

ROWING CLUB COMMITTEE MEETING

27th March 2023

7:30pm at the Boathouse

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT: Nick Barnett, Elisabet Vilaplana, Laura Fortuna, Tim Baker, Jon Crooks, Jeff Bethray, Mary Heather Bethray, John Hill, Claire Parker, Dai Howell, Iolanda Vendrell, Peter Crossley, Ruth Percy, Ruth Ward & Kathryn Crossley

APOLOGIES: Charlotte King, Georgia Dowdeswell, Nick Kenworthy-Browne

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 22, 2023 7:30 pm at the Boathouse

CHAIR: Jon Crooks

WELCOME: (JC) Reminder that the usual format of brief reports was suspended for this meeting in order to have a longer discussion about outreach, led by TB. JC noted that there are still ongoing issues around documentation issues, proposed the use of google folder for saving documentation, particularly minutes and any associated discussion papers. If any documents are to be referred to in a meeting, can these please be sent and saved in the folder? Summaries of reports also to be sent in advance of the meeting if possible to facilitate a two-week turnaround of the minutes. All of this to be saved in folders/google drives. CP asked if these can also be circulated particularly if comments or approval of the committee are needed, and it was agreed that yes, it's good to circulate these as well.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Minutes were approved, with one change noted by CP, (this had already been made in the most recent draft - KPC).

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES: These are discussed in the reports below, mainly consisting of updates to ongoing issues (water safety documentation, fobs, gym access, etc)

REPORTS:

CAPTAIN'S REPORT (JC): CP is now officially the water safety advisor, transitioned from JH completed. Constitution has not moved forward as originally anticipated, rather focus has been on more pressing concerns, including opening the gym and other items more urgent with juniors. The 'Operating Manual' is also still in progress. Primary goal for second half of year is

to make sure junior squad is financially stable. Important to move summer courses forward as they generate revenue and more junior members. Marketing is a priority for this. Suggestions for marketing these courses is welcome.

Fobs - the process is complete, one more session to come. Fobs will then be managed by LF for new members or lost fobs. No more codes, all entry to be via fobs. Everything is supposed to be open on the weekends, reflecting the decision of club trustees. It is possible to gain entrance through gate without a fob, this is intentional.

Facilities committee is up and running, several issues in progress, including décor, rules about dogs, etc.

The gym is now open, in order to use it, members need to take JH's induction course. No children are permitted to use the gym without an approved supervisor, the usual parental volunteer supervision that is acceptable for the ergs is not sufficient for juniors' gym access. It was confirmed that access to the gym will be with fobs.

C2 ergs are working well, however it seems that RP3s require more maintenance, screws keep coming loose, these need to be closely supervised. It was noted again that kayakers can use C2 ergs but cannot book these. CP asked if all the ergs are being covered by the facilities committee for the purposes of risk assessment. JC said that in his opinion, this is a rowing responsibility rather than resting with the club level - ie facilities committee. [CP to add ergs to the risk assessment]

Regatta planning seems to be working well. Thanks to MHB for working on this.

VICE-CAPTAIN'S REPORT (MHB): Agreed that the regatta system working, but a few issues with the details, crews need to provide specific information about boats and blades for reserving equipment, not all proposed entries are complete, which requires follow-up and creates additional administrative burden. The proposed regatta calendar has been circulated and each squad has put in their list of regattas for trailering. 11 crews for Abingdon, evenly mixed men and women. Since the last meeting there have been 7 enquiries, 3 tasters, 2 have joined, 2 outstanding tasters.

JUNIORS' REPORT (NK-B): NK-B sent apologies, however JC provided a brief update. Confirmed the number of juniors for the second term, 44 listed members (JB), which is actually 40 coached junior members. £2500 remains from general rowing fund still to go to the juniors, £1500 additional which may or may not be a loan, this is still being discussed. JB noted that there was a dip in junior numbers when NK-B took over as coach, but this also happened when Christy joined, JB believes that juniors numbers will similarly recover as they have in the past. JB has agreed with Phil Siswick that the £3000 left with the Cheney School for rowing will be used for Cheney students to attend the courses. **Need to consider how these will be marketed at Cheney.**

