



Executive Meeting Minutes
21st October 2017, Park Lodge Hotel, Aberystwyth

Present

Pete Fletcher (Chairman) **Newport**, Andrew Richards (Vice Chair) **Wisemans**, Tina Parsons (Secretary) **Ynys Mon**, Chris Haines (Race Officer) **Aberystwyth**, Jill Gloster (CPO), Richard Gloster (Northern Rep) **Porthmadog**, Dave Reynolds (Webmaster/Publicity) **Borth**, Sam English (Training Officer) [also representing Welsh Rowing] **Aberporth**, Richard Aherne, **Porthmadog**.

Apologies

Nic Thomas (Southern Rep), Jane O'Connor (Mid Rep), Tony Peters (Health and Safety Officer), Laura Kentfield (Welsh Rowing)

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were verified to be a true reflection of events. Proposed by Andrew R, seconded by Sam E.

Matters Arising

Secretary proposed a change to the July minutes to change the title of an AOB item from 'Unsafe Behaviours' to 'Matter for Further Consideration', as the original title may have been misleading and be taken as an accusation rather than a statement for investigation. Minuted notes and action to stand. All in agreement. [Note: no unsafe behaviours had taken place].

Action: Secretary to amend the July minutes and replace on the website.

Updates were provided by the Training Officer as a result of questions asked in the previous matters arising from the April minutes:

- There are no skill levels in Indoor Rowing or any other types of rowing.
- RNLI Man Overboard Course: This cannot be considered as an alternative to the British Rowing Man Overboard Course, with regards to being a prerequisite course for the L2 coaching course. However, if not for the L2 course, then WSRA would fully support and recommend clubs taking the RNLI course, or other arranged courses, such as those run by the Outdoor Partnership, or Jackie Southworth, for inter-club training and development. Dave R stated that he would encourage clubs to foster relationships with the RNLI, for MOB training, Safety at Sea advice, lifejacket checks etc.
Action: Dave R to speak with the RNLI Regional Assessment Team, Wales and West to mention that WSRA clubs may be in touch with them regarding advice and training, and to check that they are happy to accommodate us.
- With regards to it being mandatory for all coaches to have a current DBS check in place, this was confirmed to not be the case. According to an extract from Sports Coach UK, circulated to the Exec Committee in August, unless you are in regular or intensive contact with juniors or vulnerable adults, then a governing body of sport would not be able to request a DBS check. Regular contact is defined as once a week or more, and intensive is 4 or more days in a 30 day period or overnight.
- With regards to the AOB item Coastal Development Contact, it had been clarified by WR that Aberystwyth must lie under the Northern Rep and not the Southern Rep to equal up the catchment of the two areas. Also that the Development Officers could not be asked to attend the WSRA meeting as part of their paid WR role, therefore it had been agreed that a written update from both Officers to be circulated to the Exec Committee prior to each meeting would suffice.

Treasurer's Update

Accounts to date as of 30 Sept 2017

Total expenditure:	£20,858.76
Total Income:	£25,496.51
Bank balance 01 Jan 2017:	£18,309.73
Bank balance 27 Sept 2017:	£22,959.48

Membership income stands at £16930.00 compared with £16276 for the whole of 2016.
Recent expenses include: £250 deposit for the annual presentation dinner.

Outstanding income 1 x boat Royalty £125.00 + Vat
Outstanding expenses: Yole Repair: £202.26, Life Jackets: £850.00, Competition sculling vests sponsorship: £315.60

The Treasurer stated that the WSRA accounts were in a very healthy state with a balance of approx. £23,000, meaning another £4,000+ profit this year. He also felt that the insurance payment was slightly higher this year, although Andrew R stated that this was likely due to the fact that there had been an increase in insurance premium tax to 12%. Pete will do a full review of the accounts in readiness for the AGM.

Money had been coming in steadily all year for boat hire, as both boats had consistently been out on loan, although both boats had required maintenance this year.

Richard G mentioned that he had created a formal invoice to be used for all future boat loan periods, and had also provided a copy of this to the Southern Rep.

Action: Richard G to provide a copy of the invoice to the Secretary for 'Drop Box', for future Association use.

