

**SWIM
IRELAND**

CLUB TOOLKIT

**COVID-19 Return to Water
Finance and Planning Guide
(June 2020)**

**SWIM
IRELAND**

Me and
the water

Introduction

This guide aims to support you in identifying your current membership and finance status, which will help your club adapt to the changing environment of swimming considering the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to remain positive and remember that as we move through the phased re-opening of the country public health measures will influence how we engage in our aquatic activities, including possible changes to social distancing requirements and how many athletes can train together at one time. Therefore, whilst it is important to plan in relation to the current measures it is also important to not look too far ahead at elements beyond our control.

Communication and planning are central to the successful management of a Swim Ireland club. This guide should be viewed in conjunction with the Swim Ireland club resource library, current government advice and your club support officer.

Collaboration with your training facility and adhering to their requirements will also be essential to enable your club to return to training. Whilst many clubs will have concerns about their long term financial viability, it is important to focus on short term goals that are realistic and achievable.

Prior to any financial budgeting it is very important to gather information and engage with your members, facilities, and coaching team. As part of this process we recommend the following:

- Liaise with your facility to understand their plans for re-opening and to ascertain if they will reduce access hours, offer you more lanes and/or provide access at different times.
- Engage with your Head Coach to understand what squad numbers will look like, and how much training time and how many lanes will be required to deliver the programme. The Swim Ireland Return to Water framework document will assist clubs and coaches with this process.
- Survey your members to understand their plans for return, you will need this information to guide your planning.

Greater detail and advice on these steps can be found throughout this toolkit and will help you in your planning process.

Facility Engagement

In advance of facilities re-opening, clubs should engage in conversations with their facility around the following key areas:

- How many athletes/ members does your club need to cater for?
- Does your club cater for more than one discipline? (e.g. swimming only, or swimming and water polo).
- How many lane hours are available to your club? Is your pool a single format (i.e. 25m or 50m), or a combination of both formats through a week?
- What is the cost to your club, on a per lane basis?

Member Engagement

Many clubs have continued to engage with their members throughout lockdown on a regular basis through online and virtual means. As return to training will be in a limited capacity you should aim to continue this, with some ideas listed below:

- Virtual workouts, dry land training
- Quiz nights, for all ages
- Swim Ireland virtual webinars and courses, including CPD's, officials' courses, committee webinars and teaching/ coaching courses
- Committee meetings
- Nutrition workshops for athletes

Member survey

It is important to know who will be returning to your club now and in the future. This includes committee members, coaches, and athletes. If you do not know who intends to return you will need to ask, sending a short survey to your members is helpful. There are free online surveys available – Survey Monkey and Google Forms are two of the most widely used. Keep your survey short, with a maximum of 3-5 questions. See Appendix A for member survey.

Club Finances

For clubs to plan for returning to training it is important to understand what your current financial situation is and to review previous years' income and expenditure. Take time to answer the following questions:

- Does your club have financial reserves? i.e. cash at bank
- If your club has reserves, do you know how many weeks/ months operating costs you could cover if you had no income?
- Has your club made any advance payments? i.e. have you paid for pool time in advance?
- If you have paid for pool time in advance but have not been able to use the facility, will the facility honour this?
- Do you have any outstanding payments owing to the club? i.e. do members owe you money?
- Does the club have any outstanding liabilities? i.e. do you owe any money?
- What are your essential expenses? i.e. pool hire, coaching fees
- Are there any expenses you can reduce or remove in the short term?
- Can you review payment terms? i.e. if you currently pay your facility in advance on a quarterly or annual basis, can you pay 1 month in advance until the end of 2020 to help manage your cash flow?
- What are your income sources? i.e. membership fees, sponsorship, grants, fundraising
- Are these income sources likely to be reduced?
- Do you know what are the minimum membership fees you need to cover your costs?
- How will you charge fees? i.e. monthly between July and September

- What can you realistically (and fairly) charge your members for these modified coaching sessions?
- If refund of fees were not given for this season, can you justify using some of the member fees charged at during 2019-2020 season against these out of season sessions that you will organise over July and August?
- What additional resources are available to your club? For example, are the facility in a position to offer you additional lane space on a short-to-medium term basis, while other facility users are not able to return.
- Will you need to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer or anti-bacterial spray to facilitate the club returning? Is there any additional equipment/ resource requirements to support return to water?

