



6th April 2021

Dear all,

An update on our coaching situation.

You probably know that some of our coaching staff have been subject to disciplinary investigations. What you might not know is that those investigations did not start in response to any concerns brought by these coaches, as the coaches have led you to believe; it was in fact the other way around. The disciplinary investigations started weeks before the letter from several members of the coaching staff purporting to have concerns was sent. These concerns were presented wrongly, and should have been advanced as their reply in the disciplinary proceedings. We consider that it was also wrong of the coaches to involve the entire membership in an internal disciplinary process. It was certainly wrong of them to use the club database for that purpose on the 5th March. We now write to you, our members, to tell you the truth of what happened.

The committee took seriously and reacted compassionately to concerns raised by swimmers and parents about the behaviour of certain coaches. We undertook a two-month-long investigation and followed fair processes and procedures throughout. In response, the committee faced bitter accusations by certain coaches, and had to take action to protect swimmers who were too scared to talk or act on their own. We then appointed an external human resources consultant to conduct disciplinary interviews to ensure a wholly independent determination. Meanwhile the Club Committee remained silent, avoided engaging in a public debate, nor to pre-judge the outcome of the disciplinary processes. We had to remain calm and independent despite behaviour that included intolerable attacks and one-sided public statements largely on social media.

Those disciplinary proceedings were due to conclude this week. However, in the last few days, the coaches involved in this matter all resigned. They departed immediately, failing to serve their notice periods, such that their disciplinary hearings scheduled for later this week, cannot go ahead. The allegations relating to welfare concerns are now in the hands of Swim England as their governing body. Swim England were already investigating certain welfare matters relating to the Club. Of course, should any of these coaches apply to return to the club in the future, our disciplinary concerns would need to be revisited. For the moment the allegations will simply remain on file.

We cannot emphasise how deeply saddened we are about the events that have unfolded over the past month, which were largely out of our control. We had hoped to find a resolution with the coaches, sadly this is not to be. We understand the swimmers have all been let down immensely and wish to reassure them that their welfare and happiness in their swimming journey is the Club's top priority. The timing of this is so very unfortunate with the pools reopening next week after so many months away. The Club is actively recruiting new coaches to fill vacancies over the coming weeks. We know this has been a turbulent time in our club's history, but we must move forward for a fresh start for the Club, with new ideas, and great positivity for our swimmers. These new coaches will



work alongside our other much valued COSC coaches who have not been involved remotely in any of this matter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Otherwise, we will see you poolside in the coming weeks and look forward to having our swimmers back in the Club's home pool, Blackbird Leys. Thank you for bearing with us.

COSC Committee

City of Oxford Swimming Club