



Cymdeithas Rhwyfo Môr Cymru
Welsh Sea Rowing Association
AGM Minutes
Saturday 26th January 2019

Attendees:

Name	Role / Club
Andrew Richards (AR)	Chairman / Wisemans Bridge
Chris Haines (CH)	Race Officer / Aberystwyth
Richard Gloster (RG)	North Representative / Porthmadog
Gill Gloster (GG)	Child Protection Officer / Porthmadog
Nicola Thomas (NT)	South Representative / Towy
Mel Hopkins (MH)	Secretary / Aberystwyth
Carol Davies (CD)	Membership Secretary / Llangrannog
Pete Fletcher (PF)	President / Treasurer / Newport
Mike Hughes	Fishguard and Goodwick
Gaynor Martin	Fishguard and Goodwick
Candy Tamsit	Fishguard and Goodwick
Martha Owen	Fishguard and Goodwick
Katy Spain	Aberystwyth
Linsey Jones	Neyland
Janet Holmes	Neyland
Sam English (SE)	Training Officer / Aberporth
Richard James	St Dogmeals
David Thompson	Aberaeron
Kelly Melnicenco	Sion Cwilt
Sam Owen	Towy
Roy English	Beaumaris
Joannette English	Beaumaris
Tony Peters (TP)	Health and Safety Officer / Barry
Richard Aherne	Porthmadog
Elin Powell	Royal Welsh Caernarfon
Alison Seal Jones	PYC
Sharon Kibs	PYC
Martin Barritt	Conway
David Aston	Llanion
Chris Harding	Llanion
Martin Grey	Mumbles
Catherine Mears	Mumbles
Paul Parsons	Ynys Mon
Steve Jarrett	Ynys Mon
Tina Parsons	Ynys Mon
Neil Cross (NC)	Vice Chair / Wisemans Bridge
Mike Rogers	Aberdyfi
Guy Shaw	Aberdyfi
Pete Hughes	Moelfre
Mike Miles	Solva
Quentin Shaw	SARC (Shropshire)

Item		Actions
1.0	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Llangwm Rowing Club, Dave Reynolds (Borth), Jane O'Connor (Aberporth) and Owen Davies (Towy)</p>	
2.0	<p>Minutes of last AGM held on 27 January 2018</p> <p>The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as a true recorded. Proposed by Richard Gloster and seconded by Richard Aherne.</p>	
3.0	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Croaker Oars – arrangements have been made with Croaker UK to hold as a WSRA retainer-1 full set of M1 sweep oars. Clubs can contact Croaker and advise them that you are a WSRA club and there should be sets and individual oars available for immediate delivery. Clubs pay Croaker directly and then Croaker will order in replacement oars.</p>	
4.0	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>AR presented his Chairman's report for the 2018 period following his first year as Chairman of the WSRA. A full copy of the report is included as appendix to these minutes.</p> <p>Highlights of the report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful coxes workshop run by CH and attended by 16 clubs. • Number of clubs / members. • International success at sculling. • Dave Thompson's award. • Bleddyn Jones' world record attempt. • Purchase of two new WSRA boats. 	
5.0	<p>Treasurer's Report</p>	
5.1	PF provided his treasurer's report and presented the copy of the accounts which have been audited and are ready for the Chairman to sign off.	
5.2	Travel and events spend has increased as Committee members have been attending more events during 2018 on behalf of the membership	
5.3	Sponsorship costs also increased during the year – this was due to the contributions made towards the Italian contingent visit.	
5.4	Following the decision to pay an honorarium to the secretary there was a £2000 payment made. There is an outstanding amount to be paid in relation to the Secretary honorarium of £1000.	
5.5	Attendance at the annual dinner was down which resulted in costs exceeding income from ticket sales.	
5.6	Approximately £50K spend in total during the year.	

- 5.7 Income from membership is up to approximately 21k – membership fee was increased from £12 to £15 to cover the £3,000 honorarium for the Secretary.
- 5.8 Boat royalties were received from Dale Sailing in relation to 6 new boats. This is an income which is dependent on the number of boats purchased by clubs so is not a constant or guaranteed income.
- 5.9 Income was approx. £52k which leaves a balance of £23,025.11 at the end of the year.
- 5.10 £26518 (net) cost for the purchase of longboat and trailer and coastal rowing quad. We have received a grant of £18,099 towards these costs. The longboat has been received but we are imminently awaiting the delivery of the quad. £8224.37 outstanding with a grant of £3619.20 to be received leaving a balance of £4605.17 balance to be paid by WSRA.

