

MINUTES OF A GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD BY THE ROYAL SOLENT YACHT CLUB AT 17:00 ON THURSDAY 28TH MARCH 2024

Present:

In the Chair:

Martyn Collinson, Commodore

Graham Fell, Vice Commodore

John Poyner, Rear Commodore House

Nick Bradley, Rear Commodore Sailing

Susie Breare

Peter Crowhurst

Katie Davies

Catherine Holmes

Tom Symes (Zoom)

Mark Lacey

Richard Pierrepont

Lesley Tregear

Apologies:

Robert Quain, Hon Treasurer

Caryl Terlezki-Thomas

Hamish Fletcher, Guardian

In Attendance:

Claire Hallett, Secretary

Dick Dawson, Guardian

Mark Hall, Guardian (Zoom)

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Commodore asked GC members to stand to observe a minute's silence for members Edward Williamson and Susan Fleming, who have sadly passed away since the last GC meeting.

23/24 Apologies As listed above.

24/24 Approval of Minutes from 23rd February 2024 Meeting The minutes were approved as a true record.

25/24 Matters Arising – covered by agenda points.

26/24 Commodore's Update

South Sheds Project. The Commodore thanked Rear Commodore House and Richard Pierrepont for their assistance as part of his working group and hoped that the GC could agree a path forwards for the south sheds. The South Sheds Report & Recommendations document had been shared with the GC in advance of the meeting and should not contain any surprises, the Commodore asked if there were any questions at this point, which there were not. The recommendation of the working group is that the best option is to refurbish the sheds bay by bay and to allow for multi purpose usage. This conclusion was reached through a process of elimination and ensures that the Club keeps its options open for future usage, rather than committing to anything specific. The strategy will be to refurbish the sheds in potentially affordable stages and to deal with the old workshop at a later date when there is a better understanding of storage needs. The working group is in the process of obtaining quotes for the work and is in contact with an individual who works for the harbour and is able to do the work. The intention is to start with the east shed corner which will be used for Club storage. Money is a key issue and the Club can only afford a little each year. The Commodore formally proposed the Report & Recommendations, RCH seconded and it was unanimously agreed in a vote by the GC.

The Vice Commodore thanked the Commodore, RCH and Richard Pierrepont for all their work and the Commodore responded that it had been made a lot easier due to all the VC's work beforehand.

Director Obligations. The Commodore had contacted Rudi Fortson regarding the obligations of the Club's Directors and he had kindly drafted a document on directorship specific to the Club. [It is a work in progress as the Commodore has yet to review the document with Rudi and set out specific examples.](#)

AGM & Fitting Out Dinner. The AGM will be held on Saturday 13th April at 11am. Following a recent question from a member after the introduction of bye-law B12.2 on "discrimination, harassment or rudeness towards members, non-Members or staff based on (for example) age, race or sexual orientation", the Commodore will have a statement prepared regarding the use of the Club's cloakrooms by transgender people, in case the questions arises at the AGM. The Commodore stressed that the Equality Act 2010 is the law and the new bye-laws merely show compliance with this. [A policy is probably needed, and the Commodore is taking advice from Rudi regarding the legalities.](#)

[The Commodore requested that GC members sign up for the Fitting Out Dinner and encourage others to attend as numbers are looking quite sparse at the moment.](#)

27/24 Financial Report by Hon. Treasurer (Given by the Commodore)

February was steady for the quiet season. There were a few midweek events, but only one Saturday evening event. Monday and Tuesday closed for lunches, but the Bar remained open. However, more members attended lunches on the Wednesdays.

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The month ended with a £16.3K deficit which is better than the forecast of minus £21.3k and identical to February 2023. YTD is minus £43.5k, which is also better than the forecast at minus £58.3K. Prior Year to-date Net Deficit was £37k when the salary bill and Sailing expenses were lower. Margins are holding up well for both Bar and Catering although lower than last year due to member discounts on some events. Turnover on both were ahead of budget and previous year which is very good news in a quiet period for the Club. The deficit in Sailing of -£12,205 was £2k higher than budget due to the timing of receipts for boat maintenance. Staff costs were lower than budget due to a few positions either becoming vacant or not fulfilled as budgeted. Subscriptions remain on track at £49,501 YTD. Our cash position remains strong with £322,658 in the bank compared with £310,348 at the same time last year. February also saw us benefit from the interest payment after the 1 year bond matured. Overall, a positive result for February which is typically a slow month for us.

