

# Disability Officer's Report

## **7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk Disability Meet**

This was held at Lowestoft Waterlane on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February. Many swimmers of all ages and abilities attended. Numbers were considerably up on the previous year, and indeed were the highest we've ever had, with 273 actual swims on the day. I feel this was the most we could cope with and would aim to restrict entry in the future if it was this high again.

Once again, I am grateful to Lowestoft Lions who provided sponsorship in the form of medals for all participants and two large trophies for the swimmers that achieved the most on the night. I am also extremely grateful to the County ASA, who footed the bill for feeding the officials and volunteer helpers - thank you! And to Waveney District Council, for subsidising pool and room hire.

There continued to be problems with producing certificates on the night. We pre-printed the certificates (using a laser printer) with the colour design to save time, but subsequent passing them through an inkjet printer caused the pre-printing to melt, with disastrous smudging consequences. Either we need a better colour printer on the night, or we re-think the whole concept of giving competitors something with their times on it.

Despite this, and one incident where it appears the lifeguards were a little slow to respond to someone in difficulty, the event was voted a resounding success by those taking part and their parents.

One last big 'thankyou' to all the officials who turned out, despite the clash with Winter League.

## **East Region**

There were a number of opportunities for Suffolk swimmers to compete across the East Region in 2009. The East Region Youth Championships in May saw 5 Suffolk swimmers from 3 Clubs competing, and a considerable number more attended the second ER Disability Championships held in February at Braintree. This meet will be held again in late 2009, on December 6th at Thetford.

The recent ER Winter Champs saw 6 swimmers representing Suffolk clubs.

A number of less experienced swimmers attended the Norwich Swimability Meet in June, including a large group of first-timers from L&OBSC's Disability section.

The DSE events of 2009, at Ponds Forge, saw medals for Suffolk swimmers at both Junior National level (March) and Open National level (November), including Jessica-Jane Applegate medalling at her first DSE National event.

I also understand that we have 3 Suffolk disability swimmers on the British Talent Programme, and they have attended National training camps this year with their coaches and parents.

## **Higher Up....**

Suffolk also had a swimmer competing for GB at the IPC European Championships in Reykjavik in October. Stephanie Bird swam 100 back qualifying for the final in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. She then knocked 3 seconds off her heat time to finish in gold medal position. The icing on the cake was the subsequent announcement last Saturday that S14s will be swimming at the 2012 Paralympics, where she hopefully stands a good chance of being selected.

## **Future planning**

The pool and conference room at Waterlane had been booked for the 8<sup>th</sup> Suffolk Disability Meet in 2010, but the future of the event looks in doubt, as the pool is due to close for refurbishment, and no suitable alternative venue has emerged.

I hope to be able to run it again the following year.