

# MINUTES OF A GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD BY THE ROYAL SOLENT YACHT CLUB AT 17:00 ON FRIDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

## Present:

In the Chair: Martyn Collinson, Commodore  
Graham Fell, Vice Commodore  
John Poyner, Rear Commodore House  
Nick Bradley, Rear Commodore Sailing  
Robert Quain, Hon Treasurer  
Susie Breare  
Peter Crowhurst  
Catherine Holmes  
Mark Lacey

Richard Pierrepont  
Caryl Terlezki-Thomas  
Sarah Turvill  
**Apologies:**  
Katie Davies  
Lesley Tregear  
Hamish Fletcher, Guardian  
Mark Hall, Guardian  
Tony Walton, Guardian

## In Attendance:

Dick Dawson, Guardian  
Tom Symes, Member  
Claire Hallett, Secretary

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Commodore asked GC members to stand to observe a minute's silence for member Sue Hamilton Fletcher, who had sadly passed away since the last GC meeting.

**99/24 Apologies** As listed above.

**100/24 Approval of Minutes from 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024 Meeting** The minutes were approved as a true record.

**101/24 Matters Arising** Covered by agenda points.

Changes to the GC. The Commodore had asked the 4 GC members who have served for 3 years to confirm whether they would like to serve a 4<sup>th</sup> year from next April, and Peter Crowhurst, Katie Davies, Catherine Holmes and Lesley Tregear have all confirmed they would be happy to continue for another year. The Commodore advised that John Poyner has agreed to stand as Commodore, with Susie Breare having agreed to stand as Rear Commodore House. Rudi Fortson has also agreed to stand as Vice Commodore, with Sarah Turvill happy to stand in as and when required. The Commodore recommended that it would be good practice in the future to always have a second person to stand in and support a Flag Officer in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting. The Commodore was praised for achieving a satisfactory conclusion regarding the roles of Commodore and Vice Commodore from April and John was thanked for stepping forward.

## 102/24 Commodore's Update

Bank House. Members Tom Symes and Rudi Forton have spent a lot of time and carried out a huge amount of work on the Bank House issue. Tom Symes kindly joined this part of the GC meeting to give an update on proceedings to date. To recap, the Club entered into discussions with Bank House with a view to securing the Club's position in relation to the green strip which we have had use of under a licence agreement for many years. Rudi and Tom have delved into the matter in detail and instigated discussions with the owners, the Mandeville family, who have taken advice and now know the Club has a viable position. The GC previously signed off the basis for terms to be agreed with the Mandevilles, which involved the transferral to the Club of the grass strip just beyond the Bank House gateway. The Mandevilles have been clever in their negotiations and are constantly asking for more. There are 3 points on the terms proposed by the Club still to be agreed:

- The area to be transferred to the Club. We want as much land as possible, but provided it includes the section to the east of the Bank House gateway, we could live with it.
- Two honorary memberships. It is not felt to be appropriate, but they are given under the existing agreement so it's not a big deal.
- Fobs to use the barrier. Increasing the number of barrier fobs from 3 to 5 is not an issue.
- View from Bank House. The Club can't agree not to do anything that will interfere with the view to the north from Bank House, as there may be a need to build on the dinghy park and lawn in the future. The Club has only agreed not to build on the grass strip.

There is a basis for a deal to be done. The solicitor's advice has cost £850 so far and has confirmed the views reached by Tom and Rudi. There will be conveyancing charges if a deal is made for the transfer of the grass strip and the rectification of the defect in title. We are not quite there yet, but if we stay calm we should get an arrangement that is satisfactory, if not ideal. There shouldn't be any increase in use of the Club's driveway by Bank House as there is limited space to build behind Bank House and it's in a Conservation Area so any development requires specific planning approval, which would be difficult to get for a building of any size or substance. A critical point is whether the Greenings are buying it or not. Caryl advised that she had recently heard that the lease for Bank House Antiques has been extended for another 5 years and the sale has fallen through. The Commodore will now write back to the Mandevilles with our comeback proposal agreed by the GC in order to reach a deal:

