

# Working Together

A Guide for Coaches, Committees  
and Parents

---

Section One: Club Culture, Vision and Values

---

# Introduction

This guide has been designed to be a practical, hands-on resource to help strengthen the relationship between committees, coaches and parents in all types of aquatic clubs. It focuses especially on the key partnership between the head coach and the club chair, showing how they can work together to lead a positive, successful club.

We'll explore how to create a strong vision and set of values that are reflected in everyday actions and guide everything the club does. Inside, you'll find a range of downloadable templates you can adapt, along with inspiring case studies that highlight great practices in action. There are also reflection points throughout for you to think about how the topics relate to your own club.

This project wouldn't have been possible without the support and input of many committee members and coaches who've generously shared their time and expertise. A big thank you to all of them for working with us on this project.



**Full acknowledgements at the end**

## Working Together: Section Headings

**1**

**Club Culture, Vision and Values**

**2**

**Effective Communication**

**3**

**Defining Key Club Roles**

**4**

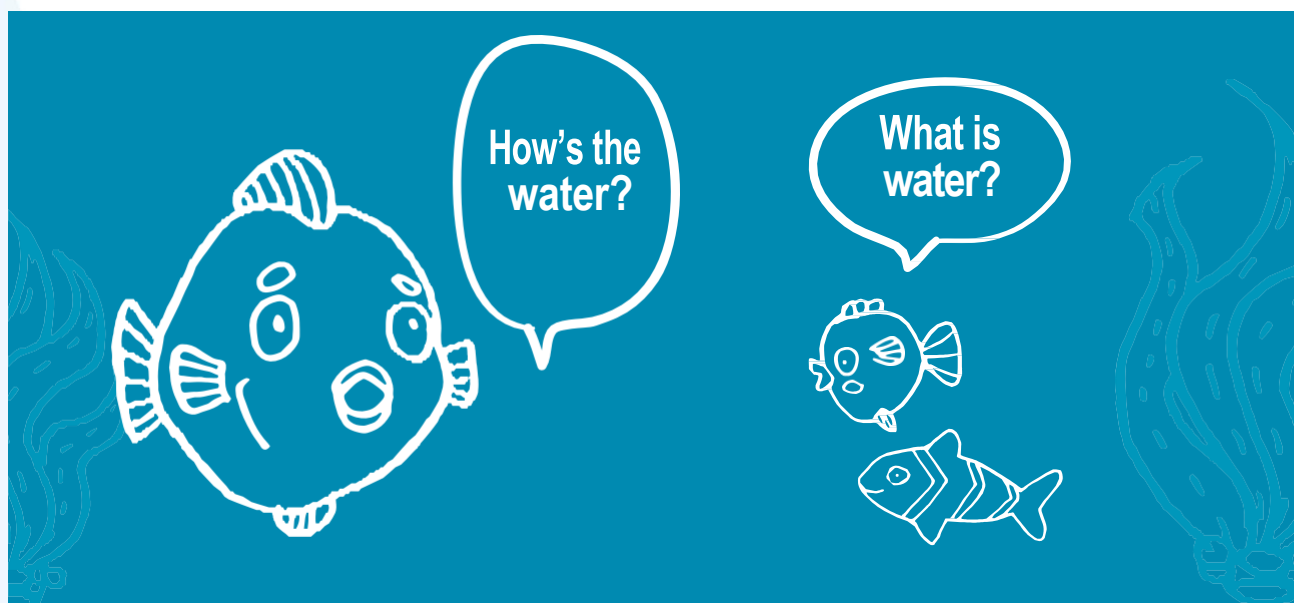
**Safer Recruitment and Further HR Support**

# Section 1: Culture, vision and values in aquatic clubs

The culture, vision and values of a club can have a huge impact on the experience of athletes, coaches and committee members alike. They affect the club's reputation and how easily they can attract new members. Whilst culture, vision and values are closely connected, each play a different role in shaping clubs into unique and distinctive organisations. A great first step is agreeing the fundamental purpose or reason for existence of the club, this provides a strong foundation for developing a meaningful vision and then the integral values and necessary culture that connects them.

## Club culture

Club culture consists of shared beliefs and practices, reflected in the behaviours and attitudes that members are encouraged to adopt and celebrate. Building a club culture where the values and vision are visible in everything you do is key to creating a strong, unified community.



In the image above, the fish that no longer see the water have fully blended into their surroundings, becoming part of the culture.

Every club has its own culture, which sets the tone for what behaviours are considered acceptable or expected. For example, it could be something as simple as thanking the coach after every session or cheering on fellow club members at events. Those who are part of the club's culture may not always notice these behaviours – they just feel natural. But for newcomers or outsiders, the 'water' is very visible. The atmosphere, or 'temperature', of the club culture is felt immediately – is it warm and welcoming, or cold and intimidating?

The culture of the club shapes how everyone experiences it and it's important to make sure that the 'water' is something that everyone can comfortably swim in.