The matter was raised of when an individual already has personal and public liability insurances in place, do they still have to affiliate to the WSRA to row in a non-league race situation. Pete F stated that this should still be the case as it shows commitment to that club, also it makes it easier to Police further down the line if that person does end up entering a race. It was also pointed out that a portion of the affiliation fee goes to the administration of the Association, with regards to purchasing new equipment which can be loaned out to clubs, maintenance of equipment, sponsorship of WSRA club events, kit and individuals etc. The insurance cover on the loan boats is based on the understanding that they are only rowed by affiliated members. All things considered, the affiliation fee for that individual is only £12 for the whole year, which is very little.

Richard A asked whether it would be possible for the WSRA to arrange a 'Day Insurance' for safety boats to cover race days.

Andrew R stated that he could look into this with the broker, but he would need more information such as the types of boats it is likely to include, as a day rate may not be able to blanket cover on a 'one price fit's all' basis. Andrew R suggested this be placed on the AGM agenda so that feedback of the type of boats could be supplied by various clubs.

Action: Secretary to place Race Day Insurance for Safety Boats on the AGM agenda

Affiliation/Membership Update

At present we have 1,030 people affiliated, as follows:

455 seniors
492 ladies
83 juniors

Andrew R said that the insurance premium is likely to go up due to the increase in numbers as the original quote was based on figures at the beginning of the season.

Carol D said that should she continue as Membership Secretary next year, she would be setting a rule in place that all new member information must be sent to her by 9.00pm on a Wednesday evening at the latest, in order for that individual to be affiliated before a race that weekend, and that payment must be received, either by a BACS payment, or by a cheque arriving with her by that Saturday morning.

Carol will recommence sending out membership spreadsheets to clubs prior to them holding their race event, so they can start doing the spot checks on registered racers again. She hadn't done it this year as she thought it had been abolished the previous year when none were sent out, however, this wasn't the case. Carol hopes to send out the membership spread sheet to clubs on the Wednesday evening, and will check that late entries have been included before it is sent.

Also next year, Carol will restart sending out the club affiliation certificates as soon as clubs have completed their affiliation.

Update on WSRA Quad Grant Application

Sam E has had two quotes, the quote to be used, which is approx £17,000, will be sent out the whole of the WSRA membership to let them know what it is that is being planned to be spent, so that this can be put forward for approval at the AGM.

It was also noted that the Celtic was in high demand and had been all year, with several clubs, both new and old requesting hire.

As the WSRA account is in a healthy condition, it was proposed that we also buy a new Celtic for the Association at an approx. cost of £13,000 including trailer and oars.

As the Sports Wales Grant is for purchases up to a maximum of £25,000, it was unclear whether it would be advisable to put both the Quad and the Celtic on the same grant application (which would take it above £25k) or whether we would be better to make two separate applications, or even if this would be considered. [Note: 80% of the £25k would be funded by Sports Wales and the remaining 20% would be funded by the WSRA].

Action: Sam E will take this to Welsh Rowing / Sports Wales to ask the best way for the grant application to be made, as one or two grants.

Action: Andrew R will get a price for the Celtic from Dale Sailing, and send the quote for the whole package to the Secretary for action.

Richard A asked whether we should be considering other types of boat at all as the Celts are quite expensive, however, Andrew R reiterated that we are a Longboat Association, also it was noted by Pete F that the price of a Celtic had not risen by much since they first were made in 2000 at a cost of £9,000 and given that they are a very hardy boat which requires little maintenance, they are good value for money.

Potential Increase of Public Liability Cover to £10 Million

Andrew R had obtained a quote in advance of the meeting. The increase in cover would actually double the price we are currently paying, and this increase in cost would ultimately have to be borne by the clubs as an increase in affiliation fees. It was agreed that we should remain at £5 million cover until such a time as we are unable to do so, when races and events WSRA clubs wish to participate in dictate otherwise.

Note: Our current liability cover is under Perkins Slade, but this Company has been taken over by Howdens Group, so this name will appear on policy documentation in future.

Update on WSRA New Flags and Banners

Chris H confirmed that he will progress with this from November as he will then have the space in his work load to do it.

