

Regents Canoe Club
Annual General Meeting 2009 Minutes
Thursday 30th April 2009 – 8pm

1. Present: Karen Shaw-Wilson (*Chair*), Dan Tattersall (*Secretary*), Sarah James (*Treasurer*), Claire Taylor (*Equipment Officer*), Ian White (*IBC Liason Officer*), Christine Dove (*Safety and Training Officer*), Alix Cordell (*Events Co-ordinator*), Ian Tokelove (*Website / Publicity Officer*), Ralph Wilson (*Auditor*), Amy Lilley, Claire Lancaster, James Boyd-Wallis, Matt Burney, Polly Rossetti, Matthew Harvey, Marc Labuhn, Marie Czajkowski, Sarah Gibbs, Marianne Crowder, Mark Rowe, Steve Smith, Genia Gulyas, Brian Coakley, Debby Rothenberg, Rachel Tyler, Dane Meech, Lucy Leddy, Riaan de Jager, Louise Reissner, Megan Dowsett, Ed Green, Paul Wathan.

2. Apologies: Caroline Robson (*Membership Secretary*), Steve Hatton (*Newsletter Editor*), Rupert King-Evans, Karina Townsend, Thomas Whitney, Veekash Bhowruth, Katie Cordell, Dave Midgely, Pau Yin Wong, Elaine McLaughlin, Lindsey Ellis, Dave Ellis, Dave Browne.

3. Acceptance of 2008 AGM's Minutes. The minutes for the 2008 AGM were accepted unanimously.

4. Reports from Outgoing Committee Members and Auditor.

a) Chair – KSW has chaired committee and general meetings, sent the regular *Notes from Canal Side* emails to the club and assisted the Safety and Training Officer by organising the duty rota.

b) Secretary – DT took minutes at meetings, as well as other administrative duties including organising pool sessions, BCU club affiliation, club YHA membership and the accommodation for the Autumn / Winter club trips. He highlighted the increases in cost for pool sessions this year and the committee's decision to subsidise these sessions heavily, and encouraged members to make use of them.

c) Treasurer – SJ circulated the draft of the 2009 Annual Report and Accounts summary. She highlighted the new income generated by the Taster Sessions (this year renamed "Introduction to Paddlesport" sessions), and the decrease in expenditure on kit. She highlighted that there are sufficient funds for more expenditure should this be desired. The pool sessions are one of the biggest losses, but the decision to subsidise pool sessions was made by the committee.

d) Auditor – RW further summarised the club's financial position. The club made a surplus of £1,757 over the year. Our biggest expenses were subsidies for training and pool sessions, a decision consciously made by the committee. Ralph highlighted that the bank balance of £17k is very healthy, but although this is a useful buffer for contingencies he suggested the next committee should consider ways of using this money as it is of little benefit in the bank. He suggested a bank balance target of £10k-£12k, although the move to new premises in the future may need to be considered.

e) Membership Secretary – DT passed on CR's apologies for being unable to attend, and drew attention to the membership figures circulated with the agenda. By 20 April 2009 membership numbers equal the previous year's figure at end of membership year (31st May). The current membership comprises more new members and fewer renewals, and female membership is growing, currently making up 45% of membership.

CT noted that the number of club members that are individual members of the BCU (British Canoe Union - the sport's national governing body) has decreased, and suggested that club members should be encouraged to join. A short discussion of the pros and cons of BCU membership followed. DT highlighted the fact that club members benefit in several ways anyway because RCC pays the BCU for club affiliation, and Paul Wathan highlighted that the previously enjoyed discounted Treweryn access fee is no longer applicable. CT volunteered to write a newsletter article outlining the benefits of BCU membership.

f) Newsletter Editor – DT passed on SH's apologies for being unable to attend, and read SH's report. Three newsletters have been published this year (June, Sept, Dec) typically with 13 full-colour pages

in each. The fourth edition is half-complete, and the current editor is happy to finish it or hand it over to the new incumbent. The annual expenditure was £130, (covering envelopes, paper, stamps (although he still has £35 worth) and printer ink). We are currently distributing around 15 paper copies, either by hand or through the post, and this is responsible for most of the cost. This means each paper copy ends up costing around £2. Whilst this isn't prohibitive, for environmental, cost, and efficiency reasons we should continue to encourage members to subscribe by email/website where possible. The Editor would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles, pictures and ideas.

A brief discussion on the level of expense for paper copies ensued. It was suggested that on the membership form (where members select how they wish to receive their newsletter) we should encourage electronic distribution by highlighting the environmental, cost and efficiency reasons SH referred to.

g) Equipment Officer – CT listed the number of units hired over the year, and the income generated. She also highlighted the extension to the storage facilities at the club and thanked Ian White for his efforts. At the SGM it was decided six boats would be purchased - four have been bought so far with a small river runner and large play boat still to source. Additionally a playboat has been left in the cage by a departing member and is now available for use. As per the club's one-in-one-out policy, boats have been moved to the pool and disposed of as appropriate. CT requested that if anyone knows of charities that could use our old boats to let her know. She also highlighted the changes made to the cage for boat storage and reported a successful annual kit check day, and pointed out the increase in use of neoprene spraydecks and semi-dry cags, translating to an increase in quality of the kit we have available for hire. Finally, she thanked the members who have donated boats to the club this year and noted that January and July are the quietest times of the year for kit hire, and encouraged members to organise trips during these months.

