



Executive Meeting Minutes 21st January 2017

Members Present

Tina Parsons (*Secretary*), Steve Jarrett, Paul Parsons, **Ynys Mon**; Chris Haines (*Race Officer*), **Aberystwyth**; Roy English, Jeannette English, **Beaumaris**; Andrew Richards (*Vice Chairman and Assistant to Committee*), **Wisemans Bridge**; Tony Peters (*Safety Officer*) **Barry**; Nicola Thomas (*Southern Representative*), Jac Davies, **Towy**; Jill Gloster (*Child Protection Officer*), Richard Gloster (*Northern Representative*), **Porthmadog**; Pete Fletcher (*Chairman and Treasurer*), **Newport**; Dave Reynolds (*Publicity/Webmaster*), Sarah Reynolds, **Borth**; Sam English (*Training Officer*), **Aberporth**; Helen Tan, **Welsh Rowing**.

Apologies

Carol Davies (*Membership Secretary*), **Llangrannog**.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed to be correct and a true record of events. Verified by Jill G and Seconded by Chris H.

Matters Arising

It was noted that there was an omission in the November minutes of a lengthy discussion which took place regarding Rule 13, (also discussed in the AGM prior to this meeting). Individuals were still not happy with this statement.

It was added that as the new Race Rules had now been adopted in the AGM, it was inappropriate to discuss changing them in the Executive Meeting and they should be left as they stand for this season.

Affiliation/Membership Report

The previous Membership Secretary did not attend the meeting, But provided the following report: There are 29 affiliated clubs at present. Not all compete. We have approx. 987 members. I will have a breakdown of numbers ready for the next Membership Secretary. A few suggestions for the next Membership Secretary; live near a bank that is open! Make a separate email address for the sole purposes of membership and affiliation, as attachments and files can come with problems which affect personal email accounts.

Dave R said he could create a separate email address for the receipt of membership/affiliation documents if required, but this may incur an additional charge to the WSRA for storage.

Andrew R added that for insurance purposes, he will need confirmation of numbers of affiliated members and clubs by 1st April 2017, he will contact Carol as the new Membership Secretary to obtain this information.

Workshop Each AGM, Alternate Race Events and Coxing/Coaching

It was agreed that moving forward this will take place from now on. Although it should be a Race Day Workshop next time, it was decided that a coaching/coxing workshop should take place instead, as this was badly needed. It was noted that some of our Level 2 coaches may have passed their coaching course some time ago, and may not have been putting their skills into practice on a regular basis, so it might be a good idea to bring all the coaches together as a refresher.

Helen T agreed to come and do a Strengthening and Conditioning session from Welsh Rowing.

Sam E asked whether she could be invited to visit clubs and attend any events they may be running with regards to training, so that she could see what is going on for learning purposes and for cascading to other clubs.

It was mentioned that the Level 2 Coaching Course was great, but was definitely more geared towards sliding seat, so needs to be made more specific for fixed seat boats. Jackie S is already approved to train Level 2 coaches and is currently designing training for fixed seat boats, and Sam E just needs to be observed training part of the course to gain her final part of the Level 3 qualification.

Pete F asked whether Cornish Gigs have the same training, or do they have something different. Helen T confirmed it was the same courses, but again they have a historical lack of tutors, so again it is based mainly on sliding seat experienced people.

Jill G asked whether we should wait as long as next year, or should we try and run something in the Spring.

Richard G suggested that we could put a coxes/coaches programme in place which isn't an authorised course, but could still be given to all clubs.

[David Thompson has been running one day coxing/coaching sessions for quite some time for various clubs, but he has been on his own trying to do it until now].

Pete F stated that he has been very disappointed in the poor coxing, poor racing decisions and errors of judgement which he has witnessed on the water recently. He was concerned that standards had actually gone down, and that coxes weren't being trained like they used to be.

Sam E noted as a fact that lots of people get put in the cox's seat purely because they are small and light, and not because they have any experience at all.

Roy E added that 90% of coaching is done by the cox on the water, so they definitely need to be trained to cox as a minimum, and preferably be able to coach as well. It was also added that there was too much bravado over collisions in the water, too many people taking clashes of oars, collisions on Buoy turns as a bit of a joke, rather than realising the potential serious consequences of their actions.

