

Reading Triathlon – Background to Tri2O involvement and distribution of surplus funds

In 2017 the Tri2o Triathlon Club took up an opportunity to take over the organisation and running of the Reading Triathlon from MST. The primary reason for doing so was to increase the Club's income to allow it to continue to keep its membership fees low and to provide subsidised coached swim sessions. The additional income has also enabled the Club to make a charitable donation to the Triathlon Trust (a division of BTF), via Katie's Legacy, which funds multisport events for children.

Along with the financial motives, the Club wanted to ensure that this popular and long standing local event, which was the very first ever triathlon race to take place in the UK back in 1983, continued. Running the Reading Triathlon is a rewarding experience for all involved and Tri2O has taken great pride in delivering a successful event for all in the last 4 years, with very positive feedback from competitors. The event won the Triathlon England Small Events Award in 2021.

The time and effort required to organise such an event is considerable. The work starts in December for the following year's event, held in September. The workload builds over the year to a frenzy of activity over the race weekend.

Tri2O has been very fortunate to have a small core events team of four dedicated volunteers who initially shadowed the MST team to "learn the ropes". To facilitate the handover, MST were paid 50% of the net profits in 2017 and 25% of the net profits in 2018. This Tri2O events team has since built on and improved the format of Reading Triathlon over the subsequent years. The core events team has invested approximately 320 hours between them every year to organise and run the event. An estimated further 426 hours is also donated across the army of Tri2O members who volunteer to help in the weeks leading up to and on the day of the event.

After last year's Reading Triathlon it became clear that if the Club wanted to continue to run the Reading Triathlon it needed to develop a sustainable model that would provide a fair and balanced way of thanking all volunteers, especially the core events team, in recognition of the time given voluntarily, including time taken out of their careers and other paid work. In addition, the Club needs a succession plan for the core event team and thus wanted to find a way to encourage members to consider getting more involved in organising the event to be ready to take over when the current members want or need to step down.

Following much consultation and discussion with and between the main committee members and significant analysis and number crunching from Pete Gough (Race Director) and Stuart Jay (Treasurer), we have created what we believe is a fair model that allows for the distribution of surplus income from the Reading Triathlon equitably to Club members involved in organising and running the event. The combined time spent by the members of the core events team is estimated to be about 45% of the total amount of volunteer time required. The core team will therefore receive this proportion of the surplus income as a thank you. An estimate has been made of the time required for other volunteer roles, such ground clearance and marshalling the bike course, and they will be rewarded in proportion to these time estimates with a mix of free swim sessions, lunch, competitor gift, and Wiggle vouchers. The value of the latter will depend on the amount of surplus funds available for distribution.