

Commodores Report to 2024 AGM

I would like to start by welcoming everyone to our AGM. I have asked our flag officers to limit their verbal updates this evening to an absolute maximum of 10 minutes each; for those of you craving more you will find detail in the words here, or we will be please to try to answer any questions arising later this evening.

It seems that every year brings fresh challenges, and this year was no exception when Blue Green Algae reared its head and, for the first time in most peoples' memory, Bristol Water felt it necessary to close the lake over a three week period from mid-June through to early July. We were extremely grateful to our neighbouring clubs – Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club and Llangdeffed across the bridge in Wales - who opened their doors with offers of free membership and sailing for those that needed their fix. The closure hit early on in our Junior Program of activity, and we were especially grateful to All Aboard Watersports in Bristol Docks for opening their doors and allowing the programme to continue there. It was a first class example of collaboration between like-minded clubs wanting to help people have fun on the water. Thank you to everyone concerned, and also for the huge effort in rearranging things to make it possible.

We were of course able to return and get sailing early in July, and you will hear from our Vice Commodore, Paul Nichols, about the huge range of racing, training, cruising and other activity that has taken place over the last year. It's always fantastic to see the lake being used in so many ways by our membership, and this diversity of activity is vital for the future health of our club.

Of particular note I have been delighted to see the huge efforts of the Youth and Junior team paying off, with many children progressing through the

organised training, enjoying time on the water and more recently beginning to compete in our club racing as well as further afield.

I have been pleased to be able to introduce a trial this winter of wing foiling on the lake. The trial is still at an early stage and while our focus in the foreseeable future remains on traditional displacement sailing activity, we should not be blind to the opportunities and appeal of foiling boards and the like as we look for ways to continue to attract and retain the active membership needed to secure the continued health of our club into the future.

Although Jon's report highlights some frustration at the difficulty in moving forward some of his premises' plans, considerable progress has still been made over the year, thanks to his continued efforts to not only stay on top of the day to day niggles, but also introduce improvements such as upgrades in the kitchen, and to the men's and women's changing room heating and air conditioning. Jon moves on having made a considerable difference over the years and although he won't formally be on a committee next year, I have no doubt will still be foremost when volunteers to help are needed.

Charles will provide a full update on the club's financial position in his Treasurers report based on the accounts accompanying these papers. These draft accounts have been submitted to our auditors for their sign off, and this is expected very shortly. In summary, I can report we remain in a sound financial position overall and this year our activities generated a further small surplus of c £20, 000. However, we cannot be complacent, our Rear Commodore, Jon Elmes, details in his report some of the ongoing challenges facing the club to sure up our club premises following the structural survey completed last year, and our operations, and therefore income and costs, remain very much at the whim of the elements.

Our membership base remains solid, although is slightly reduced overall compared to this time last year with a current membership of 467 compared with 495 at this point in 2023. Notable is a small shift in the mix of membership categories – we have 25 less family members while the number of individual members remains steady at 207. Some of this switch

reflects the small policy change introduced at the last renewal allowing members to 'buy' an additional boat space above the normal single boat allowance for individual members, negating the need to opt for the more expensive family membership to secure a second boat space. However, that doesn't fully explain the decline in family memberships, and it would be good to hear feedback from all members at the AGM, and family members in particular, to ensure we continue to provide an appealing offer for everyone.

Of course, our club doesn't function without a huge volunteer effort right across our membership. In addition to the various committee and other formal posts, all members contribute to our day to day operations, most obviously through the regular rostered dutyman duties, but also helping in the background to maintain our website, results, pontoons, weather station, powerboats, training, racing and.....I could go on and on. Thank you to everyone concerned.

To give some scale to the volunteer effort, our new Duties Sec, Mark Dinwoodie, has confirmed that a massive total of 1362 duties were rostered with the help of *Dutyman* during the period 1/10/23 to 30/9/24. (1222 duties excluding Wednesday evening racing.)

Well over a thousand of these duties were completed as rostered - thank you to all of you concerned. However, on the flip side a total of 129 members either gave notice that they couldn't do their duty or failed to turn up (excluding Wednesday evening racing), unfairly putting pressure on others to step in and cover. Those who missed a duty were assigned the next available duty and asked to volunteer for duties in future. In the extreme, we will be declining to renew membership for the extremely small number of persistent offenders.

The march of time occasionally brings some bad news, and I want to take a moment to reflect on two members who passed away during this year having made such a mark on the club. The first, David Macklin, had been a founder of our club right back at its inception and had served in most of the major flag officer roles, as our President and as a trustee. His contribution to all that we see now was enormous. And, Steve Turner, who had until very

recently served as the club bosun for several years. Many members will remember both warmly and no doubt recall happy days on the water with them.

