



Record of the April Committee Meeting

Held by Zoom Conference on 7 April 2021

1 Present

Tony Cole, President (TC) – *for period specified*
David Nixon, Commodore (DN)
Torsten Richter, Vice Commodore (TR)
Linda Richter, Rear Commodore, Social (LR)
Richard Davis, Rear Commodore, Motor Boats and Fishing (RD)
Paul Walker, Rear Commodore, Stores and Moorings (PW)
John Barnes, Rear Commodore, Sailing (co-opted)
David Casson, Hon. Treasurer (DC)
Chris Kershaw, Secretary (CK)
Mike Harvey, Health & Safety Officer (MH)
David Tebay, (DT)
Peter Ball, (PB) (co-opted)
Ray Hallett (RH) (co-opted)
Karen Walker - attended

2 DN welcomed new members – Messrs Ball, Barnes and Hallett

3 Apologies for absence – None

4 Approval of the Minutes of the last Monthly Meeting (3 March 2021)

DT – Proposed acceptance; MH seconded and the Minutes were approved by those present who had been at the relevant meeting.

5 Membership

- a New Member** – Melvyn Stuart Cammack – the formality of the two interviews having been conducted last month (as PW observed), the approval of all present was confirmed.

At this point TC joined the meeting in time for the discussion of: -

6 Report of Disciplinary Committee – subject “Member A” or “the Member”

DN summarised the conclusions of the sub-committee in saying that a series of events over a period of time involving the Member, culminating in his aural assault on P W on 25th February to which PW had responded by making a formal complaint against the Member, forced the Committee to consider sanction. The sub-committee, having considered the evidence, had concluded that the Club would be better off without the Member. However, to expel a member in this day and age is not without its complications and hence the decision had been taken to seek legal advice.

DN went on to describe a further process – a special meeting of the General Committee convened for the purpose and in accordance with Rule 24, which had been held on 29 March. DN said that, as far as possible, attempts to maintain impartiality had been made, meaning, in practice, that members of the Committee who had been on the wrong end of the Member's attention would not vote. For the purposes of the meeting and to reinforce the impartiality principle, the two Trustees and one Vice President had been co-opted on to the special meeting of the Committee.

After some discussion of the evidence, the members of the special Committee had voted, by secret ballot, as required by Rule 24, the result being 80% in favour of expulsion, 10% against and 10% abstaining.

Subsequently, DN confirmed that he had written a briefing note intended for the attention of a solicitor. The Member, having stated in his reply to the Club's initial approach to him, had stated that he would correspond only through his solicitor.

DN invited questions. JB suggested that the Committee had left itself open, referring obliquely to previous events, suggesting that the Committee had not acted even-handedly.

DN pointed out that the members involved in the matter referred to had been sanctioned and the matter had been resolved. He felt that the current case was not remotely comparable.

However, PB substantially agreed with JB, saying that we need to be shown to be fair in the treatment of all members.

PB asked how much the legal advice and any action taken on our behalf might cost. DN told him that we did not know at this stage, but pointed out that we have insurance which should cover it.

PB thought that the Club should be able to resolve such matters internally. He acknowledged from what he had heard that the Member was probably in the wrong, but felt that the matter could still be dealt with within the Club. He commented that it was a sad day for the Club – a comment with which TC agreed, but said that the Member's attitude and aggressive manner around the Club had made it so.

PB asked whether we should issue a written warning; TC pointed out that the Member would now only communicate through his solicitor. PB said that he felt that he could do something by talking to the Member.

TC pointed out that there had been a genuine effort to resolve the matter without going to the lengths of expulsion; the Member had simply shown no signs of engaging with the Committee, other than by taking the matter to the level it has now reached.

DN said that if PB felt he could make a contribution by talking to the Member, he

would be glad to allow him that opportunity.

TC suggested that perhaps we should let the new members of the Committee see what had gone on before. DN said that he would, but he would do it in his own summary.

At this point TC left the meeting

7 Reports

a Treasurer's Report

DC checked that all present had received his email and the monthly Statement and the final audited Year End Financials for Y/E 31 December 2020, before going on the say, in the context of the monthly figures, that there was nothing major to report; however, he observed that this period of the year provides the mainstream of our income.