TREASURER'S REPORT (JB): Since the last meeting, JB has paid BR affiliation, boat licensing, there is approximately £13,500 remaining. Some of this already allocated to juniors as discussed previously, anticipates some repairs, likely about 9k left. Around July we might think about refurbishing some boats and possibly near September purchasing additional boat(s), might consider between now and then what the club's priorities are. 142 adult members, 1 is a life member, 1 is a cox. 5 coaches. CP asked about gift aid. JB - this cannot be claimed back on membership fees but can be claimed on donations. CP asked if it is worth telling members that it is possible for members to claim this back? CP says it looks like membership fees can be claimed. **JB to look into this further?**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT (LF): LF no significant update on membership, she continues to work on membership renewals. MHB says that we need a flow chart, information is not always available. JC Need better documentation on processes generally, but particularly for this role. LF is there a better way to invoice, rather than invoicing for each individual race? Some members have asked if they can pay monthly or periodically rather than a year? JC agreed that with the complexity of administration it is necessary to keep the burden of this work minimal. If it's possible to spread the payments, add standing orders, etc. Current admin doesn't really allow for these, typically this has been managed by offering individual proposals privately. JB agreed that it would be helpful to sort out the juniors invoicing, as this currently involves a lot of chasing. JC asked if juniors could be run as a separate account? LF CORC asked for payment in advance for races. JC suggested coordinating with NK-B to see what might work. MHB agreed that it might be a good idea for adults also to have prepayment for races? **JC suggested having a small group discussion about solutions for this LF, JB, MHB, JC.**

JH said that he had some enquiries about a membership to the club gym, attendees for the circuits, JC reported that this has been discussed at the club level and trustees prefer not to offer this.

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT (CP): (CP circulated documents in advance of the meeting). Met with Matt in relation to the safety handbook for kayakers which discusses how coaches are allocated, cox training, bow steering, etc. Looking for completion April 9, but this seemed quite a tight timeframe to meet. CP reminded the committee that the membership form does ask members to self-certify that they can swim. Members who cannot meet the swimming requirement must wear buoyancy aids. CP has emailed all members to confirm this, **wants to ask if the membership form could be changed so that the club is certain that people have certified.** For juniors, parents certify.

CP is recording this information with a spreadsheet, where is this kept? JC reminded the committee that there is no membership database. JB thinks this could be incorporated into Sage. LF noted that it would be good to have emergency number, fob number etc in a central location. **JC agreed to have a further discussion to set up a membership database.** JC if members have not done a capsized drill, they need to do it by September. CP has sent out information to all members about capsized drills at the University pool. JH asked if this means that participants should wear a buoyancy aid for LTR if they cannot swim or if they have not

self-certified? Does the LTR course ask for swimming/capsize information? JC suggested that this could be part of the induction process. CP noted that the updated rowing safety document, now needs to add erg before committee approval. Walkies talkies and rucksacks have been purchased, no other outstanding items from NKB's report. Defib has been checked and now CP is the guardian of the defib. A general question was asked - if the defib has been registered, does it require public access? If it is registered, 999 has the code. First aid box was out of date and has been replaced by CP, silver blankets have been located. **First aid course training for all coaches was suggested, CP to follow up on this and the possibility of a course for other interested members.**

NK-B's report on the junior's recent capsizes has been discussed, only a few items outstanding. TB asked about a map of the river with hazards and safety points? MHB observed that it could also incorporate OURC spinning points. CP said that the intention is to include this in the safety handbook.

RW asked if it was possible for a membership database/information to work with squadlist? Could this be used to record the capsizes and swimming information? **JC and LF to investigate.**

BOATMAN'S REPORT (JB): A new box of wheels for seats has been purchased and is in the boatman's cupboard. Boats all seem to be in reasonable condition. Wooden boat that belonged to Cheney is being returned. Possibility of Seb's 1x moving out and another rack being freed up. Nick Kay has installed the platforms on the bays for putting a ladder on top. Thanks to Paul Munsey who has supplied additional racking for blades and a trolley and a trundle out to the rollers for the touring boats. **JH asked if there could be a discussion at the next meeting about which boats can be refurbished?** JC agreed that we need to produce a list of boats that need to be refurbished for later in the summer. JB suggested that it would be a good idea to schedule a club session when everyone can help clean boats - **JB & JC to schedule.**

LEARN TO ROW (JH): There are only 7 people signed up for the course. Something will go ahead, but JH was hoping for better uptake. JC suggested that this may speak to an overall need for better marketing, need to work on this for summer courses and the club generally. JB asked if this lack of take up might be because of the financial circumstances? JH didn't think this was necessarily the case as Accies LTR are full, CORC are not really a competitor.

