

# MINUTES OF THE ROYAL SOLENT YACHT CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 AT 1100 HOURS

## **GC Present:**

In the Chair; Martyn Collinson, Commodore  
Graham Fell, Vice Commodore  
John Poyner, Rear Commodore House  
Robert Quain, Hon. Treasurer  
Nick Bradley  
Susie Breare  
Peter Crowhurst  
Katie Davies  
Catherine Holmes

Richard Pierrepont  
Caryl Terlezki-Thomas  
Lesley Tregear

## **In Attendance:**

Dick Dawson, Guardian  
Hamish Fletcher, Guardian  
Mark Hall, Guardian  
Claire Hallett, Secretary

**Apologies:** Tom Symes

Seventy-four members attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM), including twelve Flag Officers and General Committee members.

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received in advance from 36 members, including former Rear Commodore Sailing and prospective GC member Tom Symes.

## **2. Approval of 2023 AGM Minutes – The Commodore**

The draft minutes of last year's AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were reviewed in the April 2023 General Committee meeting and circulated to members via email or post on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024. To date no amendments have been requested.

Proposed by Mark Hall, seconded by Robert Lombardelli and approved unanimously as a true record in 17 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

## **3. To Receive and Adopt the Report of the General Committee for the Year Ending 2023 – The Commodore.**

The Commodore welcomed everyone and stated that no questions have been received in advance of the AGM and that there would be an opportunity for questions from the floor at the end of the meeting. The Commodore highlighted the key points from the 2023 Report of the General Committee:

“Last year was a positive year, although pretty challenging with the unpredictable weather, increases in food prices, plus the duty reform in August, all adding to costs which caused the Club issues, as it did many businesses.

In the Taittinger RSYC Regatta last year, it was the first Saturday ever that racing was unable to take place due to the unseasonal weather, which was a particular shame as drones were commissioned for the first time to film the event and showcase what a fun weekend it is. Fortunately, some racing was achieved on Sunday before the weather worsened again. Sincer thanks to all the volunteers and the regatta sponsors: Taittinger, Edelweiss & Gurgl, River Yar Boatyard, Wight Marine, Hall Hunter, plus Yarmouth Harbour whom we are working with this year to film the racing on the Saturday. The Contessa Regatta in June was hopefully the first of many and our thanks must go to its lead sponsors Jeremy Rogers and Louis Jadot. Folkboat Week last year included the Nationals in the last 2 days and was a challenging week, but a great success.

David Porter, did a commendable job again last year as the Club's Cruising Captain and added more destinations to the programme, such as the Royal Victoria and Royal London Yacht Clubs. All Members are welcome to join the Cruising Group, either with a boat of their own or as crew.

Stand out events ashore last year included the King's Coronation Party, Ladies' Lunches with talks and basic First Aid Courses, which were well attended by Members.

As Members will have seen, a new furniture store has been constructed on the first floor of the Clubhouse, which frees up the Members' Lounge to be used as a comfortable and relaxing space. Rear

Commodore House was instrumental in introducing a 'wine of the month' last Winter, which is always well worth trying, plus the Members' discounts on food and drink are now clearly shown on posters and menus as it's easy to forget this excellent Member benefit.

The East Shed is now refurbished as the new Boatmen's workshop, with half the refurbishment costs contributed by Members, so many thanks to everyone who donated to this fundraising effort.

Thank you to Miles Peckham and Claire for all their input into the Club's annual magazine – having joined the magazine working group the Commodore has observed how much work is involved and it's always a very professional job.

The Club's list of reciprocal clubs has now increased to 60 with the addition of the Royal Bermuda and Royal Ulster Yacht Clubs, plus the Little Ship Club and it's a great perk of membership. Last year, the target for membership was set to 1,100 and it was almost reached with 1,098 achieved. It is very important that we get new members, particularly the younger generations, coming onto the membership and this year there are two Open Days so everyone is encouraged to please bring along any interested friends and family. Honorary life memberships were awarded last year to Mark Hall and Ian Dallison in recognition of their contributions to the Club as members.

Our Second Chef, Alberto, left last year to work abroad but we now welcome Jon, a renowned and experienced local chef to the team.

The General Committee is thankful to Tom Symes for his service as Rear Commodore Sailing over the last two years before having to stand down for personal reasons and thanks is due to Nick Bradley for coming up to the mark and filling the gap earlier than expected.

As we are frequently told the Club has wonderful staff, but it's also all the volunteers who make the Club a big part of their lives that help to make us one of the most successful clubs on the south coast. Please all keep doing what you're doing so this momentum is maintained."