Andrew R pointed out that we have 40 qualified Level 2 Coaches within the WSRA, plus David and Jackie at Level 3, and Sam almost qualified, so we don't have a shortage of coaches.

Chris H mentioned that 2 Aberystwyth coaches are looking to run a coxing and safety course specifically for Aberystwyth in the near future (probably late March / early April). Chris will ask permission for Sam to come along and observe for her own learning so that she can then put something together to cascade.

Nic T volunteered Towy's facilities to be used as a workshop venue for this, if Sam would like to use them.

Pete F asked whether there was any training for Welfare available for the coaches, and if there was something which we already have 'in-house' which we could present. Jill G said no, but if clubs were thinking of arranging this training, the course needs to be sport specific. Helen T (Welsh Rowing) is going to be putting on one course for the North and one course for the South so the Welfare Officers can be trained up. Details to follow.

Junior Points to be Capped at a Maximum of 10

As junior points don't affect the points going towards the shield/championship, and there are normally no more than a hand full of boats entered for any one junior category, it was agreed that this would be more sensible. Agreed by all.

Action: Dave R to capture this change of points allocation on results spreadsheet.

Action: Secretary to bring it to the attention of all clubs.

Potential Purchase of Another WSRA Boat

At present there is no waiting list for the Celtic Longboat, this could be partly as it is winter and boat usage is at a minimum, so the boat is in storage in Aberystwyth. The yole is currently on-loan to Llanberis and has been for some time, as no other clubs have requested it. It had already been agreed that Towy will use it for yole development purposes, if no other clubs wanted to hire it. Towy have put in a request to hire the yole for August, so that it can be maintained in time for usage at the Towy Open on the first weekend in September.

As the yole seems to be more in demand at the moment, it was suggested that we look into the cost of purchasing another double (possibly 2), and the cost of a single or double trailer. These boats could be stored at Towy and used in the Yole Development programme, but if any other clubs wanted to use them, Nic T stated that Towy would be happy to take them over to the other clubs and even provide training on them if required.

Jac D mentioned that there was a second hand boat available in Arklow, which may be good for training purposes. However, it was mentioned that there may be implications with insurance, potential grant funding etc so it would be better to progress looking into buying something new.

Action: Jac D to research cost of boats and trailers etc and feed back to the Secretary.

Chris H added that as this was potentially a significant investment it should be passed back to the league for a final decision as well as the committee.

Steve J mentioned that 6/7 years ago there was a boom in yole racing and at that time 3 boats were made available to Welsh Rowing, which didn't end up coming to Wales, it was believed that they ended up in London, in Upper or Lower Thames. From memory they were thought to be a quad, a double and a single. Steve asked whether we could look into getting hold of those boats? Helen T was unaware of these, but agreed to try and find out more information.

Action: Helen T to try and find out where the boats are and whether we can get access to them.

The North and South Representatives agreed to take over the responsibility of sorting out the WSRA boat loans, handovers, requests for money etc. dependent upon whose region they are currently in / or are required in.

Action: Secretary to let the N/S Reps have all the boat loan details and forms, and to inform them of the current process.

The condition of the current WSRA boats was discussed. Richard G agreed to go and check the condition of the trailer for the Celtic Longboat that was currently in Aberystwyth, and given that the yole was in the North and there had been concerns over its condition, Richard also agreed to go and have a look at that, with a view to reporting on any maintenance which may be required, so that he could arrange for this to be sorted out, and the WSRA to finance any repairs.

Winter rates for WSRA Longboat and Yole Loan

As boat usage is at a minimum over the winter months due to water/weather conditions, it was suggested that between the months of November to February inclusive, the hire charge should be charged on half rate only (effectively giving two months for free). This was agreed by all.

Action: Secretary to check the boat loan documentation and make any changes necessary to reflect the winter rates.

Early Confirmation of Race Dates

It had been suggested by Beaumaris club that race dates for the next season be confirmed at the last Executive meeting of the year, which generally falls in either October or November. This was considered not to be feasible for all clubs, as not all clubs know what other events are planned at their locations that far in advance. It was agreed that submitting dates after November is early enough. It was suggested that possibly the race calendar could be shared with all the executive officers, so that the Northern and Southern Reps could discuss clashes with clubs in their regions and re-negotiate the dates. However, this is the process already in place, which is managed by one person rather than two, having two people could potentially make it more complicated. The Race Officer will take care of the process this season, and it should just be left to him to organise. No changes to be made – agreed by all.

