



Birtley Community Aquatic Centre

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Trustees Annual Report and Charity Accounts from 01/04/25 to 31/03/26

Charity number: 1205924

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Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 01/04/25 Period start date To 31/03/26 Period end date

Charity name: Birtley Community Aquatic Centre CIO

Charity registration number:1205924

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document
The object of Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation is the promotion of community participation in healthy recreation, for the benefit of the inhabitants of Birtley and the surrounding area, by the provision of facilities at Birtley Community Aquatic Centre (BCAC) for swimming and other aquatic activities capable of promoting physical and mental health and fitness.
Summary of the main activities of the charity in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities and services identified in the accounts.
BCAC operates a community led and managed swimming pool in Birtley (named Birtley Community Pool) which is open to all equally, irrespective of difference. We provide the following aquatic activities at the pool which are for the public benefit: • Public swimming in the main pool, with or without swim lanes • Family swimming in the main pool and small pools • Mother and baby sessions in the shallow pool • Aquafit sessions in the main pool and an Aquaintro session in the improver pool • Family fun sessions involving the inflatable obstacle course and the waterslide • Private swimming lessons delivered by Swim City and Birtley Swimming Club • School swimming lessons delivered by Swim City to 9 local primary schools • Swim camps delivered to children during the school holidays by Swim City • Competitive swimming training and swimming lessons delivered by Derwentside & Gateshead swim team • Triathlon swimming coaching delivered by DS Coaching • Floating sound baths delivered by Good for the Soul Holistics • Private bookings for the Northern Gender Dysphoria Service • Regular visits during public sessions by groups from the North East Autism Society and Home Educators
Statement on public benefit
The Trustees operate the charity and its activities in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit
Contribution made by our volunteers
BCAC could not operate without the significant commitment and input made by our trustees and volunteers. We initially had eight trustees who undertook the following activities to reopen the pool, after it was closed by Gateshead Council in July 2023.

- Developing a business plan and operating model which convinced Gateshead Council that the pool could be financially sustainable when run as a community asset
- Community engagement continuously throughout the project lifecycle.
- Stakeholder engagement including Gateshead Council and funding organisations.
- Fundraising to obtain the £400k which was initially required to reopen the pool.
- Registering BCAC as a CIO with the Charities Commission in November 2023.
- Procurement of Swim City to deliver the learn to swim programme
- Procurement of the other suppliers who delivered the capital investment required to reopen the pool, including new boilers, water slide refurbishment, car park resurfacing and LED lighting.
- Planning and managing the delivery of all the capital work required between the start of the operating lease on May 31st 2024 and the reopening of the pool in September 2024.
- Recruitment, induction and training of the employees who now operate the pool on a daily basis
- Production of the documentation required to ensure the pool is run safely and complies with the relevant legislation, including normal and emergency operating procedures, risk assessments and the management, financial, health & safety and employee related policies and procedures.

The number of trustees increased to nine in August 2025 and they are supported by 13 volunteers. The trustees have subsequently undertaken the following activities to ensure the pool is run safely and efficiently and provides a warm, clean and welcoming environment for customers:

- The Trustee Board sets the strategic direction for the pool, including the policies, procedures, pool activities, pricing, organisation structure and way of working.
- The trustees review the performance of the pool on a regular basis through regular trustee board and sub-group meetings. Our sub-groups include Customer service, Marketing and Community Engagement, Finance and Fundraising, Facilities Management and HR (staff performance and welfare)
- Our chair and treasurer ensure that Trustee Board meetings are managed effectively and demonstrate good governance, including producing agendas and minutes and maintaining action logs and decision logs. The Trustee Board meetings have a dedicated minutes secretary who is a senior employee and not a Trustee, so the notes from the meeting are independent.
- The chair provides direction, guidance, support and line management to the Senior Operations Manager (SOM)
- The Customer and HR sub-groups, which includes the SOM and the Business Support Manager (BSM), listen and respond to concerns, issues and opportunities raised by customers and employees.
- The Customer sub-group also reviews and agrees changes to the pool timetable and any changes to pricing.
- The treasurer liaises with the local schools who have their swimming lessons at the pool
- The HR sub-group reviews the effectiveness of the wider employee team, taking action where necessary to address any issues
- Our trustee with HR experience acts as lead for the HR subgroup and they support the SOM and BSM with the recruitment of new staff and ensures human resources processes are followed