On questions relating to the Annual figures, he explained that the sum in respect of the beach hut was for its sale – a once off event occurring in the previous financial year. There had also been a mistake by the Accountants with regard to sums payable to the CHC and the Crown in respect of the Harbour Dues and the Ground Rent.

DC had drafted a provisional letter to accompany the annual Accounts when they were issued to the membership. DN observed that the letter needed one or two minor corrections.

PB asked why membership fees could not be paid by direct debit. DC replied that the subject had been discussed in the past. It was felt that it would create too great an administrative burden – complications would arise, in the event of people changing banks during the course of the year, for example, or leaving the Club and refusing to pay the balance of their subscription. It was also mooted that we might not qualify for the scheme, by virtue of the revenue flows involved.

DC next observed that the Race Entry Fees had been increased and promulgated by the Sailing sub-Committee without notification to or authorisation from this Committee (*Note - this was later established to be wrong; Peter Jackson had mentioned it in his monthly Report for February's General Committee meeting. Copy to be provided to the Committee, but not for general distribution.*)

JB commented that he felt that that sub-Committee had been keen to demonstrate that they could create more income for the Club. The increase had been from £30.00 to £40.00. DN agreed with DC and JB pointed out that we are sailing fewer races this year because of the pandemic. After some discussion in which both LR and DT expressed some doubts about the proposed course of action and there was also the added complication that entry was available to CCYC members, it was agreed that the old fee would be re-instated. JB said he would discuss the matter at the next meeting of the sub-Committee.

b Stores

PW brought up the subject of the default of a former member “Q”. He owed the club £245.00, which we would lose, with little hope of recovery other than by litigation, but we still have his dinghy, which we can claim by right of set-off. He commented that it would be a handy replacement for the club dinghy, as one possibility.

DN enquired about the Mizzen’s two boats (see previous meeting) and was told that they have gone – sighs of relief seemed appropriate!

PW went on to say that all the bills are in – and he had come to an arrangement to help out a senior and long standing member of the club by allowing monthly payments; however, he foresees problems arising from this quarter and felt that a letter setting out the club’s position was required. CK said that he would (provisionally) put his name to such a letter. Action: PW or DC to provide details of what they want to be said.

PW said that he had prepared new labels for all boats on club moorings etc. He observed that people are wanting to come up; he is telling them that they will have to book.

c Sailing

Peter Jackson had provided a brief report, which had been distributed with the Agenda. There was nothing therein requiring anything action/endorsement from this Committee.

DN enquired whether we were interested in Seaview’s offer of participation in the Prince Philip Cup, which he had noted recently. JB explained why he felt it was not a good idea and it was agreed that we will not get involved.

DT asked about the “Slim Jim” aerial (as per minutes *passim*) – which had fitted only yesterday. He had met Tod, who had told him that he (Tod) thought that it might be advisable to make it removable (it is possible for people get in under the fence where it is loose.) It was noted that there is equipment of some value stored in the Race Box itself, inevitably.

DC – referring to a recent email received from the local Council, commented on the state of the fence, which we did not erect. However, we are being called on to repair the fence between our “court” and the adjacent tennis court. He commented that that fence was put up by the Council’s contractor and they had not made a good job of it; some of the clips that they used were inadequate and were breaking. There is also a problem on the west side, where the building firm that used it as a yard, may have been leaning things (scaffolding, ladders and so on) against it.

DN pointed out that we have a ten year lease on the tennis court, which has some time to run. Presumably, the Council will assist in maintenance of its own perimeters. It was suggested that Paul Hippolite might be able to do something with the fencing by way of fulfilling his Duty quota. DC also reminded the

meeting of his intention to change the combination on the gate in the near future.

DN asked JB whether he knew what was going on with the proposal to construct a new slipway on the Esplanade. The latter thought that there were signs of intent, which we should support. MH said that in a recent East Cowes Town Council public forum held on Zoom, that the remark had been made that ECSC did not make much use of its current dinghy park and it had been suggested that the dingy park be enlarged – presumably, with the intention of encouraging greater sailing activity from the front. (*It is not clear of the status of the meeting to which MH referred.*) DC reminded that UKSA are keen to have a station on the front, which would save them getting to the front in the way that they are currently obliged to do – a gaggle of dinghies towed behind a RIB! JB added that the club needed young people who would be interested in dinghy sailing.

