

## MINUTES OF THE 46th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT THE CLUBHOUSE ON THE 23 OCTOBER 2013

### ***Present.***

Gordon Scott President & Chairman, Officers, Hon. Members, Trustees & Members totalling 51 voting members.

### ***Apologies for Absence***

Apologies had been received from

Alan Coventry  
David Walker  
Doug and Gail Pattison  
Graham Canford-Smith  
Dave Casley  
David Williams  
Keith Harris  
Simon Chapman

The Chairman, Gordon Scott, opened the meeting by explaining the agenda. He noted that there would be a general discussion at the end of the formal business of the meeting and that general questions should be raised at that stage.

### ***1. To approve as a true record the minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting.***

- 1.1. The Chairman asked for approval of the minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting as appearing on the Club's website.
- 1.2. There were no matters arising in the minutes
- 1.3. The motion was proposed by Charles Tricks and seconded by Errol Edwards. The Chairman asked for a show of hands to approve the minutes and this was given unanimously.

### ***2. To acknowledge reports from the Commodore, Officers of Sailing and House and Grounds as printed with the notice of Annual General Meeting and approve as necessary***

- 2.1. The Commodore stated that, although he assumed that members had read his report, he would like to emphasise certain matters within it. He drew attention to the numbers of boats racing at Chew and trends in recent years. During the last few years the numbers of boats in the handicap fleet had reduced significantly and he thought that this was partly due to problems getting crews. Whilst there had been increases in single handers there had not been an increase in the numbers racing. He invited ideas as to how we helped people to sail more and better. His aim was to get more people racing. He also noted that the number of Chew sailors racing in National Championships had also fallen significantly. He would like to try and reverse this trend which was also common at other clubs. He was conscious that there were a number of people sailing at the club who did not end up being full club members e.g. youth sailors, students and university club members. He thought that this was partly due to the cost of membership, particularly the joining fee and he believed that a separate cheaper class of membership such as a crew membership might help as a more attractive way of entry to the club for younger sailors.
- 2.2. He stated that it was often difficult to get people's views on club matters. One of the current issues was the future of the hammerhead pontoon but he welcomed views on other matters as well.
- 2.3. He reported that relationships with Bristol Water continued to be good. He had met with the new manager responsible for the lake and they had agreed to start negotiations on the renewal of the lease. This was quite an important issue as the club was unable to get grants from bodies such as Sport England unless it had a long term lease. We had also raised the

question of being able to run the 5<sup>th</sup> club rib on the lake which the terms of the lease currently prevented us from doing.

- 2.4. There was a reasonable amount of money in the club accounts. However, we had a number of major repairs and refurbishments which needed doing and once these had been costed we would be in a position to think about how surplus funds could be spent.
  - 2.5. The Chair invited questions on the Commodore's report.
  - 2.6. Peter Cheek asked why the date of the AGM had been altered from that publicised in the club calendar. NF explained that when he had prepared the calendar, he had set the date of the AGM as being the second Wednesday in October. When the meeting dates had been finalised in December 2012, the change to the calendar had not been picked up. Peter Cheek asked how members were informed of the change of date. AMJ replied that an email to all members who had asked to be contacted through email had been sent in September. In addition, a notice of the change of date had been posted in the club house and the notice of annual general meeting had been posted to all members not wishing to receive emails at the end of September.
  - 2.7. Primrose Salt reported that she had made some suggestions recently by email but asked how the committee should receive feedback in the future. MT said that he didn't mind how he got comments as long as he got them.
  - 2.8. A member asked why we didn't have a suggestion box. MT reported that we had had one but it had not been used. Further consideration would be given to its reintroduction.
  - 2.9. Helen Tudor mentioned that a good part of the membership didn't want to race and thus MT's objective of getting more casual sailors racing was not necessarily valid. MT accepted this and noted that we had tried to do more for the non racers e.g. more training, a place on the sailing committee etc. He did feel however, that having an active racing community was important for the club.
  - 2.10. Mike Meloy commented on a number of points in MT's presentation. He stated that a number of students had wanted to join the club but could not afford the joining fee. Could the club reduce this barrier? If the club wished to continue to have RYA accreditation for powerboat training the club needed a hammerhead. He noted the desire to have the 5<sup>th</sup> rib on the water. However, if we used the powerboats more frequently then we would need to change the engines more regularly. MT noted the points made and was particularly interested in the student point. He agreed to look into this further.
  - 2.11. Hugh Nettlefield said that he thought the crew membership idea was an excellent one and something he would give his full support to.
  - 2.12. Errol Edwards thought that membership paid by monthly direct debit might make it easier for some younger members including students.
3. The Hon Sailing Secretary, Nick Fisher introduced the Vice Commodore's report.
    - 3.1. NF explained that he was standing in for Simon Chapman who was unable to make the meeting. He then read through SC's report.
    - 3.2. NF stated that at the last AGM there had been a request to reduce the number of 'no general sailing' days. The Committee had tried to do this although noted that at the RS 200 inlands some limits had had to be placed on general sailing given the difficult conditions.
    - 3.3. He noted that Ali Woodiwiss was stepping down from organising the junior training but that replacements had been found to run the junior training activities.
    - 3.4. The Chair invited questions on the report.
    - 3.5. A member noted that we had recently held a meeting for Europes but that only 10 boats had taken part and he wondered why we had bothered for such a small group. NF stated that we had known that there was likely to be a small turnout when we had agreed to host the event. However, the quality of the entry was very high and the club had felt that this was an event which they should support.
    - 3.6. Peter Cheek asked whether we had considered whether we should put a limit on the number of boats in any particular class in the way we had done for Mirrors in the past. NF stated that we hadn't thought about this recently despite there being over 120 lasers at the club. NF felt that we didn't really want to restrict numbers given the desire to keep membership levels high.
    - 3.7. GGS suggested that we should make a split in the Solo fleet between the plastic and the wooden boats as he thought this would encourage more wooden boats to take part in racing.
    - 3.8. Helen Martin thought that this was a matter for the Solo fleet to decide.
    - 3.9. MT said that he would like to take this opportunity to thank the retiring Vice Commodore for all his efforts over the last two years. His work had been an enormous asset to the Club.