- Four barrier fobs is agreed.
- Complimentary membership is agreed for Mr & Mrs Greening for three years, but not to successors in title.
- It is agreed not to develop the grass strip transferred to the Club. Development of the dinghy park/lawn area is not agreed.
- The Club may oppose any proposed development unless we are given the details now.
- The area of the grass strip has already been agreed – why has this changed? It was suggested by the VC that we revert to the Mandevilles saying that GC approved the extent of the strip of land to be transferred in August when it was proposed by the Mandevilles. The GC's view has not changed.

The Commodore will draft an email accordingly, which will be circulated to the usual team of Graham, Tom, Rudi and the Secretary. The Commodore recorded a vote of thanks to Tom for all his input.

St James's Church Fundraising. An enquiry had been received from St James's church as to whether the Club or individual members would be interested in providing support for the proposed project to restore the roof, create visitor centre space/toilet facilities and add solar panels to the roof space to enhance our eco-awareness/energy issues. All present agreed that the Club could offer to host a fundraising event at no room hire charge.

Com

Sec

### 103/24 Financial Report by Hon. Treasurer

October Results. The results for October are as expected. The last 3 months of the year are always more loss making, but we are losing more money than hoped with a year to date net loss of (£12k) against a budget of (£3.8k). The year end net loss should not exceed (£35k) as we will break even at that point, once the depreciation is factored back in. Costs in November and December may be higher than anticipated, but there is optimism that we will achieve break even or thereabouts by the end of the year. There is a decent turnover for bar and catering and staff costs are a lot lower than budget due to gaps in staffing and lower salaries. People are now spending less, but our margins are holding up well and cash flow is strong, so it's not all doom and gloom. Some refurbishment costs may be able to be taken from reserves into the P&L. Staff bonuses are discretionary but will be honoured as budgeted. Next year's budget does not include staff bonuses, as the stance on these will be based on the financial position at the end of 2025. Although there is no GC meeting in December, November's financial figures will be circulated via email at the end of December.

2025 Budget. Recognising the current economic outlook, a realistic stance has been taken on next year's budget. The 3.5% increase in subscription rates has been built in assuming that a similar number of members will be retained, which gives a £20k uplift on this year. Ambitious targets were set this year for the bar and catering, which will be missed this year so have been lowered next year. Budget 2024 income was £1.02m and just under £1m next year. A flatter year is more realistic as people are pulling back on their spending. The salary plan 2025 is based on minimum and living wage increases from April, plus National Insurance increases, plus increases to maintain differentials for those not on minimum wage. The salary bill, including pension and NI contributions equates to over half the Club's expenditure. There is little that we can do short of gapping positions to give more leeway. There is £10k wriggle room for a part time bar tender position that has not yet been re-filled. Food and drink prices will be increasing, so we need to ensure we continue to buy well. Sailing costs are increasing, but we are a yacht club, we can however look at using more volunteers on the water. For the second year running, the number of moorings laid will more closely reflect the number required by members. There has been the additional Crown Estate moorings fee to factor in this year, but we won't expect boat owners to cover this through moorings rentals. The 2025 budget will be at break even operationally (£46 surplus!).

Richard Pierrepont commented that the Boat Fund had been refloated with £12,500 from capital reserves this year and the same will be done next year. He thought all boat costs, maintenance and new equipment/boats should be factored into the cost of sailing and represented in the accounts. The Hon. Treasurer responded that the cost of any new boat would come out of capital and any maintenance comes out of P&L. Sarah Turvill highlighted that the Club has £236k in cash, but in the next few years there are the boat sheds to refurbish and Countdown to replace, so if we're only breaking even how will this expenditure be funded? Clearly, we need to start building up reserves and preserving existing reserves by making more money.

