

WEIR WOOD SAILING CLUB MINUTES OF 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Sunday 2nd December 2018 at 14.00 in Clubroom

The Club Secretary, Chris Daniels, introduced himself and explained that with the sad loss of Chris Fyans, who had previously chaired the AGM, he would be chairing the 2018 meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

6 apologies for absence were received and circa 45 members were in attendance

2. Presentation of the Minutes of 51st AGM held on 6th December 2017

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Simon Davis, seconded by Charles Macrorie, and approved by a majority show of hands

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4. Reports

The Following reports were presented:

(a) The Sailing Secretary

In the absence of Ernie Hatton, David Ramshaw presented the Report to the meeting. Key points were:-

*Midweek sailing had continued to flourish and had been enjoyed by a regular group of sailors, including some recently joined members, with circa 12 boats out each week.

Thanks were expressed to Lucy Oglethorpe who had organised Midweek sailing for the last 2 seasons. She was now standing down and Martin Dell and John Walton would be taking over for the 2019 season.

*Sunday Social sailing had been introduced to encourage sailors who did not want to race to meet up for lunch, go sailing and have a cup of tea together at the end of the afternoon.

Although supported by a few members, it did not succeed in attracting new members, which was disappointing. The Committee is very conscious of the importance of engaging with new members and those who do not wish to race, particularly those without their own boat, and will be reviewing the approach over the Winter.

*Cruising had enjoyed a full year, despite very mixed weather conditions. However, whether it was too windy, flat calm or monsoon rain, all outings were enjoyed, one way or the other!! The tides in the Solent made it very difficult to plan weekend destinations without fighting the strong Spring tides. However, trips were made to Lepe Beach, Mengham Rythe SC, Folly Inn (On IofW) Round Isle of Sheppey Race and a weekend stay at Birdham.

Simon Davis commented that Cruising was a superb way to build the scope of the Club but asked that in 2019 dates were better planned, as allowed by tides etc, to avoid clashes with events in the Club Calendar.

*Club Racing had experienced wildly varied weather, but despite this, in the main, racing had been well supported. Overall some 60 members had raced during the year, only slightly down on 2017. However, whilst numbers in handicap racing had held up well, the number of Lasers was very much lower – with as low as 3 on some Sundays. Where had they all gone to?

*The eRace signing on system was now working well and a huge improvement on the historic paper system. Adoption of the 3-minute start sequence was an improvement, which materially reduced the wait to start the second race.

*Ernie Hatton and Pete Clifton had acted as Race Officers in the Committee boat, alternating each Sunday, which had resulted in all Sunday Racing being controlled from afloat – enabling much better courses to be set. With the increased use of a Committee boat, the current vessel needs to be replaced and the approval of the Main Committee to purchase a replacement is in progress.

*Seven events had been held at Weir Wood during the year and Ernie expressed his thanks to all the members who had helped to run them so professionally and ensured that they were all very successful.

(b) Sailing Development

In the absence of Sarah Alderman, Chris Hopkins presented the report to the meeting. The key points were:-

*2017/ 2018 was a somewhat transitional year, with Sarah becoming RYA Principal in 2017 and a number of other changes of personnel.

*The annual RYA inspection was passed with flying colours, with no areas requiring attention. This was the outcome of a huge amount of work to update written procedures. Sadly, the amount of paperwork required for our Training and Coaching activities is ever increasing.

*Thanks were expressed to the small, dedicated Team that have kept activities running through the season. Tim Taylor looked after the Adult Programme and John and Chris Hopkins looked after Saturday Youth Race Coaching. Adrian Gumbley and Matt Norris had looked after Oppies, but are now standing down. Some active parents are desperately required to take over the lead in running this group. No particular qualifications are required – just energy and enthusiasm.

*Thanks were also expressed to Richard Haw, who is the Club's chief Powerboat instructor and Bosun, with the arduous task of keeping our vessels and their engines in working order. He has received invaluable help from Keith Eays. Thanks were also expressed to Duncan Lawson and Rob Atkinson whose adult coaching groups frequently work with the youth groups.