6.0 Election of Officers

- 6.1 Officers who remain standing and unopposed – meeting voted to support their continuation in their roles.
- Chairman – Standing unopposed.
- Vice Chair – Standing unopposed.
- North Representative – Standing unopposed.
- South Representative – Standing unopposed.
- 6.2 Membership Secretary – Standing down (see notes re: Secretary position)
- 6.3 Secretary – Standing down. It was proposed that this and the membership secretary was combined as one position. This was proposed as a means get value for money from the honorarium. If this was to take place it would likely require a change to the constitution. There was no initial apparent interest from the room from anyone to take on the position. There was also no apparent interest in separate Secretary and Membership Secretary roles. It was stressed that without this position the Committee could not function.
- It was proposed by GG that the meeting give the committee delegated powers to co-op someone to the role of secretary and membership secretary. Meeting agreed to this.
- 6.4 Mid Representative – Standing down. Sam Owen was prepared to stand. Proposed by Martha Owen and seconded by Carol Davies.
- 6.5 Health and Safety Officer – Standing down.

Roy English asked for clarification on why the role of Health and Safety Officer was required if there were already Safety Officers based in Clubs.

Martin Grey suggested that Health and Safety Officers should be provided with training and that the Health and Safety Officer should sit on the committee and should advise club officers and provide protocols. Mike Miles raised concerns that risk assessments were being simply copied from other clubs. SE advised that the new Executive Committee will be able to access training through Welsh Rowing.

AR advised that the Health and Safety Officer role was to receive the club's risk assessment and check them for any obvious issues and to provide guidance where requested. It was also suggested that the Health and Safety Officer discuss risk assessments with the North, Mid and South Representatives for local knowledge.

Following discussions Martin Grey agreed to stand. Martin Grey was proposed by TP and seconded by Mike Miles.

6.6

Assistant to the Committee - Insurances - Richard Aherne nominated by AR and seconded by NT.

6.7

Publicity Officer - Standing down. Martha Owen nominated by AR nominated, NT seconding. Martha Owen voted on.

6.8

Training Officer – Standing down. Jane O'Conner nominated by AR and seconded by TP.

7.0 Should the staple and foundation of the WSRA continue to be the leagues / league races?

7.1 CH advised the meeting of the background to this item which was related to the fact that despite membership increasing, the number of crews competing in races was decreasing. Does the membership want the committee to concentrate its efforts on supporting league racing or does the membership want to give more focus to the open races?

7.2 Mike Rogers considered that this was the most important function of the WSRA and that this should not change. Richard Aherne and Chris Harding also supported this view and that the league should take precedence.

7.3 Chris Harding suggested that some feedback was required from clubs where there was a high number of members not actively competing in league races to determine what they may want from the WSRA and what barriers there might be to their participation.

7.4 There was a consensus from the meeting that league races should form the basis of the WSRA function.

7.5 SE suggested that we look to carry out open consultation with all members through local events or online to gather the input of members rather than making a decision today. NT proposed that this decision is deferred until such time as an open consultation with all members is carried out. It was agreed that this was the way forward. Also see 8.10.

8.0 Could the rules be changed so that a club should only be able to host one event each year - either a league race or an open race?

