

MINUTES OF A VICE COMMODORE'S COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE ROYAL SOLENT YACHT CLUB, ON FRIDAY 24TH JANUARY 2025 AT 1100 HOURS

Present:

In the Chair: Graham Fell, VC (Zoom)
Susie Breare
Peter Crowhurst (Zoom)
Rudi Fortson (Zoom)
David Porter
Lesley Tregear (Zoom)
Sarah Turvill

Apologies: None

In Attendance

Claire Hallett, Secretary

1/25 Apologies: As listed above.

2/25 Approval of the Minutes of 22nd November 2024: The minutes were approved as a true record.

3/24 Matters Arising

Corporate Membership. Peter presented an excellent paper on corporate membership, which had been circulated prior to the meeting and is shown at the end of these minutes. PC's paper suggested that the downsides could include cultural misalignment, members feeling that it's turning into a corporate environment and overuse of facilities, but these could possibly be overcome through clear communications and careful management. There may also be operational challenges, which training would help manage, plus the issue of revenue dependence although the Club is dependent on one source currently, at the higher end of the age spectrum. Peter envisages low numbers so it would probably not be that impactful – approximately 15-20 corporates, each with a block of nominees, with corporate membership totalling 100. Sarah commented that Royal Southampton has a limit on corporate members of 1% of their membership, which would be about 10 members in our case. Benefits include increased revenue, sponsorship portfolio, increase in active working members with a disposable income, present as a pro-active business-oriented organisation. Companies could be targeted by invitation and offered a membership package, e.g. £5k for a specified number of nominated members, plus sponsorship for an extra charge. The Club would need to be able to manage their expectations too and be mindful of how we could accommodate all their requests e.g. venue for meetings, training etc. Rudi stressed that the Club is fortunate to have a Royal prefix and that corporate members would want a lot in return, so the interests of the Club could become skewed by vested corporate interest as these companies will want to be in a prominent position and visible e.g. at regattas. Depending on the entity, e.g. oil and gas, this could become a contentious issue as other competing companies may then also want to come on board. The Royal Southampton is in a different position financially to the Royal Solent at the moment, so the idea of corporate membership should be parked until such times as we are in a similar financial position. The Royal Solent is a very local club, and a corporate entity would have an impact on the ethos and well being of the Club.

The Vice Commodore agreed with Rudi; the Club isn't ready for corporate membership and its ethos and ambience could be badly damaged - complaints about the Club being a pub by the sea would only be exacerbated and there would also be concerns from existing sponsors. Members are currently vetted, and this would become impossible with corporate membership.

David agreed with the views of Rudi and the VC, Lesley felt the point about vetting membership applications was very valid, but Sarah felt that the Club could control who is accepted.

It was agreed that the notion should be parked for now, but Peter's helpful document will be retained for the future when the Club will need to look at alternative revenue sources. [The VC thanked Peter for his work in producing the document and confirmed that he will recommend to the GC that it is put on hold for now and raised again at VCC if the financial situation warrants it.](#)

4/25 Membership Matters:

Applications: For the record, via email in December the VCC approved applications from 3 prospective members for recommendation to the GC:

	Applicant	Proposer	Seconders	Comments/Interests
1	1. Mr Samuel Griffiths	Julian Wood	Susie Breare	Samuel is a berthing dockmaster and based in Lymington. He is a member of the Royal Lym and interested in motorboat training, onshore activities, and race management. Aged 19, Sammy is a RYA instructor for sailing and powerboat, running PB2 courses at the Royal Lym. Often brings the Proposer over to Yarmouth on his rib.
2	2. Mr Bernie Wilkins	Susie Breare	Stephen Carson	Bernie is based in Lyndhurst; he is a carpenter/roofer and runs a 'boatel' Air BnB on his Princess 46 moored in Lymington. Also does charter work on Lucky Ash moored in Yarmouth. Interests are racing, cruising, crewing, and onshore activities.
3	3. Mr Ben Tindell	Susie Breare	Andrew Clarke	Ben is based in Lymington; he is a freelance sailor/power boat captain. Regular visitor to Yarmouth on his Bavaria 30 Cruiser with many years of boating and sailing experience. Interests are cruising, crewing, and boat shed/mooring.