- The Finance and Fundraising subgroup reviews the pool's financial performance against budget and the prior year, agrees the annual budget and oversees the effectiveness of the financial processes and controls at the pool.
- The treasurer acts as subgroup lead for the Finance and Fundraising subgroup, supported by the assistant treasurer, and produces monthly financial results including the profit and loss and cash flow.
- The treasurer also produces the annual budget for profit and loss and cash flow and compares this to the actual monthly results, including reforecasting the full year result at regular intervals.
- One of our trustees carries out the weekly process for banking the cash takings from the previous week
- The treasurer produces and submits applications for additional funding for investment in the pool to improve customer service and safety, increase income and reduce costs
- The treasurer, supported by the BSM, runs the monthly payroll process to ensure all employees are paid correctly on time and payments are made to HMRC and our pension provider Nest
- The Marketing and Community Engagement sub-group produces and distributes marketing information to promote the activities of the pool to the wider community via the website, Facebook page and other communications channels, including the local schools and the Swim City customers
- The Facilities sub-group reviews the performance and effectiveness of the pool's assets and suppliers, as well as overseeing the operational and maintenance regimes that are in place. It also identifies and delivers improvement opportunities and develops solutions to issues which arise from the operation of the pool's assets
- Our trustee who has significant experience of pool plant maintenance and operation acts as the Lead for the Facilities subgroup and supports the SOM to operate the pool plant assets effectively and to resolve asset failures through repairs or replacement at the lowest effective cost.
- Several volunteers undertake practical tasks at the pool to provide cost savings, such as minor asset repairs and maintenance including grass cutting, pool cover repairs, plumbing repairs and the optimisation of the air handling (HVAC) system
- Other volunteers work on the pool reception during busy periods to supplement the employee resources.
- All the sub-groups seek to identify and implement opportunities to improve customer service and safety, increase income and reduce costs, to ensure the financial sustainability of the pool

The trustees would like to record their thanks to all our volunteers and supporters

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries

Background – Achievements since starting

- Raising £495k of funding to enable us to reopen the pool, pay for unexpected capital and revenue expenditure identified after reopening and also supplement our income during the first seven months when the pool made significant trading losses.
- Procuring suppliers who delivered the required capital expenditure to a high standard and within the required timescales.

- Achieving procurement savings of nearly £40k which enabled us to fund the LED lighting which was not included in the Community Ownership Fund application.
- Managing the delivery of all the different strands of capital and other work required to open the pool within the three-month window from June to August 2024
- Recruiting over 20 employees between July and September 2024 to enable us to open the pool to the public and provide good customer care, and recruiting 12 further staff by March 2025 to improve our resourcing capability.
- Producing all the documentation required to ensure the pool is run safely and complies with the relevant legislation (see above section for details)
- Achieving our planned reopening dates for the clubs on September 2nd 2024 and to the public, schools and learn to swim lessons on September 16th 2024.
- Creating a bright, warm, welcoming and clean environment at the pool which has received much positive feedback from customers.

Our main achievements for 2025/26 have been as follows:

- Achieving gradual growth in swimmer numbers after reopening. Swimming memberships have grown from an initial 40 at the end of September 2024 to 180 by 31st March 2026. Swim City's learn to swim customers have grown from an initial 400 per week when the pool reopened to 1431 per week by 31st March 2026.
- Achieving a significant increase in participation in public swimming activities at the pool compared to the level of activity achieved by Gateshead Council. Income from adult and child "pay as you go" swims in 25/26, including inflatables and aquafit, was £207k compared to £112k achieved by Gateshead Council in the 19/20 year, which was the last year when the pool was fully open before COVID.
- Reducing our electricity and gas consumption by nearly 50% compared to Gateshead Council's consumption prior to the closure of the pool. The electricity reduction was due to investing in the LED lighting and an automated control mechanism which halves the frequency of the pool circulation pumps overnight. We also switch off the air handling units overnight when the pool covers are on. The gas reduction was due to replacing the old, inefficient boilers with new energy efficient boilers and insulating the pipework and heat exchangers in the plant room. Our gas and electric costs in the 25/26 year were £106k, 29% lower than the £150k cost for gas and electricity incurred by Gateshead Council in the 22/23 year
- Managing our employee rotas to minimise staffing levels whilst still maintaining the required level of lifeguarding, having flexible roles which combine lifeguarding and reception duties, and paying employees at the standard NJC rates for the leisure industry without weekend premium rates. As a result of these changes in operational practise, our employment costs for the 25/26 year were £324k, 35% lower than the £504k of employment costs incurred by Gateshead Council in the 22/23 year.
- Receiving significant and continuing support from the community for getting the pool open and the ongoing work to keep it open. This has been in many forms, including financial donations from individuals, businesses/community groups doing fundraisers for us (e.g. Hays Travel, Good for the Soul Holistics) and donations of equipment or reduced rates charged by local businesses. This has been greatly appreciated by the Trustees, especially when we have had challenging times, as their faith in and support for what we are doing has kept us going.