4. The President introduced the Rear Commodore, Allen Marsh.
  - 4.1. Allen reported that the race hut and the ladies had been refurbished in the year and these had been very successful projects.
  - 4.2. He had appointed new cleaners who he thought were doing a much better job than the previous cleaning company.
  - 4.3. He noted that the hammerhead pontoon had been a problem for him for several years now. During the year the hammerhead had become dangerous and therefore he had had the pontoon towed out of the way. He had had quotes to refurbish it as well as a visit from a pontoon company for a replacement. One of the suggestions was a proposal from Versadock and he had received a number of good references. The cost of replacing was roughly twice the price of the repair. The hammerhead was in a very exposed position and would always be vulnerable to the elements. The club wanted a system that was suitable for our users and he felt that what we currently had did not work.
  - 4.4. He noted that the disabled lift had also been very unreliable. He was dissatisfied with the current lift maintenance company but was waiting for them to carry out a repair to be done under guarantee before looking to replace them.
  - 4.5. He reported that the lighting system in the understore had been replaced with a more energy efficient one.
  - 4.6. He noted that a number of members seemed to have problems with the boat stickers. He noted that if people didn't put stickers on their boats, their boats were likely to be moved.
  - 4.7. He felt that the galley continued to work well and was not proposing any changes to the contract with the current operator.
  - 4.8. The major project for 2014 would be a partial refurbishment of the gents changing room.
  - 4.9. The Chair invited comments.
  - 4.10. Andy Harris asked whether any consideration had been given to putting in a break water between the fishing lodge and the pontoon to protect the pontoon. GGS noted that many years ago the jetty had been built to protect the launching area. However he drew attention to the fact that BW would not allow piling in the lake. NF thought that we wouldn't need foundations or piling for a break water although he was sure that BW still wouldn't let us build a breakwater.
  - 4.11. Melvin Matthews said that he had seen the Versadock proposals and video and thought their product would be ideal for us. It wasn't as expensive as other systems and he felt that we should go with Versadock.
  - 4.12. Pete Cheek asked whether we needed a pontoon at all as he thought most people were able to launch themselves without it. He also thought that with proper management we wouldn't have problems with the pontoon e.g. ensuring that it was pushed in and out as water levels changed.
  - 4.13. Richard Hole wanted to make sure that any solution we decided upon would allow wheelchair users to use it. AM replied that the Versadock system would work with wheel chair users.
  - 4.14. Tim Banks said that he had used Versadock and they were good but were not that stable. He thought that wheel chair users would have problems. He thought that the Walk-on pontoons were a better solution.
  - 4.15. John Belcher asked whether we could widen the southern slipway given that the water was so low. AM said that he was looking into this.
  - 4.16. Peter Jones noted that the use of fixed piles for a pontoon would make the construction a lot easier. He was sure that some method of sealing must be available.
  - 4.17. Dave Macklin stated that BW would still not be interested.
  - 4.18. Helen Martin said that she wished to thank AM for all the work on the ladies changing room. It was an enormous improvement.
  - 4.19. Tim Banks asked that if we were doing work in the understore again, could we move the boats out of the way, as his boat had been covered in dust and concrete during the recent repair work.
  - 4.20. Pete Cheek noted that the club mast was jammed at the top and needed sorting. It had been jammed for some 12 months.
  - 4.21. Peter Jones asked whether we had considered putting solar panels on the roof. AH reported that this had been considered but given the lease situation, no PV panel company would have been interested in putting their panels on the roof.