28/24 Vice Commodore's Report

Membership Applications. There are 6 applications for 10 prospective members this month:

Applicant	Proposer	Seconder	Comments/Interests
1.Mr Roderick Angel	Graham Fell	David Porter	Rod is a former RAF Aircrew Officer. Based in Brighstone. Interested in onshore activities and race management.
2.Mr Allan & Mrs Pauline Crosskey	George Cawood	David Porter	Allan is a retired electronics engineer and Pauline a retired doctor's receptionist. Based in Totland Bay (recently moved from the mainland). Own sailboat Hansa 37 moored at Haslar Marina, Gosport. Interested in racing, cruising, onshore activities & race management.
3.Mr Malcolm & Mrs Sarah Le May	Peter Ralls	John Poyner	Malcolm is former international banker & trustee of the Tall Ship's charity. Sarah chartered accountant and trustee of Blue Lamp Trust as well as former High Sheriff of Hampshire. Members of the Royal Yacht Squadron. In the process of purchasing a house in Yarmouth and recently purchased a 42ft J124. Own motorboat and sailboat moored at Hamble Point. Main home Upham, near Winchester. Interested in racing, cruising, motorboat training, boat shed/mooring, onshore activities and race management.
4.Mrs Carol Bennitt	Susie Breare	David Fentum	Carol is an equestrian coach, main home Leighton Buzzard and second home Yarmouth. Interested in onshore activities. Daughter of late Pamela & Malcolm Rodwell.
5.Mr James Vatcher	Graham Fell	Susie Breare	James is a barrister based in Salisbury, intends on visiting the Island every 2 weeks, been a regular visitor to the Island over many years. Owner of 42 ft sailing yacht moored in Yarmouth. Interested in racing, cruising, crewing, laser training and onshore activities.
6.Dr Thomas & Mrs Siri Adebisi Lawal-Rieley & daughter Miss Boudica Lawal-Rieley	Guy Aston	Caroline Norris	Seeking re-instated memberships. Resigned 01/01/2014 (work commitments). Based in Freshwater. Thomas is an NHS doctor, Bisi (Siri's preferred name) is an NHS wellbeing coach. Interested in onshore activities.

The Vice Commodore's Committee recommends all for approval to the GC.

Catherine Holmes and Rear Commodore Sailing asked to abstain from voting due an issue with an external business arrangement between Catherine and one of the applicants. The Commodore felt this should not impact on the GC's decision to vote for the application, however there were three options open to the GC: a) to delay approval of the application, b) to refuse the application or c) to vote on the application with Catherine and RCS abstaining. A vote was taken on whether to hold the vote now and the result was 6 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions. The vote on the membership applications was therefore taken by the GC and the result was 7 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions, so all membership applications were approved.

The Commodore thanked Catherine for being open with the GC on the matter.

New VCC Member. Sarah Turvill, who is a sailor at the Club, Chair of Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners and former Chair of Governors at Exeter University, expressed an interest in joining the Vice Commodore's Committee. If there is any conflict of interest with the harbour, then Sarah would abstain from discussions on both sides. On the plus side it should help reinforce relationships with the harbour. All present approved the appointment.

Honorary Membership. In March this year, Talan Skeels-Piggins gave a very interesting talk at the Club entitled "Everyone has the power to achieve, to be the best they can be and go beyond ordinary." Talan is a Double World Champion, European Champion and Winter Paralympian, and the world's first paraplegic to hold both motorcycle and car race licences. Talan is planning to sail around Britain in June/July this year in an unmodified boat to raise funds for the Disabled Sailors Association. The Vice Commodore's Committee feels that it would be good for the Club to award him honorary life membership so he could fly the Club's burgee and display RSYC on the guard rail during this voyage and also take advantage of the Royal Solent's reciprocal clubs along the route. A precedent has been established with the honorary life membership awarded to Geoff Holt in recognition for his work with the charity Wetwheels. [All present agreed to honorary life membership for Talan Skeels-Piggins.](#) The Commodore added that it would be great to organise another talk by Talan on his return.

Achelous Trial. It was planned to attain proof of concept for the hydrokinetic project by the end of the month and to this end Achelous installed a test rig under the Club's jetty yesterday and it will remain in place until this evening so they can assess its performance in the spring tides. Their monitoring system recorded a tidal flow of 1.6mph which they say is quite good. They will then return in a few weeks time to test the rig during neap tides. It was asked what precautions would be taken with the turbine to protect swimmers and it was confirmed that there would be a cage around the unit.

Member Complaint. The Investigation & Recommendation document relating to the recent Member complaint and prepared by RCS and Lesley Tregear was circulated to the GC ahead of this meeting. The VC said that enormous thanks was owed to RCS and Lesley as it hadn't been an easy task but had been carried out very professionally. The VC asked if there were any thoughts, questions or concerns regarding the recommendation? Dick Dawson asked what the next move would be? The VC responded that the recommendation is for the Commodore to write to the complaine and request a proper apology. It is not a reprimand as that would require a GC hearing. It was highlighted that the influence of alcohol and the heated nature of the discussion were contributing factors and in any other circumstances it probably wouldn't have resulted in a complaint. Katie Davies asked whether it would have been the same result if the complaine hadn't sworn at the complainant, the VC responded that swearing was at the centre of the complaint. Now that a review has been conducted and a recommendation made, we can draw a line under it and move on. The complaine had indicated that he would comply with any recommendation made by the GC. It is hoped that the complainant will accept the apology and that both will be able to enjoy the Club in the future. [All present agreed to support the recommendation set out in the report by RCS and Lesley.](#)

The VC thanked RCS and Lesley for turning the matter around so quickly. [It is recommended that Rule 23 is looked at by the VCC as it is ambiguous, and the procedure doesn't flow properly, particularly as there are actually two levels of behaviour; misconduct, or behaviour under Bye-law 12.1, which is rudeness and being discourteous.](#)

29/24 Update from Rear Commodore House

Past Events. There had been reasonable success with takings from the bar and catering, with a successful strategy to get people to come to the Club, though this had slightly impacted on margins.

