

Sevenoaks Water Polo Annual Review 2025

Dear Members,

I am delighted to present the Water Polo Section's Annual Review for 2025. This year has been marked by significant achievements and continued growth, made possible through the dedication of our players, coaches, volunteers, and the invaluable support of the club committee.

Key Achievements

Membership Growth

- Membership grew from 42 to 54, a significant increase again, following the success of 2024 and our efforts to engage new members, particularly juniors and ladies.

Continuation of the Monarks Partnership

- In collaboration with our friends at Monson, we continued the highly successful Monarks Partnership, training together and fielding a combined teams across almost all age groups: U12, U14, U16, Ladies, and two Men's teams.

New League Entry

- The growth of the junior section has allowed us to join a new U12+U14 League in Sussex, which combines with the under-served clubs of Hastings, Brighton and Mid-Sussex Marlins.
- The League involved a round-robin of tournaments at each home location, bringing more than double the number of tournaments available to U12s and U14s.

Development of Coaches

- We trained up one more Level 1 coach this year.

Enhanced Communication and Management

- The organisation of training and games has been well established on the app Spond, which allows us to send all key information across the membership seamlessly and in real time.
- We still rely on Whatsapp for non-event-based information sharing and these two channels are well understood and effective for members.

Ladies Team Strength

- The Ladies team has gone from strength-to-strength and has had several recent matches.
- Several Ladies team members also supplement their Sevenoaks membership by also playing occasionally for other teams in the region.

Community Engagement

- Once again, we supported Sevenoaks School with its Polo tournament for local primary schools.
- We also supported a similar event held at Tonbridge School for the first time.

Financial Contributions

- The Water Polo Section once again contributed financially to the club reflecting sound financial management and increased participation.
- Our strategy will remain to ensure that the Water Polo section makes a positive contribution to club finance via membership fees alone, despite increased pool rental costs.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Our focus remains on sustainable growth and excellence.

Ongoing Development of Coaches

- We aim to support one coach to achieve Level 1 and one to achieve Level 2 in 2026.

Performance Targets

- Monarks continue to maintain ambitious performance targets for all teams (U12, U14, U16, U19, Ladies, and Men), with a targeted number of competitive opportunities.

Competitiveness

- We recognise some frustration that for the Men's first team in particular, increased numbers have not resulted in significantly improved match performance. We will strongly focus on improving match attendance.

To achieve these goals:

Investment

- We plan to invest in coaching development, equipment, tournament fees and team kits, as per the 2025/26 budget.

Pool Time

- We currently have sufficient pool time, as members are not all regularly attending every training session.
- We monitor attendance closely and will communicate swiftly with the committee if extra pool time may be required.

Volunteers

- Coaching is still highly reliant on a small number of very committed volunteers.
- We aim to grow the coaching pool of talent in order to provide depth and cover to coaches.

Acknowledgments

I extend my heartfelt thanks to:

Players, Coaches and Volunteers

- The driving force behind the success of the club is always the players (and their parents).
- A special mention to Tom Howes and Tom McDonald for their continued commitment to coaching often several times a week, as well as in matches and tournaments, both home and away.

Parents and Supporters

- The ongoing encouragement and involvement makes a significant difference to player engagement and performance.

Club Committee

- Your commitment in supporting the Water Polo section have been instrumental in achieving these milestones.
- We are proud to be part of the club's success and reputation.

Together, we look forward to another year of growth, inclusivity, and success in 2026.

Nick Walmsley

Interim Water Polo Section Representative