Finally, I would of course like to thank all the members of the General and Sailing Committees that work tirelessly and with little recognition for the benefit of our club. Much of their work goes unseen and unappreciated, but without them nothing happens. Thank you all for your hard work, support and guidance as we navigate the sometimes not so calm waters around us!

Huge thanks are due to our retiring Rear Commodore, Jon Elmes, who throughout his time in the role has juggled and worked through a 'to do' list longer than any of us could ever believe and made a huge difference to the clubhouse and grounds that we currently enjoy. Jon has always been happy to help when he can and can be relied on to be the first to roll his sleeves up and 'get it done' if necessary. Words cannot express all that he has done.

Also, to Toby Peacock, who resigned his Secretary role earlier this year but was steady as a rock in providing wise advice, support and challenge to both me and the committee during his two years in role.

Thank you both!

And finally, to Rosie, our long serving membership secretary. Rosie has over the years worked tirelessly to ensure that our renewals are handled efficiently and accurately. As you should be aware, she is hoping to stand down over the next couple of months (having served almost double time!) and we remain on the lookout for someone to take on the role – please do step forward now to find out more if this is something that you may be able to help with.

Thank you

Andrew Jones

Commodore

Rear Commodore's Report

As we approach the 2024 AGM and I sit here penning this report, I cast my mind back to 2021 when the role of Rear Commodore passed from Mike Higgins to me. That was 3 years ago, and I'm pleased to be able to look back and proudly acknowledge many of the things that I've been able to achieve in that time. Sure, I would have liked to have done more, but with limited spare time and working to a budget, I feel that I have accomplished a great deal, although as I am sure many people in my position would, I had hoped to accomplish more as the list of things to do continues to grow.

As someone who likes to get things done, it is hard to step back, there's still so much to do, but that is the role of the Rear Commodore, 'there's always something that needs doing', and although I have decided to step down and pass on the baton, I'm under no illusion, I will still be getting involved somewhere, and who knows, maybe I'll have the privilege to serve on the Committee again in the future, when my personal circumstances and workload allows.

As many of you will know, I had hoped by now to have a plan that would enable ongoing investment in energy saving and production measures that would lead to a reduction in environmental impact of the clubhouse. This piece of work has proven to be incredibly challenging to move forwards with any pace, particularly because some initial structural assessments of the building, have raised questions about the condition of the concrete as well as the capacity of the roof to support Solar PV. In addition, the balustrade system has also been flagged as needing attention, and all these issues are currently outstanding. Some of the findings of the structural assessment have rightly given the Committee cause to consider the long-term future of the clubhouse and what steps may be needed to plan for future replacement. For now, we continue to make small changes that we hope will help.

Looking back at some of the note-worthy projects in 2023-24.

Energy – In 2023 the club was forced to re-negotiate its energy contract after coming to the end of a multi-year fixed price contract. This was a particularly bad time, with prices skyrocketing through winter 2022 and into spring 2023. Although we were able to secure a contract that was significantly less than had been budgeted, it still represented a unit increase of over 100% compared to the previous contract. Due to the volatility and uncertainty in the market, we were advised not to commit to more than a 1-year contract, so, in March 2024, we moved onto another new contract, this time for 2 years, securing our energy price at a much lower rate until 2026.

Structural – As has already been mentioned, this has been a frustratingly slow piece of work. An initial structural survey highlighted several issues and although we tried to retain the services of the original structural engineer to help guide and project manage the remedial works, they decided to retire. We now have another structural engineer engaged, but there has been no progress to date, and I fear we may need to look at other ways to move this work forward.

Galley – There has been ongoing investment in the kitchen, replacing old worn-out equipment and generally bringing things up to a standard that has enabled Ben and Antonia to achieve a 5-star hygiene rating. A new commercial dishwasher, a new commercial fryer, and as I type a new commercial electric oven is due to be delivered. This has been necessary investment to ensure the kitchen can operate effectively and efficiently into the future.

Air Con – I'll take no credit for this, but it is absolutely worth a mention. Huge thanks to Chris Meredith for rolling up his sleeves and getting involved in several projects and maintenance tasks, it's been a huge help having someone offer to take things off my plate. As some will have noticed, we now have Air Conditioning in the both the men's and women's changing rooms. It is intended that these will provide heat and cooling and will replace the unreliable gas heaters in the men's changing room. Not only is the AC more efficient, but it also offers more flexibility with smart controls that mean it won't get left switched on for days at a time. I'm sure Chris will be continuing to set the systems up over the coming weeks and

months and we can all hopefully look forward to a nice pre-warmed changing room on those colder sailing days that are approaching.

