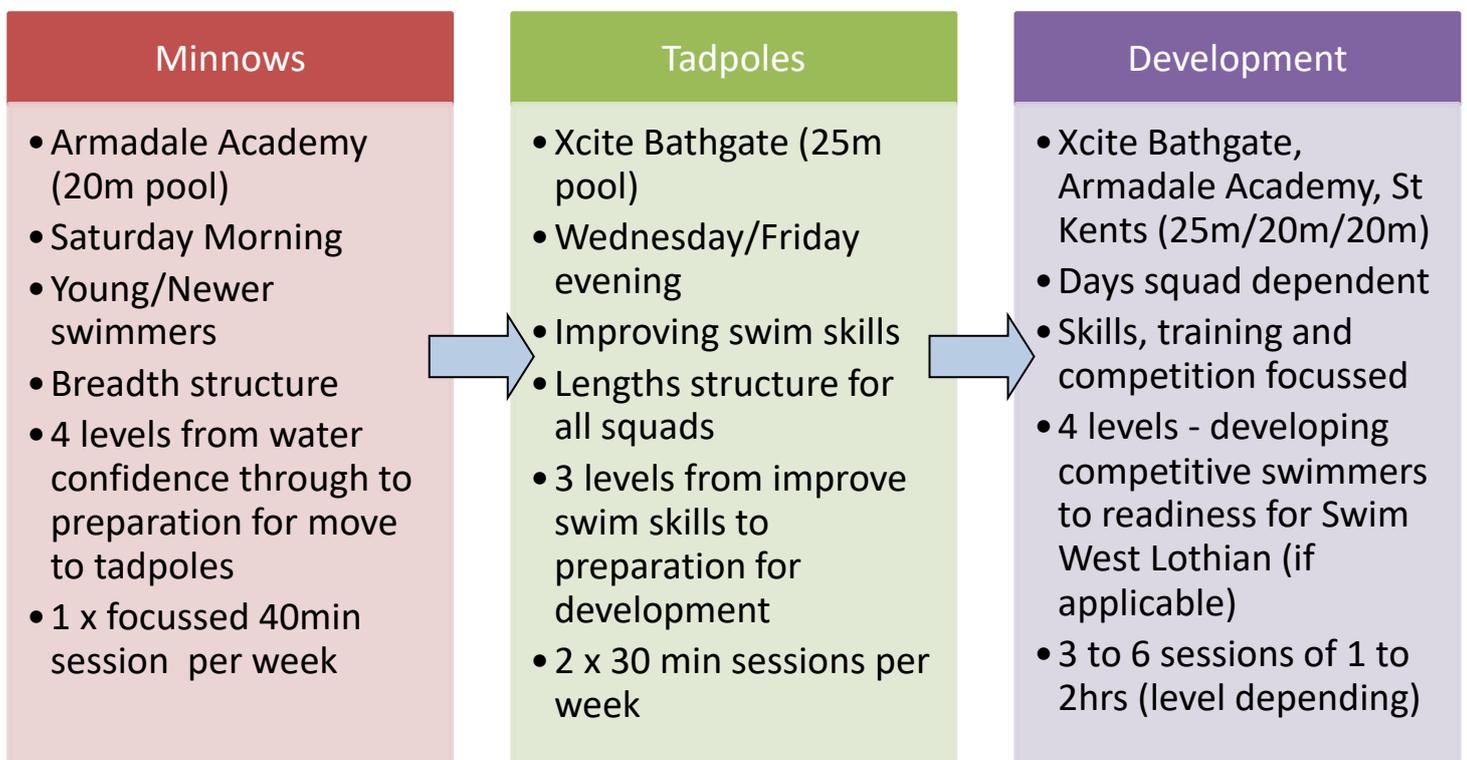


**DEVELOPING OUR LEARN TO SWIM PROGRAMME**  
**WELCOME TO OUR NEW STRUCTURE**

Bathgate Amateur Swimming Club has run a successful learn to swim programme, known as our tadpole squad (yellow, green, blue and red caps) for many years. This programme has produced many excellent swimmers who have moved on to our development squad (bronze and above) and beyond. We now have the opportunity to enhance our learn to swim programme and would like to share some further detail of the changes.