[The abbreviated reports were concluded and the discussion moved on to TB's presentation about outreach. The slides for the presentation will be circulated with the minutes, the following is a brief summary of the discussion prompted by TB's presentation rather than repeating the content of the slides.]

OUTREACH COORDINATOR'S REPORT (TB): TB explained that his presentation was a summary of conversations TB has already had as well as an outline for people to respond to, to prompt discussion in order to develop a long-term plan. TB noted that the club needs to have clear aims and principles with respect to outreach and he offered some suggestions to encourage these discussions.

TB discussed the aims of outreach for the club and for the sport generally, needs to be more welcoming in order to counteract the perception that rowing is elitist. For Falcon, this also means making the clubhouse more welcoming to the local community.

Outreach also requires making membership accessible to people with limited means. Should be a pathway for people to move their rowing forward and outreach efforts should not diminish the offering to existing members. Initiatives need a coordinated approach. Needs more coordination with kayakers. Plan needs to be sustainable financially.

TB discussed opportunities for juniors, particularly using pupil premium, should consider working with Cheney school again, school holiday offerings. Bursaries should be made available to kids who want to join but cannot otherwise afford to attend.

Other uses of the club house, to be more open to the local community. As an example, TB and JC will be hosting a group from Parasol which includes children of mixed ability, new initiative on Thursdays.

TB asked how do we work towards financial sustainability? Fundraising is easier at larger scale. Propose to create a mixed programme which is self-financing. Ideally this would mean creating an endowment to fund participation in juniors rowing.

What types of outreach might generate revenue? TB mentioned corporate eights as a type of outreach, JH and JC suggested coordination with local clubs. Possibility of a 'corporate' regatta. **JC to contact captains at CORC and Accies to consider coordinating this.**

RW noted that with respect to pathways, one way in which Falcon is inclusive and has been successful is in offering a range of pathways for people who would like to row recreationally and do not want to race. Fulham Reach is non-competitive, and it also offers a range for children. Communications with BR to offer coaching for recreational rowers, adult or children. FRC has experience with bringing people in and back in to rowing, RW suggests that this point should be used for fundraising.

CP asked how this might work with pupil premium and recalled that there was a programme with BR. Warrington was one of the participating clubs, TB said that he'd seen a report that details all of the benefits from the programme for kids which were substantial, he thought it was something like 700k and 400 kids.

AOB:

JC In addition to Paul's gift of the racks, Rebecca Coles donated the emergency recovery bags for the juniors.

JC has also asked Kez to be the coordination point for the coxes. JH asked how the club plans to develop coordination for bow steerers and coxing, and identification of criteria for assessing competency.

JC Asian Outreach Day on 29/4, volunteers to email GD.

JC asked about the development squads' structure. LF explained that there is now one development squad that includes all genders. LF is the captain and RP is acting as co-captain.

CP Safety handbook to be circulated, needs feedback. CP would like to draft and circulate to the committee for comments, so that it can be approved at the next meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

ADDITIONAL SUMMARY REPORTS RECEIVED AFTER THE MEETING

FROM JC:

Thanks for attending the meeting last night, I hope everyone felt it was productive and not too long. We managed to finish 15mins early and I am hoping we can get the meeting down to 90mins or less before the end of the year. Apologies for not opening the biscuits at the start of the meeting, I was given a lot to think about just before the meeting so I was a little distracted and forgot about them, despite having just bought them from M&S minutes earlier.

Just a reminder to everyone who presented, please provide, as soon as possible (ie today please!), Kathryn with a short summary of what you said, even if its just bullet points, or slides (as in Tims case) as well as copies of any documents you referred to. We are going to archive these documents in the RSC Google drive folder, and your summary notes will help Kathryn get the minutes draft out a lot sooner, aiming for within two weeks of the meeting. I am hoping that in turn will serve to prompt people on the actions agreed in the meeting so we can get more stuff done, helping to justify the time spent in the meeting.