Pontoons – Some will have noticed that the Southern Pontoon had recently been reconfigured, with the hope that it will be more stable and more able to stand up to the bigger storms that have caused it to break apart several times in recent years. Many may not appreciate that the club pontoons require regular attention, whether it's adjusting the chains to accommodate changing water levels, replacing worn and broken components, cleaning goose poop, or simply pulling the southern walk-ashore in so it doesn't get swept away and destroyed by storms. Currently, much of this work falls to just one person, Simon Conway, to whom we should all be hugely appreciative, but it shouldn't be left to one person. We need more members actively monitoring the Pontoons and reporting when they need maintenance and adjustment. We need more members to volunteer to work as part of a group who are willing and able to give a small amount of time when they are at the club to undertake some of the work, rather than expecting someone else to do it. If you would like to get involved, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the committee, who will be glad to put you in touch.

Finally, I'd like to end this report as I've done before, by thanking all the members of the general committee for their trust, support and hard work over the past year. It has been an honour to serve as a flag officer for Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club over the past 3 years, and I have had the privilege to serve alongside some amazing people, all of whom deserve a huge amount of praise and gratitude for their ongoing commitment to making this club what it is.

Jon Elmes

Rear Commodore

VC Report 2024

Introduction

Ladies & Gentlemen, another year has whistled thru like a strong Southerly, giving us all a battering! a bit wavy at times, making us lean out somewhat whilst causing a bit of havoc on the way! Out of the storm we resume our stewardship of the lake and continue to grow and improve sailing for all.

A packed calendar again of activities and projects On and Off the water, amazing that this is all delivered by willing and happy volunteers. Thank you all for your support in whatever capacity – be it sailing or socially, avid volunteer or on the day helper you are really valued. Im truly amazed of what we get done in such a professional way.

Appreciation & Recognition

Therefore I shall continue to recognise and highlight some of those people helping promote and deliver, but who don't always stand out.

Youth & Juniors

Thank you Angus, Ruth, Steph and team – such a fantastic springboard to get so many people thru Chew Crew and into boats joining the racing. The training set up and efforts are really paying dividends. Youth sailors joining club racing and good turn out at Barts Bash plus – A fantastic calendar for the Youth culminating in the Regional Topper event last weekend which saw a strong contingent of Chew sailors (9) in the fleet of 40. I did spend a few minutes recollecting my own experiences of learning to sail with the school so many years ago thanks to the likes of Bill Guard hailing from the bank thru the old metal “director” type megaphone - sheet the main in boy and bear up!.

Now of course we have progressed with the arrival of the battery powered Jaffa Boats – great training / coaching boats to supplement our Ribs and get the trainers / coaches up close. (prob nstill need to sheet in and bear up though!) Thanks to all of you who have made this possible – perhaps a leap of faith for & a joly of reality for some of us.. but a great step forward.

Please to continue your support and give encouragement to continue the journey of our future CVLSC sailors.

Training Learning To Sail + Power Boats

Dave Orme who is our Principal Training officer / Instructor also has an oversubscribed program of Learning to sail supporting the many people including families wanting to join and learn to sail or just “Discover Sailing” by coming along to one of the planned days. Big thks to Dave and team for spearheading our RYA inspection days. Much appreciated.

We also continue benefit from the great work of Jeff running the PB training keeping us all competent and legal.

Groups

CLADS / Schools / Unis / Police - Very active as usual.

Joining a organisation / group and benefitting from the skills of others is another great way to find a pathway into the fine art of sailing!

We continue to see two very active Universities with both Bristol and Bath offering Term Time Sailing and Team racing in their own boats and a fantastic array of Team Racing events in the calendar again.

CLADS with the direction of Steve Nash offering sailing for all.

Jeff (with his other hat on) key contact for the Police group who continue to support us at Chew on the sailing side & help us also with the Open events we run at Chew.

Schools continue to benefit from the lake - Clifton, Millfield, Sidcot & Priory – wouldn't it be nice to see Chew Valley School start a group ?

Boat Upkeep

I said last year that mending things that Break can be a full time job, actually I need to correct myself – It is! And we are so fortunate to have a great team of Dinghy Boat Bosuns - Dave, David, Chris, Andrew, Rob & Alan Looking after our growing fleet of, Sailing boats Oppy's, Teras, Favas & Quests. Big thanks for your ongoing support.

John Rogers as our Power Boat Bosun got the replacement committee boat not only ready but equipped it so well - its actually easier to run the starts on the water than in the Race Hut - Great job John. I know all the Race Officers appreciate your great efforts here. Just need the kettle and tea cups now please!

Cruising

I've really enjoyed the reports from Simon our Cruising rep who has been far and wide with his wayfarer along the Coast of Devon and Cornwall. We continue to focus also to provide sailing for both people who want to Race and those who also prefer not to.

Racing

I will let you all access the webpage for the honours board for 23/24 Racing performances however I would like to pick a few to mention here.... But I do take pride in the truly magnificent set of ambassadors we have reaching both local & far away events to compete.

