

# DRAYCOTE WATER SAILING CLUB

Minutes of the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting held online  
On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm

## PRESENT

Jeremy Atkins (Chair), Will Whittaker, Ian Macwhinnie, Rodger Webb, Chris Silver and David Rowe.

Together with 48 other members.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Jane & David Wade, Pat & Jane Collison.

Jeremy Atkins read the notice convening the fifty-first Annual General Meeting of The Draycote Water Sailing Club Limited.

Jeremy began by explaining to attendees how they could communicate during the AGM with use of the Q&A function, and how a poll would be used should someone be against a proposal.

## 2. MINUTES OF THE 50<sup>TH</sup> AGM

The minutes of the fiftieth Annual General Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were put to the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Jeremy Atkins, seconded by Ian Macwhinnie and accepted by the meeting with no one voting against.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 were put to the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Jeremy Atkins, seconded by Ian Macwhinnie and accepted by the meeting with no one voting against.

## 4. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

A PowerPoint presentation was given by the Committee to the members attending. The key elements of the reports of the Committee are as follows:

### Jeremy Atkins, Commodore:

We are officially reporting on the 2019/20 year which was of course our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and was a fantastic year with great celebrations, we made a respectable surplus and we were Club of the year finalist. But then, just before membership renewal, Covid struck.

Since then we have slowly restored activity where we've been allowed too, had a good summer and autumn was looking pretty good too until last Saturday when new national restrictions were put in place.

We had 'COBRA' meetings, often daily, with me, Will, Rodger and Dave, and we worked hard to keep up with the rapidly changing regulations, and still do.

We've introduced more communication to keep our members up to date with these changes, and we hosted some high-profile speakers – we all enjoyed listening to the stories of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

We have also slowly opened up the site to more activity led by Dave and the staff team who have done a fantastic job of this, taking all the effort away from club members by running all the racing and events in a Covid-safe way.

It has been an enormous challenge and it has been helped enormously by the support the members have given by renewing your membership when you couldn't even get on the water. Thank you to our members for their support.

### Will Whittaker, Rear Commodore Sail:

We have had a very hectic summer from March/Easter time with the site closing when we first had the pandemic hit and we had to shut the site, which is now repeating itself again.

## **Reopening the site**

We started by setting out a roadmap to how we were going to get the Club open, part of that is the legal requirement with regards to undertaking the risk assessments. Dave & I spent quite a bit of time working with the RYA to get their documents in order and presenting videos for them on how to open up sites. We created the posters to summarise all of the legal documents into one page to show what our members could and couldn't do. We've had good feedback from the RYA on how we've handled all this and also had other clubs ask to use our documentation to support the reopening of their own clubs. We are going to repeat this process now with an updated road map and risk assessment, however that will be dependent on what tier we come out of this new lockdown in, which will be announced in due course.

## **The Clubhouse & Site**

When we opened up the club house, we haven't ever been able to open the changing rooms. We've introduced one-way systems with brilliant signage provided by Jon Hughes; however, compliance has always been an issue. It's been good working with Dave over these last few months as normally he is the laid back one, but it's turned out to be the other way round on some occasions with him telling us about changing things as people don't comply, etc. We have to remember that this is the staff's workplace – they are not here as members in their own time, and we need to protect them too.

Dave & Matt came up with the brilliant idea of a marquee so members can sit outside and socially distance in the dry. Hopefully we'll be able to use that for future events as well.

## **Participation**

We had to think of new ideas for members to be able to use the water within the regulations. The 'Stig Lap' proved popular and had lots of uptake, and we'll probably use it again when coming out of this lockdown.

Matt spent a lot of time doing a new automated race start sequence. We had already spent a lot of time looking into this (researching various light levels needed in different light situations, etc.) and now Matt had the time to create and fully implement this so it would work on both OD boats, and would be seen and heard from all angles – the horn most definitely works!

Dave has driven the set-up of the Draycote Academy which Steve Irish is heading up as coach. It has already proved very popular with participants travelling from all over England to take part. It really is market leading for us and hopefully will put us in a far stronger position coming out of this lockdown.

The new Aero fleet have begun with their own race start. It's brilliant to see such great numbers joining the fleet which is continuing to grow, and we need them to continue to support this new start. Our single biggest asset, that a lot of other clubs still can't do, is to have fleet starts. We are very unique and we must maintain this and the new Aero fleet fully supports this.

## **Dave Rowe, Club Manager:**

### **Running Safe Events**

We were very keen to get open meetings, or any activity, started as soon as possible coming out of lockdown, whether that was just sailing such as the Stig Laps. Regional open meetings were the first time that we were allowed to hold any events for club members and for visitors as well.