Sam confirmed that she has 2 of the original teardrops and that Nic T has the other 2.

Update on Amendments to WSRA Links and Discounts Tab on Website

Andrew R is now addressing this. Dave R stated that all previous links on the website tab should really be removed and that a fresh start is needed. Andrew will look into links with Dale Sailing and other appropriate companies; he also produced a member's discount voucher from the Cotswold

chain. The voucher is available to all WSRA members for a 15% discount from Cotswold, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need, both in store and on-line.

Action: Secretary to make this voucher and code available to all WSRA members.

Update on Tailoring Benefits to Welsh Rowing

This item was related to the minutes of the April meeting where it was noted that all benefits of affiliation to Welsh Rowing, apart from access to the Sports Wales grant, were not applicable to the WSRA as we already had our own covers in place.

Sam E mentioned that there was also the link to the Welsh Rowing branding and that our affiliation meant we could register on Welsh Rowing courses for £10 rather than the full price, such as Strength and Conditioning workshops, Pilates, Sports psychology etc. All courses she would recommend. These courses are advertised on the Welsh Rowing website. Sam E suggested that the committee have write access to the WSRA Facebook page to share information such as this; also Richard G mentioned it would be good to be able to advertised social rows so different clubs can get together outside of race days.

Sam E said she would like to arrange a gathering of all coaches and regional reps prior to the AGM to ask for feedback on what they would like to be included in the WR benefits, so she can take it back to WR, and what they would like to be planned in for next year.

Chris H pointed out that all these workshops/courses tend to be running in the South and Cardiff and not in the North; it was asked that some of these courses be arranged for the North.

Action: Sam E to arrange a meeting with all the coaches and regional reps, and follow up on any suggestions made relating to benefits of affiliation to Welsh Rowing.

Under 14 Participation and Junior Regatta/Event

One meeting of the U14/Junior sub-committee had taken place in September and the minutes of the meeting had been forwarded to the whole WSRA membership.

Physical aspects of juniors rowing sweep under 14 years had not been covered, however it had been mentioned that Teifi Skiffs may be a good option to pursue as a lighter, coxed boat that juniors could scull rather than sweep row. Pete F said from experience that these were not that easy to control in the sea, as being a shorter boat they could easily be spun round on the waves, could take on more water, and weren't that buoyant if they did get swamped. St Dogmaels club intends to run an event on the Teifi River, pre-race season and is working on a plan for this to be inclusive for juniors U14, possibly using the Tefi Skiffs designed for river use. Sub-committee to keep up to date with progress.

Action: Committee members to have a look what's 'out there' as suitable sea going, light coxed rowing boats / sculling boats, which would be fit for purpose for junior rowing and particularly U14s.

The age of coxes was mentioned again. The coxing check sheet for clubs had now been revised by the Training Officer and once tweaked, this was to be rolled out to all clubs for them to do their own in-house assessment on capability. These would be signed off by club coaches, or the Safety Officer. It was felt that if individuals, both juniors and adults alike were viewed as competent in all relevant areas, they should be permitted to cox in races.

Written Updates from Welsh Rowing Coastal Development Officers (WRCDO)

Sam E had sent a comprehensive update to the Committee prior to the meeting regarding all things which had been ongoing with Welsh Rowing in the South, however, no update had been received from the North Development Officer. Richard G said he knew that the North WRCDO had been working with Conwy club (of which he is a member) regarding inclusivity and disabled rowing, and has also been liaising with REX club, he has also been in touch with Pwllheli club, who are not interested in racing at this point, but are very active with social rowing. It was unclear whether any other activity was taking place in the North, and this would be brought to the attention of Welsh Rowing.

Video Footage from the Coxes Workshop

Sam E confirmed that the file had been too large to send, it needs to be downloaded onto a computer for her to work on. She will try and see Tony to borrow his camera card to download the film directly onto her computer.

