

Eastern Region Rowing Council AGM

Tuesday 20 November at 7.30pm at Goldie Boathouse, Kimberley Road,
Cambridge, CB4 1HG

Draft Minutes - unapproved

Attendees

Andrew Blit, Sudbury RC	Matthew Holland, CUBC
Sally Lawrence, Lea RC	Nick Hubble, Peterborough City RC
Katrina Payne, Star RC	Lydia Swift, Bedford RC
Vicky Parry, Isle of Ely RC	Ashley Wyatt, British Rowing
Jacq Barnard, Deben RC	Simon Prior, West Norfolk RC
Belinda Walker, West Norfolk RC	Mark Bavington, Bedford Modern/Harpur Trust
Teresa Aslett, Isle of Ely RC	Stephen Nichols, Sudbury RC
Tracy Muir, Sudbury RC	Mike Arnold, Cantabrigian RC
Stephen Wyborn, City of Cambridge RC	Katy Knowles, British Rowing
Gillian Cooper, Cantabrigian RC	Bill Key, Cambridge Veterans/CRA
Karen Wilson, Milton Keynes RC	Lianne Stanford, Cambridge 99 RC
Paul Ashmore, St. Ives RC	Andy Turnbull, Rob Roy BC
Henk-Jaap Wagenaar, Cambridge 99 RC	Paul Lorenzato, British Rowing

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Andrew Blit opened the meeting and welcomed people.

Apologies have been received from:

Penny Lowen, Southend Coastal RC	Helen Middleton, Norwich High School RC
Paul Breheny, Broxbourne RC	Amanda Hoskings, Broxbourne RC
Robin De Vere Green, Beccles RC	Andrew Johnson, Cantabrigian RC
Trevor Rickwood, St Neots RC	Donald Grieve, Norwich Rowing Club
Richard Moseley, Cambridge 99 RC	Jo Cotgrove, Isle of Ely RC
Robin de Vere Green Beccles RC	
Louise Rivett, Milton Keynes RC (received by email post meeting)	

2. Minutes of 2017 AGM and quarterly meeting 19.9.18 and matters arising

There were no matters of material accuracy nor anything attendees wished to raise (that weren't being covered in AGM) therefore the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the 2017 AGM and 19.9.18 meetings

3. Chair's report

Andrew asked that the Meeting observed a silence to reflect on the lives and contribution of all those gone ahead and in particular:

John Ash – of the Trent and long-time supporter of regattas at Peterborough

Martin Brandon Bravo – past President of the ARA
Silvia Breu – coach and mentor to the Cambridge rowing community
Margaret O’Byrne – Club Welfare Officer at Yare Boat Club
Mick Deards – Vice President and past Captain of Star Club

The Chair’s report has a lot in it. The following items were highlighted:

- The apparent decline of J14 members. British Rowing is asking for feedback via Andrew Blit andrew.blit@outlook.com
- Safety audit – a reminder for clubs to complete this before the end of the month as the cut off will be rigorously enforced at the start of December
- Power Eights – there is a planning meeting in second week of December and the Region will be advertising for coaches and assistant coaches as a development opportunity for young coaches to be exposed to high performance coaching
- Regional event - see below
- Regional Welfare Advisor – the terms of reference are being drafted the region will be looking for someone to take on this role in the New Year
- The Environment Agency has put charges up including increases for unpowered craft of 7.7% p.a. for the next two years; clubs should be budgeting for this. Paul Lorenzato replied on behalf of British Rowing that only three rowing clubs responded (unless some did anonymously) and British Rowing needs clubs to respond as the more people who say “No” to the increases the better. Links will be in the December monthly report to region.

There were no questions.

4. Chair of British Rowing: Mark Davies: Where we are and what we are trying to get done

Mark Davies thanked AB for inviting him and also for interviewing him for the position of Chair of British Rowing and reflected on the summer of 1991 when he came to trials in this room and as a result stayed in the sport although he didn’t expect then to apply for position of Chair of British Rowing.

He would like the sport to be more reflective of the country as a whole. When he goes to UK Sport etc and hears sport is a force for good, he says rowing is on a higher level than other sports because it does more than other sports in tackling mental health, obesity and discipline in young people. These are so much more helped by rowing compared to, say football; rowing is so much more powerful in addressing these issues.

In the next seven years he wants to transform the outreach of rowing. There are great outreach programmes now: Fulham Reach, London Youth Rowing and Warrington but going forwards he wants use s106 money to build large rowing centres. British Rowing is trying to use a council premise in Cornwall to increase coastal rowing. We need to increase the number of people in the sport. We need to get a better sponsor and improve the pitch to potential sponsors. Rather than the pitch being basically please can you give so that middle class white people can row, change the pitch to sponsor the sport because rowing as a sport for good and a catalyst for change.