There is 1 application for 1 prospective member this month:

	Applicant	Proposer	Seconders	Comments/Interests
1	1. Mr Thomas Brown	Julian Wood	Anthony Davies	Tom works in events & sailing management, based in Holbury, Southampton. He is 21 yrs old and a member of Royal Lymington Yacht Club. He has worked in the hospitality industry at the Royal Lym and the Guards Polo Club. He is interested in racing, crewing, onshore activities, and race management. He has attended several Gentlemen's Lunches accompanying his Proposer. Very well-mannered and a keen sailor, who has competed in the Nationals and regularly crewing on XODs and cruisers at Lymington.

All those present were happy to recommend the applications to the GC for approval.

VC

5/25 Vice Commodore's Points

Maintenance Projects. A lot of maintenance work was carried out in December. The east external staircase is complete with the concrete step repaired and end caps added to the handrails, although the concrete steps still require painting. The water ingress issue on the west side has been greatly reduced and is being monitored as the Huddleston Bars's west doors are still letting rainwater in at the bottom when it rains heavily. Additional work is required in terms of the leakage on the west side bar door, cracks and holes in the stonework around the members' balcony and metal posts on the members' balcony that need sealing in, for which quotations will be provided in due course. Duncan Waite and his team have done an excellent job for us to date. Susie added that the staff had also done an excellent job maintaining the inside of the clubhouse during the January close down.

Solar Panels. The VC presented a number of options regarding the installation of solar panels at the last GC meeting. The GC rejected panels on the main club roof due to poor aesthetics, but felt the workshop roof could be a possibility. The VC has subsequently requested and received a quote for panels on both the east side and the west side of the workshop to take to the GC next week. The cost of scaffolding, the local development certificate are still to be confirmed, along with an indication of how long it will take to recover capital expenditure – the pay back period, which is the saving on the energy bill offset against the capital expenditure. There won't be enough output to go back into the grid. The cost is ~£6k for one side and ~£10k for both sides of the workshop roof. John Caulcutt would need to be approached regarding the east side. Panels on both sides would equate to 14% of total consumption, which is quite small but a start. The ultimate aim would be to get panels on the south sheds when the roof can take the weight. Susie offered to ask Allan Cooper to contact the VC to review the quote.

VC

Club Rules Review. The GC approved the VCC's proposed rule changes via email in December and these have now been sent by the Secretary to the membership to review ahead of the AGM. The proposed changes are straightforward and reasonable, and consisted more of tidying up existing rules rather than any new rules, so there shouldn't be any issues.

SB

Choir Practice. It is noted that the VCC and GC approved via email the request that non-members be allowed into the Club for choir practice ahead of the Club's Opera Night.

6/25 Marketing Matters

Open Day. The first of the Club's two annual Open Days will be held on 3rd May (Bank Holiday weekend) from 11am to 2pm. Lesley feels the current format works and produces good results and will approach the GC for assistance in due course. It was noted that any membership applications submitted on Open Day should continue to be overseen by senior Officers.

LT

8/25 Secretary's Points

Membership Statistics. There have been 67 resignations to date, compared to 53 up to the end of January last year, this is a 26% increase. Membership at the end of December was at 1,139, compared to 1,098 at the end of December 2023, that is a 4% uplift. Membership today is 1,074, compared to 1,049 at the end of January last year, which is a 2% uplift. There are still a number of members who haven't yet paid their membership subscriptions and who may still resign, Janet is currently calculating this. The VC stressed that it was the right move to put the subscriptions up by 3.5% and no more. It was confirmed that we are still capturing the reasons when members are resigning.

New Website. The initial design proposals have been received from Peripatus for the Club's insignia, featuring the new King's crown and new roundel and shield designs. They are currently under review and will be shared with the VCC in due course.

9/25 AOB

Screw Moorings. David had been in touch with Jim Atkins, who is responsible for the screw moorings in Studland Bay. It is planned to invite him the Club to give a talk on screw moorings and to invite representatives from Yarmouth harbour, the local boatyards and B W Moorings. Approximately 4 screw moorings were laid by the Club in 2011 but have had little use. One of them was located again in 2021 and found to be in excellent condition. There is potential for the Club to save money on chains and mooring fees, as Crown Estate will offer a discount on screw moorings as they have an environmental benefit.