If you're considering reviewing your current club culture and developing a vision and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for ideas and helpful activities.

## Vision

The clubs' vision or vision statement is usually one or two sentences concerning the long-term direction of your club or the big-picture goal. It's a clear and inspiring statement of what the club wants to achieve in the future and realistic for each club in terms of reviewing all available resources. This could consider access to pool time, the local competition (what other clubs are offering), your coaching team, volunteer engagement and the geographic and socio-economic communities you serve.

### Vision examples:

Great experiences in water. For all. For life.

**Swim England, One Swim England vision statement, November 2024**

We're here to champion the life-changing impact of being active and ensure everyone across the nation can benefit from it.

**Sport England, Uniting the Movement Strategy, vision statement**

## Values

Values are the principles or core beliefs that guide the behaviour and decisions of everyone in the club, helping to bring the vision to life. They reflect the character and integrity of the club and its members. These values should be simple, clear and easy for everyone to understand.

For example:

- Responsibility – taking ownership of your own growth and your role within the team.
- Respect – treating others, the pool and the equipment with care, showing that you value them.

## Defining your club's culture, vision and values

Creating an authentic and inspiring vision and set of values for your club should involve input from everyone who's invested in its success. This means gathering ideas from athletes, coaches, committee members and parents. A great starting point is asking: "Where do you want the club to be in 5 to 10 years?" You can get everyone involved through workshops, brainstorming sessions, or by reviewing feedback from member surveys.

For help defining your club's culture, vision, and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for additional resources and support options.

## Club culture, vision and values in action

Once you've agreed on your club's culture, vision and values, it's important to keep them relevant and central to your club by regularly sharing and reviewing them. Take the time to think about how your core principles are being put into action every day.

It's one thing to talk about values but it's another to live them every day. The more you reference and embody them in your daily activities, the stronger the club culture will be. For example, you could include your values in your email signature, print them on swim hats, or even focus on them in a committee meeting.

To make it even clearer, identify the specific behaviours that reflect each value and how that contributes to the club culture. Here are a few examples:

- **Value:** Teamwork
- **Behaviour:** Coaches and committee members collaborate openly and share knowledge to reach common goals.
- **Culture example:** During meetings, everyone actively contributes ideas, supports each other, and shares relevant information.
  
- **Value:** Integrity
- **Behaviour:** Always act honestly and transparently in all dealings.
- **Culture example:** When a mistake is made, it's acknowledged immediately, and the person takes responsibility to correct it.

Club leadership should consistently model these behaviours in their interactions with each other and everyone else. When leaders set the right example, others will follow suit.

If you are considering reviewing your current club culture and developing your vision and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for more ideas and activities to guide you.

## Managing conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest can pop up frequently in clubs, especially when committee members are also parents of athletes. That's why it's important to understand where these conflicts might arise and have a clear, transparent way of dealing with them. Making decisions in the best interest of the whole club and its members is key to a positive culture – this means coaches and committee members should not gain personal benefits from their decisions.

[\\*Link to Good Governance Guide](#)

## Showcase your values

Clubs have many fantastic initiatives and opportunities for the personal development of their members; the young coach programme at Long Eaton SC is a great example of this. Don't forget to shout about it and show all members and potential members that this is something you care about. At Halifax SC, they have exceptionally good teamwork between the coaching team and the committee, another example to be proud of. You can read more about these examples in the **Case Studies** tab.

# Acknowledgements

<b>Name</b>	<b>Club</b>
Wendy Brunt	Alsager Swimming Club
Keith Munday	Boldmere Swimming Club
Sofia Marcal Whittles	Chelsea and Westminster Swimming Club
Jo Deakins	City of Coventry Swimming Club
Gillian Russell	City of Leicester Swimming Club
Sarah Kennedy	City of Leicester Swimming Club
Jamie Evans	City of Leicester Swimming Club
Tracey Spinner	City of Norwich Swimming Club
Ben Negus	City of Peterborough Swimming Club
Jessica Fletcher	City of Salford Synchronised Swimming Club
Gabrielle Williams	City of Sheffield Water Polo Club
David Hibbert	Ealing Swimming Club
Mary McClung	Halifax Swimming Club
Karen Mee	Leamington Amateur Swimming Club
Kim Black	Leicester Sharks Competitive Swimming Club
Caroline Strathon	Lincoln Trident Swimming Academy
Helen Akers	Long Eaton Swimming Club
Siobhan Morton	Long Eaton Swimming Club
Sally Freeman	Plymouth Diving
Marieta Candal	Portsmouth Northsea Swimming Club
Angela Eguakhide	Romford Town Swimming Club
Ian Jolly	Solihull Swimming Club
Shân Veasey	Southend Diving
Sara Dilks	Tiverton Swimming Club
Alex McLauchlan	Worksop Dolphins Swimming Club
Alastair Roberts	Worthing SC Water Polo
Kevin Brooks	Wycombe District Swimming Club
John Adye	Derby Excel
Sara Todd	Regional Chair Swim England South East