None of this is happening at the moment. Rowing is not on a firm enough footing as a sport; British Rowing’s finances are not in a very good shape. There is a £450k pa overspend on “business as usual” before British Rowing does anything more interesting/looks to the future.

British Rowing has just short of £5m in reserves, and a reserves policy that requires them to hold £3.75m in order to allow an orderly run-off of their obligations. Our funding was cut by Sport England and we didn't change the programmes so immediately started to run a budget deficit. The position is unsustainable for very long; continued spending at this level with the same income means that in a few years British Rowing will go bust. The first thing that needs addressing is this budget deficit, so what we are doing about it and how are we going to change.

Income consists of £8m from UK Sport for elite rowing, £1m from Sport England for indoor rowing (both of which are ring-fenced), some commercial money and membership income.

There are two ways to grow your membership income: increase fees or increase the number of members. The first is not good as it would put off numbers of members and then programmes would fall away, therefore we need to significantly increase the number of people affiliated to and involved with British Rowing.

Why does anyone want to be a member? This is the challenge: to get all of the people in this sport to be part of British Rowing when they come into the sport and stay as members when they fall out of the sport. There are tens of thousands of people who could be members.

The NGB safeguards the sport and the memories in the sport.

The President of the IOC gave a talk at Plovdiv where he said that it wasn't up to the IOC to tell the international rowing federations how to run their sports, but rowing doesn't work for the Olympics. There is a danger that by 2032 rowing will not be in the Olympics. It would be a big problem if rowing fell out of the Olympics; a disaster if it became like lacrosse or jousting.

We all love to talk about what we did rowing and it is the NGB that safeguards the memory of the sport. We all need to pitch to ex rowers that they can help us secure the sport and its programmes by paying £30 pa for Support membership enabling British Rowing to do all the business as usual.

It is the focus now of the team at British Rowing to close gap on finances by getting more members otherwise there will be a cut in programmes. We need to get the 32k members to a number where that gap gets bridged. The timescale to do this is 12 – 24 months.

Mark asked for questions.

A target number to bridge the £450k shortfall is 15,000 people at £30 pp. We need to target students, the 15 – 20,000 club members of clubs who are not British Rowing members, the 10,000 or so who are members of Stewards, parents of children at National Schools Regatta etc. There are a lot of people out there who are not members of British Rowing. If people understand what is at stake and the implications if there wasn't a NGB, it might encourage them to sign up.

But if we succeed in persuading them to become members, we will wipe out the deficit that hangs over us, and we will take the sport forward in many different ways. Ultimately, the

higher membership income could be spent on effective programmes and then even membership fees could come down.

People say that British Rowing used to have a surplus when Di Ellis was at British Rowing but what they need to understand is that the world is more competitive and there are lots of requirements on the NGB now.

Simon Prior of West Norfolk RC said there should be a package for people setting up a club who haven't come from a rowing background.

Given the aim is to enable as many people as possible to enjoy rowing, British Rowing should be providing a package of how to set up a new boat club eg how to engage with local council., get S106 funding which is what Fulham Reach did – they applied for money to build and equip boathouse. Feedback is needed from clubs who have done this to improve the package.

BUT British Rowing needs to sort its finances first.

Mark Bavington mentioned the decline in J14 noted above and thinks it is part of a bigger issue: British Rowing needs to look at the competition structure - many schools can't compete with the major rowing schools (Radley, Eton) at National Schools and other regattas - and how it could support junior rowing otherwise there will be fewer juniors coming through into senior rowing.

Mark Davies doesn't understand why there is this reduction – there is formal paper going to the Board in January as issues like that sit with the Sport Committee not the Board. It might well be around the competition structure. Kids are dropping out of sport because of standard they are required to achieve. The competition at junior level is so high compared to that at university; juniors are pushed but this doesn't lead to long term retention. Mark asked Nick Hubble to pick this item up at the Sport Committee.

This view is that the change in the existing 32k members is not going to make the step change to fill the £450k gap. British Rowing needs more members. Membership stickers going out with membership renewals so that people can see that other people are involved and hopefully they will join British Rowing.

There was a suggestion that the larger schools could run events at different levels. The Ball Cup is a well-received regatta for juniors who couldn't compete at a national level. An increasing number of schools are running private matches where the pupils are covered through school insurance and therefore not needing British Rowing insurance to race.

ClubHub creates a Support category of membership. It will give more data to British Rowing and insight into membership patterns

British Rowing needs to get out there and let people know who they are and what they do. Without British Rowing, the sport will lose relevance from the Olympics downwards.

Lots of potential things we can do with events. Power Eight sprints show the short format sports can work; the offshore championships show another option if you don't want to do 2k racing.