The impact of our project to reopen Birtley swimming pool as a community asset after it was closed, and the continuing availability of the pool to the local community in Birtley, has

been significant and very well received by the community who have supported the pool in large and growing numbers. In the period to 31st March 2026:

- 9 local primary schools and over 300 children have continued to have their swimming lessons at the pool, many of which walk their children to the pool. Whilst the pool was closed by the Council, they had to hire transport at an additional cost to take their children to other pools which were much further away
- Swim City are providing swimming lessons to over 1,400 children each week who would otherwise have had to travel to another pool for lessons. In addition, Birtley Swimming Club and Derwentside and Gateshead Swim Team are providing swimming lessons to 100 children and 40 children respectively each week. In many cases, these children would not have been able to travel to other pools, especially if they didn't have access to transport, so their ability to learn to swim would have been significantly impaired
- Over 180 adults have taken out memberships to swim regularly at the pool, many of whom would not have been able to swim at other pools because of the cost and time required to travel further afield.
- There has been an average of 622 adult visits to the pool each week on a pay as you go basis, for lane swimming, public swimming, family swimming, aquafit and family fun sessions. The average in the 24/25 year was 500 per week
- There have been an average of 364 child visits to the pool each week on a pay as you go basis, for public swimming, family swimming and family fun sessions. The average for the 24/25 year was 300 per week.
- 100 competitive swimmers with Derwentside and Gateshead swim team have been able to train at the pool every week
- Birtley Swimming Club has been able to reopen to provide low-cost swimming lessons to its members, which average 100 swimmers per week. The club was forced to close when Gateshead Council closed the pool in July 2023 and if the pool hadn't reopened as a community asset, run by BCAC, Birtley Swimming club would have closed permanently after being in continuous existence for over 50 years.

These achievements clearly demonstrate the significant and lasting difference the project has made. The successful reopening and ongoing operation of Birtley Swimming Pool has preserved an important community asset, increased participation in physical activity, supported health and wellbeing outcomes, and strengthened community cohesion. Continued growth in usage and membership provides strong evidence that the pool is meeting a vital local need and delivering substantial social value for the community of Birtley.

Achievements against objectives set

Funding achieved compared to initial target

Our original fundraising target, as set out in our second Crowdfunding campaign narrative was to raise £390k to reopen the pool, including £300k for capital expenditure and £90k for operating costs.

By March 31st 2025, we had actually raised £505k, including £311k for specific capital items. Of the remaining £184k raised, £46k has been spent on capital items and the remainder used to pay for operating costs prior to reopening the pool (£63.2k) and to offset operating losses made from trading during the first seven months of the 24/25 year (£69k).

Operating loss compared to business plan forecast operating loss

The last version of our business plan from June 2024 forecast an operating deficit of £3k for the year to 31st March 2026. Our actual operating deficit for the year to 31st March 2026 was £19.1k. The table below provides a comparison for the 25/26 financial year between our actual financial results from trading activities and the last version of the business plan, for the main income and expenditure categories:

Income category	Actual to 31.03.26 £'000	Business plan to 31.03.26 £'000	Variance to 31.03.25 £'000
Income from public swimming	327.2	331.9	(4.7)
Income from pool hire	158.1	182.5	(24.4)
Income from school lessons	43.7	44.2	(0.5)
Amortisation of capital grants	28.6	0.0	28.6
Revenue grants	18.1	0.0	18.1
Other income	7.2	44.7	(37.5)
Total income	582.9	603.3	(20.4)
Expenditure category	Actual to 31.03.26 £'000	Business plan to 31.03.26 £'000	Variance to 31.03.25 £'000
Payroll costs	324.5	362.4	37.9
Gas	51.9	39.5	(12.4)
Electricity	54.1	56.7	2.6
Water	18.5	15.0	(3.5)
Repairs and cyclical maintenance	15.8	38.6	22.8
Insurance	21.1	20.0	(1.1)
Chemicals, materials and equipment	55.2	27.0	(28.2)
Depreciation	34.0	22.1	(11.9)
Other costs	26.9	25.2	(1.7)
Total expenditure	602.0	606.5	4.5
Operating deficit	(19.1)	(3.2)	(15.9)