RH asked whether the *Danny H* would be needed during the racing season. JB answered “yes”, but probably a little into the season; the Race Committee were initially working in the expectation of the continuance of distancing regulations and would organise races in line of sight accordingly. It was pointed out that the *Danny H* may need anti-fouling. DN thought that the *Danny H* would not be needed, on the basis of the current government schedule, until after 17th May. DN expressed the hope that it would be deployed in due course, which wish JB echoed.

d Fishing

RD noted that the first competition of the year was to be held on Sunday, 18th April (Heaviest ray).

DN confirmed that the Fishing Programme was in his recent Newsletter. MH said that he had put a list on the top of the bait freezer, which should be an ongoing reminder.

e House

TR said that planning for the kitchen was in hand, but said that on the basis of most recent exchanges with the authority, it seems that their main concern was on ventilation/extraction systems; he needs to take a picture for them. DN said we need to make a list of what we need to do – we will need to ensure that we are compliant with Fire Regulations and we know that the door at the top is the wrong way round; it should open outwards. Also, we probably need smoke detectors in the area.

And then in addition, there was the structure of the Centre Store itself, as examined and reported on by Tari Willis several years ago. PB noted that the Forge (to whom we might have turned in respect of the metalwork required) is not accredited to the necessary level. DMR in Cowes are appropriately qualified, but are considerably more expensive than the Forge. DC said that we may to consider arranging another inspection by a structural engineer.

With regard to the door as mentioned above, LR questioned whether we could

move it to the bottom of the stairs. PB said we might need one at top and bottom; the best thing to do would be to invite the Fire Officer in and ask for his thoughts.

DN said that he would send the Tari Willis Report to DC.

Although not relevant to the above, PB mentioned that the T bars on the pontoon are worn and the shackles have come off. PW said that he had noticed and that he and DC would be looking to deal with the matter and any other defects that they noticed.

8 Matters Arising

a AGM - arrangements

DN said that he wanted to hold it as soon as possible, notwithstanding the potential problems of holding it at a time when many people would be taking their summer holidays. Some wanted to defer until later, but DN said that he would not support that.

LR asked whether we could arrange for proxy votes in some form. CK was asked to put together some notes. Rather than trying to implement a proxy system, the use of postal voting seems more promising. We would need to announce and explain it to the membership in good time. DC said that the Rules provided that the forms for proposing and seconding members for the Committee should go up on 17 May if the AGM was to be held on 21st June. We had previously thought not to go for the first day of the provisional final release from lockdown (i.e. 21 June) and 24th had been suggested, until it was realised that this was a Thursday, which would interrupt the racing calendar. The 23rd would be better, if available.

LR said that she would contact the Town Hall again and book the nearest she could to the Wednesday, while avoiding Thursday. She reminded everyone that payment (in the region of £60 to £70) would be required in advance and would not be refundable, unless the period of relevant restrictions was extended.

b CHC and Pontoon Development

DN said that we were not in a position to progress the matter. He noted that some members have written to the MMO, which may have had some effect, in so far as they appear to have recommenced their enquiries and DN thought, would probably issue a licence, but from the point of view of the club, the matter is in the hands of Ed Walker, the new Harbour Master. DN has told him that we, as a committee, cannot go back to the members without detailed costings.

c Insurance – Renewal

CK told the meeting that our insurances expire in the near future and that he was in the process of arranging the renewal. The brokers had been rather slow in raising the subject with us and said that in the light of other ongoing matters, we should opt for a straight renewal, although there would undoubtedly be a significant increase. Last year's total bill was £7,582.21. No comment was made, so CK to continue with the process.

9 Any Other Business

DN went round the table -

MH noted that there had been a theft of a fuel tank from one of the fisherman's boats (Darren Webster). DN said that the CCTV is not working at the moment, so that will be no help.

PW asked whether, subsequent to a major power cut, anyone had thought to check the fire alarms; TR thought that they should be ok, but he will check.

DT said that he had fitted the white light to the RIB.

RH said that there was a letter in the mail box for PW.

RD noted that the slipway had been given a thorough clean recently.

Meeting closed at 20:52 hrs

Next Meeting 19:00 hrs on Wednesday, 5 May 2020