British Rowing can offer opportunities for members to do things e.g. row in Gloriana, coaching with Jurgen Groebler. The problem is that these can only be offered ten or so times a year. British Rowing needs to appeal to people's soft side; as well as having a club identity, they have a connection with British Rowing eg get members to buy more British Rowing kit or wear a British Rowing blazer. If the sport is seen to achieve what those inside the sport know and if those outside recognize this, people might want to wear that British Rowing blazer.

There are three big issues/aims: develop big rowing hubs around the country, have a strategy to revitalise lapsed membership (we need current members to reach these lapsed members), and get more investment from industry/business (eg with The Rowing Foundation) as a disproportionate number of captains of industry are rowers.

Cambridge is a bubble which does not have many British Rowing members relative to the number in the sport. British Rowing could help Cambridge clubs by helping with dealings Cam Conservators and Environmental Agency. The promised rowing lake, in the pipeline for twenty years, would materialize if each of the colleges donated £.5m

There was a suggestion that affiliation fee increased but clubs need to get something for this increased fee.

What is needed is a step change to get more people as members, then British Rowing can do more things once the annual overspend is covered.

Archery GB has more than 45k members 45k because they need the insurance even though there are not as many archers as rowers.

Should clubs include British Rowing membership in their own membership? Clubhub will make it easier to see what is happening here.

It is incumbent on members to tell other lapsed members that they should continue their British Rowing membership after they stop rowing. The parents of junior rowers should be encouraged to join as Supporters.

It was suggested that rowing is not doing itself as many favours as it could. It is a force for good and has been working like this for years. The outreach projects are not done in a holistic way and unless you are selling a really exciting package you won't get the message out. You need to talk about what is happening like at Fulham Reach or with the Henley Stewards Coaches then more people might become friends/supporters if they recognize the good that

is done through rowing. The advertisement of a major accountancy firm with rowing eight is an oblique acknowledgement to this.

Karen Wilson of Milton Keynes said theirs was a community club and British Rowing offered Explore rowing packages which was a good incentive. Their L2Rs included silver membership but she was unsure how many of the non-racing members renewed it when it lapsed. British Rowing needs to offer the right incentives; there is a disconnect between the clubs and the NGB's – there are different agendas – and this needs to break this down. There are lots of clubs that are doing outreach but need better relationship between British Rowing and these clubs. Project Oarsome had a big impact in the same way as the Explore packages.

The implementation of Clubhub has been so all encompassing therefore team not been looking at things but now it is rolled out, the team will be looking at other things.

Please feel free contact him mark.davis@britishrowing.org

5. ClubHub: Presentation by the British Rowing Community Development Team

This item was moved to the end of the agenda.

Paul Lorenzato gave the attached presentation about ClubHub which went live today, followed by questions and answers.

6. Annual Accounts

These were circulated before the meeting, having been prepared by Stephen Wyborn and audited by Robin de Vere Green. The net position is slightly better than expected but there are some expenses (awards for the GB v France match) which have not been included therefore next year's numbers will be a bit worse. The accounts were accepted.

7. Eastern Region coaching initiative and continuation of funding

Two reports have been circulated: the Club and Coach Development Programme report and the Club and Coach Co-ordination request for continued funding

The Initiative has helped a range of issues including the Sharing Good Practice Day with more than 200 coaches attending. The British Rowing Start coaches think it is good for the coaches to meet other coaches.

However, there is a cost involved. The Initiative has replaced the feet on the ground that BR cut. We need to communicate via clubs

AB: The Region has £17k in reserves and if the Initiative is continued for another year these will reduce to £10k and represent four years' rebate income. There are full details in the report circulated. We deliberately decided to spend the reserves that had built up over some 25 years. They have been spent over three years rather than the originally planned two years. The initiative has been valuable and good for the region; it has included the delivery of coaching courses, liaising with the coastal clubs, website etc.

Suggestions for funding this initiative include the regional event, The Head of the East, an extra £1 per seat on entry fees at regional events (although clubs might be reluctant), requesting a voluntary donation from clubs using the service and use this to help fund (rather than asking clubs to contribute to the service).

AB proposed that the Initiative continued for the coming year as tabled. There were no objections and this was therefore accepted.

8. Eastern Region Event, Spring 2019

St Neots are generously hosting regional multi division head race, The Head of the East, which is planned for 17 February 2019. A planning meeting will take place on 12 December to decide on details as the Region wants it to appeal as widely as possible. It is aimed at clubs who might have attended the overfull Cambridge Winter League; it may clash with this event, but the Region has consistently supported events to run where there is demand. This British Rowing event should bring money into the Region. In future years it is hoped that it will become one of a series of head races.

Volunteers from clubs who don't currently run an event are invited to help and learn how to run events.