10/25 Date of next meeting: 11am on Friday 21st February 2025

January 2025

Corporate Membership Category for the Royal Solent Yacht Club

Introduction

Following the VCC meeting in November 2024 it was agreed, following some inquiries, that the VCC would consider the suggestion to investigate a corporate membership offer. Such a move presents the opportunities and challenges as outline below for further discussion:

Key Risks and Mitigation Strategies

1. Cultural Misalignment

- a. **Risk:** Traditional members may feel the Club's culture is diluted, or corporate nominees may not align with the Club's ethos.
- b. **Mitigation:** Clearly communicate Club values to corporate members and provide onboarding sessions for nominees to integrate them into the Club's traditions.

2. Facility Overuse

- a. **Risk:** Increased membership could strain facilities and reduce the quality of experience for existing members.
- b. **Mitigation:** Monitor facility usage closely and implement reservation systems or usage caps if necessary.

3. Dilution of Exclusivity

- a. **Risk:** The introduction of corporate memberships could reduce the Club's perceived exclusivity.
- b. **Mitigation:** Limit the number of corporate memberships and maintain a balance between individual and corporate members.

4. Revenue Dependence

- a. **Risk:** Over-reliance on corporate memberships may leave the Club vulnerable to economic downturns or changes in corporate priorities.
- b. **Mitigation:** Diversify revenue streams by promoting sponsorships, events, and other income sources. We are dependent on individuals alone at present for dues revenues.

5. Operational Challenges

- a. **Risk:** Managing a larger membership base with varying expectations could strain administrative resources.
- b. **Mitigation:** Boost team training on side, increase membership team headcount where appropriate and streamline operations with robust membership management systems.

6. Reputational Risks

- a. **Risk:** Aligning with companies whose values or reputation do not match the Club and could damage its image.
- b. **Mitigation:** Vet potential corporate members carefully to ensure alignment with the Club's standards and values. Membership by invitation.

7. Nominee Turnover

- a. **Risk:** Frequent changes in corporate nominees may lead to reduced engagement and investment in the Club's community.
- b. **Mitigation:** Set guidelines for nominee rotations, such as annual limits, and encourage long-term participation through engagement Programmes.

Benefits for Corporate Membership

Corporate members can expect the following profile benefits upon joining:

1. Enhanced Brand Recognition

- a. Corporate logos and branding displayed at sponsored events, on Club materials, and digital platforms.
- b. Opportunity to position the company as a supporter of a prestigious and historic organisation.

2. Business Networking

- a. Access to exclusive events where corporate members can interact with individual members and other businesses.
- b. Opportunity to build partnerships within a like-minded community.

3. Community Engagement

- a. Association with a club that values tradition, community involvement, and social responsibility.
- b. Enhanced corporate reputation through visible support of local maritime culture.

4. Employee Perks

- a. Nominees enjoy access to Club facilities, fostering employee satisfaction and loyalty.
- b. Opportunity to host team-building activities, client meetings, or social events in a premium setting.

5. Long-Term Partnerships

- a. Potential for long-term sponsorship opportunities for regattas, winter training, races, or youth sailing Programmes.
- b. Collaboration opportunities with the Club on future community initiatives.

Benefits to RSYC

- a. New revenue stream for membership
- b. Increase in active working members who have disposable income providing events, and discretionary spending to the club.
- c. Increase sponsorship portfolio
- d. Ensure that the RSYC remains the most proactive, active and progressive club in the marine world.

Concluding Remarks

Corporate membership presented and managed well provides a membership income that is less reliant on the means of working or retired individuals alone. Such organisations would also bring more events and sponsorship opportunities for the RSYC.

If the VCC deem as a workable proposition implementation can be by means of the following methods:

- Membership by Invitation to targeted companies drawn from key sectors that include but not limited to:
 - Financial Services
 - Real estate
 - Oil & Gas
 - Renewables
 - Legal
 - Marine
- Capped number of corporates, which creates a demand.
- Two tiers: Gold and Silver each with an allocated number of nominees

For discussion/consideration

PC 23.1.25