Answering the questions above will start to give you a clear picture of what it costs to run your club and how you can fund it in the short term.

Squad/ Team Planning

To assist your club with the logistical planning of returning to training we have produced a squad planning sample and template documents, available in the Return to Water section of club resource library. The template document can be edited to meet your club's needs.

The Squad Planning Sample provides a working example of a club's projections from July-September and is broke into the following sections within the excel document:

1. Member and income projection – Listing athletes by name in each squad, enter what you intend to charge for training per month. The projections table is formulated to provide calculations based on various levels of return.
2. Pool hire costing – this can be edited based on pool or lane hire to calculate the weekly costs of training per squad.
3. Squad planning – Based on the current social distancing requirements and age range of squad members, clubs can calculate their pool hire needs.
4. Weekly plans – These sheets are more detailed to allow clubs to plan their training, coaching and COVID officer roster, also providing costings per athlete.

Budgeting

If you do not currently have a club budget, now is time to put one in place. Using the information, you have gathered from the questions above, and the template budget document you should be able to put a short term budget together. This will enable the club committee to make informed decisions and give you the ability to adapt, as necessary. A sample and template budget, and tutorial video are available in Club Finance Management section of club resource library.

Other considerations

This section covers the main concerns highlighted by clubs and some of our suggested actions that can be taken to address these concerns. It is important to remember that not all facilities may re-open in the short term, some clubs may be working towards returning to training in September.

- Facility will increase fees to make up for lost revenue – it is important to contact your facility to understand what actions they are considering, clubs bring a steady flow of income to facilities on a regular basis, and your facility may welcome this contact and reassurance that you wish to return.
- Facility will not want clubs back in as they will make more money from swimming lessons – it is beneficial to facilities to allow experienced athletes to return to training first. As clubs will be following Swim Ireland guidelines and manage their own groups facilities may welcome your return. Engagement with your facility to understand their concerns and needs is vital.
- Facility will not re-open in the short term as it is not financially viable to do so – this is a challenge that many facilities will face. Contact with your facility is essential to understand if the club can provide support to enable reduced opening times.
- We will have to rent extra lanes to meet social distancing requirements, or we will have less athletes in the pool at the same cost – depending on the social distancing requirements in place this is a likely scenario. This may be a short term measure, it is recommended that you use the squad planning template to put a plan in place to support your athletes returning to training.
- Many athletes may not return to training, leading to reduced numbers in the pool – using the member survey will enable your club to understand the concerns your athletes may have and enable you to put measures in place to support them. Some athletes may choose to return later, consider how you can support a phased return of your membership.

Planning

Having a plan in place is essential for all clubs planning to return to training. However, it is important to remember that plans change, and your club needs to be prepared to adapt. Break your plan down in to objectives (actions), making sure they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and have a Timeline. Use the Annual Plan Template, available in the Club Planning section of club resource library to help make sure that your club is focused on the following:

- Objectives – what needs to be done?
- Responsibility – who is going to do it?
- Timescale – when will the objective be achieved?
- Finance – what is the cost (if any)?
- Update – is it completed?

Need more help?

It is important to remember that you are not alone. Club committees should work together with their coaching team and facility to support their club return to training.

Club Support Officers and Pathway Development Coaches are available in each region to provide support and guidance and there is a Facebook Community for club Chairpersons, Secretaries, Treasurers, and Coaches so that you can ask for help and advice from other club volunteers.

We also recommend that you attend our Return to Water webinars, details are available on the Events and Courses sections of the Swim Ireland Membership Database.

Appendix A - Suggested survey questions

1. Will you be returning to the club once swimming pools reopen?

- Yes, as soon as the club sessions restart
- Yes, but not immediately
- No, I will not be returning

2. Please use the comment box below to provide more detail to the above question. For example, please explain why you may not be returning immediately, or why you have chosen not to return at all.

[comment box]

3. Do you have any fears or concerns about returning to the club?

- Yes
- No

4. If you answered yes to the question above, please give more detail in the comment box below, including what we, as a club, can do to calm those fears.

[comment box]

5. What are you most looking forward to, in terms of returning to the water?

- Meeting up with friends
- Getting fit
- Getting back into a routine
- Training for competition
- Other [comment box]