The main variations in the table above are explained below:

- Income from public swimming activities is £4.7k below the business plan but the business plan included income from swimming activities (£302.0k) and from sales of vending items and swimwear (£29.9k). In the 25/26 year, the actual income from swimming activities was £273k (£29k adverse), while the actual income from sales of vending items and swimwear was £54.2k (£24.3k favourable)
- Income from pool hire is £24.4k (13%) below the business plan. This was partly because Derwentside and Gateshead swim team reduced its pool hire by 40% in January 2025, due to reductions in their swimmer numbers following the Club's merger. It is also because the business plan assumed £15k income from 4 hours pool hire per day over 6 weeks, from the swim camps which Swim City run during the school holidays. The swim camps were only run for two weeks in 25/26 and only required two hours pool hire each day.
- Amortisation of capital grants to the profit and loss account was omitted from the business plan in error
- BCAC has received grant funding from The Royal Foundation which does not relate to capital investment and this is shown as revenue grants which have been released to the profit and loss account. No revenue grants were assumed in the business plan.

- Other income in the business plan included £21k from children paying to use the soft play. This did not generate the income expected, so we have stopped charging for this and instead use the soft play equipment to enhance the customer experience in the spectator area. Other budgeted income also included £12.2k for running first aid training courses, which we have not been able to deliver.
- Payroll costs are £38k (25%) less than the business plan due to rationalisation of the shift rotas to minimise lifeguard cover, whilst still maintaining a safe swimming environment. The business plan was very prudent in this respect and included a much higher level of lifeguarding resource than was necessary
- Gas costs are £12.4k (31%) above business plan due to an increase in the unit rate from 3p to 4.4p per hour (47%), partly offset by lower consumption than expected due to the efficiency of the new boilers and insulation of the pipework from November 25
- Repairs and cyclical maintenance are £22.8k (59%) below the business plan due to the replacement of the boilers which need minimal maintenance and due to the majority of minor repairs being carried out by the staff supported by trustees and volunteers
- Depreciation is £12.0k above the business plan because investment in fixed assets has been larger than expected
- Chemicals, materials and equipment are £28.1k (104%) higher than the business plan, as this includes the cost of vending items and swimwear sold which was £32.1k in 25/26. In the business plan, only £7k was included for the cost of vending items and swimwear, as it was based on vending sales of just £14k achieved by Gateshead Council in the 19/20 year, the last year when the pool opened for normal hours.

Swimmer numbers compared to targets agreed with the Royal Foundation

The grant agreement with one of our main funders, The Royal Foundation, included targets for swimmer numbers. Our performance against those targets has been as follows:

Royal Foundation target for the period to 31.03.26	Target	Actual
Number of schools which have had swimming lessons	10	9
Number of visits to the pool by local children	70,000	80,561
% of children having lessons at BCAC can swim 25m	90%	64%
Number of young people trained as lifeguards	20	14
Number of young people trained as rookie lifeguards	20	30

We have not met our target for 90% of children who can swim 25m. On reflection this target was unrealistically high, given that the majority of the children that have lessons from Swim City are non-swimmers or in the early stages of swimming lessons and therefore just starting their swimming journey.

Improving our inclusivity and affordability

BCAC provides a swimming pool for the community that enhances the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of the individuals using it. Birtley Community pool is “run by the community for the community”.

We believe that our pool and our community are stronger when they are full of opportunities for people with diverse identities, backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to making our pool more equitable and inclusive. As Trustees and volunteers, we are deeply connected with local people and our community organisations around us; we are committed to listening to their voices and having regular engagement, so they guide what we do.

We have set our prices for swimming activities to be competitive with other local swimming pools, and we believe these are affordable, as evidenced by the steady growth of our swimmer numbers since we reopened in September 2024 and particularly since January 2025. A family of four can participate in swimming for less than £16 and in the inflatable fun sessions for £22, which compares very favourably to most other forms of family entertainment activities.