**What is changing?**

Currently we have two main parts of the club – Tadpoles (learn to swim) and Development (learn to train and compete). Going forward the club will have the following structure.



## Minnows

Minnows is the new part of our learn to swim programme (now comprising Minnows and Tadpoles).

Minnows will have 4 levels. This will allow for steady progression of swimming fundamentals where teaching is more tailored to their needs and swimmers interact with those closer to their own level.

The key points to note about Minnows are:

- All swimmers joining Bathgate ASC will now likely join our Minnows section before progressing through the other sections of the club.
- Exceptions to this is where the a swimmer has been on the waiting list and can meet the higher level requirements for Tadpoles (as assessed by trial). If there is space, the swimmer will be offered a place in Tadpoles when one is available. Please note the entry level for Tadpoles is now higher than before.
- If you have a swimmer on the Bathgate ASC waiting list, they will be offered a trial for Minnows and placed in that section at the appropriate level.
- The Minnows squad times are 9am to 9.40am or 9.50am to 10.30am at Armadale Academy depending on squad.
- At its core, Minnows is about ensuring swimmers are water confident, understand the fundamentals of swimming and can take direction from a swim teacher. There will be water helpers and coaches in the water with the swimmers (at levels 1 and 2) to ensure their safety and to help the development of fundamentals.
- Once swimmers have completed level 4 they will be ready to transition to Tadpoles to continue their swimming development.
- There will be a NPLQ qualified lifeguard at these sessions at all times

We cannot confirm the exact fee for Minnows as these will be agreed at the club AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> November. The proposal being put forward is that there will be an annual fee to cover Scottish Swimming (SASA) membership to provide insurance and other benefits (currently £43) and a low ongoing monthly fee of £15.00. This annual fee for SASA and ongoing monthly fee is consistent with the approach for all swimmers currently in the club. The joining process for Minnows will be communicated separately to those joining the squad following trials.

## Tadpoles

While Tadpoles has essentially been the name for our learn to swim programme for many years, the squads and structure is now changing. Key points to note are:

- Essentially the swimming level currently associated with yellow caps (tank 1) will no longer be part of Tadpoles. The needs of swimmers at this level will be met by the Minnows section.
- The previous structure of Bathgate (Wednesday/Friday sessions) shown in appendix 1 (which has two thirds of the pool taken up with half length splits) will change.
- All squads in Tadpoles will now swim full lengths as shown in appendix 2.
- This change will take place from 9th January 2019.

We cannot confirm the exact fee for new Tadpoles as these will be agreed at the club AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> November. We will be recommending that there is no increase in squad fees – those moving from Yellow to Green will incur the appropriate Green squad fee.

To support swimmers who are currently in yellow and green caps prepare for the transition, we are offering them a month of transition sessions at Armadale pool on a Saturday morning. This is in addition to their current tadpole sessions and is free of charge. The sessions dates are shown in the transition timeline shown below.

Before the year end, all parents with a swimmer in Yellow in the current structure will receive a communication with an assessment of which section and squad is best for their continued development. You will receive this communication in good time so your swimmer can attend the appropriate session(s) at the start of the year.