*Adult Training had a lower take up, but the combined Level 1 and 2 Courses held in July had worked well as it had enabled a range of courses to be offered with a single Senior Instructor overseeing the weekend.

*Instructor Training had enjoyed a large intake of new Assistant Instructors (5 under 18 and 4 over 18) and over a number of Sundays the required 20 hours of practical and theory-based training was successfully completed. These Instructors subsequently helped out at Oppy Camp and on the adult courses and the regular weekend youth programme. It is hoped that they will take up the opportunity to progress to full Instructor qualifications, as the Club's facilities will enable these courses to be available on very reasonable terms.

In 2019 a Senior Instructor Course will be hosted and also Race Coaching courses if there is sufficient demand.

*Sunday Youth had enjoyed a very good season, with afternoons attracting a range of youth sailors of all ages. A number of sessions for all of the RYA youth stages had been run, with a number of participants completing each stage. If the same scope is to be available in 2019, more help is required and additional Senior Instructor cover needed.

*Optimists had a year of rebuilding after the issues with Sail and Race. Demand for beginner's courses remained strong and there is a core group of intermediaries and Racers, but the flow from beginners needs strengthening. In the absence of parent leaders, the group has been heavily dependent on young instructors, but this is not sustainable in the longer term and enthusiastic adults are required to drive the group.

*Schools again ran a full programme, organised by Simon Davis and aided by Chris Oglethorpe, Glen Chandler and Zach Thompson. Demand was strong from independent schools but despite considerable effort and positive responses, little impact has been achieved with State schools. However, it is recognised that approaches were a little late and better timing is proposed for 2018/19.

Good links have been achieved with less privileged groups such as Young Epilepsy and Cornfields school, which caters for young females with emotional difficulties. As a result of this work, it is a great credit to all those involved that WWSC has been recognised as a RYA Sailability Centre. Simon reminded the meeting that 2019 is the last year that he will be able to run these offerings and a replacement is required if they are to continue.

*WWSC is a recognised Training Centre for Powerboats and several courses were successfully run together with one Safety Boat Certificate. These courses help the Club's youngsters achieve their Assistant Instructor and their full Dinghy Instructor qualifications.

(c) Membership

Peter Hargreaves presented some slides to update attendees on the position re membership. The key points were:-

- * Membership was currently down – 337 against 361 last year.
- * Annual churn of members continues to be circa 20%, with 67 members leaving this year. However, 40 new members had been recruited so far.
- * There is scope for more Winter only members if there is a Laser Winter Series.
- * Largest reduction was in Family members.
- * It is hard work to replace the 20% of leavers. Feedback from members leaving confirms that there is little scope to improve retention, as in most cases it was for personal reasons and not directly a reflection on the Club itself.
- * The recent RYA survey recorded a satisfaction score for WWSC just below the average compared to other Clubs. 66% would recommend the Club to friends or relatives and 91% say they were likely to renew membership.
- * Membership duration is often short and so one way to improve retention is for all existing members to make new members welcome and to help them integrate into the Club.
- * Feedback also advises that improvements need to be made to the changing facilities, particularly ladies, and the provision of storage of equipment.
- * To achieve significant improvements, more help is required to run the Club. The existing Main Committee members are overstretched dealing with the routine requirements and current commitments and have limited scope to entertain further initiatives.

Chris Daniels opened the session to the floor for discussion and feedback and a number of issues were raised:-

* Support for new members was required through the Fleet captains. Whilst this was evident with the Enterprises, it did not happen with other groups.

* There is a need for a wider New Member support group with targeted communication and specific events. This would help involve the families of new members who probably do not sail and feel distanced from the Club with no engagement whilst the other parties were on the water.

* In previous years a Buddy system had been tried, but there was little take up by new members. Also, sailing taster sessions had been arranged for the parents of Oppy sailors who might be waiting on the bank for the children to return with little to do. The intention was to embrace a wider family involvement in sailing. The initiatives had ceased but it would seem appropriate to try them again.

