



Executive Meeting Minutes
23rd July 2017, 10.00am, Aberystwyth Boat Club

Members Present

Andrew Richards (Vice Chair and Assistant to the Committee), **Wisemans**; Tina Parsons (Secretary), Paul Parsons, **Ynys Mon**; Chris Haines (Race Officer), **Aberystwyth**; Jane O'Connor (Mid Region Rep), **Aberaeron**; Tony Peters (Safety Officer), **Barry**; Jill Gloster (Child Protection and Welfare Officer), Richard Gloster (Northern Representative) **Porthmadog**; Nicola Thomas (Southern Representative), **Towy**; Dave Reynolds (Webmaster), Sarah Reynolds, **Borth**; Sam English (Training Officer), Aberporth.

Apologies

David Thompson (Head Coach), Pete Fletcher (Chairman), Laura Hood (Welsh Rowing).

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were verified as a true reflection of events

Matters arising

Page 2 - Jill G asked about the skill levels in indoor rowing, Laura had mentioned skill level 1, what was skill level 1 and was there a level 2, 3 etc. Are there skill levels for any other type of rowing?

Action: Sam E will take the question back to Laura for clarification.

Page 8 - Jill G also asked about whether there were any consequences of the WSRA covering the affiliation fee £149 for new clubs in their first year of setting up, i.e. did this send up the insurance cost on the Policy? Andrew R explained that it didn't as the £12 per person which everyone pays for public liability and personal insurance goes towards covering the overall insurance costs, along with a portion of the club affiliation fee of £149, but some of this then also goes to the WSRA. This stance will be retained unless otherwise agreed by the committee and WSRA will cover the new clubs affiliation fee for the first 12 months. As there is a potential new club trying to form in Port Eynon, in the Gower Peninsula, Sam E will take this information back to them to encourage them to start. It was asked whether REX from Chester intend to set up their own sea rowing section now that they have tried out the sport and have been hiring the WSRA Celtic for the last few months. Richard G confirmed that they won't, however, having the chance to try sea rowing had interested enough of them, for them to want to affiliate as individuals through other, already established sea rowing clubs, so they could continue with the sport when on holiday etc.

Page 8 - Jill G wished it be noted that she hadn't yet had chance to progress anything regarding data protection.

Page 2 – Re: Time to Listen Courses, this has not been progressed during the racing season, but Jill will commence with this again post race season.

Treasurers Update (a copy of the accounts had been provided)

As of 27th June 2017 our bank balance shows a healthy £21752.61 up from £18309.73 beginning of January 2017.

Expenditure is up £1465.21 over the same period due to additional equipment insurance, web host costs, travel, room hire etc.

However income is higher at £15742.00 compared with £15370 in 2016 over the same period.

Membership income remains good at £15259.00 compared with £15370 on the 1st July 2016.

We have no outstanding invoices to pay with a small amount VAT to claim back.

Jill G noted that it was difficult to tell from the spreadsheet, exactly which clubs had paid to affiliate this year, as a lot of the transactions were just marked down as 'Deposit Aber' where the money had been deposited. It was uncertain whether this was because BACS payments had been made, which hadn't been labelled under club names, or more likely whether these were cheques deposited in bulk.

Richard G queried whether we should be claiming back VAT on membership payments. Andrew R suggested Richard put his query in writing via an email to Pete and circulate the response to the committee afterwards.

Membership Update

No information was provided, therefore the item could not be discussed.

Progress on WSRA Executive Committee Job Descriptions

Only 5 to date: Race Officer / Training Officer / Vice Chair / Assistant to Committee / Regional Reps. The Secretary Role is in drop box as first draft. The Secretary suggested that a word be changed on the Regional Reps job description from 'Supporting' the Welsh Rowing Coastal Development Officer, to 'liaising with'.

Action: WSRA Committee members who haven't yet created a job description for their role to do so prior to the next meeting in October 2017, so that they can be linked to the contact page on the website in readiness for election of members at the next AGM.

Addition to the Racing Rules – R11 (as circulated)

Chris H - Following some concerns from the coastal scull community that they will not conform to race rules, the following was proposed:

R11 Paragraph 1, Change first line to read "All Celtic and Pembrokeshire Longboats ... Then add the following to the end of the paragraph "Coastal Sculls participating in WSRA league races will be subject to FISA guidelines"

It was agreed this was a sensible improvement to the rules. Proposal to amend the race rules to reflect this sentence. Agreed by all, motion carried.

Action: Secretary to amend the Race Rules in draft status, this amendment to be ratified at the AGM prior to reissue, also while amending the Rules, Secretary to check that all references to 'Yoles' be replaced with 'Coastal Sculls' as 'Yole' is a brand name.