4.22. The President asked for a proposer and seconder to support the motion to accept the flag officers' reports. GGS proposed the motion and John Shimmel seconded. The motion was then put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

**5. To receive the Accounts and a Report from the Treasurer.**

- 5.1. Ian Hudson, the club treasurer was introduced by the President.
- 5.2. IH reported that whilst the club had made a surplus of some £16k in the year compared to a loss of £6k in the prior year, this result was inflated by the release of part of the key deposit provision and the proceeds on insurance from the loss of the committee boat and the theft of engines.
- 5.3. We had had some additional expenditure during the year. The club had had to make some large capital outlays due to the thefts and the loss of the committee boat as well as the refurbishment of the ladies' changing room. Utility costs had also continued to rise.
- 5.4. Whilst the club had quite high levels of cash at the year end a lot of this was due to annual subscriptions being received in February and March. We had a number of capital projects being planned and these could make a significant dent in the cash reserves.
- 5.5. The chair asked for comments.
- 5.6. Peter Cheek asked where the insurance receipts were in the accounts. IH noted that these were reflected in the gains on disposal of assets.
- 5.7. The President then asked for a proposer and seconder to support the motion to accept the Treasurer's report and the annual financial account. This motion was proposed by John Kelly and seconded by NF. The motion was then passed unanimously.

**6. Business as defined in Rule 9.2 (a) "scope of meeting" and (b)."prior notice".**

- 6.1. The President explained that there were a number of proposals to make amendments to the club rules and that these were set out in the notice of the AGM document.
- 6.2. **Proposal one – Changes to the annual auditing arrangements.**
  - 6.2.1. AMJ explained that earlier in the year we had received notice from our current auditors that they were proposing to increase the audit fee substantially and as a result the treasurer obtained fee quotes from other firms of accountants. The quotes received indicated that our audit fee was likely to at least triple. We therefore had looked into alternatives to obtaining a full audit from a firm of accountants and as part of this exercise looked at what the RYA proposed in their model set of rules for a non incorporated sailing club. These rules include a provision that an appropriately qualified auditor, who may be a member of the club but not of the General Committee, should audit the accounts. It had therefore been decided to propose a change to the rules in order to allow the club the option of appointing an auditor from the club membership.
  - 6.2.2. The chair invited questions.
  - 6.2.3. Ken Comrie asked what the difference in costs was. IH stated that our current auditors had previously charged £1200 and were now asking for £3600.
  - 6.2.4. Brian Brooks asked what the risks were of not having a professional firm auditing the accounts. AMJ stated that the Committee would only appoint an auditor from the membership if they were satisfied that a suitably vigorous audit would be undertaken. He noted that we were a very small client for the current auditors and they undertook the work at a very high level. He was satisfied that there would be no loss in audit quality. He also noted that whilst the club could in theory sue a professional auditor for negligence, the circumstances of this being relevant to the club and chances of success were remote.
  - 6.2.5. A member asked whether a body such as Sport England would be more reluctant to give the club grants if a professional auditor was not reporting on the accounts. The member also asked whether the appointment of an honorary auditor would breach the conditions of the insurance policies. AMJ responded that Sport England gave grants to many small sports organisations which did not have their accounts audited. He added that he was not aware of any conditions in the insurance policies that would be breached by not having a full professional audit but that this would be checked before any decision was made to change auditors.
  - 6.2.6. The motion was put to the vote. One member voted against the motion and all others approved the motion. The rule change was approved.
- 6.3. Proposal two – **Changes to the definition of Notice of Meetings**