* More effort was required by all to embrace new members and their families. Whilst the regular Racers frequently gathered together in groups after racing, for a meal or drinks, new racers and non-racers were often left alone and ignored. Wednesday sailing worked well, but on Sundays integration was problematic. Family members waiting for people sailing were also frequently ignored, and much more effort was required by all members to make them feel more welcome.

* There was strong need to improve communication by social media. Each section seemed to communicate separately. There was a feeling that communication within a fleet by Fleet captains was hampered by the need to use Webcollect. Feedback to Club members was currently one way – club to member – with no scope for easy feedback from members to the Club. Members needed to be made more aware of happenings more quickly

The Club Webmaster reminded attendees that WWSC had a number of communication channels in place, including the website, regular bulletins and Twitter. It was important that he was advised of events etc so that he could put them on the website. To date he received minimal information to publicise. When communicating to members it was essential to use the existing channels in a manner which respected the data restrictions of recent GDPR legislation. Failure to do so could result in serious consequences for the Club.

* There was scope to introduce a morning weekday session for women (or men) to sail whilst the children were at school. This could be encouraged by targeted communication/publicity to the local community.

* The view was expressed that WWSC would not be able to expand unless it converted itself from a sailing club offering social events into a social club offering a number of waterborne activities as well as sailing. Chris Daniels pointed out the existing restrictions in the WWSC lease and closed the discussion with the commitment that the Main Committee would review the points raised.

(d) Business Development Sub-Committee

In the absence of Ian Alderman, Patrick Jiskoot read out a report on behalf of the Business Development Committee. The main points were:-

*At the 2017 AGM a number of goals for the year were set out relating to identifying new revenue streams and the future of the Clubhouse. Unfortunately, intervening circumstances including increased demands at work and the arrival of two babies had significantly affected the time that the Sub-Committee could apply to progressing them.

Key actions achieved included:-

* The impact of declining volunteer rates was investigated and the cost of mitigation using external paid alternatives investigated. A host of new liabilities occurred if paid staff were

involved, and an additional employee would be required to run them. Even if contract staff were used there were legal, insurance and employment issues to deal with. Replacing or complimenting the work of volunteers would be costly, and subscriptions would have to rise to cover the costs – possibly creating a downward spiral of membership numbers.

* The optimum way forward for the Club was to find better ways to engage with the membership do fully use the skills and experience that they had. To achieve this, greater clarity of the roles and demands of key Committee members was required along with much clearer visibility of the tasks and assistance required.

* An initial draft of terms for hiring the Clubhouse, now permitted under the renegotiated lease, was drafted along with a menu of charges for using Club facilities. This could generate more revenue for the Club, but again, the issue arose of who and how to manage the administration.

* With regard to the Clubhouse development, progress had been slower than hoped, but there is now a first release of a design brief and the process of gaining topographic and structural surveys had commenced. These will provide the basis for the order of magnitude of costs and enable the next stages of identifying potential solutions for the Clubhouse. The substantial previous work by Simon Davis to progress redevelopment was acknowledged.

* Despite delays re the Clubhouse enhancement of the existing structure had not ceased. For example, the heating system had been replaced, which substantially improved the showers, the flooring had been replaced and other improvements made.

* The report concluded with an appeal for members with relevant skills or spare time to come forward to help the Sub-Committee progress outstanding actions.

Simon protested strongly that despite the reduced capacity, more should have been done to progress the redevelopment of the Clubhouse. He felt that work that he and Bill Stean had done had produced a viable option but that the Main Committee had effectively shelved it.

Chris Daniels responded by saying that was not the case. Not everybody supported the current proposal and more work was required to explore the alternative options – work with the existing building, extend/remodel the building or build a new Clubhouse. The Main Committee and its Sub-Committee could only deliver what its volunteer members could manage to achieve with the time that they had available. Ian Alderman was standing down as chair of the Business Development Sub-Committee and as soon as a replacement was appointed Chris was confident that the Sub-Committee would liaise with Simon to resume the work as best they could.

(e). Social Secretary Report

Rachael Courtenay gave a verbal report on the year's activities:-

* A number of successful events had been held, but the take up by members continued to be disappointing. Those that had attended had enjoyed themselves, but more support from members was essential if the scope of social offerings was to grow.

