



**Cymdeithas Rhwyfo Mor Cymru
Welsh Sea Rowing Association
Executive Meeting Minutes
6th August 2016**

Members Present

Tina Parsons (*Secretary*), **Ynys Mon**; Carol Davies (*Chair*), **Llangrannog**; Leo O'Connor, Jane O'Connor, Dominic Bromley, **Aberaeron**; Andrew Richards (*Assistant to Committee*), Wisemans; Jill Gloster (*CPO*), Richard Gloster, **Porthmadog**; Tony Peters (*Health and Safety Officer*), **Barry**; Tim Knowles, **Beumaris**; Chris Haines, **Aberystwyth**; Nicola Thomas, J Davies, **Towy**; Alun Steadman, **Aberdyfi**; Sarah Reynolds, Dave Reynolds (*Webmaster*), **Borth**

Apologies

Ian Badham, Tenby; Caernarfon; Aberteifi Cardigan Rowing Club; Emyr Rhys & Sharon Jones, Llanberis; Helen, Llangwm; Candy, Fishguard; Pete Fletcher (*Treasurer*); Danielle Milliner (*Publicity*); Pippa Owen, Porthmadog; Wendy Price-Jones (*Membership*); Paul King, Shropshire; Dylan Evans (*Vice Chairman*); Betsan O'Connor, Crannog; Paul Fisher, Barry

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct and a true record of events. Verified by Andrew R and Jane O.

Matters Arising

No matters arising.

Trophies for the New Shield Category

It was confirmed that three new trophies will be required for the category of the shield, one for the North, one for the South and one for the joint. There was mixed opinion on whether the new trophies should be in line with the resin trophies purchased last season for all other race categories, or whether a wooden shield would be better. However, it was agreed that the company who supplied the resin trophies should be approached and asked if they can produce a shield shape in the resin, if so, this may be the way forward.

Action Secretary: contact the resin trophy supplier to investigate the shield idea and if it is possible, place an order.

Amendment of WSRA Race Guidelines to include Jet Ski and Back Board

This season for the first time, it was approved by the Officers of the committee to allow the use of a Jet Ski with back board to act as an extra safety vessel in a league race. This was not used instead of the normal safety boat cover but as a back-up. These jet skis with back boards are commonplace on surf beaches being used by the lifeguards as they are much faster to reach individuals in the water and can keep people afloat until the support boat arrives. The Jet Ski itself will hold two people so that one would be able to help people out of the water whilst the other maintains control of the vehicle, the back board takes 4 people. It was agreed that use of these vehicles can be included in the race guidelines document. Persons controlling the Jet Skis must have the appropriate level of training/accreditation.

Action Nicola T from Towy: to inform the secretary of the correct level of accreditation required, so this can be reflected in the updated documents.

Action Secretary: Amend the Race Guidelines / Racing Rules; documents to include the Jet Ski and back boards, and replace on the website links.

Yole Usage Guidelines

At present there are no specific guidelines for the use of yoles, both in races and in general practice sessions. As these boats are increasingly being used and purchased by many more WSRA affiliated clubs, it is only right that we have some usage guidelines in place. It was suggested that once documents were created, yoles should have their own tab on the website. This was agreed by Dave R the webmaster.

Action Secretary: to approach Chris Terry to ask for his assistance in putting some guidance together for both adult and junior rowers, to cover safety etc in both race and non-race situations.

Action Webmaster: to create an area on the WSRA website.

New Race Category 'Ultravets'

It was proposed by Beaumaris Rowing Club to consider the possibility of another race category for next season for 'Ultravets', which would comprise of a senior crew where the age of the 4 rowers (not to include the cox) should add up to a minimum of 240 years.

Discussions were held regarding whether the current 'Supavets' category should be reclassified by extending the minimum age to 45 or 50, however, it was agreed by all that one of the main positives with the 'Supavets' category was that you could place a younger rower in with three older rowers just to make sure you could complete a crew, and to be more prescriptive on the age of each rower may deplete this category.

It was also felt that to create the new category of 'Ultravets' to run alongside the 'Supavets' may in some races make the two fields so small that everyone wins, no matter what their position. It was appreciated though, that many clubs now have a growing number of 'older' rowers, and that it would be good for them to have recognition for their participation in these events.