- 6.3.1. AMJ explained the reasons for the rule change. The club's rule on notice of meetings was drafted before email was invented and could be interpreted as though the post is the only method of communication. The rule change was designed to clarify this rule.
- 6.3.2. The rule change was then voted upon and approved unanimously.
- 6.4. **Proposal 3 – proposal to reduce the price of the book from £15 to £10**
- 6.4.1. Pete Cheek was invited to explain why the change had been proposed.
- 6.4.2. Pete Cheek noted that the majority of those present were comparatively new members and in fact there were only two members present who had been founding members of the club. Pete then asked whether the committee had agreed at their latest meeting to sell the book for £10.
- 6.4.3. For the benefit of members present MT sought to give some background to the current issue. He stated that a book had been produced by Brian Brooks and other members and the Committee had been asked whether it would support the printing of the book. The committee had agreed. There was then a question of how many copies we should print. The initial quotes had indicated that if we printed 500 copies then the cost per book would be around £10. If 300 copies were printed then the club would have to subsidise the book by around £200. Given the uncertainty as to how many books would be sold, he had decided that 300 copies should be printed. The final costs of the print run had in fact been around £12.50 per book with the result that the subsidy required was now £750. At the September Committee meeting, which he had not been able to attend, the Committee had agreed a price of £15.
- 6.4.4. GGS emphasised that the committee decision was based on the latest printing costs of £12.50.
- 6.4.5. Dave Macklin stated that he had taken some 2 years drafting the book and he hadn't produced it for the club to make a profit. It had been produced in order to inform members and the wider community of the history of the club.
- 6.4.6. CT noted that it had not been the intention to make a profit from the sale of the book. The price had been set taking into account that a number of copies were going to be given away free, that £15 seemed a good round number and still represented value for an interesting book.
- 6.4.7. Brian Brooks thought that this was a one time event in the history of the club. He thought that it was appropriate for the club to subsidise the book.
- 6.4.8. Peter Cheek asked whether the members had seen the 'three men and a book' article. He then gave some background to the book. He had thought that the founding members of the club were dwindling in number and that it was a good idea to try and record their memories before there were even fewer of them. It had therefore been decided to proceed with drafting a book. Brian Brooks had collected a lot of the historical details. A draft copy of the book was produced. A quote was received for around £10 a copy for 500 copies. The subsequent decision to print 300 copies meant that the cost had increased to around £12.50.
- 6.4.9. Melvin Matthews thought that the book was very important and deserved more publicity outside the club. He thought that the book was a good marketing tool and he felt that the committee was being stingy in their small print run and the price they wished to charge.
- 6.4.10. Helen Martin asked why she had only just heard of this issue and why it had not appeared in the notice of AGM. AMJ explained that this was business proposed under Rule 9.2b and had only been received after the notice of AGM had been posted out.
- 6.4.11. Gus Cameron asked what the plans were for marketing of the book. AMJ stated that we had sought publicity from the local press and were also intending marketing it directly to members and at various sailing club events.
- 6.4.12. The president then asked for the motion to be put to the vote. There were 31 votes in favour of the motion, 11 against and 9 abstentions. The motion was carried.

## 7. **Election of Officers as defined in Rule 4.2**

- 7.1. The Chair introduced this part of the business. He noted that there was only one nomination for each post. The Vice Commodore was retiring this year and Rob Mitchell had been proposed as his successor. He invited Rob to say a few words.
- 7.2. Rob gave a brief introduction to himself and explained that he had been organising the RYA training this year. He emphasised that this was a membership club and relied on members being involved in the running of the club. He looked forward to members' advice and feedback and welcomed people's ideas and assistance in helping manage the club.

7.3. The proposal to elect the officers was then put to the AGM and approved unanimously.

**8. Election of General Committee as defined in Rule 5.1**

8.1. The president noted that there was requirement to appoint other members to the committee and briefly went through the proposed appointments.

8.2. The motion was then put to a vote and approved unanimously.

**9. Appointment of Auditors for the coming year**

9.1. The Chairman asked for approval to appoint Mazars LLP Chartered Accountants as the auditors to the Club for the coming year.

9.2. A show of hands confirmed the appointment unanimously.

10. The Chairman closed the formal business of the Annual General Meeting.

**11. Discussion**

11.1. Helen Martin drew attention to John Emmett's talk and stated that the galley would be open from 6.45 that evening. All were welcome to what would be a very interesting evening.

11.2. CT stated that since he'd been safety officer he had had a number of comments about how we run our safety boat cover and whether it was adequate. Some of the criticisms received were as follows:

11.2.1. Rescue helms were not doing enough duties each year and therefore were not sufficiently experienced

11.2.2. Refresher courses for helms were very difficult to put on and received little support from the membership.

11.2.3. Just because a member has an RYA level 2 qualification they don't necessarily know how to perform a rescue.

11.2.4. There were lots of different types of boat on the lake and each had different entrapment risks. There was a low awareness of this amongst the helms

11.2.5. Due to doing few duties it's difficult for inexperienced rescue helms to resist unsuitable requests from other members e.g. the requisition of rescue ribs for training, resisting those members whose actions were likely to endanger themselves

11.2.6. Equipment from the ribs, was frequently going missing and the RYA had recently criticised us for not having certain equipment on boats because it had been removed.

