

## **GM Amalgamation Proposal April 2021**

*The following document details a proposal to merge our three local swimming Associations into one. It explains the rationale for this, a proposed new structure along with procedural requirements and outlines a new style gala programme to best suit the needs of swimmers and clubs going forwards.*

### **Brief History:**

The three local swimming Associations – Manchester & District, Bolton & District and Central Lancashire have been serving their local swimming community and clubs for well over 80 years.

Each Association has evolved to deliver separate championships and competition for swimming and water polo. In addition, they have also provided inter-club league competition too.

Some clubs are affiliated to 2 or more Associations and choose which competitions they want to enter. This has generally worked well for many decades. In the early part of this century M&D chose to merge its Championship meets with B&D, to become the B&M Championships. Subsequently Central Lancashire joined this arrangement to give what we know today as the Greater Manchester Championships. This has provided a much better competition than the 3 individual events.

A lot of the organising and committee personnel are active in more than just one Association and there is a lot of duplication of effort of administration and for the leagues. It was considered that a merger of the three Associations would reduce this duplication and enable a fresh look at how a league competition might look for swimming and water polo in the 2020's and beyond. By taking the best that each Association has to offer and producing a zoned approach based on geographical position rather than just affiliation, would reduce travel time for many clubs.

Each Association committee met, discussed the concept and agreed in principal that this was the right direction to take. An amalgamation committee was formed in the Spring of 2019 to discuss the finer detail of how a merger might take place. A brief presentation of their findings to date, was made to swimmers and parents during the GM Autumn meet at Wigan in 2019. Those that attended consented in principal that we should progress this further with a view to putting in place a firm proposal that members could vote on in their respective Associations in 2020. A handover structure could then be formed to transfer the dealings of each Association to the new Association which, would be formed along prescribed guidelines constructed by the amalgamation committee. Further details of this can be seen below.

It was hoped that this process could have happened during 2020 subject to clubs' agreement. However, Covid -19 placed this on hold. We anticipate that during 2021 there will be a return to some 'normal' swimming and water polo – whatever that might look like. Consequently, it is considered timely to commence where we left off at the end of 2019.

The amalgamation committee has met twice during 2020 and has produced an outline of a league programme for swimming. There is no proposal to change the current GM meet arrangements. We appreciate that since Covid struck, clubs have suffered greatly, some have closed their doors for the last time and many will return with reduced numbers. Until we do get a full return to swimming it will be difficult to know how the club structure will look, but it is likely to make a restructure of the Associations even more appropriate.

We would like all members of clubs, affiliated to the three Associations, to read through the structural proposals as well as the league programmes and offer your feedback and any suggestions that you may have. We are open to considering all reasonable suggestions before making a final proposition for your respective Association to vote on. Please feedback to your respective Association Contact, all of whom are members of the amalgamation committee. Their details appear at the bottom of this document.

It should be noted at this point that the new Association is intended to deliver a better swim programme for all member clubs with improved competitions. It is designed to be managed and operated with less meeting times, fewer volunteers and less demands on their time. It will need some new blood to succeed but we believe that between the 3 current Associations there will be sufficient drive to achieve this. When you have read through this please consider volunteering a small amount of your time to help out. It will be an exciting time to be involved in a project like this and especially rewarding in what we all hope will be a post Covid period.

#### **Association structure and governance:**

The general consensus of the amalgamation committee was that any new council or committee should initially comprise 4 people from each Association. This 12-strong group would be considered as the 'executive committee', for want of a better description. Whilst this may be considered a large number it will accommodate a degree of drop out from some participants.

The 12 executive committee members will have self-determination of structure in accordance with Swim England constitutional format and in consultation with the Region. A separate water polo sub-committee should be formed from 3 (more realistically 2) members of each Association. The water polo sub-committee members should not be members of the executive committee. Water Polo per se must adhere to the rules of water polo and be accountable as such. The water polo sub-committee will report to the executive committee.

A Swimming committee would be formed as a sub-committee and comprise 2 members from each Association. Should other aquatic disciplines such as diving or synchronized swimming wish to become active they would follow the same structure as the swimming committee as further sub-committees. All sub-committees would report directly to the executive committee.

The Executive committee will be structured for succession – i.e., possibly positions of 1,2 and 3 years for maximum of 2 terms of office consecutively, or whatever term is considered satisfactory. Precise structure still to be determined. Sub-committees of swimming and water polo (and any other disciplines if appropriate) to be made up of 2 persons from each

Association so 6 in total. The swimming committee would have responsibility for running of main meets (currently the GM spring and Autumn) and any newly proposed league formats. This committee would be empowered to co-opt further personnel as deemed necessary. The current treasurers of each Association would be invited onto the committee. The water polo committee would be run along the same lines as the swimming committee. Both would be accountable to the Executive committee.