Chris H from Aberystwyth suggested that we trial the 'Ultravets' category in the three joint league races next season, as there are more competitors in these races, which would make the category more substantial, without the 'Supavets' category losing out on entrants. As the category would be on a trial basis, rather than trophies being purchased, it was agreed that the winners should receive certificates for the 2017 season.

Proposal to trial 'Ultravets' in the 2017 season. 1st proposer Leo O, Second Proposer Tony K. Proposal carried.

Note: As this new category is being trialled, it will not require an update to the race rules etc on the website at this point until it is decided whether the category will be passed as a permanent new fixture. However, the race league tables will need amending for next season to include this new category for the joint league races.

Action Webmaster: to amend next year's league tables

Welfare

Jill G informed those present that she is still not receiving responses from clubs with the names of people who are their nominated Welfare Officers. WCVA are stopping doing DBS from 26 Sept 2016 but Wales Sport are taking it on. It is probable that Sports Wales will cover the costs, but if not, there will be a small charge of £4.50 per person in admin costs for the future. Hopefully it will be free until March 2017. The current DBS Officers will receive training on this in September.

Non-Race Grievance Appeals Procedure

At present WSRA does not give any direction on an appeals procedure should there be a grievance which can't be resolved 'in house' with the individual clubs. WSRA are adopting an appeals procedure based on the one from British Rowing. It is expected that all WSRA affiliated clubs have their own 'in house' grievance procedure and this should be noted in their constitutions. Clubs should also have their own 'Code of Conduct' document. As the WSRA constitution is in the process of being amended at this time, a note regarding grievance/appeals will be included in the WSRA one before re-issue, and the expectation is that all clubs should ensure their constitutions are amended in accordance with this, (if required), before the next racing season. It is planned that the Appeals procedure document will be circulated to the Officers before the end of August, and once the contents are agreed, will be circulated to all affiliated clubs for consideration before the next Executive meeting in November, in order that it can be implemented at that meeting.

Action Secretary: to send link to British Rowing grievance procedure to assist any clubs who may need guidance on preparing their own.

Update on re-write of the Constitution

Richard G reported that he had a positive response from his request to form a sub group to rewrite the constitution, he is being assisted by Leo O and Richard James and once the racing season has finished, the work will progress with gusto. He has obtained copies of various other constitutions from related organisations to help in preparing a draft. He has also had other constitutions sent to him by Helen Tan from Welsh Rowing who is also being very supportive. It is hoped that Richard will have his first draft ready in September to be sent to LO and RJ for consideration and further comment. Once the second draft is ready, this will be sent out to all the affiliated clubs for review, and possibly, as a result of feedback, further amendment. The final draft is planned to be presented at the 2017 AGM for approval.

Update on Rewrite of Racing Rules

Roy English was not present at the meeting however he had sent a statement to the Secretary as follows:

The review is well underway and a draft nearly ready. I intend to discuss the draft with a small group of 3 or 4 people and then send a copy to WSRA to circulate to all clubs before the 2017 AGM.

Tim K mentioned that having listened to the feedback from Richard G on the constitution and how he intends to progress it, he would speak with Roy E and suggest that he sends his first draft of the Racing Rules to three other clubs for review and input prior to it being sent as proposed final draft to the Secretary for circulation to all clubs, and not just reviewed within Beaumaris Rowing Club,. It was suggested that the three other clubs should maybe represent one in the North, one in the South and one from the Joint League.

Andrew R asked whether the rules for beach starts could also be amended whilst Roy E is doing his re-write. At present the rules state that the boats should be held by the cox and that they should have one foot in the boat and one firmly planted on the beach. This rule does not suit everyone as there may be individual physical limitations to what a cox can and cannot do. Andrew R proposed that the change reflect that the boat can be held by the cox with one foot on the beach, **or** the cox can already be positioned in the boat with another person holding the

boat in the shallows at the beach, there should be a choice given. This change in wording was agreed by all present.

Action Tim K: to inform Roy E of the change to be incorporated into the Racing Rules as part of his re-write.