Our price for an adult swim is £5.50, with discounted prices of £3.30 for children aged between 4 and 15 and only £1 for children aged 3 and under. For our inflatable fun sessions, the price is the same for adults but £5.00 for children, as we need additional lifeguards for these sessions. Our price for an aquafit session is £7.50.

We also offer a swimming membership scheme for £30.00 per month which enables the member to have unlimited swims at the pool as well as a discounted price of £5 for aquafit and £4.50 for an inflatable fun session. We introduced additional membership options for families and children below 16 at the end of April 2025.

We also offer discounted prices for family groups, including £15.50 for two adults and two children, £13 for two adults and one child and £10 for one adult and two children.

We have benchmarked our aquatic activities pricing to be competitive and in line with other local community led pools in the area, so we don't undercut them, and our pricing is significantly cheaper than the local Council's outsourced facilities. This ensures inclusivity and affordability for the community members who use our pool facilities.

In our dealings with our community, we pledge to always be open and honest, do what we say we will do, and learn from our mistakes, resulting in all actions and decisions taken to be for the good of our customers, the centre and its future learning and growth.

Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set

Our fundraising performance has exceeded our target of £390k to reopen the pool by more than £175k. We had raised a total of £505k of funding up to the end of March 2025 and a further £71k was raised in the year ending March 31st 2026, making a total of £576k.

The main contributions in the 24/25 year were as follows:

- The Community Ownership Fund contributed £272k
- The Royal Foundation has contributed £96k
- Personal donations from trustees and local individuals contributed £104k
- Sport England contributed £18k to the two crowdfunding campaigns
- Donations and grants from local funding organisations contributed £29.4k, which included donations of fixed assets costing £5.4k

The main contributions in the 25/26 year were as follows:

- Gateshead Council contributed £31.2k to reimburse the cost of replacing or refurbishing several critical pool plant assets which failed within three months of reopening the pool.
- The National Lottery Awards for all contributed £20k to the solar panels project

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period

Background Information:

Birtley Community Aquatic Centre took over Birtley Swimming Centre from Gateshead Council on 31st May 2024 and has a 50 year operating lease.

We were responsible for all the operating costs of the building from June 1st 2024, recruited staff from July 2024 onwards and reopened the pool to the public on September 16th 2024.

We expected that the income we would receive from the public activities at the pool would grow over time but would not cover our operating costs in the first seven months after reopening the pool. Our fundraising anticipated that there would be a significant loss in the period before we opened and smaller losses as the income grew over the first seven months.

Summary of our financial results for the year ending 31st March 2025

We incurred significant costs of £63.2k on gas, electricity water and employment costs during the first 3.5 months from 1st June 2024 to when the pool opened in mid-September, when we had no income.

We incurred an operating loss of £69k during our first 6.5 months of trading from September 16th 2024 to March 31st 2025. £50k of this operating loss was incurred in our first 3.5 months of operation to 31st December 2024. The last quarter of the calendar year is usually a challenging period in the leisure industry but the scale of our losses in this period was still very concerning.

Our losses reduced significantly to £19k over the three months from January 2025 to March 2025, as customer footfall increased significantly across all our activities from the start of January 2025, following an extensive marketing campaign and significant amounts of positive feedback from our customers, which encouraged more people to come to the pool.

Our income in the last quarter of the year to March 31st 2025 showed a very encouraging upward trend as a result, with steady growth in our membership numbers and in the number of people paying for swimming activities on a sessional basis. We attracted several new organisations, who started hiring the pool for their activities. We also started to make some progress in reducing some of our costs.

Summary of our financial results for the year ending 31st March 2026

After making a significant operating loss during our first 6.5 months of trading to 31st March 2025, we knew that further significant financial improvements would be needed to reach a sustainable financial position, to ensure that our income covered our costs.

We decided to increase our prices in September 2025 by an average of 10%, which has generated an average £5k increase in our monthly income. We believed that the planned price increases for public swimming activities would not result in a reduction in customer numbers, as the new prices would still be competitive with other local pools and the impact on a pay as you go price would typically be just 50p.

We have monitored customer footfall on a pay as you go basis since the price increase and we have found that this has remained stable, as have membership numbers.

We developed a plan for the 25/26 year to implement further operational efficiencies, particularly relating to chemicals and gas costs. We also identified some opportunities to safely optimise our staffing rotas to reduce our staff costs.