RCS advised that we are going to have to spend money on the committee boat next year and he will be presenting the options open to us and the corresponding costs which start from £40k and go upwards. We are going to have to find the money somehow. The Commodore stated that the Club can't borrow money without 75% of the membership agreeing. Peter Crowhurst asked where the opportunities are from a business perspective, given the current economic climate and the local competition. How do we not just hang onto the cash, but grow our income? How do we get more members into the Club and get more spend per member? Susie Breare suggested reducing costs to get more people in. The Club's main income sources are food, drink and subscriptions and potentially RYA training courses. The Club works hard at delivering events, so much so that they are at saturation point for members. We all need to be realistic about what is possible to increase turnover.

The Hon. Treasurer proposed the Budget for 2025, which was seconded by RCH and approved by all present.

## 104/24 Vice Commodore's Report

Membership Applications. There are 3 applications for 5 prospective members this month:

	Applicant	Proposer	Second	Comments/Interests
1	1. Mr Marcus Reedman 2. Mrs Astrid Reedman	Catherine Holmes	Peter Cottrell	Marcus is a Risk Consultant for Deloitte. He served as a Commanding Officer of the Royal Gurkha Regiment, Head of the National Security Council Secretariat and Deputy Director of the Government's Covid-19 task force as acting brigadier. Astrid is a PR Manager for Clarins. They live in Yarmouth. They are interested in racing, cruising, crewing, motorboat training, boat shed/mooring, onshore activities, and race management. Also, members of Victory Services Club, London.
2	3. Mrs Sharon Ashton	Caroline Norris	Catherine Holmes	Sharon is seeking reinstatement on her husbands (Guy Ashton) account. She resigned in 2014. Lives in Totland Bay. Interests are cruising, crewing, and onshore activities.
3	4. Mr Michael Morgan 5. Mrs Catherine Morgan	Susie Breare	Sarah Turvill	Mike & Cathie were originally seeking overseas membership as they spend most of their time in Port Grimaud in the south of France, however, have decided each to apply for full membership. They have both done a lot of sailing in the past, having owned an X boat as well as other yachts and are now more interested in cruising, social activities and would be happy volunteering at the club (discussed in meeting with Proposer & Second - no interests ticked on form). Homes in Yarmouth & Port Grimaud. They have been members of The Royal Lymington Yacht Club for over 30 years and have also been members of St Tropez for over 8 years.

All the applicants are recommended to the GC by the VCC and there were no objections from the GC.

Maintenance Projects. There is scaffold at the front of the building for the woodwork repairs and work continues with the water ingress issues on the west extension. The slabs on the Members' Balcony were very wet underneath as the inadequate pointing was letting water through. The re-pointing of the slabs was completed today and then the sealant will be applied to the slabs. It is slow progress, but Duncan Waitt is still aiming to complete it by Christmas. Duncan will incur more costs than quoted for originally, but will stand by his original quotation.

Green Agenda. Three prospective suppliers have provided quotations for solar panels, which will all be subject to planning permission. Solar Solutions have proposed panels on the south shed when it is possible to install them. Egg and Island Renewables have quoted for panels on the main clubhouse roof, with the latter also quoting for panels on the workshop and south sheds. The biggest area currently available is the main clubhouse roof and a diagram of the proposed panels has been circulated before this meeting. The general response to the diagram is that they would be too disjointed and not be acceptable from an aesthetic point of view, plus planning would be difficult. The workshop was considered the best option at the current time, at a cost of £6k for a 6 mega watt yield and 7.5 years pay back. **The Vice Commodore will put together a proposal for both the east and west sides of the workshop roof.**

Rules Review. Rule 23, appertaining to disciplinary action, doesn't flow and needs to be re-written. Rule 20.6 will be updated to enable the GC to withdraw honorary membership if required. Rule 20.7 will be updated to allow for volunteers to be given temporary membership for up to 12 months. The Vice Commodore will put a proposal of rule changes to the GC via email as there is no December meeting and the proposed changes need to be shared with the membership by 15<sup>th</sup> January.