* A key issue was the very late confirmation of attendance and of buying tickets. On most occasions commitment was left until the last minute which made organising the event unnecessarily difficult.

* Thought needed to be given to some new initiatives attractive to new members and to the non-sailing partners/families of sailing members.

* Rachael thanked the team of people who had helped her with the organisation and running of events during the year.

* Rachael was not running for office again in 2019, due to other commitments, but wished her successor well and made an offer of help if available to do so.

On behalf of the Club, Chris Daniels thanked Rachael for her outstanding work during the year. In a Club the size of WWSC achieving critical mass for social events was hard work, but running them was essential to the long run future of WWSC.RC had done a fantastic job and the attendees expressed their appreciation with loud applause.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Patrick Jiskoot, presented a report which covered the Final Accounts for YE 31st March 2018 and the Accounts to 30th September 2018. The details and spreadsheets were on the Website for interested members to digest.

The key points identified were:-

Year Ending 31st March 2018

* The surplus had increased to £31k from £21k in 16/17, primarily due to a reduction in running costs. Subscription income remained healthy at £98k, offsetting the drop in income from other sources – notably Training income from schools, Oppies and Adults. Overall revenue remained practically unchanged at £139k.

* The cost of building maintenance was unchanged, and the process of upgrading the Clubhouse and facilities continued as before. Expenditure on the grounds increased (largely tree lopping), and on the maintenance of the Club's sailing and power boats as we sought to improve the sailing fleet and support boats.

* Savings were achieved in a number of areas, notably on the Alarm System, Advertising and Publicity, and sundry expenses.

* Profit/Cost Centres had been created to enable focus on the financial position of certain activities. At this stage it had not been possible to allocate the costs of fuel, equipment and depreciation, but on this basis Schools Training showed a gross return of circa 50%, Adult Training 45%, Youth Training 55% and Oppies 51%. It is hoped that work to allocate costs will be completed in 2018 to enable Net Returns to be shown.

* The Bar/galley broke even and Social Activities showed a gross margin of 43%, although this was the lowest for many years at only circa £2k. Boat Hire delivered significant growth at an all-time high of £1154.

None of the above figures recognise any allocation for the running overheads of the Club, such as the lease, rates, insurance etc.

* Reserves had continued to grow and were now at circa £259k, which includes circa £44k for prepaid 2018/19 Subscriptions. This reserve is substantial but will be required if there was ever a need to wind down the Club and for any redevelopment of the Clubhouse.

Accounts to 30th September 2018

Points to note were:-

* The current surplus is circa £21k with a year-end figure of circa £25k predicted.

* Projections are clearly speculative, but a decrease in subscription revenue is indicated – in line with the current reduced level of membership.

* Training income comprises circa 22% of gross Club revenue and this area is seen as a major strategic exposure that needs urgent focus from the membership as a whole. Net margin is much lower but greater support is needed to ensure our continued status as a major recognised RYA Training Centre. There is an urgent need to find candidates to run the Oppy Group.

* Savings are being achieved with energy charges and Website/IT costs through renegotiation of contracts. In addition, equipment efficiencies will start to deliver savings – for example from the re-plumbing of our water/heating systems and the installation of the solar panels due to tremendous work by Simon Davis, Mike Summers and others.

Chris Daniels opened the session to questions and comment:-

* Ralph Wynniatt-Husey offered to help the Treasurer secure better returns for the Club's cash reserves.

* Ralph also expressed his view that the finances and fortunes of WWSC could be greatly enhanced by converting it from a CASC to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Chris Daniels very briefly explained what this meant and that Ralph had made a presentation to the Main Committee outlining the primary advantages and issues arising. The Main Committee had undertaken to investigate this approach further and would revert to members if an actionable option emerged.

* Charles Macrorie questioned some aspects of the income lines on the spreadsheet, which the Treasurer undertook to answer outside of the meeting.

* Simon Davis reminded the meeting that it was his last year of running the Schools initiative and unless a replacement could be found, this activity would cease.