During 25/26 we implemented the following operational efficiencies:

- We changed how we control the pH level in the water in September 2025 and we now use sodium bisulphate instead of carbon dioxide for this, which has reduced our chemical costs by £5k per annum
- We insulated the heat exchangers and most of the pipework in the plant room and draught proofed all the external doors during the last quarter of 2025, which reduced our gas costs from November 25 to March 26 by £8.9k, compared to the equivalent period in the 24/25 year.

We have incurred an operating loss of £19.1k in the 12 months to 31st March 2026, a significant improvement on the operating loss of £69k which was incurred in the 6.5 months to 31st March 2025. This includes the benefit of £18.1k of one off revenue grants received during the year.

Improvements planned for the 26/27 year

We have developed further plans to improve the financial results during the 26/27 year, which include the following main improvements compared to the actual results in the 25/26 year, which total £54k for the year:

- A smaller price increase in September 2026, which will increase income from public activities by £12k and from pool hire by £5k if customer footfall is maintained
- An increase of £16k in our profit share and pool hire income from our learn to swim supplier, Swim City
- An increase of £4k in income from our swim memberships
- A reduction of £3k in chemical costs due to changing the method of pH dosing
- A reduction in electricity costs of £7k due to the impact of solar panels from September and a price reduction from 1st June
- A reduction of our gas costs of £3k due to further consumption reductions following process optimisation
- A reduction in our insurance costs of £4k following a successful procurement process

These improvements are partly offset by the following adverse changes which total £32k for the year:

- A reduction in one off revenue grants received of £9k for the year
- An increase in our employment costs of £21k due to the NJC pay rise, the change in Statutory Sick Pay and an additional amount included for a part time lead leisure attendant role to strengthen our leadership team.
- An increase of £2k in the cost of planned cyclical maintenance

Our budget for the 26/27 year, after incorporating the above changes, is a small operating surplus of £3k.

BCAC financial position at the year end

The balance sheet at March 31st 2026 includes the following key balances:

- Fixed assets have reduced from £342.1k to £329.3k, reflecting investment in new assets of £21.2k and depreciation for the year of £34.0k.
- Net current assets have increased from £9.9k to £28.6k. This includes an increase in the bank balance from £16.4k to £28.5k.
- Deferred capital grants have increased from £294.2k to £310.3k, reflecting grants received in the year of £51.2k. amortisation of grant income of £28.6k and grants released to the profit and loss account of £6.5k
- An interest free loan for £10k, repayable over 8 years, was provided by one of the volunteer trustees in January 2026 to assist with working capital requirements, which are greatest during the winter as this is the most challenging financial period of the year
- Total net assets have reduced from £57.9k to £38.8k, reflecting the loss for the year of £19.1k

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held

BCAC's reserves policy is as follows:

- Our objective is to maintain an amount of money in reserve which equates to three months of operating costs, which is currently £141k.
- This amount would be held in reserve to meet unexpected changes which would have an adverse impact on BCAC's financial position. These would include significant cost increases, significant reductions in our customer numbers, or external impacts such as another pandemic closing the swimming pools

Amount of reserves held

BCAC had reserves of £38.8k at 31st March 2026

Reasons for holding less than three month's reserves

BCAC is a new community asset for which the trustees raised a significant amount of funding to enable the pool to be reopened to the public in September 2024. This funding has covered all the investment required in the pool, the preopening costs and the operating losses which were incurred during the first nineteen months of trading. The reserves would have been greater than £39k but have been adversely impacted by the following items:

- Unexpected capital expenditure, due to the failure of several key assets on reopening the pool
- Higher than expected initial operating losses
- Losses continuing into the 25/26 year at a reduced level

These have both been explained earlier in this report. We expect that our plans to increase income and to reduce operating costs in 26/27, as explained earlier, will result in BCAC starting to generate a small operating surplus going forward. This will gradually increase the value of our reserves, enabling us to reach the objective of holding three months of operating costs within the medium term.

Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern

Our trading performance improved significantly in the 25/26 year, as BCAC incurred a much reduced loss of £19.1k compared to £69k for the preceding 6.5 month trading period in 24/25. Our budget for the 26/27 shows a small surplus of £3k. This indicates that the pool should become financially sustainable during 26/27, with income covering operating costs.

Our balance sheet at 31st March 2026 remains healthy, with net current assets of £29.8k, although this includes £20k funding received in advance for the solar panels project. We have also taken out an interest free loan of £10k in January 2026 from one of the volunteer trustees, repayable over 8 years. The loan agreement includes a further £10k option which can be drawn down if needed, but our budgeted cashflow for the year to 31st March 2027 does not require this additional loan option to be drawn down.