- 8.1 CH suggested that with the number of races, a barrier to participation may be the costs associated with participating, the number of events taking place, especially where there are events on both a Saturday or Sunday, and challenges for members with children.
- 8.2 Catherine Mears suggested that there should be more activities / facilities provided for children at the race events to encourage rowers who are parents to attend races. AR advised that the committee was working with Welsh Rowing to develop opportunities / encourage youth development.
- 8.3 Martin Grey suggested that it should not be for the committee to dictate that a club can only hold one event. AR suggested that we needed to find out whether the open races are affecting league participation and whether there were too many or too few events.
- 8.4 Chris Harding suggested that limiting clubs might discourage clubs from organising events and lead to fewer races. NT also suggested that some of the open races had done a significant amount for raising the profile of the sport.
- 8.5 Elin Powell suggested that maybe there should be a focus towards indoor rowing over the winter period. AR advised that this was something that was going to be considered.
- 8.6 TP suggested that when races took place every week over an extended period that this might discourage those rowers whose partners may not be rowers from attending.
- 8.7 Richard Aherne suggested that open races were a way for new rowers and clubs to start rowing competitive racing as league races might be too intimidating.
- 8.8 Roy English advised that from their club's perspective there was more interest in open races than league races. They also suggested that the ladies within the club were unhappy that the ladies' races were shorter than men's races.
- 8.9 Quentin Shaw advised that due to distances from Shropshire rowers were more inclined to attend open races.
- 8.10 SE suggested that this, and items down to item 14, should also be subject to open consultation. PR suggested that this be done via a questionnaire to clubs which could be developed and returned quickly to give an indication of the feeling of the membership from clubs. AR suggested that this consultation take place in 2019 with a view that any changes are adopted from the 2020 season. This was agreed and would be progressed by the executive committee who following the consultation would bring forward robust proposals for the 2020 AGM to be considered and if approved would be implemented that season.
- 9.0 Could the number of races be limited i.e. 5 north, 5 South and 3 nationals OR 6 north, 6 south and 1 national.**
See 8.10

10.0 Should we change the race criteria to allow races to be held on either a Saturday or Sunday, but still limit to 1 race per weekend?

See 8.10

11.0 Could we limit the number of WSRA sanctioned open races each year, limiting it to 2 or 3 north, 2 or 3 south?

See 8.10

12.0 Should the criteria for hosting a race be extended to include open races as well? i.e. in order to host a race, a club should have attended at least 5 WSRA sanctioned races in the previous season (to include a minimum of ?? league races).

See 8.10

13.0 Should trophies be awarded for each league race? With the growing number of categories and the inclusion of coastal skulls, there could be as many as 19 trophies required for each event. In other sports trophies for leagues are only awarded at the end of the season.

See 8.10

14.0 Is the current format for league races working or does it need to evolve?

See 8.10

15.0 Confirmation of 2019 fixture list.

The draft fixture list has been circulated by email and paper copies were made available at the meeting. No concerns were raised at the meeting. AR proposed the calendar and the meeting approved the adoption of the calendar for 2019.

16.0 Ratify race officials document. (see attached)

16.1 There has not been a document prior to this, however there have been some incidents / issues which have resulted in a need for a guideline document. This document outlines which officials should be present at races, their roles and how to address issues/incidents that arise.

16.2 Candy Tamsit asked for clarifications on whether timekeepers / recording of times where required. CH confirmed that this was not mandatory.

16.3 Chris Harding raised concerns over the reference to light contact not being considered to being a racing incident and that this would encourage contact. CH advised that the document was based on feedback received from the coxes' workshop was that light contact sometimes was unavoidable.

16.4 Janet Holmes suggested that if any contact at all (including very light contact) was penalised that this was likely to put people off from coxing in races.

16.5 Mike Miles advised that if the light contact did not impede his boat or give the other boat an advantage then he would not consider raising a complaint.

16.6 AR advised that the feedback from the meeting will be taken to the executive meeting this afternoon and considered.

17.0 Does the WSRA need to return to a boat age of 200 in the supervets but with an amendment to include a 30 second deduction for finishing times per 10 years over the 200-year minimum total.

17.1 This was proposed by Richard Aherne and supported by Roy English.

17.2 CH raised concerns that this would present challenges for clubs when calculating results including the need for timekeepers.

17.3 Mike Miles was of the view that vets and super-vets often finished ahead of senior crews and therefore there was no need to provide assistance / competitive advantage in this way.

17.4 Chris Harding suggested that an arbitrary 30 seconds would not be an appropriate means to determine the amount of advantage / disadvantage to a crew given different venues with varying conditions.

17.5 A vote on the proposal was held - *'Does the WSRA need to return to a boat age of 200 in the super-vets but with an amendment to include a 30 second deduction for finishing times per 10 years over the 200-year minimum total?'*.