The 2023 Report of the General Committee was proposed by Alan Hans Hamilton, seconded by John Crowhurst and approved unanimously in 17 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

#### **4. To Receive and Adopt the Financial Report for the Year Ending 2023 – Hon. Treasurer**

"2023 Results. For those who attended last year's AGM, I ended my presentation on a rather optimistic note. The good news was that this proved to be correct and overall the Royal Solent's finances continue to be sound with sensible cash reserves for capital improvements and other projects.

You will see from the annual financial statement our income derives from two main sources; subscriptions from members which is predictable and most arrives in one go in January, and trading income from the bar & catering which is less predictable and skewed towards the late spring and summer. Other income comes from regattas, moorings, merchandise, car parking etc. After the first two weeks of January for the normal clubhouse spring clean and staff holidays your Club was fully open all year. It was excellent to see our annual turnover increase by £96,000. Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine and the relatively recent conflict in Gaza, inflation reduced and the cost of living crisis abated somewhat. However, we were not immune to higher energy and food prices as well as costs for boat and mooring maintenance going up. These all fed through to our bottom line.

Nevertheless, taking into account all our cost of sales and administrative expenses, the Club's end of year audited position improved considerably from a deficit of £77,330 in 2022 to a much better £8,268 deficit in 2023. So while our turnover increased significantly we managed our costs much better. I should point out that the Taittinger Regatta 2023 was a great success despite the weather and the Club sold the old Solent RIB for c£10,000.

Our staff are our key resource and their excellent service is one we are rightly proud of. However, we must attract and retain when local demand for bar and catering staff is high and financial incentives are clear to see. This we did by looking after our staff with affordable pay rises and generous bonuses once

again. At this point I would like to thank Members for their generosity contributing to the Goodwill Fund, which operates its own bank account and is not part of the Club's funds.

Subscriptions held up very well and we ended 2023 with more Members than we started with and income increasing by £14,430 despite a modest 2.5% increase in subscription rates. This rate was significantly less than many other clubs on the Solent. Our costs as a yacht club are driven by providing facilities for Members in the clubhouse and racing/ cruising services on the water. Salaries and maintenance of the Club's assets make up the bulk of the annual costs and it is a careful balance we must make to ensure we deliver quality at a cost we can afford. In a normal year we aim to break even or make a little surplus to put towards reserves for future projects. We have budgeted to break even this year and I am optimistic that this will be achieved.

Audit. Although not legally required, we have once again had our accounts audited externally by Harrison Black who know our Club records well. I'm glad to report once again only a very few observations were noted. While I will propose an external audit of our accounts for 2024, given that preparation for the audit is a lot of work and we get few comments, it may be worth taking a more targeted approach to certain aspects of the club's finances rather than a full audit in 2025. This will save time and significant cost. I will be in discussions with our auditors on this and report to the General Committee in due course.

Capital Projects. Last year we took delivery of the new Solent RIB and paid the residual of £32,614. The main project in 2023 was the refurbishment of the East Shed as the new Boatman's Workshop delivered on budget at a cost of £63,000 funded from the Club's reserves. However, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the continued generosity of our members with donations and the two auctions held at the Club that covered almost 50%. Thank you all.

The main projects for 2024 your committees will consider are a new Club website as the current one is no longer supported, refurbishing the fire escape staircase at the end of the Eastern balcony which has corroded over the years and is no longer in a good state and the refurbishment of the South Shed – in full or part with options being looked at now.

I remain optimistic and confident that 2024 will be a sound year financially as Members continue to use the Club's facilities both on the water and in the clubhouse. Club social events are well supported and I'm sure this will continue throughout the year with a full programme from the Rear Commodore House and delivered by our excellent staff. I for one look forward to another successful and enjoyable Taittinger RSYC Regatta this summer, hopefully with more moderate winds!

Finally, I'd like to thank a couple of people who have helped me this year. Janet, our financial controller has provided me with all the information I have asked for in a timely and efficient way and also, past Commodore, Anne Kyle, who has been a good sounding board during the year on Club finances.

I'm happy to take questions before I ask you to vote on accepting the Accounts for 2023. No questions were asked.

The 2023 Financial Report was proposed by Anne Kyle, seconded by James Day and approved unanimously in 17 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

## **5. Reappointment of Harrison Black as Auditors – Hon. Treasurer**

The reappointment was proposed by the Hon. Treasurer, Rob Quain, seconded by Anne Kyle and approved unanimously in 18 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

## **6. Election of Flag Officers – The Commodore**

Election of Mr Nicholas Bradley as Rear Commodore Sailing. Proposed by the Commodore, Martyn Collinson, and seconded by Rear Commodore House, John Poyner. Elected unanimously in 18 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

The Commodore congratulated the new Rear Commodore Sailing and presented him with the Royal Solent Yacht Club's Rear Commodore burgee.