It did require quite a few changes to how we would previously have run these events:

- Online briefing – the race officer briefing with arrival information was delivered in a video then emailed out to those attending.
- Limited numbers – we had to limit numbers of those attending so that we could socially distance on slipways and at first it was limited to 30 at any gatherings.
- Advanced entry – using advanced entry only was the only way we could control the numbers to meet the Covid restrictions. If we had entry on the day we would have had no control over how many would have turned up.
- Official noticeboard – normally we use the board under the rear stairs, but we had to develop a

new system for that. WhatsApp was the chosen method which worked well to keep attendees updated, after some initial teething problems at the first event.

- Drive through registration – with not being able to use the inside space and to avoid everyone gathering, we set up a drive through registration on the entrance driveway where everyone was ticked off the list and we also collected track & trace information.
- Slipway allocation – marshals directed attendees to their allocated slipway. Where in the past we may have just used the far end for visitors, we now used all 12 slipways at the club and created a new one by flattening some rocks with concrete, so managing to keep between 6-10 to each slipway and well spread out.
- Adjusting race times – we thought carefully about how open meetings would work with our members and club racing, especially with the usage of slipways and launching. Open meetings were timed to start earlier so that by the time members arrived for club racing the first open meeting race was well underway, which did mean some early starts for the staff but it worked very well.
- Back to back racing – we ran the races back to back so that we didn't bring anyone ashore and have people gathering. This did mean that the wet bar took a hit in takings.
- Prize givings – we didn't hold any prize givings but used the WhatsApp noticeboard to notify the winners to come to the patio to collect their prize. A quick photo was taken to be used in any race reports.
- Online protests – any protests were done via Zoom. There was one 'small' protest that tested the situation at the Feva event and Jeremy did a fantastic job of hosting it online. It worked really well, and we'll probably continue to use this method in future.

It was great to get open meetings back on and we built up from 26 Toppers in our first one to 100 Toppers in our biggest event, and it's a shame that all the events have gone again with the new restrictions.

#### **Christine Silver, Rear Commodore House:**

Not much has happened because of the lockdown, but we have done the following:

- Acoustic panels – these have been fitted to the ceiling of the lounge to help reduce the echo, although we haven't had an event yet to test their effectiveness. These were funded by a £2k grant from Rugby Borough Council as well as a past donation from the Miracle fleet. Many thanks to Dave & Matt for fitting them which saved approx. £1.5k.
- Portable hearing loop – the rest of the council grant was used to purchase a hearing loop which can be used in any of the meeting or training rooms for wearers of hearing aids.
- Ladies changing rooms – we have received a £20k grant from Sport England for the ladies changing rooms, and the Club will be topping up the balance of approx. £30-40k. The really good news is that the work is due to start in December subject to final approval on the plans from Severn Trent.

### **5. PROGRESS OF THE CLUB'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **Jeremy Atkins:**

Obviously, the development plan has taken a bit of a hit this year given the pandemic situation. To recap, the development plan was a 10-year plan that was set up about 3 years ago with a number of elements:

#### **Increasing Income from:**

- Membership – last year was our highest membership income for 10 years, however it won't be this year.
- Commercial trading – we exceeded the target 3 years early, but again Covid has intervened.

#### **Enhancing Club management:**

- Committee members – we're still currently on our aim to keep 8-10 committee members.
- Staff team – we're developing the right paid staff team and that's ongoing.
- Trading company – already set up.
- Financial reporting – one of our big tasks this year is to improve our financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting. Rodger has done many budgets this year as the situation has changed so many times. It is

working and we've certainly seen progress this year.

- Updating the articles – updated and completed last year.

#### **Addressing lease & site issues:**

- Securing lease extension – perhaps the most significant thing this year is that the lease extension has been secured and that is down to the dogged work of Will Whittaker. This was a really important for me when I became Commodore and I felt it should be my responsibility, but I soon realised after a few meetings with Severn Trent that it was such a challenge, that I asked Will to take it on. His patience and persistence have worked wonders to secure this lease until 2035, and without this we would not have got the grant for the ladies changing rooms.
- Boat replacement scheme – ongoing with plan in place.
- Improving & developing the site – ongoing.

We are doing really well seeing as we are only three years into the plan, but the key ongoing concern of these things of those will be increasing income, especially from membership. We had a plan for 2020 with geo-demographic targeting but then the pandemic hit, and we hope to reinstate it for 2021.

## **6. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS**

### **Rodger Webb, Treasurer.**

This year we have three sets of accounts: Sailing Club, the Trading Company that was set up to comply with CASC regulations, and now a set of Consolidated accounts.