Loan of the WSRA Celtic

Loan of the Celtic to Langstone Harbour (near Portsmouth) was discussed. The club is very keen to investigate using Celts for competitions rather than the types of boats they are currently using, as are a couple of other clubs in their location, so they would like to trial them. As the WSRA is keen to develop and increase participation in the sport, it was agreed that they should be allowed to hire the WSRA Celtic, and would be permitted to take advantage of the first year free club affiliation (which would only take them up until the end of March 2018), as had been arranged for REX. As usual all rowers must affiliate individually at £12 per person.

The Celtic is currently out on loan and being mended by Beaumaris club, it is expected that this will be completed in the near future so it was suggested that Langstone be able to hire the boat for January and February.

There are potential new clubs making enquiries in both the North and the South, but none are at a stage where they are ready to loan the WSRA boat at this present time.

The Secretary had already sent out an email to all clubs asking if anyone could hire out one of their boats to Langstone as a private arrangement, but no clubs had come forward.

Action: Secretary to send out all relevant affiliation paperwork to Langstone, to be completed and returned prior to the end of December 2017.

AOB

History of the Longboat - Pete F asked that a paragraph be placed on the WSRA website regarding the history of the Longboat and its origins.

Action: Pete F to provide the wording to Dave R.

Hosting an International Event - Sam E gave notification that after her recent visit to Italy to participate in the International Fixed Seat Rowing Championships, she was keen to reciprocate the hospitality shown by the Italians, by arranging an event in Cardiff in 2019, along the lines of a Rowing Festival. She will progress with the planning of this during 2018.

2018 Year of the Sea – As first proposed in the November 2016 meeting, Richard A put forward the initial draft plans on an International event to be held in Milford Haven in September 2018, after the GRR, for any fixed seat boat. This event will be organised by John Wassel of 'Walk the plank' in liaison with Richard A and a steering committee, a preliminary funding application was being submitted now. The funding application would include provision for a person to work full time on the project. The plan being to have racing, a daytime parade, a night time flotilla, food and drink festival, evening party and entertainment with camping etc. Richard A asked whether the WSRA would support this proposal in principle before he continued with any further plans.

There were concerns whether Milford Haven would be the most appropriate venue to host this event, as there may not be many places for people to go during 'down time'. On the positive side, if held there the weather was less likely to have any great impact so shouldn't stop it going ahead. It was appreciated that nearly all events end up being in Cardiff and that a change of location would be good providing it was suitable. Concerns were also raised over the tight timeframe for this to be organised and advertised etc.

Pete F suggested that further investigation be made into the availability of all facilities large enough to accommodate the planned numbers at Milford, also that Richard gathered data on the level of interest to ensure that it had to potential to be a successful event.

It was felt that even if overseas competitors didn't enter in this first year, and it was just the Celtic nations, it would still be worth doing.

Chris H suggested that it may be possible to jump on something already existing, such as the Return of the Cleddau, or the Dale Marathon or Milford Marathon, as they would already have a structure in place, which may be built upon to make them bigger.

Dave R mentioned that it was about time Wales had its own big race, similar to the Ocean to City or Castle to Crane, the Year of the Sea would be the perfect time to introduce it, to be built upon in future.

Andrew R stated that the project would be supported in principle by the WSRA, and that Richard should gather the required information and report back via email to the committee on the viability of the project. All progress could then be updated at the AGM in January.

Action: Richard A to gather info on potential numbers interested in taking part, the viability of the site and facilities and on any progress made with securing funding etc., to be fed back to the committee.

Action: Secretary to place The Year of the Sea on the AGM agenda.

Race Day Workshop – A Race Day / Events workshop will be arranged to be held before the AGM/Exec meeting in January. To be organised by Sam E in liaison with Chris H.

FAQs – The Secretary confirmed that the FAQs page was in progress and would be sent to Dave R to go on the website at some point in the future.

Job Descriptions – Most of the committee job descriptions were now on the website, linked to the contacts page next to each person's name. There were a few still outstanding which were requested.

Presentation Dinner – bookings were slow coming in, so the Secretary will send out a reminder email to all clubs. Deposit has been paid. Separate area for photographs as per last year. Pete F and Chris H agreed to conduct the presentation and Chris suggested a slightly different format for collection of trophies.

Action: Secretary to prepare an example presentation sheet to reflect the change.