## **7. To elect the following candidates to serve on the General Committee – The Commodore**

Mark Lacey

Proposed by the Commodore, Martyn Collinson, and seconded by Rear Commodore Sailing, Nicholas Bradley.

Tom Symes

Proposed by the Commodore, Martyn Collinson, and seconded by Rear Commodore House, John Poyner.

As these elections were uncontested, they were taken together, and all candidates were elected unanimously in 18 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

## **8. To consider and, if thought fit, approve the following rule changes – Commodore:**

The Vice Commodore's Committee and General Committee recommend the following rule changes, which were not reiterated during the AGM having been previously distributed in the Calling Notice:

### **RULE 20 CLASSES AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS**

#### Rule 20.1, Note 6 – Current wording:

A Registration Fee is additionally payable in respect of each new Member. In the case of a couple or family joining, only one Registration Fee is payable. A Registration Fee will not normally be required for ex-Members seeking reinstatement. Each new membership account will be issued with a Club Payment Card. Normally the full amount of the Registration Fee will be credited to this Club Payment Card, but this arrangement may be altered by the General Committee.

#### Rule 20.1, Note 6 – Proposed wording:

**As defined on the Membership Application Form**, a Registration Fee is additionally payable in respect of each new Member **aged 18 or over**. In the case of a couple or family joining **at the same time**, only one Registration Fee is payable. A **lesser** Registration Fee **may** be required for ex-Members seeking reinstatement **or for new or ex-Members joining an existing membership account**. Each new membership account will be issued with a Club Payment Card. Normally the full amount of the Registration Fee will be credited to this Club Payment Card, but this arrangement may be altered by the General Committee.

Rationale: The proposed changes aim to encourage junior membership, clarify that couples and families joining at the same time will pay only one registration fee, clarify that a lesser registration fee may be required for ex-Members seeking reinstatement and for new or ex-Members joining an existing membership account.

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### **RULE 20 CLASSES AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS**

#### Rule 20.11 – Current wording:

Notwithstanding anything contained elsewhere in these Rules, persons may not be elected to membership, or be admitted as candidates for any class of membership or to any privileges of membership, without an interval of at least two clear days between their nomination or application for membership and their election to membership.

#### Rule 20.11 – Proposal:

It is proposed by the General Committee that this rule is removed.

Rationale: This rule was a requirement of the Licensing Act 2003 when the Club held a Club Premises Certificate, but as this has now been replaced by a Premises Licence it is no longer applicable. Rule 20.9 deals with the term required between the nomination/application and election of a Member.

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## **RULE 26 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS**

### Rule 26.2 – Current wording:

The number of social functions to which such persons are admitted, and at which intoxicating liquor is sold to such persons, shall not exceed twelve or such higher number as may be permitted by licensing laws and the terms of the Club's liquor licences from time to time.

### Rule 26.2 – Proposal:

It is proposed by the General Committee that this rule is removed.

Rationale: This rule was a requirement of the Licensing Act 2003 when the Club held a Club Premises Certificate, but as this has now been replaced by a Premises Licence it is no longer applicable.

The rule changes were proposed by the Vice Commodore, Graham Fell, seconded by Kathy Collinson and all were unanimously approved in 18 votes cast in advance and by a show of hands.

That concluded the formal part of the meeting.

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## **Questions**

No questions had been submitted in advance, but there was one question from the floor from Nigel Hawkes regarding the pinch point between the north wall and the bar on the first floor, particularly where table 15 is located. Mr Hawkes felt this could be improved by reducing the space behind the bar, as detailed in the redesign proposal he had commissioned from Acorn Interiors when he was Rear Commodore House, though he acknowledged it would all come down to finances. The Commodore responded that Mr Hawkes should email his proposal to the Secretary to enable the General Committee to consider it properly.

## **Lottery Results**

Drawn by Kathy Collinson:

### Solent Lottery.

3 <sup>rd</sup> prize of £25	-	Jennie Beaver
2 <sup>nd</sup> prize of £25	-	David Farmer
1 <sup>st</sup> prize of £50	-	Tony & Jill Matthews

## **Thanks by the Commodore**

Former Rear Commodore Sailing, Tom Symes, was not able to attend the AGM so his Past Rear Commodore's burgee and a bottle of wine have been sent to him at his home in London, with a note of thanks.

## **Thanks to the Commodore & Team by Dick Dawson, on behalf of the Guardians**

"A year ago it seemed that the threat of Covid was truly behind us and things were improving. However, with galloping inflation and political strife to feed our financial worries, we knew it would not be a walk in the park. Today, despite the difficulties of the last few years, we are in a very strong position. This has required dedication and determination, demonstrated admirably by Commodore Martyn, who has worked hard to keep the Club on the straight and narrow. He and his dedicated team are all deserving of a huge vote of thanks from the Guardians and Members."