A discussion was held regarding some confusion which had arisen from REX club regarding the rules for a 'mixed supervets' race. It states on the website that half the rowing crew must be female for both the 'mixed' and the 'mixed vets', but for the 'mixed supervets' it states 'A mixed crew in which the total age of all rowing crew is over 200 years' and doesn't actually specify that 2 women must be rowing at all times. As REX took this to mean that they could have 3 men rowing and one lady, to avoid any issues in the future the website will be amended to include the clarification.

Action: Secretary to amend the wording for this category and ask the webmaster to update the website 'categories of racing'. Also to check this same wording doesn't appear in the Race Guidelines etc. and amend if necessary.

Chris H stated that so far this season there had only been two reported issues within the league races, one of which was in New Quay where he was led to believe the complaint had been dropped when actually it hadn't. It was reiterated that any incident should be investigated on the day of the race with the parties involved. The other event had happened at the Llanion race, both instances had involved the same cox. A decision has now been made by the club of that cox, that he will only be permitted to cox races with a small number of boats, e.g. junior/novice races. Sarah R asked whether the Cox programme was still going to be put in place, it was confirmed that this was still being developed, rather than a course where individuals would be assessed by a coach from another

club (which was the original plan) it was confirmed that coxes will be signed off as competent by their own club Safety Officer (or Coach if they have one).

There was a minor incident in the Ynys Mon Race where one boat T boned another on the Buoy and the cox was quite vocal about taking out the competition. This matter was discussed with the cox immediately following the race and apologies were given.

Richard G said that a query was raised over whether it would be permitted to use different types of spoons on our oars, it is stipulated somewhere that the oars used in WSRA Longboat races must be Macon. [This issue has arisen previously from a club purchasing new oars, where the following information was provided: *Cleavers have a bigger surface area and grip the water much better. Macons allow for more 'slippage'. While this means that they are less efficient, there is a higher risk of back injury if you have a very heavy, slow boat and you are putting your whole body weight into it, so the 'slippage' in the Macon softens things up a little. There's also the issue of the position of the spine in the spoon. The Macons are easier to keep out of the way of waves. Cleavers are used with the fine boats and Coastal Sculls, Macons are used for absolute raw beginners on the river, or traditional sea boats*].

Action: Secretary to amend the Race Rules to include the type of oar spoon to be used for racing in Longboats, in draft status, to be ratified at the next AGM (Coastal Scull spoons are covered under FISA guidelines, i.e. addition to Rule 11).

Dave R mentioned that he has created a points table for the coastal sculls which have been competing so far this season, but hasn't yet allocated the points as he wasn't sure how it should work. Nic T explained how the Welsh Coastal Sculling Facebook has its own league table as the Coastal Sculls entering league races are not able to accrue points due to being a different category of boat. They award points for the first 3 places only, with 3 points going to the first place, 2 points to second etc. She mentioned that at some venues the Sculls are not being given any recognition, which needs addressing as these types of boats have been competing since 2007. Dave R said he would put a link to the sculling website on the WSRA website to use the existing league table. It was suggested that coastal sculling recognition be placed on the agenda for discussed at the next AGM in Jan 2018.

Action: Secretary to put Coastal Scull Recognition in WSRA Races on the Agenda.

Nic T stated that BR have their own rules which are slightly different to FISA, they should really be following FISA rules (World Rowing) as different rules just complicates matters for competing clubs.

Action: Secretary to sent a copy of the minutes to Helen Tan, Welsh Rowing, to make sure she is aware of this

Race Discards (as circulated)

Several clubs had responded via their regional reps regarding the proposal from Ynys Mon to stop discards and encourage all clubs to attend as many races as they could, many were in support of this however, there were pros and cons. Jane O stated that a smaller club may not be able to attend all races, so using the discards worked in their favour. It was agreed that no resolution for a proposal could be agreed on in the Executive Meeting, and therefore the only way to address this was with the presence of all clubs at the AGM for an interactive discussion.

Action: Secretary to add Race Discards to the AGM agenda.

The matter of the mandatory inclusion of the Joint races in the final 7 results was discussed. Having had feedback from several clubs agreeing that although the moving of the joint league races was fair, it was not practical, and this had been proven by only 1 Northern club being able to attend the Fishguard race. Under the current understanding of the rules, only one Northern club can achieve any league trophies this season, and all other Northern clubs cannot compete as they have forfeit a mandatory race. Chris H stated that there may be similar issues for the Southern league as the Aberystwyth race has yet to be rescheduled.

