

# ROWING CLUB COMMITTEE MEETING

21<sup>st</sup> November 2022

7:30pm at Falcon Boathouse

## DRAFT MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Mary Heather Bethray, Jeff Bethray, John Hill, Iolanda Vendrell, Georgia Dowdeswell, Kathyne Crossley, Melanie Elwine, Jon Crooks, Nick Kenworthy-Browne, Dai Howell, Elisabet Traveria, Sebastian Lange, Clare Parker, Laura Fortuna, Frantz Meckler, Peter Crossley

**APOLOGIES:** Howard Jacob and Charlotte King

Chair - Jon Crooks

### MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Minutes of previous meeting were approved and archived.

### MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

As the main focus of the previous meeting concerned the procedures for the election of the rowing captain (which remain unresolved as the election was ultimately uncontested), there were no specific outstanding matters arising.

JC stated that the primary outstanding item remaining from previous meetings was the creation of the rowing constitution and rules for the rowing side of the club. There followed a discussion on issues around voting, particularly concerning the role of precedent within the committee, whether it was generally agreed that, as in the past, precedent would continue to be maintained or not, the question remained whether the club was run by rules or by precedent.

JC restated the need for meetings to be run efficiently and to keep to time, with meetings finishing in the allotted two hours. He stated that in the event of a 'hung vote' he would bring the matter to the trustees.

MHB stated that in her recollection, there were two votes – on the purchase of Athena and on the new boathouse.

There was also a discussion on voting rights, both within the committee and more broadly among the membership of the club. JC stated that the new voting members (M&W development squads and junior captain) were intended to provide proportional representation.

Again, the question of whether the rowing committee was run by rules or precedent was discussed, with considerable cross talk and no consensus.

KC raised the matter of the secretary's voting rights, which JC had removed in a list of committee members and voting rights circulated to the membership in the previous month. JC reiterated that he

intended to remove the secretary's voting rights which he stated was necessary to ensure the impartiality of the secretary. KC stated that she disagreed with the removal of voting rights. CP asked for clarification of the role of the secretary and a discussion followed with members providing other examples of their experiences on other committees and that in those cases, committee secretaries typically voted. JC restated that in his experience, secretaries did not vote. GD stated that the secretary was a senior position in the committee and should carry voting rights. JH stated that he disagreed with the removal of the secretary's voting rights and asked for clarification on how changes like these are meant to be instituted going forward. JC said that he does not recognize the precedent of the FRC secretary's voting rights and that a set of rowing rules will be created, and that he understood that in trustee meetings there is a non-voting member who takes minutes. JC reiterated that the club has a constitution at FBC level and the trustees have the right to withdraw authority which rests with them. The matter was concluded with no agreement among committee members.

The date of the next committee meeting was agreed, January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 at 7:30 pm.

JC raised the creation of JH's new position as talent development coach, a role to support athletes and coaches, to keep an eye on all of the development squads and support and facilitate the development of club members. JH agreed with the description and expressed his enthusiasm for continuing with this work going forward.

The discussion then moved to the agenda.

## **REPORTS**

**Report from Treasurer and Boatman (JB)** £31.61 remained on rowing side. The annual dividend from the club was £15883. £21671 has been spent primarily on ergs and 3 new boats, one has arrived and two still to come. Repairs to date £1981, refurb of sparrowhawk mostly, some general repairs

Juniors coaching fees £5714 at start, 52 junior members, £5155 currently received from them, £6005 spent so far on junior coaching. In Feb juniors will be invoiced for coaching fees.

3 Fenesseys have been sold for £275 and this has been allocated to the juniors account

JH asked for clarification on what constitutes a training boat, JB stated that the explorers were categorised as training boats because they are more stable, some disagreement followed about whether they are significantly different from other boats.

JC asked NK-B to put together a financial forecast for expenditure for the coming terms, in response to his concerns about funding and report back at the next meeting.

**Report from Water Safety Officer (CP)** CP noted that following from JH's previous report, there remained several questions that need addressing, for example how is swimming assessed? Is there a notice board several things following on from Rowsafe document. JH added that this was lengthy, 111 pages in the document, all processes and procedures to be addressed – lots of work ahead on this. CP and JH continued, with additional questions: where are things written down, do members know these

procedures? How is it disseminated? It was stated that this will require committee approval when completed.

JC added that these will be incorporated into the rules of the club, NB has offered some administrative assistance.

CP continued, stating that of particular concern is the training and induction of club members and procedures for how will this be made visible to current and new members. **CP to put together the top 5 issues and report to the committee at the next meeting.**

JH stated that there had been no significant water safety incidents since the previous committee meeting.

JC agreed with CP and JH that the matter of water safety needs to be carried forward, assistance from JC and JH will be available to CP.

MHB suggested that water safety procedures necessarily involves the membership secretary and Malcom drafted a letter for new members, should this be taken up?