### **Funding the new Association:**

The amalgamation committee are unanimously agreed that the new Association should have sufficient funds to exist for 18 months with no other income. A figure of £25,000 from each Association is considered to be a desirable amount to meet this requirement. It is hoped that the activities of the new Association would be largely self-funding and with a view to being able to generate funds if considered appropriate. This would provide a very strong financial footing for the new Association.

It was also felt appropriate, with this in mind, to consider ring-fencing off a proportion of the monies to act as a bursary for clubs to be supported with the cost of teaching/coaching courses, officials and swimming related continual professional development courses.

There will be a residual money in each Association after the payment of the £25k. It will be for each Association to determine its disposal and that of any other assets. This needs to be determined prior to dissolution and in accordance with the constitution for each respective Association.

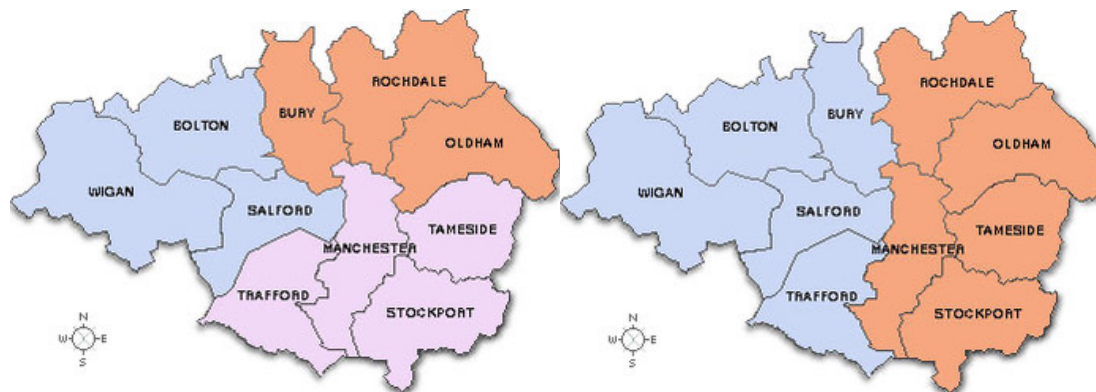
### **Geographical structure:**

The area of the proposed Association would stretch almost from Merseyside in the west to Glossop in the east and from Marple in the south to Rochdale in the north. The boundaries would be delineated by a distance of 30 miles from Manchester Town Hall. Clubs within this boundary would be eligible to affiliate to the new Association. Any clubs currently affiliated to either of the 3 Associations that fall outside of this boundary would be permitted entry to the new Association.

This represents a large catchment area of clubs but will create problems with travel to and from venues for league meets. For this reason, there are two proposals for regionalising the new Association. One option provides three regions that are broadly the areas covered by the existing three Associations. The other option is a west/east split into two regions. Clubs within each region would compete against other clubs in the same region for preliminary rounds of league competition. The leagues would generate A and B finals that combine results from all regions. It would be held on the same day, preferably in an 8-lane pool to get as many teams involved as possible.

The intention will be to have roughly the same number of clubs in each region. Clubs that are on the border of regions will be selected into a region to even the numbers out and where possible to even out the swimming ability.

The maps below provide an outline of the three and two region options that will need to be decided upon for the competition programme.



The map below showing the three-region option (the preferred option of the amalgamation committee) includes the clubs for each region.

All Clubs	Proposed New Region	Proposed Regions
Altrincham	3	1 - Wigan, Bolton & Salford
Aquabears of Rochdale	2	2 - Bury, Rochdale & Oldham
Ashton Central	1	3 - Trafford, Manchester, Tameside & Stockport
Ashton-u-Lyne	3	
Atherton & Leigh	1	
Bolton SC	1	
Bridgefield WP	1	
Bury & Elton	2	
Chadderton	2	
City of Chester	1	
City of Preston Aquatics	1	
Dukinfield Marlins	3	
Flixton	3	
Glossop	3	
Gt Harwood	1	
Hazel Grove/Bramhall (Saracens SC)	3	
Hindley	1	
Horwich Leisure Centre	1	
Howe Bridge Aces	1	
Liverpool WP	1	
Manchester Sharks	3	
Marple	3	
Oldham Seals	2	
ORCA	2	
Pioneer 79	1	
Radcliffe	1	
Ramsbottom	2	
Rochdale	2	
Romiley Marina	3	
Saddleworth	2	
Salford City	1	
		Stalybridge 3
		Stockport 3
		Stretford 3
		Swinton 1
		Trafford Metro 3
		Tyldesley 1
		Warrington 1
		Warriors of Warri 1
		Wigan 1



### **The proposed swimming competition programme:**

The intention is to continue with our championships and run a series of leagues. The current format of holding the GM Spring and Autumn meets will remain and with a gala programme that will maximise entries making for a significant competition within the calendar. The leagues proposal has taken what is considered to be the best from each existing Association programme with some adaptations and new ideas ideally suited to our swimmers. There is an emphasis on providing competition for the youngest swimmers through the leagues, which for many will be their first taste of external competition. The intention is to provide competition for all club members with a variety of formats that each club can choose to enter as they see fit.

