

## 2024-2025 Annual Report – NIKO NESTOR CHARITY

**Bank Balance:** £ 2739.11

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### 1. Overview

The 2024–2025 year has been a period of strong consolidation, growth and preparation for the next phase of the Niko Nestor Charity.

Our central focus remained promoting water safety, swimming ability and access to aquatic activities for children, young people and disadvantaged communities, while expanding the therapeutic and inclusive dimension of our work.

Major milestone this year has been the near-completion of our structured **training course**, alongside the professional development of our trustee **Victoria Nestor**, who successfully qualified as a **Swimming Therapist – Level 1**. This represents a significant step towards integrating rehabilitation, inclusion and therapeutic swimming into our charity's delivery.

#### Promotion of the Charity Through International Representation

Our trustee, **Michael Read MBE**, has continued to raise the profile of the Niko Nestor Charity on the international swimming stage. Throughout 2025, Michael competed at major global masters' events, showcasing both athletic excellence and the values of lifelong participation in aquatic sport. His presence at these competitions directly supports the charity's mission by strengthening international relationships and increasing recognition of our work in water safety, coaching and community inclusion.

#### World Masters Games – Taiwan, May 2025

Michael achieved outstanding results across multiple disciplines, inspiring swimmers of all ages and reinforcing the charity's commitment to lifelong aquatic development:

- **200 Free – 4th place (04:01.27)**
- **400 Free – 1st place (08:15.74)**
- **200 IM – 1st place (05:14.26)**
- **400 IM – 1st place (11:10.29)**
- **800 Free – 1st place (17:10.29)**
- **3 km Open Water – 1st place (1:13:49.34)**

#### British Long Course Championships – London, June 2025

Michael continued to demonstrate excellence at national level, achieving:

- **400 Free – 3rd place (08:28.20)**
- **1500 Free – 1st place (34:46.58)**
- **400 IM – 2nd place (11:12.70)**
- **800 Free – 3rd place (17:24.38)**

## World Masters Championships – Singapore, July/August 2025

A highlight of the year was Michael becoming a **World Masters Champion**:

- **200 Free – 9th place (03:57.99)**
- **400 Free – 8th place (08:32.99)**
- **200 IM – 6th place (05:13.00)**
- **400 IM – 2nd place (10:57.11)**
- **800 Free – 7th place (17:28.93)**
- **3 km Open Water – 1st place (1:27:32.10) – World Masters Champion**
- **Mixed Freestyle Relay – 2nd place (02:19.94)**
- **Mixed Medley Relay – 2nd place (02:36.51)**

Michael's consistent top-tier performances, across pool and open water, have significantly contributed to elevating the charity's name among international coaches, clubs and swimmers.

### Community & Charity Engagement

In addition to competition, Michael also represented the charity at community events.

- **On 28 September 2025**, he was invited to open the **Arundel Lido Charity Swim**, supporting the *Keep Me Breathing Trust*. His participation strengthened the connection between swimming, community wellbeing and charitable action.

## 2. Education, Training & Professional Development

Our core training programme is now **nearly ready for launch**, following extensive development and consultation.

Key progress:

- The course structure, learning outcomes and practical elements have been finalised.
- It is designed to support:
  - Swimming teachers
  - Volunteer coaches (Katerina; Akva sport coaches; Evgenij's suggestion- coach
  - Community swimming leaders
  - Parents and carers interested in water safety and therapeutic swimming.
- The course includes elements of water safety, confidence-building in water, and inclusive swimming principles.

It is provided/ delivered by :

- Michael Read; Christina Simeonides; Peter Van Vooren; Nicki Pope
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Victoria's qualification as a **Swimming Therapist (Level 1)** adds professional depth and credibility to the programme, allowing the charity to:

- Offer structured therapeutic swimming sessions
- Better support children and adults with additional or physical needs
- Align our work with recognised inclusive swimming methodologies, including Halliwick principles.

### 3. International Engagement & Ohrid Plans

This year also marked the strengthening of our international links.

Victoria also had the opportunity to visit and attend training sessions led by **Nicki Pope's inclusive swimming group**, a programme coordinated by **Head Teacher James Allan** and organised with the support of **Mike**, whose ongoing contribution to swimming development continues to be invaluable. This visit provided a unique insight into the group's training philosophy and the remarkable impact they have had on enabling swimmers of all abilities to take part in open-water challenges.

James and Nikki successfully trained a team of **non-specialist swimmers** to complete a **Channel relay crossing**, demonstrating that with the right coaching and support, open-water achievements can be accessible to a far wider community. Their team completed another relay crossing this year and received a **CSA Award** in recognition of their dedication and achievement.