The Secretary advised that having researched old documentation and minutes, it was unclear when the inclusion of the 3 joint league races became a mandatory rule. In 2010 the 7 results did not have to include the joint league races and these could be used as discards, in Oct 2011, it was proposed that these 3 races became mandatory, this was discussed and not agreed on, therefore no changes were made to the current arrangement at that point. No further correspondence could be found on this matter until January 2014 when the Secretary asked for clarification on the 'best of 7' and was told that this was the 3 joint and 4 of the respective North or South league results. This matter was not voted on as an item at that time, it was merely stated as fact. Nic T remembered this rule being upheld with her club in the past, so this understanding of the rules had been around for some time.

Action: As there is no clear rule, to address the current issue of only one Northern club being able to compete for league trophies, Chris H will ask for feedback from all WSRA clubs on whether they would agree to the best of 7 not having to include the 3 joint races this season. Outcome to be fed back to the committee.

Action: Secretary to put the inclusion of the Joint Races in the best of 7 on the AGM Agenda as part of the discards discussion, if it is decided that discards will remain.

Proposal for purchase of WSRA quad – package costs

Nic T provided a package cost for the WSRA quad for training and development purposes. Towy club already have a grant application underway for a quad of their own, plus Beaumaris and Aberdyfi both have grant applications in progress for their own projects. It was noted that the funding available came through Sports Wales and was not a bottomless pit, therefore, WSRA would have to act on their application before it was too late.

Action: Sam E will run with this project and start the grant application process in liaison with Welsh Rowing / Sports Wales. Sam to come up with the final cost which will be payable by the WSRA toward the project, this can then be circulated to all WSRA clubs to ensure there are no objections to the money being spent. If there are any objections the application can always be halted.

As the quad will only be able to be used by certain clubs due to its size and manoeuvrability, special towing licence etc, it had been suggested that for development in sculling in a coxed boat, that a Teifi Skiff might be ideal for this purpose, and whether a couple of these could be purchased by the WSRA. It was stated that as only one individual was able to build these boats and he had now retired, we could not commission any more. This said, the WSRA has money available to spend on development, so further expenditure on suitable boats to be accessible to more clubs will be revisited. The intention is that the quad would be based in Towy as a 'centre of excellence' but Towy would be happy to transport the quad to Northern Clubs and even provide training on it. If smaller clubs are keen to have a more manageable coxed sculling boat like a skiff, it should be put to the WSRA as a separate proposal.

WSRA flags and banners

Sam E will arrange to get the originals from Carol so Nic can use them at the weekend in the British Championships.

3 quotes had been supplied from Chris, Tony and Dave's brother. It was suggested that Chris, Tony and Dave get together to discuss the best option and move this forward in readiness for next season.

Action: Chris H to move this forward and keep the Secretary informed on the outcome.

Amendments to WSRA links page

Andrew R stated that he had made no progress on the links page of the website as he had been too busy, he intends to hit this over winter, when the race season has finished. If anyone has any company discounts they would like to share, to let him know so he can progress.

Tailoring benefits of Affiliation to Welsh Rowing

Item deferred until October Meeting.

Update on Junior Regatta/Event

Jane O said no progress had been made as yet as there had been trouble getting everyone involved together, however, she had set a date for the first meeting on Sat 16th Sept. Neil is currently in the USA, so this will have to commence without him. They will be concentrating on rowing for 11+ and racing for under 14's. British Rowing guidelines state that children 11+ should only be sculling and not sweep rowing, and that they should only row sweep at 16, however, some WSRA clubs believe that not letting U14s participate in races is affecting memberships. Chris H asked whether these children would be covered from an insurance perspective if they suffered a rowing injury, as it was clear they were insured to be in the boat from the age of 3, but this was not necessarily whilst rowing. Andrew R had discussed this subject with the broker in the past and believed that they would be covered and the broker leaves making a sensible decision up to the clubs.

Tony P asked the ruling on child passengers in boats. It was clarified that even as passengers they need to be insured (this is the same for an adult passenger). They would just need to be affiliated to the WSRA to be insured £12 for an adult and £6 for a child.

Action: Secretary to ensure that this information is on the website.

