



## **SPEECH OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN** **OF THE TRIANGLE TRIATHLON CLUB**

It is my honour to bring you these few words to sum up the 2017 season.

I cannot recall how many of these I have given – which is a good enough reason for moving on and letting someone else into this chair!

I sit on a Board of Governors at a secondary school and I also help oversee ten Rotary Clubs. Those institutions are all encouraged to carry out a health check. You take the opportunity to grade your education system, your Rotary Club – or indeed your Triathlon Club to see if we are fit for purpose.

So what are the ingredients of a good Club?

### **Thirteen vital items spring to mind:-**

1. The club member/athletes.
2. The races we organise.
3. The craic/social activities.
4. Our kit.
5. Our coaches.
6. Our ability to travel to races as a unit.
7. Our ability to cater for (a) the elite, (b) the newcomers and (c) the experienced weekend warriors.
8. Good value membership fee.
9. Trained club officers who serve the wider triathlon community.
10. Branding.
11. Finances.
12. Website.
13. History of the club versus the future of the club.

Let us address these one by one:-

1. We have a lot of good people in this club, they are quality athletes and even more importantly good human beings – our athletes have placed on podia and we score age group wins. We no longer dominate the Irish and Ulster scene as we used to do when we had multiple winners, like Michael McCarron, John Madden, Mark Tosh,



Anne Paul and Julie Murphy (another Commonwealth Games athlete, like Mark) but times change. Elite Triathlon is now practically professional. We had recently a 60 year old athlete found guilty of taking PED's performance enhancing drugs, i.e. cheating. It's a competitive world out there, but it is important to remember that we all do this for fun, for fellowship, and to give us a buzz that nothing else in the world can produce. Our club members are also our race organisers – Adam, Mervyn, Conal, Samantha, and now Gearoid. You should thank these people. Only a Race Director knows the stresses and strains of organising an event which leads me on to.

2. **The Races we organise.** Anyone would be happy with our race calendar whether it's the:-

National Series Duathlon in Magherafelt organised by Samantha on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

Gearoid's Roe Valley Sprint on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.

Adam's Olympic Distance Race on the 16<sup>th</sup> June.

Conal's Sprint and Half in Groomsport in September and Mervyn's Children's Tri also in September.

I don't think any other club offers as many different races which brings us to a fundamental problem – our athletes want to do our races. Last year, we laid down a rule that a good club member must contribute and marshal at least one club race. You will not be a member in good standing if you don't and you will not be eligible for a club award at the end of the season. Maybe club member should get into our races cheaper if they have contributed to the cause. If we all put our shoulder to the wheel, then the wheel goes round easier.

3. **The Craic/Social Outings.** We should have more of these events even if they are in the three main towns of our club i.e. Coleraine, Limavady and Magherafelt. Athletes don't have to be serious all the time. We are united in our love of the sport and there is nothing that we love better than talking about the sport we love!

4. **Our Kit.** Thanks to Charlotte, we have a great range of quality kit, whether its tri suits, cycle jackets, gilets, t-shirts, hoodies etc. I may be biased but I think our kit looks great. When you travel to a race, remember you are an ambassador for our club. You should be



immediately identifiable before, during and after a race, as a member of this club.

5. **Coaches**. We have high quality coaches like Mervyn, Anne and hopefully James shortly, too. We should use them more often and say thank you to them more often for their expertise, their experience and their enthusiasm.
  
6. **Travelling to Races**. We should travel en mass to more races. We should identify a race that requires a bit of time, trouble and effort to get there. Do the race, then party like mad. I remember – or actually I don't remember – some of the wild parties we were at in Sligo and Donegal many years ago after races.
  
7. **Is our membership good value? £20.00 – without a doubt.** If you know of better value in any sporting club, please let me know.
  
8. **Looking outwards, rather than inwards.** We have a long and proud tradition of serving the wider triathlon community, whether it be as Commonwealth Games Officers like Conal and Stewart or as Chair of the Ulster Branch or President of the Irish Triathlon Association as it then was or whether it's being a qualified Triathlon Ireland official like Thomas who goes and oversees other races, it is vital we are seen on the scene in Ireland. You never know where it can lead to. Some of my close friends have been TI officials at World Championships and the Olympic Games. If you give of your time, you have no idea how far your volunteering skills will take you.
  
9. **Branding** – We need our gazebo fixed. We should look at our feather flags and banners. If it needs fixing, let's get it done now before the season starts. G. has done great work on this regard and in keeping the trailer road worthy and preparing an inventory of club equipment. If any one feels we need more equipment, please let your committee know as we have the resources. Our thanks to Alistair by the way for looking after our clock which gets us a few quid every year.



10. **Finances**. Thanks to the careful husbandry of our predecessors in the past over many years, we are in a comfortable financial situation but no sports club should never rest on its laurels. Our current Treasurer, Jim, is doing a great job. It's a position of great responsibility and honour and probity – thank you Jim.
11. **Prize Giving**. The season should end and be marked with a prize giving/awards ceremony. I was delighted with the democratic and transparent nature of the prize giving at the end of 2017 in Magherafelt and my thanks to Anne, Thomas, Alan and Mervyn for that. It is important that we share the venue of the prize giving of around the three different areas i.e. it will probably be in Limavady this year.
12. **The Website**. This is our window on the world. This is more important than ever. Gerard Lundy has done great work on this. We need to keep this under review. We also should have a dedicated twitter officer, if there is such a word! The website should be updated and refreshed. Details should be put up of races as well as accomplishments of our athletes.
13. **The History of our Club -v- the Future**. History is important and if there is one thing we are good at in this country – it's having long memories! But more important than history and the past, is the future. It's important that we all re-join our club and Triathlon Ireland as soon as possible, that we encourage others to join our club, that we invest in youth, that we even possibly look at organising an Irish Schools Championship that we update, refresh, renew and look forward, not backwards. We are a relatively small club, members wise but you all know that we kick ass way above our pay grade. Long may that continue...

So, how did we do in our health check for our beloved black and red club? You may well feel that we did well – but we can do even better. I feel this club needs a new face, a new sense of direction, a new way forward and that's why we should have a new leader. Every club needs to adapt, adopt and change and evolve. The days of the dinosaurs are over. I do however, look forward to supporting and cheering on this club in some other way in the future.

May I conclude by thanking the Secretary and Treasurer and all those who have contributed to the club in any way over the last 12 months.

Peter Jack TTC AGM 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018



PETER JACK