## 105/24 Update from Rear Commodore House

Past Events. Events at the Club in October have included the following:

- Jazz Night – 36, very good.
- Wine Society – 51, raised £576 for the air ambulance.
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – Royal Thames Autumn Excuse & Dinner – 53 guests for dinner.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November – All Saints Church Sunday lunch – 34 attendees.

VC

- 5<sup>th</sup> November – Firework Night Dinner – 80 members & guests for supper. General public on the lawn & in the dinghy park due to Club's great location for fireworks – should we be taking advantage of this by selling them food and drink? It would be good PR for the Club to show that we're welcoming to non-members. Further discussion required.
- 6<sup>th</sup> November – First Wednesday talk on the RNLI by Martin Woodward. 56 stayed for lunch.
- 9<sup>th</sup> November – Laying Up Dinner for 71.
- 13<sup>th</sup> November – Ladies Lunch for 42.
- 14<sup>th</sup> November – Film Night, well attended with 30 staying for supper.
- 15<sup>th</sup> November – Recently Joined Members Evening, 47 attended for drinks & 38 stayed for dinner.
- 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November – YOD & XOD dinners were very good.
- 30<sup>th</sup> November – Après Ski Night is cancelled due to only 21 having booked. It clashed with a member's drinks party.

#### Upcoming Events.

- 5th December – RNLI Christmas Fair
- 7th December – Helpers Drinks
- 10th December – Needles Relief Anniversary Lunch
- 11th December – Senior Citizens Xmas Lunch
- 12th December – Wine Society Christmas Party
- 13th December – Gent's Lunch
- 14th December – Needles Relief Race
- 15th December – Commodore's Xmas Party
- 20th December – Carols at the Club
- 24th December – Christmas Eve Brunch
- 31st December – New Year's Eve Brunch

RCH stressed that we need people in the bar and dining, times are tough with Christmas coming, but that's how we make our money.

#### **106/24 Update from Rear Commodore Sailing**

Sailing Update. The Winter Series are nearly over, 11 boats took part in the first series and 9 in the second series. There has been one recent cruising event to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, which went well. The Boxing Day Race is the next sailing event after the Winter Series. The Needles Relief Race is on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December. The Sailing Secretary has worked hard to organise a commemorative event for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the automation of the Needles lighthouse. Trinity House has refused any landing on the lighthouse so there'll be no action on the water, but a film of footage of the lighthouse will be shown, followed by a lunch on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December. The Spring Series commences on 9<sup>th</sup> March and the Wednesday Evening Series starts on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The RSYC Contessa Regatta is 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May, Taittinger RSYC Regatta is 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> July, Dinghy Week is 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> August and the 60<sup>th</sup> Folkboat Week is 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> August, to which it is hoped to attract 60 Folkboats.

Richard Pierrepont asked whether the Taittinger RSYC Regatta could include racing on a Friday? This would give more flexibility in the event of bad weather. RCS responded that it could be considered for 2026 and he will take it to the regatta committee for discussion.

#### **107/24 Secretary's Points**

Membership Statistics. Total membership, not including those approved today, stands at 1,135 compared to 1,096 at the same point last year, which is an increase year on year of 39 members. New & re-instated members this year are 106 compared to 104 last year. There have been 59 resignations for the current year compared to 71 last year. Those resigning at the end of the year number 48, compared to 35 at the same point last year.

51% of members are in their seventies, 23% in their sixties and 14% in their fifties. So 88% of members are aged 50+.

45% of the membership is female and 55% is male.

Waste Collection. We are looking at moving our waste collection from Biffa to Onward Waste which should save £2k a year.

Alarm Systems. Lifeline has now taken over the intruder and fire alarm systems and monitoring is in place.

MP Membership. Richard Quigley has accepted the offer of ex-officio honorary membership while he is MP for Isle of Wight West.

**108/24 Next Meeting** Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 at 1700 hours