In the inaugural year of these competitions the requirements for age groups or number of swims per swimmer, may be altered, to allow for the impact of Covid-19. There may also be format changes (e.g., Leagues/Semi-finals & Finals) based on the number of clubs who enter each league.

#### **Mini League (Old B&D Mini league)**

Age groups 9, 10, 11 & 12. Age on day of each gala

Same format rules & events as B&D mini league except 12yr events change to 2L from 3L

Mainly individual events with 9-year relays only and 2 mixed age group relays at the end.

Swimmers can do 2 event only & mixed relays

Clubs split into sub-groups depending on numbers entered, and each club hosts one gala.

There will be A&B Finals. With semi-finals depending on the number of clubs entered.

Date of finals to be confirmed by the GM Ass (Sep, Oct or Nov).

#### **Junior League (Old M&D Prog 'A' league & CL Jubilee league)**

Age groups – Individual events 10/U, 11/U, 12/U, 13/U, Relay events 11/U, 13/U.

Age at (exact date of final if date set, or end of the month final will be held in, e.g., 30th September)

Swimmers can do 2 individuals in own age group & 1 individual up, plus all team events.

Format is the same as CL Jubilee, but swimmers are limited to the above number of events.

There will be no set dates for galas, which will be arranged at the fixtures meeting.

Finals in Sep, Oct or Nov.

#### **Intermediate league (Old CL Intermediate league)**

Age groups 11/U, 13/U, 15/U.

Age at (exact date of final if date set, or end of the month final will be held in, e.g. (31<sup>st</sup> October)

Swimmers can swim 3 individuals in total (own age group or above) and any number of relays.

Format as in C Lancs Intermediate league – Each club will swim 2 swimmers in each individual event and one relay team in each relay event.

Clubs split into Divisions if the club number entered dictates.

Each team will meet each other team one per season.

Champions will be decided by the league table only (no Finals).

**Team Sprint League** (Old M&D team relay league & CL Junior leagues)

Age groups 10/U, 12/U, 14/U, 16/U. Introduce 16 & under age group similar to CL Junior League.

Age at (exact date of final if date set, or end of the month final will be held in, e.g., 30th November)

Swimmers can swim 5 events but only 4 in own age group, plus the cannon 8x1L.

Use M&D Team gala format but change mixed squad relays to mixed freestyle relays.

Mixed relays can now be swum with 2G2B in any order.

Clubs split into Divisions if clubs entered dictates.

Each team will meet each other team one per season.

Champions will be decided by the league table only (no Finals).

**Senior League** (Old BD Senior league, CL Senior league, MD Prog 'B' league)

Age groups 13/U, 15/U, & open age. Age at 31st December that year

Swimmers can do 2 individuals in own age & 1 in age above plus any number of eligible relays.

Use the B&D Inter club format where individual events are 2L, relays 4x2L.

Number of Clubs entered will decide Format e.g. One Final, Semi-final, Quarter finals.

Or

Clubs split into divisions with teams meeting each other once per season, champions decided by the league table.

**The proposed water polo competition programme:**

Possible polo competitions

Under 12	Mixed	
Under 14	Mixed	
Under 16	Mixed	
Under 18	Men	Requested
Under 18	Women	New
Senior Men	Men	
Senior	Women	New

Junior Under 12 to Under 16 is a straight swop, like for like from old associations, as is Senior men.

Under 18 men was a request made to B&D at the start of the 2020 season and it was agreed in principle.

Under 18s and senior women needs to be added to bring us in line with the Swim England equal opportunities policies.

Historically both a League and Knock Out competition has been offered at every level.

At the time of preparing this document in February 2021 it was stated that this plan represents a lot of games that may not be feasible subject to water time availability of individual clubs. Further discussions will take place on this subject.

**Other relevant information:**

Any Association affiliated to Swim England requires a constitution. From a practical perspective, having a constitution in place is a pre-requisite for being able to open a bank account that will be essential to the new Association. With this in mind the amalgamation committee prepared a new constitution in readiness and had it reviewed positively by NW Region. It is based on the standard template from the Regional website and can be viewed upon request.

**For further information or to provide feedback please contact:**

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