4 votes for and 16 against. Proposal not supported.

18.0 To introduce an annual All Wales event modelled on the Irish equivalent to be located alternating in north and south wales at suitable venues.

18.1 This was proposed by Richard Aherne following low participation in joint league races and his view that one event would result in higher participation.

18.2 CH suggested that one of the joint league races could be defined as the All Wales event. Alternatively, it could be that we have only 1 joint All Wales event and the other joint league events just be north or south events.

18.3 PF suggested that we should vote on this in principal but because a lot of work needs to be done to determine the structure and location that it should not be a voted on at this time. AR suggested that we consider an amendment as follows:

'To introduce an annual All Wales event modelled on the Irish equivalent to be located alternating in north and south wales at suitable venues for 2020 in principal and this will be included in the consultation with clubs to determine a way forward which can be ratified at the 2020 AGM'.

18.4 The meeting agreed that this was a way forward and would be progressed by the executive committee.

19.0 Points allocation. Joint races to be included in north and south league overall points totals (unless point 18 approved).

It was clarified that failure to attend a joint league race would not prevent a club from winning a league – they would just lose out on the opportunity of the points from the race they failed to attend.

A vote on the proposal was held – *'Points allocation. Joint races to be included in north and south league overall points totals'*.

17 votes for and the remaining votes were abstentions. Proposal supported.

20.0 In order to host a race (league or open event), a club should have attended at least 5 races hosted by a WSRA affiliated club in the previous season (to include a minimum of 2 north or south races and 1 joint race - unless point 18 approved).

20.1 There was concern from Quentin Shaw and Mike Miles that this would exclude SARC and Llangwm from holding an open race.

20.2 AR explained that there was some concern that clubs were holding events and benefiting from other clubs participating in their race but then not attending any other clubs' races.

20.3 Mike Miles suggested that the committee should be able to take into consideration extenuating circumstances and that they could overrule this rule.

20.4 Richard Aherne suggested that a new club hosting a race for the first time should be required to attend a minimum number of races before being able to hold a race.

20.5 CH suggested an amendment to the proposal to read as follows and a vote was held:

'In order to host a race (league or open event), a club should have attended at least 5 races hosted by a WSRA affiliated club in the previous season (to include a minimum of 2 north or south races and 1 joint race Executive committee to be given discretion to consider extenuating circumstances and allow a club not meeting the criteria to hold a race.'

19 votes for 1 vote against. Proposal supported.

21.0 League races – start sculls earlier to avoid tangles.

21.1 Martha Owen proposed that sculls should start earlier than the current 100 metre head start. Martin Grey also supported a change in the arrangements as there were challenges for slower sculls particularly at buoy turns.

22.2 Chris Harding suggested that starting the sculls after the longboats rather than ahead was a more sensible option (approximately 3-4 minutes behind).

22.3 It was agreed that this would be referred to the Executive Committee meeting for a discussion and a proposal will be brought forward from this discussion.

22.0 Ultravets – trial it properly this time.

22.1 Martha Owen provided background to this proposal which is that there was a crew with a combined age of 270 who felt that their age was not being taken into account. They did not believe that the trial was conducted properly.

22.2 A vote on the proposal was held – *'Retrial ultra-vets category with certificates on for 2019 season.'*

14 votes for, 4 against and 2 abstentions. Proposal supported.

23.0 Proposed Junior age clarification (document prepared by JOC)

The meeting agreed to the clarification.

24.0 AOB

24.1 Purchase of league buoys.

24.1.1 The proposal to purchase league buoys was discussed. This had come about due to clubs approaching the committee because they did not have suitable buoys. The proposed buoys are yacht racing buoys and will come with ropes and anchors. It is proposed to have 2 north and 2 south with an outlay of £2000. It is hoped that these buoys would also have WSRA livery/branding essential for promotional benefits.

24.1.2 It was confirmed that clubs would be responsible for the buoys when in their possession and that North, South and Mid representatives responsible between races.

24.1.3 A vote was held on purchasing 2 buoys for the North and 2 buoys for the South.

17 votes for, 1 against and 2 abstaining. Proposal supported.