9. Regional Awards

AB: It was rewarding to help choose winners for the Regional awards, but very difficult to pick winner as so much being done in the Region. The Regional winners for the various categories will be invited to the national awards ceremony.

The Regional winners are:

Volunteer of the Year - Deva Mitra, Lea RC

Rising Star - Callum Gilbey, Peterborough City RC

Lifetime Achievement - John Canton, Peterborough City RC

Junior Women's Coaching Team - Lea RC led by Dick Millard; commended Broxbourne RC

Club Development Coach David Wynn Norwich; commended Katy Ball, Broxbourne RC

Club Performance Coach - Chris Jillings, Ipswich RC

Education Development Coach - Dan Janes of CULWRC

10. ER officer reports

10.1 Coaching

A report has been circulated. The Region is delivering all the programmes now that BR aren't e.g. A Step into Coaching. Robin Williams is delivering a workshop at £100 per coach with a minimum of eight coaches. Those who attended thought it was very good. Norfolk Mind ran a mental health workshop at Norwich RC.

British Rowing's England Talent Pathway are looking out for athletes with potential to support their development alongside their coach. If coaches have athletes with potential to achieve high performance and would appreciate support with coaching them for long term development please get in touch with Katy Knowles. These can be male or female athletes. Ongoing support can be offered to coaches and athletes

that are keen. Aim is to widen the opportunity for talent to reach senior GB standard by supporting coaches and athletes that wouldn't otherwise be likely to make it. Details are here: <https://www.britishrowing.org/gb-rowing-team/rowing-for-gb/england-talent-pathway/>

Women's Training Days need better publicity as they are for developing coaches alongside athletes. Club coaches can come along with their athlete to that day to assist and develop. Coaches without appropriate athletes that are keen to learn can still attend. It would be good to encourage regional attendance.

Katy Knowles is looking for 15 to 23 year old women with a minimum height of 175cm who have the potential to go far and minimum erg scores of 3.55 for 1k rate 24 and sub 7.50 for 2k free rate to ensure a level of strength and fitness. The next day is a Strength & Conditioning day with S&C coach to assist delivery of the day on a Sunday in January (to be confirmed). It will be promoted on British rowing social media and through Eastern Region.

Contact katy.knowles@britishrowing.org for further details. It is different to the Start programme as this is to support those who already row to reach their potential within their club and does not take athletes out of their club.

The meeting agreed to the continuation of the existing scheme for supporting the cost of coach education for one third of British Rowing Level 2 and Level 3 coaching courses.

10.2 Competition

No report.

10.3 Events & 2019

A report has been circulated. The calendar now has the addition of the Peterborough Autumn Head in November (which will have three divisions) and the Head of the East (see above for details).

10.4 Umpires

No report.

10.5 Juniors

No report.

10.6 Safety

A report has been circulated. The main item is a request to submit your club's safety audit on time.

10.7 Masters

A report has been circulated. Are clubs aware of the masters' material that has been circulated?

10.8 Recreational and ER league.

A report has been circulated. The Charles Stanley boats have been really busy.

10.9 Coastal

No report.

10.10 Regional website

A report has been circulated. The website needs to go onto a new platform. Other regions like our website. Jacq Barnard has also been publishing a newsletter. Please get your coaches to sign up and then they will get info – GDPR reduced the number of coaches receiving information. It was questioned why an Eastern Region website was needed when we have a British Rowing one. The regions need to be done by the regions as there is no capacity to do this by British Rowing, although British Rowing does have a link on its website to the ERRC website. A suggestion to have a poster in each club about the Region and its roles will be followed up. **Who will do this?**

10.11 Other reports

11. Election of Officers

Regional Representative

Helen Middleton is happy to stand again as Regional Representative. AB nominated. SL seconded. There were no objections and Helen was duly elected.

Officers of the Council

The posts on Regional Executive for election and nominations for them are:

Treasurer – Stephen Wyborn

Secretary – Sally Lawrence

Safety – Simon White

Masters – Karen Wilson

Recreational – Teres Aslett

Coastal – Nina Crouchman

AB proposed voting *en bloc* for the above. There were no objections and the current nominations will continue in their roles.

There are two posts which are part of the Eastern Region framework: Vice Chair Finance and Funding and Vice Chair Coaching & Education. Andrew Johnson and Vicky Parry respectively will continue in these roles.

Dick Millard has resigned as Junior Representative. If you know someone who is can contribute to development of junior rowing please let Andrew Blit know.

The Chair of the Regional Umpire Committee is chosen by the Committee as is the Chair of the Coaching Committee. The current chairs are Jo Cotgrove and Tracy Muir and their appointments were ratified.

12. AOB

There was none.

Following the ClubHub presentation, the meeting was drawn to a close at 10.36pm.