



## **Water Babies toasts 20 years of baby swimming lessons**

**DATE, London** – Water Babies, the UK’s largest baby swimming school is delighted to be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout July with a series of events to thank its customers, employees, franchisees, and partners as it reaches a key milestone as a growing business.

The business was set-up in 2002 by the founder, Paul Thompson, after starting baby swimming lessons with his daughter. He returned to the UK with his young family, following a hurricane and near-miss whilst living in the Caribbean, and decided to combine his passion for water and an opportunity for parents to experience the one-to-one bonding which happens in the swimming pool through baby swimming. 20 years later, Water Babies have the best trained baby swimming teachers in the world and have been providing swimming lessons and unique underwater photoshoots to babies and toddlers across the UK and the world ever since.

Since its launch, Water Babies has grown to be the world’s largest baby swimming school, led by a network of dedicated franchisees who swim 52,000 babies every week across the UK, Ireland, Canada, The Netherlands, China, and Germany coming soon. Over the past 20 years, Water Babies have taught half a million children the life-saving skill of learning how to swim.

The benefits of learning to swim from a young age are tenfold; it is a life skill that will always be available to an individual. The physical exercise of swimming for babies and young children has shown to lead them to have better balance and be better at grasping new skills; they are significantly stronger and more co-ordinated than non-swimmers, they walk earlier than their peers and have improved appetites and sleeping patterns.

The expertise and passion of Water Babies swimming teachers has been the key to the business’ success, helping thousands of babies and toddlers to swim and feel confident in the water. Many individuals have even switched careers paths as cabin crew or military personnel or members of the to train as swimming teachers with Water Babies.

As part of the celebrations, the business will be championing several teacher successes with interviews and video content which will be shared across social media channels and the website. For example, Beau Lawrence in the Water Babies Yorkshire Central and West franchise, is the first Water Babies customer to become a Water Babies swimming teacher, starting lessons when she was just 6 months old 18 years ago.

Throughout July, Water Babies will be hosting free-to-attend parties for customers at swimming pools across the UK to say thank you and celebrate, with jam-packed birthday-themed activities, songs, and games, and will receive limited-edition party bags with toys and goodies. Unmissable prizes are also up for grabs across Water Babies’ social media channels with giveaways from a variety of brands. Water Babies have also created a limited-edition 20<sup>th</sup> birthday towel and Happy Nappy, which customers can purchase to celebrate this milestone in style via its website.

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July, Water Babies will also host a conference for its employees, franchisees, partners, and suppliers to celebrate the milestone and thank all involved in driving success the past 20 years. With over 400 members of the Water Babies family expected to attend, this will be the first time the business has come together since the COVID-19 pandemic started and the loss of Steve Franks, the late CEO of Water Babies.

**Commenting on the milestone, Chief Executive of Water Babies, Howard Harrison said:** “We are really proud to be celebrating 20 years of this unique business with our fantastic employees,



franchisees, customers and partners. Our talented people and customers are what make this business so special, and we are delighted to be able to thank everyone who has shaped Water Babies over the past 20 years.

I joined Water Babies in 2021 during a strong period of growth despite the pandemic. As the leading baby swim school around the world, we have strong ambitions to continue growing and teaching more little ones to swim.”

**Founder of Water Babies, Paul Thompson added:** “It has been fantastic to see the business grow over the past twenty years, and I am so excited with the journey the business is taking to help as many children as possible to gain important life skills and confidence in the water. We are lucky to have had a dedicated, skilled, and passionate network of people working for our business which has helped to drive us forward.”

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### **Notes to editors**

#### **About Water Babies:**

Since it was co-founded by Paul Thompson in 2002, [Water Babies](#) has grown into the world’s largest baby swim school, today teaching more than 53,000 babies every week the lifesaving skill of learning how to swim. Lessons are delivered through a network of family businesses across the UK, Ireland, Canada, The Netherlands, and China.

With the support of over 76 franchise outlets and around 600 teachers, Water Babies has won numerous national awards over the last few years including, What’s on 4 Kids Activities award for Most Loved Sport of Physical Activity in 2019 and 2020, Leadership & Culture winner in the British Franchise Association awards in 2020 and Silver in the Business Resilience category in 2021, voted Best Baby Class in the Loved By Parents awards in 2021, and announced as finalists in the Ukactive Generation Active award. Water Babies was also placed at number 16 in the Elite Franchise Top 100 UK franchises in 2021.

Water Babies is the only baby swimming school with its own pool consultancy service, passing on its expertise to pools across the UK, Ireland, Canada, The Netherlands, and China. Water Babies is also the only swim company to have its own in-house, award-winning underwater baby photography unit.

Water Babies swimming teachers are the best-trained baby swimming teachers in the world and the only ones who can obtain the National Governing Body Swim England's highest teaching qualification for under 5s.