Change of Venue for Future meetings - The Secretary proposed looking at alternate venues for future exec meetings, as the old yacht club didn't seem to be having any improvements done to it and was becoming less fit for purpose, especially as it now incurred a cost to meet there, plus the room wasn't really large enough to accommodate AGMs and workshops. Secretary proposed, all in agreement, motion carried.

Action: Secretary to book an alternate venue to hold the AGM and workshop in January, and also to look into prices at other locations around Aberystwyth to find suitable alternatives for future meetings.

Potential for Secretary Position being a Paid Role – This item was raised by Sam E on behalf of the Mid region Rep. It was confirmed by the Secretary that she normally did 8-10 hours per week on WSRA work, this could be slightly less in quiet periods. This work could equate to one day per week, to be managed by the individual.

Chris H believed that it was very complicated for an Association to employ somebody and that there may be lots of grey areas regarding employment law, although it was unclear what the implications were. It was suggested that the person be self employed and submit an invoice for their time, the same arrangement that Sam E has with Welsh Rowing, however, this individual would then have to be registered as self employed for tax purposes and it may just complicate matters if they have another employed role. It was also asked whether there may be employee insurance implications etc

Action: Chris H will find out the implications with this, or even if it is feasible and will feed back to the Committee. It can then be taken to the AGM in January if it is to be proposed.

WSRA Merchandise – Andrew R brought in samples for consideration; drink bottle, mug, sports vest, t-shirt. All present agreed that this merchandise was a good idea, to sell on race days to racers and spectators for extra WSRA funding.

Action: Andrew R to progress with this and get 2 or 3 quotes.

Ultravets – Unfortunately this category had not been trialled in the Joint League Races this season as hoped, so it was difficult to make an informed decision on how popular this category might be. The Secretary mentioned that crews had been entered in some of the North league races as Ultravets, even though their points had gone across to the league as Supervets, but that there only seemed to have been one Ultravet entry in any category, so each time it would have been a 'win' for that crew for participation, rather than by beating another Ultravet crew.

Pete F suggested that rather than creating another category in the league, we refine the existing Supervets category to state all rowers must be 50 years old or above, this would bring this category closer to the Ultravets criteria. This proposal to be taken to the AGM by the WSRA committee.

Richard A suggested a possible time handicap system whereby we use the current criteria for Supervets (whole rowing crew must be a minimum of 200 years old) is used, but for every year over 200, 2 seconds per year is applied: e.g. if the total age of the rowing crew is 230, then 30 years x 2 seconds, is 60 seconds, and this time should be taken off the overall time taken for that crew.

This was deemed an interesting proposal, but it was agreed that it might not be feasible on a race day to start making all these calculations and amending overall times, as mistakes might be made, but it was agreed that it would be worth further investigation, even if just for interest. Richard G said that they may be able to test this out to see how it works out in a non-league race such as their Pilot Race or the Madog Dash.

Action: Richard G to trial this time credit system next season and let the committee know how it worked.

Joint race Boundaries – Chris H reported that all clubs he had heard from didn't wish the Joint League Races to be any further North than Aberdyfi and any further South than New Quay, therefore reverting back to how they were in 2016, with the option of Borth or Aberaeron hosting as they were within this band.

Discards – discussions were held, and the proposal Ynys Mon had put forward about abolishing the discards altogether was mentioned. Chris H noted that moving the Joint League Races this season had not worked and that attendance at all races across both the North and the South had been down. There was no easy solution and no firm proposal could be decided on, to be put forward by the WSRA committee at the AGM. Chris H suggested possibly looking at the whole points system to see if there was a possible better arrangement, also it was suggested that there could be a North League and a South League and then just one Welsh Championship instead of the 3 Joints. This Championship could change location each year so it wasn't always the same club hosting it year after year. If looked at as a Championship, it was also suggested that there might be potential for sprint racing to take place on the Saturday and then the league Championship on the Sunday, to make it a weekend event.

Action: Chris H to liaise with Dave R regarding the points system to suggest a few ideas as to whether it can, or even should, be changed. Also, Chris to come up with a couple of proposals regarding the discards and the way the league could work in general, ready for the AGM.

Date of Next Meeting (AGM and Executive)

27th January 2018