### **Transition timeline**

The key dates in the transition dates are as follows:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>What</u></b>	<b><u>Why</u></b>
3/11/18	Water Helper and Shadow Coach training	Improving skills to support the new structure
10/11/18	Trials for age appropriate swimmers on waiting list and those wishing to join from SWL LTS programme. E-mail to contacts on list due shortly	To ensure swimmers will be invited to the appropriate session time and squad in Minnows come 9/1/18
17/11/18	Trials for age appropriate swimmers on waiting list and those wishing to join from SWL LTS programme. E-mail to contacts on list due shortly	To ensure swimmers will be invited to the appropriate session time and squad in Minnows come 9/1/18
24/11/18	Yellow and Green Cap transition sessions	To provide additional support to swimmers in the squads most affected by the changes
1/12/18	Yellow and Green Cap transition sessions	To provide additional support to swimmers in the squads most affected by the changes
8/12/18	Yellow and Green Cap transition sessions	To provide additional support to swimmers in the squads most affected by the changes
15/12/18	Yellow and Green Cap transition sessions	To provide additional support to swimmers in the squads most affected by the changes
22/12/18	Club is closed for holidays	
9/1/18	New structure commences for all tadpole swimmers. The Club Executive will give a short presentation followed by an opportunity for Q&A. Members of Minnows and their parents will be invited to see the next stage.	To mark the start of the new structure and also give parents an opportunity to discuss and outstanding questions. Gives an opportunity for new Minnows swimmers to become involved in wider club.
12/1/18	New Minnows programme commences in Armadale Academy	The reasons are set out in the next section

## Why we are making these changes

Our current learn to swim programme is good but has a number of weaknesses. This is in large part due to the structure of the pool and programme that had to be adopted to try and accommodate more swimmers within the same limited pool time.

The current situation means:

- Some swimmers start our programme without water confidence or swim fundamentals. This can take up significant time of the single coach for one swimmer. This can be difficult for the child and frustrating for the coach and parents of other swimmers. This is not the best start to a young swimmers experience with the club. It also does not allow us to develop young swimmers as we would wish.
- Often swimmers seem to take a long time to progress through the first 2 stages of the programme which has been a frustration for parents and swimmers.
- Part of the pool structure is not conducive to developing swimming skills (current upper green) and is very difficult to coach safely and successfully.
- There is a significant amount of the pool which isn't useful for teaching turn skills which is often key to later performance.

This situation is holding back the development of our young swimmers meaning many reach development stage later than ideal or still with stroke and core skills deficiencies.

The changes we are making will mean:

### For Minnows:

- We are able to provide an environment which is tailored to the needs of younger and less able swimmers.
- There will be more coaching and water helper support dedicated to the initial swimming levels
- This will lead to stronger development of fundamentals meaning better and faster progression. This will in turn lead to better swimming performance in the longer term
- A better experience for swimmers

### For Tadpoles

- Swimmers will commence the start of Tadpoles at around the same level
- They will know the fundamentals of swimming, know our teaching method and be able to take instruction
- The environment will be more suited to development of the skills needed to become a quality swimmer
- We will be able to develop fitness/stamina as the pool structure will now allow for this
- We can resolve the structural issue there currently is in teaching all our green caps effectively. At this key stage, coaches will now be at the best position to view and communicate to their swimmers



## **Next steps**

We will be communicating shortly to all those on our waiting list aged 4 year and 9 months (as at 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018) or above who have not previously been assessed as requiring a space in green caps or above. We will be offering trial dates to all those swimmers at Armadale Academy to assess their swimming needs and evaluate how we can best support them.

If there are swimmers on the waiting list who have been assessed as, and are waiting for, a space in Green or above we will get back in touch when a space in Tadpoles becomes available.