Training Matters / Request

Sam E gave a full update on all the progress being made at present both as WSRA Training Officer and also in relation to work she is also doing in her Coastal Development Role through Welsh Rowing. The L2 coaching course is booked to run in Pwllhelli on 21/22 Oct and 4/5 Nov. Pembrokeshire Sports Council have a target to increase water based activity in this financial year, clubs in this area are encouraged to apply for funding. Sam is meeting with a Disability Inclusion Officer to discuss what the WSRA can do to become more inclusive. Ceredigion Indoor Rowing Project has been successful in securing £20k plus worth of funding to purchase 12 C2's and train 16 Instructors within the county. All clubs in Ceredigion have been invited to send one representative to the Welsh Rowing Indoor Instructors Workshop on Sat 5th August (fully funded). The idea is to set up an indoor rowing league and encourage clubs to attend the Welsh Indoor Rowing Championships in November. Chris H asked how this compared to the Concept course as they have a concept coach, the concept course is a different course and would be considered a higher level, if an individual has already done the concept course they wouldn't need to do this one. Outside of the course, these C2's will be available for teams to use in situ, there are 6 in Aberaeron leisure centre and 6 in Cardigan, teams can book out the whole 6 together and train as a team as they are all linked to each other and to a big screen. The next Coxing Workshop will be arranged post season. Coaches Workshops will also be planned in the mid, south and north regions once the league has ended. The idea will be to further train/develop qualified coaches, share best practice and identify training needs. It was noted that some coaches may not have done any coaching for some time and may need to do refresher courses.

At present nobody has registered on the L2 course in Oct. Richard G stated that there were 9 people on his list as wanting to do it, but none had registered as yet due to obtaining funding through the Outdoor Partnership.

It was asked whether British Rowing (BR) would accept the RNLI MOB and inshore lifeboat qualification as an equivalent, or whether it had to be the BR one.

Action: Sam E will take this question back to BR and see if it can be considered as an equivalent.

Action: Sam E - The 'club cox checklist' will be progressed prior to the next coxes workshop and the information made available to all clubs. Sam will work closely with Chris H on this so it can tie in with his workshop material.

It was queried whether all coaches have to have an in date DBS check, even if there are no children or vulnerable adults. The answer was unknown and it was unclear where this might be specified.

Action: Sam E to investigate and circulate the outcome.

Claim Society - should WSRA become an incorporated entity (as circulated)

In light of today's claim society, the Welsh Rugby union are suggesting that their affiliated rugby clubs become incorporated entities due to possible claims against individual club members, consideration was given to whether the WSRA should become an incorporated entity.

A discussion was held into the added paperwork and controls, and the added expenses which would be incurred from this, also whether this would affect any grant applications in future as we would be considered as a company. It was considered that there would be no added benefits to the WSRA for the introduction of all these external controls.

A vote was taken as to whether WSRA should stay as it was and not incorporate. 9 votes for, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

A small discussion was held into the amount of insurance cover we currently have through WSRA, which is 5 million, as some venues now are asking for £10 million cover for water sports.

Action: Andrew R will ask the broker how much extra it would put on the cost of the policy if we were to raise ours to £10 million. [Quote requested and awaiting response].

Video update

The video of the previous coxes workshop has not yet been edited and is a huge file. Sam E offered to edit the material. Once done Dave can link it to the website.

Action: Sam E to review the material and determine if it can be used for training purposes, if yes, edit and forward to Dave for the web.

Support letter for New Quay to not lose its All Weather Lifeboat

Jane O had requested that the WSRA prepare a letter in support of New Quay lifeboat station not losing its All Weather Lifeboat in 2020, they currently have a Mersey class All Weather Lifeboat (ALB) and a D-Class inshore lifeboat (ILB). In 2020, the ALB will be replaced by an Atlantic 85 ILB (which is a much faster boat) and they will also retain the D-Class. New Shannon Class Boats (ALBs) will be located in Barmouth and Pwllheli.

Dave R stated that it was not the place of the WSRA to send in a letter representing the opinions of all its members. Jane O said that there were 5 clubs using that stretch of coast, so as water users shouldn't we show support. Dave maintained that regardless of the feelings of individuals within the committee, the RNLI would have carefully considered the placement of its new lifeboats, so whether it was considered a forward or a backward step, as an association we could not speak for everyone nor should we influence outcomes, it was up to individuals to make those decisions. This information is already fully briefed on social media, and it should be up to the individual clubs and club members to make themselves aware of the changes in provision for this stretch of water.

No action to be taken.

5 Races to Host a Race

For clarification only. As per the Jan 2013 minutes, a club must attend 5 races to host a race the next year. In a year they host their own race, their own race can be considered as one of the 5 for them to be able to host again the following year.

End of Season Dinner Dance and Presentation

It was agreed that the Royal Feathers Hotel in Aberaeron was a good venue last year, lovely food, good service and good disco. The only negative being the lack of available accommodation. However, this may have been due to the venue only being confirmed at such a late date so all accommodation was already taken, it is hoped that if we book in advance it will alleviate the problem this year. It was agreed to try the Feathers again this year for the presentation dinner. Three potential dates were suggested.