- Wine Society, 22nd February – 53 attendees
- Cruising Lunch, 29th February – 63 attendees
- John Doerr Talk & Lunch, 1st March – 22 attendees
- First Wednesday Talk by Talan Skeels-Piggins, 6th March – 40 attendees, 57 for lunch
- Mothering Sunday Lunch, 10th March – 56 attendees

- Film Night, 14th March – 24 attendees
- Little Ship Club Dinner, 16th March – 98 attendees, a very good evening. The LSC now has full reciprocity with the RSYC, and members can book 2 berth rooms for £80 a night in a great position on the Thames.
- Wine Society 'Call My Bluff', 21st March – 38 attendees

Upcoming Events.

- Good Friday Fish & Chips, 29th March
- Boat Jumble, 30th March
- Easter Sunday Lunch, 31st March – now fully booked
- Ladies' Lunch, 5th April – with a talk by Charlotte Rayner of the Needles NCI, 40+ signed up
- Clay Shoot & Lunch, 6th April
- Last Film Night, 11st April
- Fitting Out Dinner, 13th April
- St George's Day Gents' Lunch, 19th April
- Commodore's Party with an Italian theme, 25th May
- Opera Evening, 29th March 2025 as no availability for this year
- Jazz Night with Jim Thorn, 19th October

30/24 Update from Rear Commodore Sailing

Sailing. The Spring Series is well underway and going well, the first Sunday there was no wind, the second Sunday saw 4 boats out though it was very foggy and last Sunday there were 8 boats racing in blustery conditions. The next race is on Easter Sunday. A separate Contessa series is being held within the Spring Series.

Wednesday evening racing starts on 24th April and the Club's moorings are now laid.

Cruising. The first Out to Lunch was to Lymington Town SC and was a successful outing. The next is to Gins Farm on 11th April.

RO Training. A number of Race officer training sessions have taken place, there's a need to focus on succession, including in the Protest Committee, which requires any members willing to sit on or chair the Protest Committee. John Doerr came over on 2nd March and ran a very interesting session on how rules and penalties work in protests, which was attended by RCS, Cordelia and Richard Ellis, Rudi Fortson, the CRO and Sailing Secretary.

Club Boats. Marksman is due for launch very soon as the Head Boatman wants to conduct sea trials before she is needed for mark laying. It was necessary to carry out some unexpected work on Marksman's jet unit this winter, but the Head Boatman did a great job of keeping the spend within expected limits.

Countdown is old, but we need to look after what we have at the moment. It is planned to have a written programme for annual boat maintenance moving forwards, with the boats being put to bed properly at the end of the year. The Secretary had a useful meeting with Jen Allen regarding the Club's boats and has shared the action points with RCS, the Head Boatman and Richard Pierrepont.

RSYC Contessa Regatta. There are 11 Contessas entered to date, it is hoped to have over the 40 entries we had last year. The Commodore has been liaising with the harbour to arrange to have the event filmed by drone free of charge.

31/24 Secretary's Points

Membership Statistics. The latest membership statistics had been shared with the GC ahead of the meeting. Almost identical figures this year compared to last year in terms of recruitment and retention to date, but an increased current total membership of 2.7% year on year.

ANNUAL STATS TO DATE AT:	END MAR 2024	END MAR 2023	END MAR 2022	END MAR 2021	END MAR 2020
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP (as of 22/3)	1051	1023	999	953	988
NEW MEMBERS (approved in months before)	16	16	23	8	9
DEATHS (as of 22/3)	3	4	4	4	3
TOTAL RESIGNATIONS (as of 22/3)	56	56	43	49	45

With the decent intake of 10 prospective members due to be approved today and start from 1st April and no outstanding subscriptions to generate further resignations, April's statistics should be very positive.

Staffing Update. The new Second Chef, Jon, will be starting on 10th April, this should enable the kitchen to open on Tuesday lunchtimes from the following week. Matt Whale's last day working full time as a bartender will be 10th April, he will be returning to work at the Club in the school holidays which is great news. Two new part time bar staff have been recruited – Lelayna and Keaton, plus Martha has joined the waiting team part time. The Assistant Boatman, Nathan, handed in his notice today although the outcome of his probationary review meeting scheduled for next Tuesday was not looking positive. The Head Boatman will be contacting the runner up in the interview process to ascertain if he is still interested and available.

32/24 AOB

Open Day. Lesley Tregear asked GC members who had not yet responded to her email requesting help to do so as soon as possible.

The Commodore ended the meeting by saying that a number of challenging topics had been addressed at the meeting and all had been managed well, so he thanked all present.

33/24 Next Meeting Friday 26th April 2024 at 1700 hours