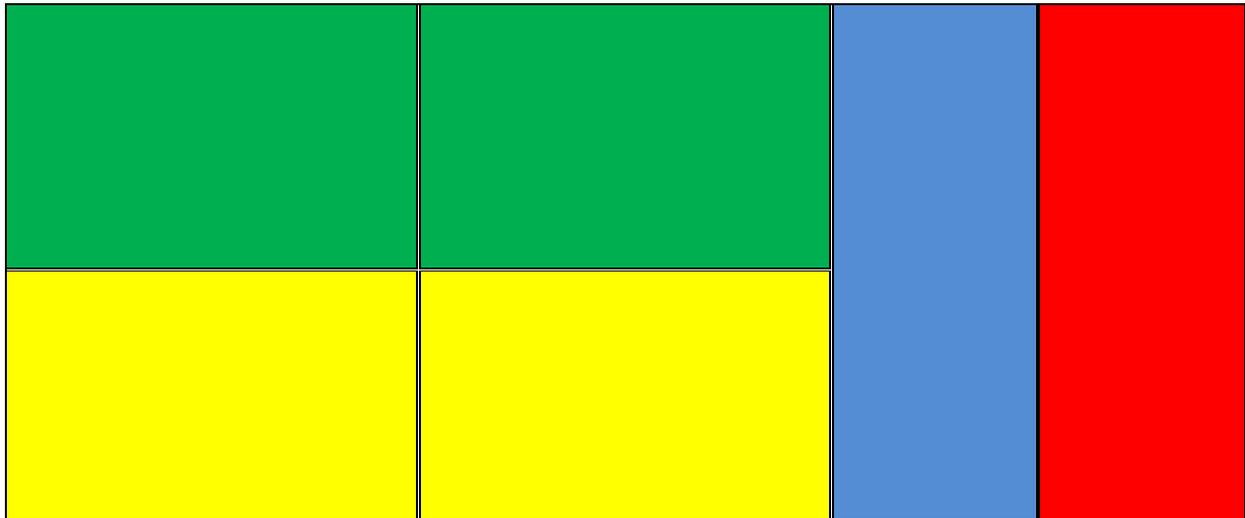
Communication with parents of children currently in yellow will take place as soon as possible. If you have any pressing initial questions you can contact me at the e-mail address shown below.

We hope that this document has helped explain the changes we are making and why they are for the long term benefit of the club and its swimmers. If you have any questions about the changes and how this may affect you, please get in touch by e-mail to [BASCPresident@outlook.com](mailto:BASCPresident@outlook.com) and copy to [BASCSecretary@outlook.com](mailto:BASCSecretary@outlook.com)

On Behalf of BASC Management Committee

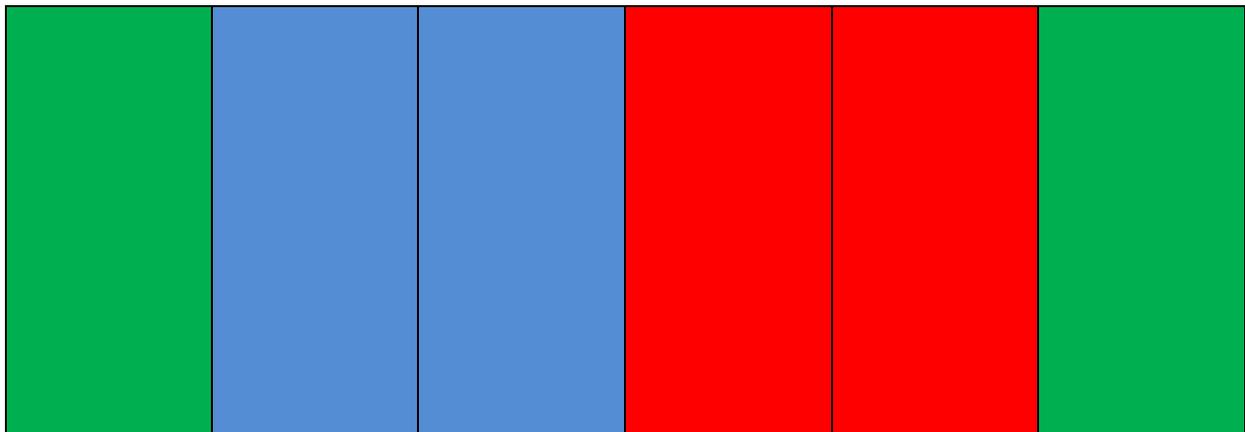
Ronnie Morgan  
President  
Bathgate ASC

**Appendix 1**



*Most of the Tadpoles sessions are taken up with swimming half lengths. We need to use this 25m pool to develop swim skills such as dives and turns as well as increasing stamina.*

**Appendix 2**



*With this structure, all squads swim lengths in Tadpoles. Green squads (the first tadpole level) have the outside lanes so swimmers have the closest contact with the coach. Skills which are key to future performance can be developed early.*