**Report from Women's Development Squad (ME)** In February, Howard will be leaving ME discussed the challenges that would follow HJ's absence. WD planned to do IWL, combining some sessions with other squads, MHB asked about the size of squad, which was estimated to be about 12 rowers, some interest from new beginners from LTR so possibly 15. ME stated there was some resistance to having paid coaches. JB said that unpaid coaching should be for club sessions, and suggested that the squad consider looking to current members who wanted to learn more about coaching, bank riding, etc to keep it voluntary. CP asked if the squad had looked for any coaches who needed to get practice? MHB asked how will squads plan to progress? Any ambition for current squads who are moving up? Several examples were offered of helpful suggestions from other members of the club, particularly from the masters women's crews.

**Report from Men's Development Squad (SL)** 5 new men joined from LTR, have started coming to land training, positive about having critical mass, if these 5 stay then they might achieve that objective. SL said that the squad were especially appreciative of Andy for helping the men's squad and support for achieving their targets for the coming year. SL said that they were trying to get bigger boats out, 4x and 8. JC suggested that SL encourage MD rowers to reach out to other club members for filling seats.

**Report from Junior Rowing (NK-B)** NK-B said that the most significant issues remained the admin associated with running the programme. **PC to prepare Junior Captain's report for the next meeting in January. NK-B said that the website needs to be updated with his information.** A discussion of the challenges with managing the juniors' admin followed. NK-B stated that he was considering the logistics of timing with respect to joining and thinking of writing a parent handbook. PC asked when juniors could return to heads as the previous goal was for this to resume in November, NK-B said that the club was still discussing how logistics can work for this esp with bank riding, the expectation was

that there would be one bank rider for each junior boat participating in heads. The matter was deferred. MHB asked about socials between rowing and kayaking juniors, NK-B said that at least one pizza evening had gone forward and more were planned in the future, it was agreed that encouraging more social activities between the two groups of juniors was a good idea.

**Learn to Row (JH)** JH said that Andy Monroe has been doing most of the LTR coaching, about 5 men have moved up to dev and 2-3 to women's, some more LTR members will be moving to club. JH raised the issue of Andy's coaching fees, also should consider that he was helping with club support and he ought to be paid. JB stated that some coordination was required with club sessions and JB, it was a matter of trying to balance people and coaching demands. It was hoped that the new cox Tim might also stay for 6 months and help out

**Publicity Officer's Report (DH)** – There was not much to report on the website, DH said that he could help with NK-B. Unfortunately, the club had lost all contacts in local press, probably need to build these, JB said that he thought one of the rowing members, Emily was with BBC Radio 4.

**Welfare Officer's Report (EV)** - EV has contacted kayaking welfare officer and will advertise posters around club; she has been authorised to do DBS checks. **EV to compile the list of members who need DBS checks.**

**Adult Independent Racing Report (IV)** IV stated there had been a few requests for people to join the group since the previous meeting. Recent success at both Bedford Heads and Vet heads (both 4x won), there were a few entries for Walton in December. JH asked who is doing regatta selection for the club as he has some ideas about regattas. **JC stated that the club needed to identify a regatta schedule, coordinate with AIR, DEV and Juniors, could be coordinated through captains whats app.**

MHB asked when will juniors start racing, suggested that the regatta calendar needs coordination, again Abingdon was the easiest, difficult to find a replacement for this, who was available to drive the trailer and which regattas are suitable for the various groups of rowers. IV said that MHB does entries, so has a good view of these Henley T&V, Abingdon, Oxford, etc. and would have helpful suggestions for a regatta calendar. JC to appoint a regatta coordinator to create a calendar and a club plan for regattas for the upcoming season.

**Social Secretaries' Report (GD)** The club Christmas party to be held on December 4 at Brasserie Blanc in Jericho; 47 people have signed up, 24 people have paid. Pantomime had been suggested but only 3 signed up NKB stated that there was some interest from juniors in attending.

**Membership Secretary's Report (LF)** LF met with Malcolm, now has access to all spreadsheets. JC and LF to coordinate. JC asked about FBC capacity, in particular about club capacity and whether or not the club should actively recruit new members. Questions were then asked about various indicators of membership capacity and how many members could the rowing side support and how many were required to finance the regular operation of the club? MHB said that she observed that over her tenure there was the usual ebb and flow of members whether kayakers or rowing. People come and go from Oxford, fairly predictable flow of members. MHB stated that the booking sheet suggests there is some

excess capacity. JC asked JB if the club was at capacity in the boathouse? JB said that there were still some outside racking spaces. There was a brief discussion of other local clubs' membership numbers. MHB stated that whether or not the club engaged in more marketing, she did not think that more publicity would radically alter the rate of recruitment.

CP asked if the membership list could include first aid training and swimming ability? Questions about GDPR. JC, CP and LF to coordinate on how to update/incorporate this information.

**Club Rowing Report (JB)** JB said that Tim has been helping out with these, numbers fluctuate, sessions continue to be popular. Recent successful club outing to Port Meadow.