The increase in use of neoprene spraydecks was discussed. It was generally agreed this is a positive change, and it was suggested that the club should also move towards their use during pool sessions, although questions of the effect of chlorine on the equipment was raised. KSW suggested that the next committee should discuss this issue.

h) IBC Liason Officer – IW updated the meeting on the ongoing development of the basin and the club's move to new premises. Due to the current economic climate the majority of the development is not to be built in the near future. IBC are due to meet with Islington Council in the near future and IW will update when he finds out more. Additionally he highlighted the development at the end of the basin and the fact that this area will soon be open to the public, his efforts to improve the showers, and the personnel changes at IBC.

A lengthy discussion followed about the quality of the showers at the club, particularly in light that it now seems that we will be staying here for the foreseeable future, and that the club has money to spend. IW suggested we would need a plumber to identify the cost of improvements and highlighted that anything would need to be done in conjunction with IBC. The relationship we have with IBC was raised, and that technically we could be evicted at any stage, and these are particularly uncertain times with the change of personnel. It was pointed out that perhaps this is a way to kick-start a good relationship. KSW suggested that this should be passed to the new committee for discussion at their first meeting, and that any large expenditure could be agreed at an SGM.

i) Safety and Training Officer – CD reported that there were no major incidents over the course of the year, and listed the minor injuries to club members. She summarised by suggesting that overall the club continues to operate safely. Training at the club has again been successful, with two Introduction to White Water Courses and six Taster Sessions. There have been many training sessions at the club for members including open boating, safety and rescue, slalom and one- and two-star skills. Training obtained off-site has included level one and two coaching certificates, three-star open boating and four-star ww kayaking awards obtained, and first aid training and four-star open-boat training has been obtained. This summer's plans are looking equally action-packed.

i) Events Coordinator – AC summarised the club’s social activities this year, including the summer Wet Fun events, the Biathlon and the Christmas Party. She has also started looking into a new batch of club branded merchandise (hoodies, kit bags etc), which will be finalised in conjunction with the new committee.

j) Website / Publicity Officer – IT has updated and maintained the website, as well as responding to email enquiries to the club. This year the ability to receive electronic payments via the web using the Paypal facility has been added, and is currently operational for the Introduction to White Water, Introduction to Paddlesport and Open Evening sessions.

A discussion followed about the Paypal system. It was suggested that it could also be used to take payment for membership renewals, although IT highlighted that we are currently trialling the system and he suggested it is best to ensure it is fully operational before adding more features. Additionally, Paypal takes a cut of every transaction, and this can be a significant amount. Further ideas, including direct bank transfer of funds, were discussed. The next committee will consider these points as the system is developed over the coming year.

5. Motions for Consideration

a) Committee’s recommended change to the constitution

KSW summarised the background to the recommended change to the constitution. After a brief discussion the motion was carried unanimously.

b) Review of Membership and Equipment Hire Fees

SJ outlined her recommendation for changes to the membership fees. She emphasised that this wasn’t needed for financial reasons as the club’s accounts are healthy, but suggested changes to make the cash handling simpler including scrapping quarter- and three-quarter-year rates, and increasing membership to £50 to encourage use of notes rather than coins (£25 half-year, £15 students / unwaged). Additionally she suggested that people who have recently completed an ITWW course should pay half membership.

This provoked a lengthy discussion. It was noted that £25 for the last month of the membership year could be prohibitively expensive. SJ highlighted that her research of other club’s policies revealed that some charge 1¹/₄ year membership rate for these cases. Several other suggestions of changes to the membership rates were made, leading to the suggestion that the new committee could spend some time discussing this issue before coming to next year’s AGM with a final proposal.

A vote was taken on SJ’s original proposal (seconded by Paul Wathan). Six voted in favour, twenty-two against with four abstentions. Motion rejected.

CT proposed that rates for equipment hire remain unchanged. The possibility of change was discussed, including simplifying the system by a package deal or a prepay system. CT highlighted the advantages of the current system, including keeping track of bookings as they are made by a physical transaction taking place. A vote was taken on CT’s original proposal (seconded by Sarah James), which was carried unanimously.

6. Election of the new Committee

Chair: Karen Shaw-Wilson was nominated by James Boyd-Wallis and seconded by Caroline Robson. Elected unanimously.

Secretary: Alix Cordell was nominated by Mark Rowe and seconded by Katie Cordell. Elected unanimously.

Treasurer: Dan Tattersall was nominated by Alix Cordell and seconded by Amy Lilley. Elected unanimously.

Membership Secretary: Rachel Tyler was nominated by Christine Dove and seconded by Matthew Harvey. Elected unanimously.

Equipment Officer: Claire Taylor was nominated by Rachel Tyler and seconded by James Boyd-Wallis. Elected unanimously.

Newsletter Editor: Lucy Leddy was nominated by Louise Reissner and seconded by Dan Tattersall. Elected unanimously.

IBC Liaison Officer: Ian White was nominated by Megan Dowsett and seconded by Matthew Burney. Elected unanimously.

Safety and Training Officer: Christine Dove was nominated by Claire Taylor and seconded by Steve Smith. Elected unanimously.

Events Co-ordinator: Mark Rowe was nominated by Dicky Kembery and seconded by Lindsay Ellis. Elected unanimously.

Website and Publicity Officer: Ian Tokelove was nominated by Pau Yin Wong and seconded by Elaine McLaughlin. Elected unanimously.

7. Any Other Business.

Megan Dowsett thanked the committee on behalf of the club for their hard work throughout the year.

CD encouraged feedback to the committee, including ideas for events, training or courses to be run, and ideas how to spend the money.

KSW noted the excellent turn-out and thanked everyone for attending.

The AGM was closed at 9:30pm.

The new committee met briefly. The first committee meeting is Monday 1st June, at 8pm at the club. RT to liaise by email with the committee as necessary in advance of the start of the membership year (1st June).