The charity's principal sources of funds

BCAC's principal sources of funds are as follows:

- Income from public swimming activities for which customers pay at reception on a pay as you go basis, including adult swimming, family swimming, aquafit and the fun sessions with the inflatables and water slide
- Income from hiring all three pools to Swim City when they provide swimming lessons to the public
- Income from hiring the pools to swimming clubs and other organisations
- Income from delivering swimming lessons to local schools
- Income from swimming memberships which are taken out by regular swimmers
- Income from selling swimwear and swimming equipment to customers
- Income from vending machines, selling hot and cold drinks and snacks
- Income from running National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) and other training courses
- Income from applying to funders for grants
- Income from other fundraising activities including donations from the public

The principal risks facing the charity

The principal risks facing Birtley Community Aquatic Centre are as follows:

- Loss of a key trustee or trustees due to illness or unexpected life events
- Loss of key members of staff due to illness or unexpected life events
- Death, serious injury or illness experienced by a customer or employee due to drowning, an accident or a medical emergency at the swimming pool
- Major failure of pool plant results in the closure of the pool for an extended period
- Impact of external events over which BCAC has no control, such as another pandemic closing all pools for a significant period
- Increases in the costs of gas, electricity, water and insurance which are the result of macro economic changes and outside of BCAC's control
- Loss of customers due to competition from other nearby pools, particularly the pools at Dunston, Gateshead Leisure Centre, Chester Le Street and Washington
- Loss of customers due to any incidents at the pool which damage BCAC's reputation
- Cost of living pressures and changes in personal circumstances result in a reduction in customer footfall

All these are monitored by the Trustees using the BCAC Organisational Risk Assessment

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's governing document

Our constitution content and format is the one required for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with volunteers who have signed up and been inducted also classed as voting members along with the charity trustees who are also unpaid volunteers

How is the charity constituted?

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Trustee selection methods

Trustees are appointed in line with Section 13 of our constitution and the eligibility requirements are set out in section 12. Trustees retire annually by rotation of not less than one third and may put themselves forward for re-election. Vacancies are then duly filled by the decision of the members. The constitution includes provision to appoint a new trustee at any time due to retirement or to increase the number of trustees up to a maximum of 12.

Charity's Organisational structure

BCAC currently has nine trustees, including the chair, Yvonne Probert and the treasurer, Matthew Grant. The trustees have specific skills sets and areas of responsibility, including financial management, payroll, fundraising, pool plant maintenance and operation, HR policies and processes and social media communications.

The Trustee board met every fortnight from when the charity was registered in November 2023 until May 2025, and this reduced to once a month from June to September 2025. Since then, the Trustee board meetings have been held every other month. All meetings are supported by a non-Trustee Board secretary. The Senior Operations Manager has also attended these meetings since he was appointed in July 2024. Agendas are produced in advance of each meeting and minutes, actions and decisions are recorded.

In addition, the following subgroups meet regularly between the Board meetings to work on the subject areas in more detail and to report to the board on progress, recommendations and any issues.

- Finance and fundraising subgroup
- Customer Services subgroup
- Human Resources subgroup
- Facilities management subgroup
- Marketing and Community Engagement subgroup

The frequency of these meeting has increased since the Trustee Board meetings changed to be every other month.

Reference and Administrative details:

Charity name	Birtley Community Aquatic Centre
Other name the charity uses	Birtley Community Pool
Registered charity number	1205924
Charity's principal address	Birtley Community Pool Durham Road Birtley Chester Le Street DH3 2PA

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

		Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
	1	Yvonne Probert	Chair		
	2	Matthew Grant	Treasurer		
	3	Graham Fuery	Facilities Trustee		
	4	Tracy Green	HR Trustee		
	5	Jackie Mowbray	Customer Services Trustee		
	6	Dean Cox	Trustee		
	7	Rebecca Scott	Trustee		
	8	Gerald Bishop	Trustee	010425 to 140526	
	9	Sue Alexander	Trustee	From 270825	
	10	Anne Atkinson	Assistant Treasurer and Trustee	From 270825	

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	Yvonne Probert	Matthew Grant
Full name(s)	Yvonne Probert	Matthew Grant
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Treasurer
Date	12/08/26	12/08/26