JB discussed the refurbishment of boats. Sparrowhawk had been refurbished, Harrier next to be refurbed, quote for 4k, can fix back stays and wheels, gates, etc. SL said that after Mark had rigged Harrier, he felt it was improved. JC asked what to do next? NKB said that he might have 4 boys that need a 4x – questions about weight of boat 60-80. Falcon needs desperate attention, could be rigged as a 4x or a 4. SL asked if it is possible to limit the tilt of the angle of the racks? Concern about Harrier on rack and possibility of damage to Tawney and Barn. Discussion about difficulty of reaching some boats. **JB to have a word with Nick (the builder) to change the angle of the racks.**

JC asked how much of the work on Falcon can be done in house, he felt the club needed a coxless 4. JB said one of the footplates needs to be looked at, **JB to have Mark look at Falcon. NKB said that he'd noticed a crack in Buzzard's bow canvas, JB to take a look.**

**JB said that an email should go to all members about boat damage and a reminder to report promptly,** Harris Hawk had major damage from a rigger and not reported. NKB – damage to RP3, connector wire has been bent. Not rolling correctly which was also not reported. JH said that there was £1500 from LTR, might be used to upgrade Sea Eagle, he also said that the macon blades needed new collars, also have Mark to look at this, JB said that he also thought he could change the gates. NK-B asked if they could also look at the 8x which had been getting more use from the juniors. **Various issues listed above for JB to follow up on.**

**Report from Vice Captain (MHB)** Membership enquires from start of September, there were 11 enquiries, which resulted in 6 tasters, of these, 3 joined. MHB said the fleet list to be updated and blades list to be updated, restated the importance of notice boards. JC said that a notice board would go up, and that the club was going to appoint a committee to run the site.

This moved the discussion onto AOB.

## **AOB**

**Miscellaneous items for discussion:** NK-B – Seb S is selling his boat (Kanghua 1x), asking 2k.

JC - Memorial message for Jan Holloway who died recently. Ruth to draft a message and sent to family. An event to be planned later in his memory; Gift for Grahame to be presented at the club xmas dinner, ideas, proposed tickets to Henley Regatta.

JH – any interest in a club blazer? Captains to discuss with squads and gauge interest.

JC – canoe trips, any interest? To be sent around again, holiday paddles with canoeing members.

**Club Communications Strategy** JC said there were ongoing issues with google groups. Possibility of using spond, problems of changing email addresses which change which makes google less practical. GD stated that the frequency of emails should be discussed, a weekly newsletter might be a solution. JC to check on the frequency of emails sent lately, difficult to self administer email addresses in google. Do clubwide messages reach everyone? MHB agreed that action ought to be taken, although she was not expressing a preference for the particular course of the action. **JC to propose strategy for improving club communications.**

**Club Rowing Rules** JC said that the draft document from BR and appendices came from Gloucestershire. Been reviewed by the trustees (DS). How should this be moved forward?

The question of what had been agreed with respect to voting was again raised. JC said that he recalled two items had been agreed: members aged 16 and up to be allowed to vote and then the other condition was that one year paid membership for voting. For the rowing rules he stated that members should be consulted, there should be a period of consultation, these suggestions and opinions to be collated, a final version to be decided and then submitted to the trustees for their approval

CP asked for clarification on the scope of the rules. Is it specific about conditions for rowing? JC Rules can include how committee members are selected, will all members vote for committee? Does the committee feel happy that this procedure is acceptable? NK-B asked how will these proposed rules be made available for the membership to consult? JC said that members will be engaged in the feedback process but the precise details of this have not been determined. JB said that there were various appendices that need to be moved forward, which of these match committee roles? The committee also needed to consider what ought to be on website and how/when this will be updated. JC reiterated that help was available from the kayaking side on the rules.

**Assistance with cost for juniors' fees for prospective member** JB stated that the club had received an enquiry from a prospective junior member whose parent asked about possible discounts on fees for children in receipt of free school meals. JB had offered a discount of £50 and the parent had expressed that this was less than they were expecting based on their experience with other activities/clubs. A general discussion followed and the committee agreed that the club is not diverse on the rowing side, particularly compared to the kayaking side of the club. KC asked what represented an appropriate discount and how did the club calculate the £50 discount offered, which seemed insufficient especially considering the threshold for qualifying for free school meals? JH proposed 6 months of free membership for children in receipt of free school meals and suggested that the marginal cost of coaching an additional child was relatively low and something the club could afford to do. NK-B said

that support for fee assistance should consider the demands of membership on junior coaches. JC stated that he disagreed that the club should subsidize junior membership at a greater cost to the club.

CP asked if there was funding available for the club to support outreach among juniors, are any British Rowing grants available? JH asked if it was at least possible to express an intent to seek funding for juniors? JC said that no decision would be taken and the matter to be tabled for later.

**Associate Member Category** JC asked about the idea of an associate member, one who doesn't row or use gym facilities. People who would like to be associated with the club but do not use equipment. Propose that an associate membership exist, 20 or 50 per year, numbers to be limited.

JB asked what is the benefit to potential members? People like Mark should not be charged, could be an honorary member. JC said that it was broadly for a social association. The discussion concluded with no agreement, the matter to be taken up later.

There being no other business and the two hours allotted for the meeting having passed, it was decided that the meeting should be concluded.

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