Action: Secretary to contact the Hotel to find out availability.

AOB

Aberystwyth Race Reschedule: Chris H asked how everyone felt about the very early start to catch the tide for the first race at 9.30am. Although not ideal, everyone agreed it would have to lie with Aberystwyth to make the decision.

Coastal Development Contact: Chris H mentioned that he had not received any correspondence from Sam as the Coastal Development Officer. It transpired that Aberystwyth had been banded together with the North bundle. Chris asked that this be changed, and that he be included in any future South correspondence. The Secretary mentioned that she had never provided any Aberystwyth contacts to the Northern Development Officer, as she had also assumed that Aberystwyth would be South.

Action: Sam to include Aberystwyth on her distribution list from now onwards.

It was suggested that at the next meeting in October, both Sam as Southern Rep and Paul as Northern Rep provide a brief update on what they have already done in their new post and what they intend to do. This will also help to differentiate between Sam's role as WSRA Training Officer and the role she is doing for Welsh Rowing.

Action: Secretary to make sure this is on the October Agenda and to invite Paul to attend.

Lifejackets for the Championships: Nic T asked about funding for a specific type of lifejacket which was stipulated to be used by BR for the Welsh Championships. Correspondence on this matter had already been circulated by email. The WSRA agreed to fund the purchase of 8 lifejackets as these were specialist safety equipment not normally used by the club, and would be required for any future British Offshore races.

There was also a request for sponsored kit, Andrew R asked if it could display the WSRA logo, however BR rules stated that there were no logo's allowed, only 3 letters, so Nic would use WSR. These competitions are a pathway to the World Championships, if you finish on the podium it would be an automatic qualification for the World Championships, any individuals who don't make it this way can present a CV containing a history of races entered and won, participation in league races can also be included in this.

Andrew R stated that funding is available to support lots of ventures, not just the coastal sculling and funding the Welsh squad, clubs should not be afraid to contact the WSRA for support. Each request would be looked at on an individual basis.

Race Clashes: Richard G mentioned that there had been a couple of race clashes again this season in the North/South league and asked if it could be avoided next year. Chris H reminded that clubs were asked to put in 3 race dates over 3 different monthly bands, however, this hadn't been possible for all, as some clubs were restricted by tides and yacht clubs, so it wasn't always an option. When organising the race calendar the WSRA Secretary liaised with all the clubs with clashes to try and find alternate dates and lots of moving around was done well in advance, but it wasn't always possible to eliminate all clashes and wasn't helped by clubs who didn't put their dates in until the deadline.

Beach Landing Incident: Richard G spoke to everyone about the incident which had happened in the Cob to Cork Race. This happened during a beach landing and an individual was injured. A full incident report had been submitted and it was agreed that this should be shared with all clubs for learning as it could easily happen to somebody else and the outcome next time could be more severe.

Action: Secretary to send a copy of the report out to all clubs and ask them to share with their members. Also to send the report to Dave R to place on Facebook.

A copy had already been sent to Helen Tan from Welsh Rowing.

Celtic Challenge: Chris H mentioned that he is putting together a 'lessons learned' from the Celtic Challenge. General feedback was that the majority of problems encountered were not rowing related, but more to do with support boats and transfers. This document would be made available in the near future.

Unsafe Behaviours: Recently the Castle to Castle Race had to be cancelled due to high winds. Andrew R said it had come to light that one club had decided to do the course anyway despite the safety judgement made by the people with the local knowledge. Fortunately this crew did complete the course safely, all be it over a much longer period of time, but it was doubtful that a risk assessment had been completed for this single crew to go out, and there wouldn't have been any safety boat cover on a stretch of water that is notoriously dangerous.

Action: Richard G will speak to Caernarfon Club for their thoughts on this and to ask if they would like to take this any further.

Action: Andrew R to speak to a representative from the club who decided to complete the course despite the cancellation, to investigate further and report back to the WSRA Committee.

WSRA Merchandise: Andrew R and Pete F had been discussing the potential of the WSRA commissioning some merchandise with the WSRA logo to sell. Tony P had mocked up a few samples prior to the meeting. This idea was deemed to be a good one to raise extra money for the WSRA pot. Although the WSRA bank account is already in a very healthy state at the moment, more money in the pot means more money available to push out to the league to support clubs and events. Once a few items are agreed on, 3 quotes will be obtained before a decision is made.

Action: Committee to make suggestions to Andrew R for other viable products and provide any feedback prior to the next committee meeting.

Secretary Role: Tina P announced that she would be standing down from the Secretary role at the January meeting, this early warning leaves 6 months to find a volunteer to take over the role.

Date of Next Meeting

21st October 2017