24.2 Proposal to amend rules.

24.2.1 A proposal was received from REX rowing club by email requesting an amendment to the rules so that the average age of rowers applies to determined categories rather than based on the age of the youngest rower in the boat.

24.2.2 A vote was held on the proposal *'to base categories on average age rather than the age of the youngest rower'*.

5 votes for and 15 votes against. Proposal not supported.

24.2.3 CH suggested an amendment to the proposal to read *'to base supervet and ultravet categories only on average age rather than the age of the youngest rower'* and a vote was held.

0 votes in favour, 16 against and 4 abstentions. Proposal not supported.

24.3 Loan of boats

24.3.1 There had been requests from clubs to loan boats from other clubs. If there are any clubs that have boats that they would be willing to loan please let your regional representatives know.

24.3.2 NT advised that Cork would also like to borrow a boat for the Celtic Challenge. MH

24.3.3 MH to send an email to the distribution list regarding this.

25.0 **Formal thank you from WSRA to leaving officers**

In recognition of the work undertaken by Committee members who were standing down at this AGM, PF presented a small gift of thanks to:

- Carol Davies
- Tony Peters
- Sam English
- David Thompson

26.0 **Date of next AGM**

11am 25 January 2020 at St Annes Church, Penparcau, Aberystwyth.

Appendix 1 – Chairman’s Report

Members, as the days lengthen and our thoughts turn to the coming season I can report that WSRA has had another successful year attracting members into the sea rowing community during one of the best summers I can remember.

Your committee (to which I am extremely grateful) has worked hard over the last 12 months to provide members with a range of exciting league races and challenge events both in the north and south with the challenge events appearing to be more attractive based on attendances.

On the water, the season commenced early with a challenge event in Shropshire in late March followed by further challenge events and league races in north and south in late April. The season was well under way at this point and league races and events came around thick and fast. The league racing finished in early September due to cancelled events which resulted in the Great River Race becoming the final event of the season.

The two leagues function well and having the sport advertised in such a manner has helped to attract new rowers and also new clubs forming over the recent seasons. These additions have resulted in affiliated rowers now totalling 1172 within 34 affiliated clubs. However, we must ensure that clubs are more active in recruiting junior members and creating links with local schools to ensure that the sport can continue to be as active in future years as it has been historically

The longboats form the stable basis of the association, however the number of sculling boats within the clubs has been increasing year on year, and this provides a welcome progression of the sport into the international arena. Several clubs have recently sent rowers to some of

these international events and have returned with positive results. Unfortunately the association does not have the correct setup to support the elite rowers in such events, and it is hoped that Welsh Rowing will step up in this aspect to support these rowers.

A recent coxing workshop event held in Towy for the south region run by the race officer Chris Haines was well attended with rowers from 16 different southern clubs and received very positive feedback regarding the presentation and content. Another workshop is currently planned for Northern clubs early in 2019 which will also be run by Chris and I hope that we will see another well attended event by the northern clubs.

We have in attendance today Mr David Thomson who recently received the Torch Trophy Trust award for his services to the sport of rowing. I would like to thank David on behalf of WSRA for his services over many years and wish him the very best in his retirement. In addition I would also like to mention Bleddyn from Aberystwyth Rowing Club who recently rowed 275,169 metres on an erg in memory of his son Ned and in the process raised over £9,000 for Wales Air Ambulance.

The association understands that the affiliated clubs have a very active social calendar and the recent lack of interest in the annual dinner has been noted by the association and we will seek to double our efforts in 2019.

Financially the association remains in a strong position and we will strive to improve the support and facilities that we offer to all the members and clubs whilst also promoting the sport of sea rowing in Wales. This is very important in a climate of reduced grant funding and positive advertising of the sport can only help moving forward. The number of rowers and clubs affiliated to WSRA is what the association is mainly judged on and as a result of this increase, WSRA funds together with a sports grant have enabled the purchase of two new boats to add to the existing fleet.

I would like to thank the whole of the committee. They work tirelessly on behalf of the association and deserve our gratitude and thanks. Finally, I would like to pass on my thanks to all the clubs and rowers that make our events so excellent. Thank you all for the support and warm friendship that I have received over the last year as your chairman and I hope to see you out on the water in the 2019.