Clarification on Legal Level of Responsibility of the Cox

This item was previously discussed as part of the AGM.

Junior Coxing

The majority of clubs who had spoken to Nic T prior to the meeting would like the age brought back down to 16.

If it were to be brought back down to 16 in the future, more emphasis would need to be put on coxing/coaching before they could cox in a race, and it was suggested that if all the junior coxes were to complete a coxing/coaching course before the race season commenced, whether they could then be permitted to cox in the races.

Dave R stated that this was an aspiration; however, the coxing/coaching course was not yet even in place, so would be unlikely to be achievable.

It was also suggested that possibly a line could be added to the Race Rules in the future to state that coxes should have undertaken this course/workshop prior to being allowed to cox in a race.

This suggestion wasn't taken any further.

Timescales dictate that there isn't enough time for everyone to complete a workshop prior to the 2017 race season, but it may be something that could be done for the 2018 season.

The majority of the Exec Committee also felt that 16 was old enough to cox in a race, however, the WSRA Safety Officer would rather this remained at 18 as immature decisions can be made.

Sarah R added that the competency of coxes applies to all ages not just to the Under 18s.

Andrew R suggested we use this next 12 months for the training to be put in place and undertaken so that we can look at changing the rules ready for the 2018 season.

It was proposed that Level 2 Coaches from individual clubs could train the junior coxes in line with a programme of competencies put together by the WSRA Training Officer, which once completed should be signed off by the Safety Officer from each Club, as ultimately they would be taking responsibility for this decision and 'the buck would stop with them'. It was suggested that this programme should be in place by April 2017, to be issued out to all clubs.

Chris H felt that it needed to go to all WSRA clubs for their opinions. If there were any disagreement to this, it could be taken to the next meeting on April 8th.

Richard G will take this to the Northern Clubs for feedback and Nic T to the Southern Clubs.

Joint Race Start Times

It was stated that Joint Race Start times, should be scheduled for the first race to run at a reasonable time to allow for clubs travelling from a distance. It was also noted, that this already happens in most cases, but venues don't always get allocated their preferred dates, and the time of the first race is then compromised by tides. Generally the first and second choices given by clubs are at the best times and the Secretary (Race Officer moving forward) will always try to accommodate the first or second choice dates as far as possible.

Possibility of Doing 2 out of 3 Joint Races

Andrew R mentioned that a few Southern Clubs had raised concerns regarding the ability to travel to Porthmadog

Chris H stated that to do all three races and win that category at the end of the season was a reflection of 'Best in Wales' and that if clubs wanted this prestige, then they should be prepared to put in the effort to compete in all 3.

It was also noted that to only attend 2 out of 3 to win a joint league category overall could introduce a biased result, for instance, this season, if most clubs in the South (which is bigger than the North) attended New Quay and Fishguard and didn't attend Porthmadog, their points would be harder to win as there would be more boats competing, whereas if most of the Southern Clubs didn't attend Porthmadog, being the furthest North, the clubs who did attend this race, wouldn't have as many competitors and had the potential to obtain a much better result in that race.

It was agreed by all present that all 3 joint races will remain compulsory for the 2017 season. If it doesn't work this year, or locations are felt to be too far North or too far South, joint league races will be looked at again for the 2018 season.

AOB

Richard G made an observation that he may have an issue with his joint league race with regards to the trots at the end of the course in Porthmadog, where there is no overtaking for the last 300 yards. He will look into the possibility of changing the finish line to further down the trots, before reaching the yacht club, as he envisaged there would be problems with congestion on the water for a joint league event.

The Secretary asked whether it might be possible for the WSRA to purchase a small Dictaphone to record the meetings to assist with typing up the minutes in the following week, as there are so many people contributing from different sides of the room, it was very hard to keep up at times. This was agreed to be a good idea and as there is funding available, Andrew R offered to look into it.

Action: Secretary invite Helen T to the next meeting in April.

Date of next Meeting

8th April 2017

Future Proposed Meeting Dates for 2017:

Executive Meeting	July date TBC
Executive Meeting	21 st October 2017