Gong forward we would like to implement that proposal I put forward last year, where everyone who intends to present should send a brief summary to Kathryn just before the meeting, along with copies of documents you plan to reference, if any. This will really help her to prepare the minutes so we have a good capture of what we have discussed, agreed and planned to do.

For example, below is my summary of what I presented last night - the first part I would have sent the day before, the second part I would send the day after. This is quite a long list, I am not expecting such a long one from everyone.

Items to be discussed in the meeting :

- Announce ClaireP fully in WSA role

- Discuss constitution - focus is on operating rules - boat usage, rack allocation, bow and cox steering qualification, etc.
- Primary goal is to stabilise Junior squad finances - summer courses, annual coaching renewals, cost efficiencies, financial transparency, endowments/grants/bursaries
- Fob process and site access
- Facilities Committee status and actions
- Outreach items => TimBaker
- Gym open for business
- Regatta planning process is in place and is working well, so far
- Concept2 ergs are all refurbished and functioning well, RP3 are a concern from a mtce perspective.

Additional items that came up in the meeting (*obviously you can't write this bit before the meeting - very likely Kathrynne will have captured this already but its a useful check*)

- Next Meeting : Monday May 22nd, 730pm
- ACTIONS : Find a better way to handle junior regatta payments - Jon, Laura, Jeff, MHB, Ruth P
- ACTION : Advise members of tax benefits to club membership
- ACTION : Develop instantiate membership database - can we use squadlist ?
- Candidates for boat repair in the summer

Bateleur
Another double (tba JohnHill)
Sea Eagle

- ACTION Encourage a boat cleaning day club wide

Once I have finished wrestling with SurveyMonkey I may send out a very short survey to get your feedback on the meeting and how useful and effective it was - it will be anonymous and very short !

FROM MEMBERSHIP (LF):

Dev squad side: men and women Dev squads have merged into a unique Dev squad. I'm the capitan of the Dev squad and Ruth Percy is the co-captain. We help each other with admin etc. This might change again in the near future.

We have requested for Aquila Eagle to be refurbished as the 8 we will be using for the upcoming races.

For the membership side one new member joined and I am now starting to send invoices for April. I missed the March but Jeff sent those invoices for me.

There should be a better way to invoice juniors for their races. We will discuss with Nick; Mary Heather and Ruth (as parent of a juniors squad member).

FROM WATER SAFETY OFFICER (CP): CP emailed 2 documents which will be circulated.

Have updated my report for the committee with comments.

Also enc is the current Risk Assessment to upload to G Drive - I will add an erg section get it reviewed by Jon, then it's ready to go onto the website. I'll also add something about the risk of getting high up boats down as that wasn't on there before.

FROM VICE-CAPTAIN:

Vice- Captain's report to FRC 27/03/2023

Trailer Bookings - All the adult groups had submitted their target lists of regattas and these, along with those for the Juniors had been compiled into one table (a link to this was circulated to members).

Conflicts of usage have been identified and are being solved through discussion between the relevant parties.

Abingdon Spring head 16/04/2023 – 11 adult crews (6 men's 5 women's) have entered to date and the boats required will fill one trailer load therefore leaving the Juniors the whole of the second trailer. MHB and Nick K-B will liase over organisation of kit for the day.

Membership Enquires – Since the previous FRC meeting, there had been 7 new enquiries resulting in 4 taster sessions (2 more scheduled) and 2 people joining.

FROM TREASURER/BOATMAN:

Treasurer's Report

We have £13,511 remaining in the general account

BR affiliation paid

EA boat registrations paid

There will be further expenditure on boat repairs but suggest we hold off on any Boat purchase until later in this financial year.

Boatman's Report

Four New single training sculls now in operation

Paul Munsey kindly provided additional sculling and sweep oar racks, and a trolley for moving the Kite's to the water edge

All Double, Quad and Eight boats have backstays fitted to the Bow Seat

Matt & Angus the Junior Double now racked outside for ease of access

Concrete pads now in place to support the Red Steps when used

Refurbishment of boats to be considered later in the year

FROM OUTREACH COORDINATOR (TB): TB sent his slides for circulation.