



## **Open Water Swimming Guidelines for Club Members**

Over the past few years the number of club members taking part in open water swimming has increased to a level where we should all be thinking more clearly about our own safety and that of our friends and club mates. It is everyone's responsibility to look out for each other and should be part of our club ethos. With that in mind here are some simple guidelines which should become habit.

1. **Communicate:-** Introduce yourselves to new members, work out what speed you are compared to others.
2. **Group:-** Always swim in a small group (3-6) ideally of similar speed.
3. **Names:-** Know who is in your group.
4. **Route:-** Agree and understand the route. Ideally swim close to the shore. Avoid a route where head on collisions may become an issue.
5. **Head count:-** Agree stopping points on the route and do a head count.
6. **Stopping:-** If you decide to stop early tell your group.
7. **Be seen:-** Wear a bright swim cap, the club has bright red ones for members.
8. **Keep warm:-** Wear a wetsuit, consider neoprene gloves, boots, hat if it's really cold.
9. **Common sense:-** Above all don't leave your brain on the beach.

### Other issues to consider

Weather conditions; if the wind strength and direction results in excessive wave conditions over the proposed route, consider changing the route or postponing the swim.

Water temperature; when the water temperature is very low, consider reducing the swim route and therefore the time in the water.

Water quality; where there is water quality signage, check it prior to starting the swim e.g. Portobello promenade. Poor water quality can occur following periods of heavy rain. Consider postponing the swim.

Assess any other hazards before you get in. For example jet skis, kite surfers and boats.