11.2.7. Rescue boat helms should ideally have first aid qualifications

11.3. These problems affected all sailing clubs and they had responded in different ways. Some had gone down the route of having professional helms but this was expensive. Others had demanded that their rescue helms to do more duties each year – Oxford asked their rescue helms to do 10 duties a year, Graffham 6 and they reduced membership fees for them and put them on additional courses.

11.4. CT thought that it would be better if we had a smaller core of more qualified rescue boat helms but this would mean they would have to do a lot more duties which might not be accepted by the membership. Another possibility would be to have a highly qualified helm on duty alongside the duty helm team. If we had a core of 30 highly trained helms they would have to do around 6 duties per year if this approach was adopted. This core team would also be responsible for ensuring the ribs were properly equipped. Some form of reward for these volunteers might be needed.

11.5. CT concluded by saying that just because we've got away with things for the last few years it didn't mean that our approach was appropriate for the future and he thought that arrangements needed an overhaul.

11.6. Helen Tudor stated that she thought it was the sailors' responsibility as to whether they should go sailing or not. GS stated that he had been at an RYA seminar and they were quite clear that it is the club's responsibility to ensure safety and if something went wrong, the club would be called to account.

11.7. NF thought that there were those who had confidence who only did duties occasionally and those who did more duties but didn't have confidence. He was unsure whether doing more duties would necessarily mean that a duty helm would feel able to stand up to argumentative members.

- 11.8. Ken Comrie thought that we could have a senior member on duty each day who could take on overall responsibility for the rescue helms. He also thought that we should have a training program to continue to develop existing helms and assistant racing officers.
- 11.9. GS noted that we now had 4 trained powerboat instructors but this still wasn't enough to increase the level of training of powerboat helms. It was also noted that we needed safety boat training as well as powerboat training.
- 11.10. Mike Meloy noted that we didn't provide safety boat cover, we provided rescue cover. On the RYA level 2 course we taught basic rescue – e.g. recovery of boats. We had a limited number of windows for training and we had a high level of drop outs. The refresher courses had been difficult to run as it was difficult to get people to turn up.
- 11.11. NF stated that he had tried to free up the ribs for training and had limited the schools and the Universities in their use of the ribs so as to make this possible.
- 11.12. Mike Meloy made a number of complaints about how some of the schools and university instructors treated the ribs.
- 11.13. A suggestion was made that if the club did not have the capacity to train rescue helms then those who were keen to get trained, do this at a third party centre and perhaps get some subsidy from the club.
- 11.14. Malcolm Jefferies stated that if we can't get members to attend the courses then we should penalise them, perhaps by taking their membership away from them.
- 11.15. NF thought that this wasn't quite so easy as it sounded as in the current economic climate it was difficult to maintain high levels of membership.
- 11.16. CJ thought that having senior members to support others was the way to go.
- 11.17. John Shimmell reported of a club where there was a professional team and the members did duties who earned credits against their membership fees. Another amateur club stated that you could go sailing anytime you liked but no rescue cover was provided.
- 11.18. MT noted the dangers of employing professional helms and club officers. Apart from the cost the club ethos could change significantly with the professionals setting club strategies.
- 11.19. Another member noted that there were people who liked driving ribs but weren't so keen at sailing. We could perhaps encourage these people to do more safety boat helming duties.
- 11.20. Another member supported Ken Comrie's point and believe that we should give more support to less experienced members and encourage the next generation.
- 11.21. NF asked members if they had any further thoughts on the crewing membership suggestion.
- 11.22. A member proposed that those moving from group or junior membership to full membership should not have to pay the joining fee. Another member thought that having a crewing membership might impact existing full membership numbers as members chose to opt for a cheaper membership class. Another member thought there might be a case for giving bursaries to those really good younger sailors who might otherwise not be able to afford full club membership fees.
- 11.23. GGS drew attention to questions raised by Melvin Matthews in an email to the General Committee. One of them related to the weather station which had not been working due to damage. He reported that it had now been mended.
- 11.24. Primrose Salt drew attention to her email to the committee and asked whether any action was going to be taken. NF responded and said that her comments had been discussed at the last General Committee and her comments would be taken forward with the new junior training team. The question of whether it was possible to have racks in the ladies' changing room was raised so that bags could be stored off the ground. AM said that this was still being considered. Primrose asked if she could receive a response to her email in writing.

12. The Chairman then thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed as a true record of the meeting .....

Date .....

Position.....