Format wise – we have a few changes, Adam has taken over fully now the PRO from Rob Mitchell (thanks again for Rob's great support) and with the team has developed Sprint Racing series at the popular request of you all. This format, along with refreshed starting sequencies is paying dividends also with increasing numbers and enthusiasm.

Your sailing committee – has also welcomed several new members this year with Josh taking over results from long serving Bill. Josh has also seen the light - in his Red Sail approach to sailing, welcome Josh. Elliott and Rob – pick up the handicap fleets whilst Chris Meredith continues leading the soloists. Gus continuing his service with the Ilca / Lasers. Simon Conway continues as Cruising rep. Dave Orme continues with dinghy training, Jeff

Stratford with power boat training. John Rogers leads from the front as Power Boat Bosun.

Leaving us we would recognize Keith & Claire of Flying 15 fame who have pushed of for Falmouth and the delights of big Yacht bashing.. Thanks for all your support over the years.

Rob's enthusiasm is also quite close to his prowess -as he picked up RS 700 National Champion 2024 ! Wow well done Rob. Chew achievements stretch a long way with Rob sharing the roll of honors for our sailors; Travels included heading to the Italian lakes and Carnac in France where our commodore Andy Jones picked up the title of RS100 European champion. Well done Andy. At home Tom Jeffcoat won the Scorpion open meeting hosted by the club. Bill and Josh 2nd in FF (15) Open event.

Chew hosted several other events - The Solo Winter Champs were held in January with 34 boats on the water & the Solo Open was held in May with 24 & pur own Chris Meredith is currently 4th in the western solo series.

We had the Red Sails again at Chew with the Mirror Inlands with 27 boats – Olympians and all !- A really great weekend saw ex Chew sailor and Legend Ben McGrane with his daughter Kiara winning from Olympian (470) Chris Grube and his son Edward. Top Chew boat was Rachel Grayson & Harry Smalley who finished 4th who also won the Top Lady helm trophy.

We will also continue to limit the number of Open Meetings and give preference to those classes sailed here at Chew, the pilot we did this year mixing club racing with Opens was successful and we are including more of the same in the 24/25 calendar. Asymmetric continue to grow and with a few tweaks the balance of WL vs conventional is working.

For our club series spritely Colin Evans with his new to him Finn sails, the Jones brothers, Adam and Bella Broughton, David Pye, Ruben & Jo Woodbridge along with others picked up club race series, race days and trophies. Wednesday evening – Rob and his magic 700 took the A Handicap trophy followed by Nick Martindale with Emily Wright (RS200) and Russell with Julie (Flying Fifteen). In the B Handicap we had a full Solo

podium. Chris Meredith took home the trophy followed by Dave Oakey & Julian Smith.

The Wednesday evening series was once again by far the most popular series of the year. 78 boats with at least 113 sailors took to lake to compete for A & B Handicap honors.

One of the big bumps this year was the Green /Blue Algae affair – what a stopper – didn't see that coming – No Sailing in our busiest and often nicest period. Thanks to the great support offered by local club BCYC we were rescued in being given access to their facilities to join their racing. Many Thanks to those who arranged this and to BCYC for supporting us during this period. Thankfully we were able to repay in kind this autumn when the BCYC reservoir grew a hole and emptied, rendering them unable to sail. We are currently replicating their support in offering sailing for those wanting to travel to Chew over the autumn.

Projects

Our Slipway improvements projects are still planned, water levels again mean we prob wont see this unfortunately in 2024. However we have seen improvements to the pontoons which had lasted remarkably well with the main pontoon being replaced along with improved moorings. A new Mooring in the lee of Denny Island for our Committee boat has been completed. Stormy weather warnings will allow us coverage until she comes out of the Water.

Focus on maintain Ribs and club boats continue. Refurbishment of some of the engines is also planned.

Wing Foiling –In response to the developing arena for fun and skills evolve, we are running a Pilot this year for wing foiling. Whilst this is new to many of us, it is growing fast across the country as our Youth take back time for iPad', TV and Phones! Rob is also our champion here and he has been working with the club to test the concept at Chew. He tells its a sport that is accessible to all ages and abilities so don't be surprised if you see this

during our Windsurfing period, reach out to Rob if you want to join in watch the Newsletter for updates.

Summary

A big thanks to those who make things happen time after time, please keep contributing we appreciate all your efforts. Lets all remember though we are still a voluntary organisation and we may not always get it right ! A lot of us are learning also – so continue to be respectful and understanding of others on the water please.

I would give a big shout out to our race officers too who not only deal with stressed out sailors, but also the unforgiving wind direction we sometimes have at Chew. Probably best to share reflections after the race in the bar, not on the start line or during the start sequence please !

Finally again - James Williams is the main reasons things happen smoothly on the Sailing front. Not only keeping us in check, but also arranging our Calendar, Boat Booking system, Universities. Really fantastic having your talents in our team, Cheers James.

Paul