5. Acceptance of Accounts

Acceptance was proposed by Dick Lankester, seconded by Simon Davis and approved unanimously by a show of hands.

6. . Approval of 2018/19 Subscriptions

Peter Hargreaves gave a presentation in which he outlined the proposals for the 2019/20 subscriptions. Key points were:-

* General increase of CPI, 2.4%, to align with annual increase in the Club's overheads

* Freeze Cadet and Student fees until they fall to 50% of a single membership

* Renewal to be allowed at 2018/9 prices if completed and paid by 31st March 2019.

Chris Daniels opened the session to questions:-

Peter was questioned on the age to be eligible for the Senior's discount – State pension age. The need to offer a Senior's discount was questioned. Peter responded that paying the reduced fee was not compulsory and a few eligible members paid the higher rate.

Ralph reminded Peter that members who chose to pay the extra amount should do so as a gift to ensure that Gift Aid was received. Peter confirmed this happened.

Kevin Francis stated that some Clubs of all complexions included scope for a voluntary donation with the renewal documentation. This could take the form of a fixed suggested amount, such as £5 or left to the member, who might just round up the charge. Members could decline to make the contribution if they objected to it. Chris Daniels confirmed that his bowls Club adopted this

approach and significant extra income was generated. Peter undertook to explore this idea in the Membership Sub-Committee. .

The acceptance of the proposed subscriptions was proposed by Simon Davis, seconded by Kevin Francis and unanimously approved by a show of hands.

7. Election of Officers of the Club.

The re-election of the nominees was proposed by Kevin Francis, seconded by David Ramshaw and unanimously approved by block vote by a show of hands.

8. Re-Election of other members of the Main Committee

The re-election of the nominees was proposed by Tim Taylor , seconded by Charles Macrorie and unanimously approved by block vote by a show of hands.

9. Election of Social Secretary.

Charles Macrorie was proposed as Social Secretary by Peter Hargreaves and seconded by Dick Lankester and unanimously approved by a block show of hands.

10. Vacancies on the Main Committee

The Secretary reported that no nominations had been received for the positions of Commodore. A possible candidate for the post of Chair of the Business Development Sub-Committee had been identified, and if they accepted their appointment would be ratified at the 2019 AGM.

11. AOB and Open

* The message during the meeting that more help was required to run the Club was challenged by Amanda Bull. It was necessary for the Committee to be much more explicit in outlining the help required and more effort was required to harness the skills of members.

* Chris Daniels responded by agreeing that more definition of the tasks required to run the Club was required along with better clarity on where help was needed. The routine administration and operational demands required to satisfy ever increasing legislation was sapping the capability of the current Main Committee – leaving minimal scope for new initiatives. In addition to general please, on occasions specific help from members had been sought, for example legal assistance from members with legal experience, but none had been forthcoming.

* It was now evident that the historic organisational structure and allocation of duties was increasingly inadequate and required radical improvement. To date, responsibility for key tasks had been taken on ad hoc, “availability to do it” basis. Whilst getting the job done in the short term, the approach lacked co-ordination and had minimal resilience.

* A meeting of the Main Committee was to be held early in 2019 to consider the structure of the Main Committee and its Sub-Committees and to identify and allocate tasks in a more coherent manner. The shortfalls could then be more readily identified and more focussed solicitations for help publicised. Members would be advised of the outcome of that meeting as soon as a proposition for change was concluded.

* In the meantime, Chris reiterated that WWSC should be in no doubt of the hard work, time and effort required by those on the Main Committee to achieve the current level of service to members. The Main Committee was committed to finding a way forward, but unless a way could be found to increase the level of assistance from members or external parties, in the longer term, WWSC in its current mode of operation was in jeopardy.

* The timing of the AGM was questioned. Attendance was poor, largely comprising long standing regular members. There were no younger members or new members present. It might be better to move the AGM to a Summer or Autumn date and combine it with a social or sailing event. On behalf of the Committee Chris undertook to consider a different approach and timing and revert back to members with a proposal.

Chris thanked all attendees for making the effort to come on such a dismal Winter Day and closed the meeting at circa 16.10

CD/V1/15.01.19