Race Day Catering

Proposal by Aberdyfi to give clubs the choice of whether to provide catering or not, and if not, to reflect this by a reduction of the race entry fee.

Much discussion was had on this subject, as WSRA clubs have such varied access to facilities, in some cases clubs have no facilities, and therefore have to hire buildings to use, which puts and added cost onto the provision of catering and therefore makes it hard to break even. All agreed that the provision of bacon baps, tea, coffee and cakes, and the raffle, did make money for the clubs, but the actual provision of food and facilities after the race could eat into that profit or take it all completely. Some members present felt that the reduction in race fee and no food provided was a fair suggestion, as this would also avoid food being made/ordered and then not being used in the case of postponed races. However, the majority felt that the provision of food was an important part of the racing day. Clubs may have travelled a long way and have a long journey home afterwards, and all rowers have participated in some hard races, both rowing and coxing, they are more often than not cold, wet, tired and hungry immediately afterwards. It was felt that to expect them to go to local shops to try and buy food, and the wait that would be involved with this, would just end up with clubs just racking their boats and going straight home and not staying for the presentations. Staying for the food and presentation after the races is an important social interaction that we all value, a chance to catch up with each other in a non-competitive and relaxed environment, to lose this would have a negative impact on racing as a whole. The issue of food hygiene was mentioned due to more emphasis being placed on food hygiene health and safety regulations, and clubs will be more aware of how they prepare and store food in future.

It was also discussed that where clubs are lacking on facilities it is sometimes hard to arrange the catering due to lack of equipment. Nicola T mentioned that their club has large burners which are ideal for soups and stews if Aberdyfi wanted to borrow them in future to run their event from the lifeboat station building rather than the yacht club. It was stated that all clubs should speak up if they are having problems catering an event, and ask for assistance from other clubs who could loan them equipment.

Jill G proposed that the race entry fees be increased to £5 per adult for the 2017 season to try and help cover the costs involved with catering and providing facilities and services for after the event. This was seconded by Dominic B. Proposal carried.

After discussion it was agreed that the junior fee should not increase as we have such a low number of juniors racing anyway, the impact of a cost increase to the host club would be negligible, plus we are trying to encourage juniors to join, and more often than not the juniors also have rowing parents, so they would be paying for their increase as well. The junior fee will remain at £2 per person for the 2017 season. Proposed by Secretary, seconded by Leo O.

Action Secretary: to amend all related documents with this uplift for adult race entry fee in preparation for the next season.

Presentation Dinner

The date was confirmed as 12th November to be held in the Feathers Hotel in Aberaeron. It was asked whether it might be worth having a guest speaker for the event and to present the awards, however, it was felt that there wouldn't be enough time to fit in a speaker as well as the meal, presentation and the disco, therefore it was suggested that this be looked into as a possible separate event with a speaker for the beginning of the racing season.

Action Chair: to book Aberaeron Yacht Club to hold the next Executive meeting on the same day as the presentation to avoid people having to travel twice.

Any Other Business

Treasurers Report – Pete F reported in absentia that the WSRA bank balance currently stood at £18,329.55 as at 27th June 2016. As far as he was aware there were no outstanding invoices to pay. Equipment insurance was due in late July. Apart from a small percentage of the premium, the rest will be covered by club receipts not yet received.

Equipment Insurance – Andrew R confirmed that he had now heard from every affiliated club except two regarding the equipment insurance, the equipment from these two clubs are no longer insured under the WSRA insurance, so he was hoping that they might have arranged alternative insurance and not informed him, however, he would be pursuing this for confirmation.

Progress on Future Coaching/Training – Richard G covered several items:

- Jackie Southworth, Ynys Mon, has been appointed as a course trainer for Level 2 Coaching by British Rowing. This will help make courses more available plus have a better fixed seat emphasis.
- A L2 Coaching Course is planned to be run at Plas Heli, Pwllheli this October/November. Exact dates to be confirmed by Welsh Rowing.
- 3 L2 coaches were completing the tutor's course so that by next year they would also be able to train coaches.
- Discussions and pressure was being placed upon Welsh Rowing to arrange for the training of Assessors. Once this was introduced WSRA and Welsh Rowing should be able to arrange courses to suit clubs demands.

