**Passing of Mr Alan Crook – Wiltshire County and Marlborough Penguins**

**Mr Alan Crook**

We were all saddened to hear of the passing last week of Alan Crook, a much-respected member of our swimming community who contributed so much to our sport. Alan, along with his wife Joan, first became involved in Marlborough Penguins in 1958 as parent volunteers. They both wont onto play active roles within the Club, and Alan in particular continued to do so up until Covid in 2019.

Alan was involved in all the club activities over the years, as well as serving on the Club committee and held most, if not all, offices at some point within his 60 years of active volunteering. He was a Club life member as well as a County life member in recognition of all the work that he did and influence he had on the sport within the County.

Alan was the driving force behind the Club’s coaching program and Learn to Swim program for many years as Head Coach. In fact, many of us remember him in his whites poolside up until Covid in 2019, when he eventually retired from active volunteering, a mere 60 years! During these years the Club went from strength to strength, with one of the highlights for Alan being one of his swimmers winning the gold medal in the 200m breaststroke at the National championships. However, his goal was always to enable all children to realise and achieve their potential. He did this by teaching good technique, motivating without any pressure and thereby creating the desire, confidence and determination in the children to do the best they could for themselves and the Club.

In 1997 Alan was recognised as Wiltshire Sports Coach of the Year in recognition of his coaching of hundreds of swimmers in Marlborough and beyond. Alan was also awarded a National award by the RLSS for services in society for the lifeguard training he gave to our swim teachers prior to lifeguards being provided by the Leisure Centre. Alan was awarded this prestigious award at the Guildhall in London.

Aside from his roles in the Club, Alan also played a critical role in the County, sitting on many of the Wilts Committees. He was one of the organisers of the renowned County Easter Courses which ran from the 1960s until 2013 and are remembered with great fondness by generations of Wiltshire swimmers.

Alan was a passionate volunteer and always actively encouraged parents of swimmers to become involved in the Club and County, and despite his significant contributions to the sport and achievements would always avoid attempts to recognise all the work he did. His commitment was always to the Club, County, Sport and the swimmers. In fact, on receiving his Wiltshire Sports Coach of the Year award his response was *“The award is 5% me and 95% the Club. They support me. I don’t win the medals – it’s my swimmers who do that. We have 60 people who support us at the Club and this award is for them as well as for me.”*

Alan was truly one of a kind and will be missed by many across the County and Club, as well as his family and friends. His legacy is huge, not just for the Club and County, but also for the town of Marlborough … all done by the quietly spoken man dressed in whites on the poolside.

No doubt many will want to pay their respects in due course and the funeral arrangements will be circulated when known.