The movement this year is still a work in progress, it is difficult to compare year on year due to moving the accounts on to QuickBooks a few years ago, then setting up the Trading Company, and then changes to the category settings within the accounts. It's been difficult to make comparisons and now this year is not going to be comparable with anything for a couple of years until everything settles down again. It is much helped by having Frances running the accounts for us.

### **Overall Financial Performance**

On paper the Trading Company made a loss of £22k and the Sailing Club made a profit of £40k but it is a question of where we allocate costs to which is a learning curve and so this doesn't really reflect the loss that the Trading Company makes, as without the Trading Company the Club wouldn't exist.

The Consolidated Accounts show that we have made a good surplus, with the exception of 2017 when we did a lot of building work. We have made a consistent surplus since 2018 which is a good amount given that we are in the business to invest in the club and not to make big profits.

### **Income/Expenditure**

Expenditure is split into £355k of running costs and £57k of Cost of commercial sales, totalling £411k. Income is split into membership income of £209K and commercial income of £228k, totalling £437k so a surplus of £26k.

The total income is up 7% for the fourth year in a row, with membership income at the highest for over 10 years although it hasn't kept up with inflation, and we're still considerably behind where we need to be on membership although we have stabilised it in terms of numbers.

Commercial income, thanks to the team, continues to grow and now for the second time has been greater than membership income by quite a margin this time.

A major milestone that we reached last month, is that we now have £150k in reserve funds and the target being that we should be able to cover 12 months of uncancellable bills to see us through any possible future disasters.

### **Questions to the Committee**

Helen Angell (submitted by email prior to AGM) – What was the reason for the £10,730 legal fees as the previous year it was zero. I couldn't find anything in the notes that explained. I did have a recollection it might have been to do with organising lease with Severn Trent.

JA – Yes, this was associated with the renewal of the lease.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Jeremy Atkins, seconded by Ian Macwhinnie and accepted by the meeting with no one voting against.

### **Where are we after the first 6 months?**

April to September has been interesting to put it mildly, but thanks to our remarkable members renewing their memberships, our membership level is similar in numerical terms to the same time last year but income is slightly down although not massively given the circumstances.

Commercial income is roughly half compared to the same period last year which is incredible considering the pandemic, and the staff were continuing to run commercial events until this last weekend.

We did have some help with a £25k rate relief grant from Rugby Borough Council in line with most small businesses receiving Government funding support.

We've managed to bring expenditure right down and with help from the furlough scheme and a quarter rent rebate from Severn Trent.

Remarkably, we are looking to make a small surplus this year with current projections although this was done before the new lockdown measures were announced at the weekend. We've got considerable funds in the bank and a good surplus but it's whether we maintain it given that our financial years are front loaded with income and it's usually this time of year until March that we start eating into any surplus we have made. The critical time will be next March when renewal comes round again so an advanced encouragement to members to renew when the time comes as cancelled direct debits remain a concern for us.

### **Jeremy Atkins – Looking Forward**

Given the circumstances, our Club is in a remarkably good position, which none of the Committee were expecting 6 months ago. This is down to 3 immense contributions:

- Member support
- Staff effort – that our commercial income is only down 50% is incredible, as we were initially predicting zero commercial income this year. An amazing effort from all the staff.
- Sector-leading work from Covid committee – as Will has referred to before, the RYA, many other clubs and class associations have used our work as a template for their own. This is mainly down to the professional and industry knowledge of Will Whittaker. Having an expert like him on our team has been invaluable.

But despite the good news, we are in a precarious position:

- Membership is highly likely to be lower for the next 2-3 years
- Commercial income is likely to take a while to get to pre-Covid levels

We must make sure that the coming recession does not damage the Club as much as the last one did (which resulted in 5 years with £80k losses), we need to try and avoid that at all costs.

It is a members' Club – it's not a staff or committee club – and it really needs the members support, both in membership renewal and also in participation (on the water, attracting new members, being a volunteer, or even on the Committee).

### **Questions/Comments to the Committee**

Several comments of thanks to the Committee.

Klaus Beyaert – How many members do we currently have?

RW – Approximately 450 'memberships' totalling around 700 members.