During Victoria's visit, she engaged in constructive discussions on how the **Niko Nestor Charity** can collaborate with their programme in future. The connection formed during this visit is now laying the foundation for a broader partnership between inclusive swimming networks in the **UK, mainland Europe**, and even further afield. One of the charity's international links—**Enrique in Mexico**, whose progress qualifies for our possible donation—illustrates the growing global reach of this inclusive approach.

The intention is to continue developing this cooperation, sharing knowledge, coaching methods and opportunities that will strengthen inclusion, safety and participation across the wider swimming community.

We are planning an **inclusive swimming and safety event in Ohrid**, alongside the Ohrid Swimming Marathon.

The vision is to bring together:

- Halliwick practitioners (coach Dawn with a group of young swimmers – Ohrid swimming event)
- Therapeutic swimming specialists
- Inclusive swim groups
- Open-water swimmers

Our focus will not be competition, but **access, safety, inclusion and shared learning**, especially for children and vulnerable participants.

### 4. Recognition – Niko Nestor Award

This year, the **Niko Nestor Award- Swimming for Peace** was presented to **Evgenij Pop Acev**, in recognition of his successful swim across the Channel and his inspirational impact within the swimming community.

Evgenij is known for completing a solo English Channel crossing, a feat requiring exceptional endurance, discipline and mental strength, which reflects the spirit and values of Niko Nestor's legacy. Evgenij, a world class open water marathon swimmer from Skopje, North Macedonia, competed in 106 world-class events across 21 countries during his marathon swimming career from 2007 to 2021. He won three major titles in the FINA series: the 2015 and 2017 FINA Grand Prix Series, and the 2019 FINA UltraMarathon Swim Series. Consistently performing at a high level, Acev achieved podium positions in these series for nine consecutive years.

## 5. Fundraising & Community Support

A special highlight of the year was the fundraising effort led by **Jeffrey Gill**.

Jeffrey successfully completed an **English Channel relay swim** as part of his open-water challenge.

In addition to his own fundraising, the Niko Nestor Charity supported Jeffrey by:

- Making a financial donation towards his preparation
- Organising a professional coaching session with Michael Read MBE to support his preparation

His swim was not only a physical achievement, but also a powerful example of how open-water swimming can be used to raise awareness and support charitable work.

## 6. Impact Summary 2024–2025

This year the charity has:

- Progressed a new open water swimming course to near-completion
- Developed therapeutic swimming capacity through trustee qualification
- Strengthened international swimming partnerships
- Promoted inclusive swimming and open-water awareness
- Supported fundraising through athlete engagement
- Continued to build visibility through content creation and outreach

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## Outlook & Action Plan 2025–2026

### 1. Strategic Outlook

Over the next year, our focus will move from preparation into **delivery and expansion**.

Key objectives:

- Official launch of the Niko Nestor Swimming Course
  - Delivery of pilot therapeutic and inclusive swimming sessions
  - Organisation of the Ohrid inclusive swimming event- partnership with Ohridski branovi and Akva Sport
  - Stronger volunteer structure and growth
  - Expansion of digital presence and resources
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## 2. Action Plan

### *A. Course Launch*

- Finalise materials and approvals
- Deliver first pilot cohorts in the UK
- Gather feedback and refine the programme
- Introduce online modules for international access – You tube subscription

### *B. Ohrid Event Delivery*

- Formalise collaboration with Halliwick networks; Ohrid team and Akva sport
- Invite UK and international inclusive swimming groups
- Organise workshops: water safety, therapy swimming, confidence for beginners
- Develop safeguarding and accessibility framework for all participants

### *C. Volunteer Monitoring & Development*

Volunteers are central to our work — and we need both **better monitoring** and **more volunteers**.

We will try to introduce:

- 1. Volunteer Register & Monitoring**
  - Create a database of all volunteers
  - Record roles, training completed,
  - Possibly log volunteer hours and involvement
- 2. Volunteer Coordinator Role**
  - Appoint a volunteer coordinator- Biljana Gligorova
  - Responsible for recruitment, communication and scheduling
  - Acts as first point of contact for volunteers
- 3. Training & Retention**
  - Offer short volunteer training sessions
  - Provide certificates and recognition
  - Publicly acknowledge volunteers in reports and on social media
- 4. Where we can find more volunteers**
  - **Universities & Colleges**
    - Sports science students
    - Physiotherapy and education students
    - Volunteering offices and student unions

- **Swimming Clubs & Leisure Centres**
  - Local coaches and trainee teachers
  - Competitive swimmers interested in community work
  - Lifeguards seeking experience
- **Community & Disability Organisations**
  - Groups working with children with additional needs
  - Parent networks linked to special education
  - Local charities and community hubs
- **Online Volunteering Platforms**
  - Reach Volunteering
  - Do-It.org
  - Local council volunteer hubs
- **Social Media & YouTube**
  - Call-outs on Instagram and Facebook
  - Volunteer stories posted on your YouTube channel
  - Behind-the-scenes videos to attract new supporters