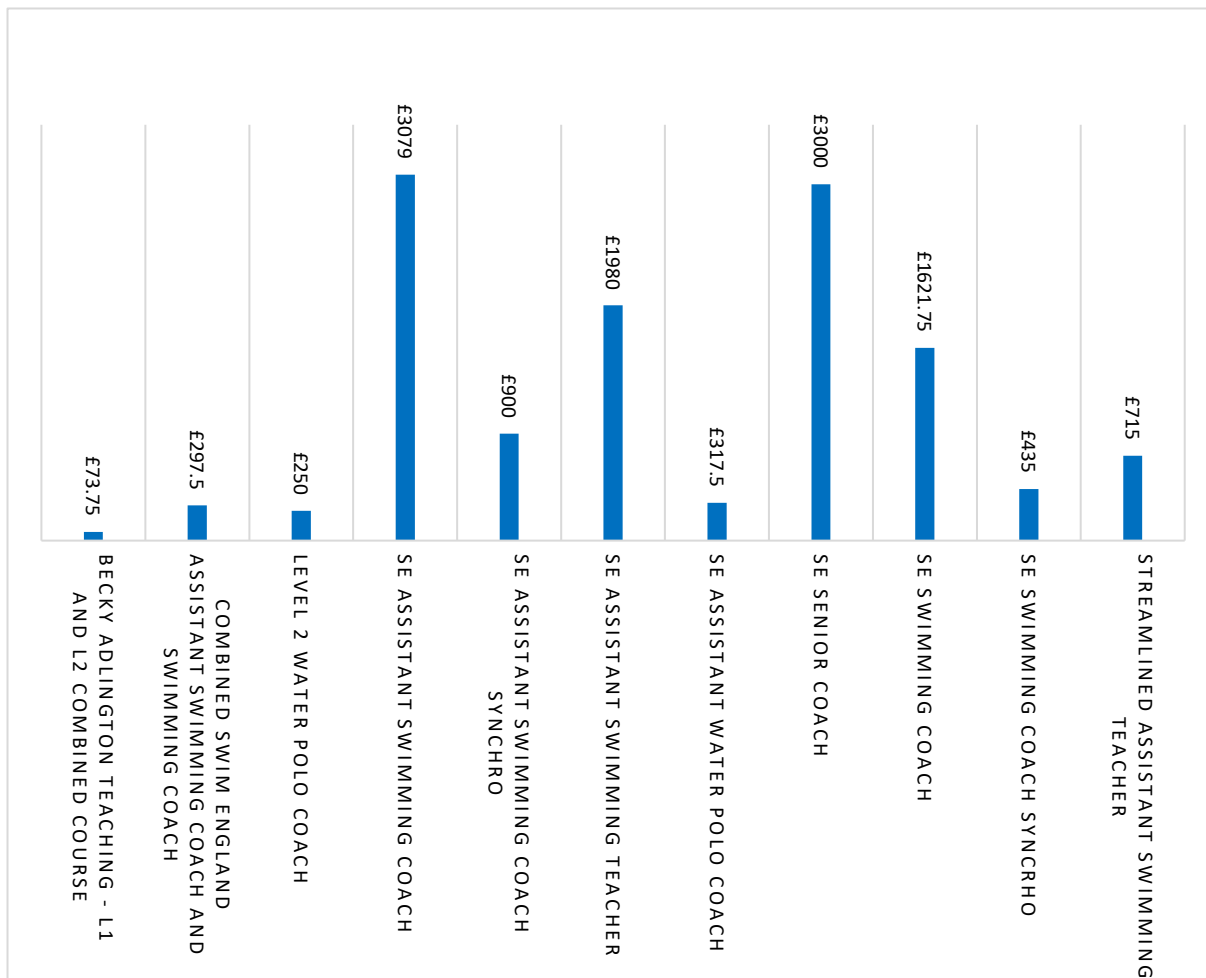
- Support clubs to ensure they are implementing the appropriate governance and meeting minimum operating standards.
- Enhance the experience of club members.
- Demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the safety of all affiliated clubs and members through stronger governance.
- Provide stronger leadership for the sport.
- Strengthen sustainability for future generations.

Stronger Affiliation is aimed at the Swim England clubs which aren’t currently SwimMark accredited. We are happy to report that 12 of our clubs achieved Stronger Affiliation.

➤ Bursaries & Grants –

Bursaries:

Bursaries are available to coaches and teachers from clubs in the region who are currently SwimMark accredited. In 2020 Swim England West Midlands awarded £12,669.50 in bursaries to 27 clubs.



Club Development Grants:

During the year the Club Development Committee funded 8 Club Development Grants to the value of £8,980.50

Club Membership Growth Grants:

During the year the Club Development Committee funded 3 Club Membership Growth Grants to the value of £2,210.35

➤ What's Next –

Although 2020 has been a year of new challenges and unexpected obstacles we feel so proud of all our members coming together and supporting one another. We have engaged more than ever with our clubs and we hope it will continue this in 2021. At the moment the main work areas for 2021 are:

- 1:1 club support – via calls, texts, emails, Zoom etc.
- Coach & teacher courses,
- Covid Guidance,
- Funding & Grants,
- Monthly Forums continued – Club, Coach and Covid Forums,
- Officials support/training,
- Regional Camps across all the disciplines,
- SwimMark support,
- Supporting clubs returning to the water,
- Volunteer Coordinators Project,
- Volunteer workshops & training – please see an up to date list of the upcoming workshops [here](#)
- Weekly updates,
- Young Volunteers Programme.

➤ Getting back into the SWIM of things:

We have now established a small working group, including a representative from each County, with the intention of looking at how we can better support our clubs on their return to the pools and going forward. More information to follow once the working group has completed its work.