Richard G asked whether it would be possible for the WSRA to set aside a budget to pay for tutors/coaches (such as David Thompson) expenses, for having to travel and stay overnight to run certain courses, as he is providing a vital service to the association. It was agreed at the meeting that this should be the case.

Action Secretary: to follow this up with WSRA Treasurer.

Chris H spoke about the possibility of having a workshop each year to cover topics such as Race Planning and Training, to run subjects on alternate years. It was suggested that this could be progressed before or at the next AGM. The suggestion to have a member's training / master class style event was well received by all.

It was suggested that the list of WSRA L2 qualified coaches should be displayed on the WSRA website as general information.

Action Secretary: to email all clubs to ask for a list of names of their L2 coaches.

Race Numbers being Down this Year – Chris T wondered whether this may be because of clashes between Northern and Southern League Races on the same dates, however, this had only occurred on two occasions so was not thought to be the reason, it was also not believed to be anything to do with the new race category of the shield. It was felt that all clubs are trying to run their race events early to avoid any bad weather later on in the season, and avoid re-schedules, so the league is very race heavy in the first few months. Jane O suggested that we could have 4 joint league events instead of 3 and then only choose our best three results out of those races, and that we could rotate the venues for these events, however, Chris H felt that people would just choose to skip one event instead, which would have a more negative impact. It was asked that for next season's race date, any clashes should try to be avoided if at all possible. No further actions.

Confirmation of Numbers for Preparation of Race Food – Aberporth raised a complaint to say that clubs are not letting them know of numbers attending races in advance, this makes it impossible to know how much food and how much race safety cover to arrange. The importance of this was emphasised to all. Tim K also mentioned that host clubs need to be made aware in advance of any non-race participants, who are coming to support race crews, and who may wish to purchase food from them on the day, as these people also need to be catered for in the overall numbers.

Ramsay Island Social Row – WSRA clubs have not formally been invited by Tom Sutton, from Porthgain due to previous issues with insurance and safety boat cover, even though the posters have been circulated. The invitation to Celtics to attend this event still needs to be ratified by Tom Sutton, and if it is extended, then Andrew R will inform the Secretary so that the information can be shared. There are a number of WSRA clubs hoping to attend this event and Towy have even changed their race date to accommodate it. Andrew R is seeing if we can have it added to our Policy as a non-WSRA event. The insurer is happy to do it if it is ratified at the executive meeting. As there is no safety boat cover for this event (as it is not a race), each club would be expected to risk assess it themselves, and take the appropriate safety precautions. Porthgain will make the final safety 'go', or 'no-go' decisions on the day as there are certain parts of the row which entail navigating/rowing through complicated waters. Andrew R asked whether all present were happy to have this event added to the policy, and hoped that this may in fact encourage Porthgain to re-affiliate in the future. Andrew R didn't believe that this would result in any cost implications to the policy, although this was unconfirmed. All present agreed that we should go ahead and add it so that clubs can take part. Proposed by Richard G, seconded by Dave R. Proposal carried.

Action Andrew R: to add this event to the insurance policy.

Affiliation Levels with British Rowing – Nicola T asked what level of membership the WSRA have with British Rowing, as they needed a minimum of Silver to be entitled to enter International events. (There are three levels of membership; silver, gold and platinum). Nobody present knew the answer to this question, only that we (WSRA) pay affiliation to Welsh Rowing, who are associated to British Rowing. It was agreed that several persons present were going to help get the answers needed immediately following the meeting, as entries needed to be submitted by the following weekend at the latest.

Post Meeting Note: WSRA is listed on the British Rowing website under Member Clubs and Associations, and therefore, should be affiliated at the lowest level (Silver) however; an email from Helen Tan at Welsh Rowing confirmed that all individual rowers must also affiliate separately to British Rowing, this is in addition to any fee that might have been paid to Welsh Rowing by the WSRA. The individual memberships for rowers can be purchased on-line, and rowers wishing to compete internationally must have them.

Nicola T, Jane O, and Alan S are progressing all matters.

Date of Next Meeting

12th November – Aberaeron Yacht Club