## 7. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMODORE'S CUP

It's been a difficult year for all of us, but certainly for helping and volunteering as there hasn't been that much opportunity. I spoke to one club members who said it's amazing we can run the open meetings, and I replied that we can do so because they're run by paid staff and there's no volunteers involved. However, I realised that there was one volunteer, with his daughter, who has been at virtually every open meeting this year. He also runs the youth and junior part of the club, and he would say that it's not just him doing it, but he does lead it and without him it wouldn't happen. He also volunteers to do the mark laying for many events, including for the shortly to be cancelled Draycote Dash, and again he would say that it's not just me, that Izzy is there too. Then when we needed graphics for site signage, we naturally turned to an expert in that industry and Jon, through the company he works for, provided a massive amount of graphics which really communicated the regulations – a lot of it was free, much of it below commercial rate. So, I and the committee are very pleased to award this year's Commodore's Cup to Jon Hughes.

A virtual round of applause and many comments of recognition and congratulations were sent in.

## 8. ELECT OFFICERS

Jeremy Atkins announced that the committee are delighted that Harry Sayers has agreed to be Club President for another year. He is a stalwart of the Club, and he is a great advisor to all on the Committee which is greatly appreciated.

There has only been one nomination received for each office, therefore no election is needed.

<b><u>OFFICE</u></b>	<b><u>NOMINEES</u></b>	<b><u>ELECTED</u></b>
Commodore	Jeremy Atkins	Jeremy Atkins
Vice Commodore	William Whittaker	William Whittaker
Rear Commodore Sail	Norman Byrd	Norman Byrd
Rear Commodore House	Christine Silver	Christine Silver
Treasurer	Rodger Webb	Rodger Webb

We are delighted to welcome Norman Byrd as Rear Commodore Sail and Will Whittaker has moved up to Vice-Commodore, taking over from Ian. Ian has retired after a number of years on the Committee and we acknowledge the contribution he has made to the Club which has been immense. He is a wise counsel and although we may not always agree, we value his different opinions which are important to the Club and we hope he continues to contribute although he's not on the Committee.

We did receive an expression of interest from a member for the position of Treasurer however we did receive it after the closing date for nominations. With Rodger's agreement we will be pursuing that interest in the coming months, and it is much appreciated as Rodger has been Treasurer for 9 years and deserves time off!

I have now publicly stated that this will be my last year as Commodore, having done 6 years which is 2 years longer than any other Commodore and 4 years longer than the average.

## 9. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Only four nominations were received for up to 7 people, so they were elected: Louise Craig, Patrick Collison, Robin Warren & Simon Ball.

We are delighted to welcome Simon Ball to the Committee, and we look forward to his contributions. We also acknowledge the work that Andy Guppy has done on the Committee but he has chosen to step down due to other commitments – we value his contributions and he was heavily involved in the automation of the race start sequence we talked about earlier.

## 10. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTANT & AUTHORISE COMMITTEE TO FIX REMUNERATION

Bernard Rogers & Co to be appointed as our accountants and the committee authorised to fix their remuneration.

Proposed by Jeremy Atkins, seconded by Ian Macwhinnie. Approved by the meeting – passed nem com.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Questions from the members:

Judith & Richard Brown – Can we have pictures of the Committee in the next newsletter please?

JA – We did do a series during lockdown on our Committee members, but Rebecca can arrange for pictures to be in the newsletter too.

Tim Fenemore – Do you need specific help or ideas from members in generating increased membership?

JA – We conducted an 18-month consultation process before we put together the development plan, and had lots of members meetings at the Club and lots of ideas that were evaluated. But we welcome any new ideas, it is such a crucial item for us that we will consider them – please do send them in to us.

Louise Craig – Can we access the boat park during this second closure, especially as the public often walks through?

JA – As far as we interpret Government law, we are not allowed to do outdoor recreation or exercise in places where the public is not allowed, and as the boat park is a members' area it is therefore closed (long with the rest of the Club site). We are aware that the public do walk through the boat park, but they do not have the right to access it. We are waiting to see if the RYA are able to lobby the Government to change this but until that happens, we are sticking to the legislation. If there are any significant changes, we will communicate these via the Club website and the newsletter.

Jon Hughes – Will staff be on site during lockdown?

JA & WW – Limited, though as it's a workplace they will be working on site if required.

Further comments from the panel:

WW – I'd just like to thank Jeremy – you do all this hard work and it's been brilliant. We did the COBRA work together but it was sterling work and sterling leadership.

About membership – is the problem more rooted to the sport rather than just the Club

Also, thanks to Dave & Matt for running the racing, the courses have been significantly better.

JA – The wonderful thing with online meetings is that they don't last as long as face to face meetings, but we do miss the exchange of views. Obviously, the members can see us, but we do miss the interaction and comments. So, please do feel very free to email us or speak to us about any concerns or suggestions you have. It is your Club, and we want to make it as good as it can be for you.

Several comments of support and thanks were sent in from members.

**This concluded the business of the Annual General Meeting**