

United Kingdom  
Surf Rowers  
League



**15 January 2017**

## **Increase in membership costs**

Dear All,

### **2017**

Full membership £100

Day Ticket racing £35 can only be purchased twice in a season.

Student membership - abolished

As you can see from the AGM minutes we have had to increase our membership fees for 2017 in order for the league to remain viable. This was not a decision taken lightly but is necessary to ensure the future and growth of our sport.

Some of you may not wish to read what follows so we will start by detailing the fees for 2017:

The student membership fee has been abolished.

If you want to understand the reasons for the increase, please read on.

A copy of last year's accounts has been circulated to you all with the minutes and from these you will see that the total income from membership fees was just under £3,000 but excluding the exceptional costs relating to the boats from Turkey our running costs were in excess of £6,500. We were very lucky to have secured the generous sponsorship from Sunzapper in 2016 which at £2,250 went a long way towards meeting the shortfall. However, sponsorship by its very nature cannot be relied upon and we believe that going forwards our membership fees should at least cover regular running costs.

In addition, we have set a policy that at the end of our financial year we should maintain a cash reserve at least equal to one year's running costs. Such a buffer gives us the confidence to start making financial commitments for the season ahead well in advance of the usual influx of membership fees in April. At 30th September 2016 our cash reserves stood at just under £5,700 and so have fallen below the desired level and we need to take action now to increase membership fees for 2017.

A quick glance at the accounts will tell you that our most significant running cost is the safety cover we provide at each event which, as you know, is now contracted out to a professional third party. In

previous years cover was provided by local surf club volunteers on a significantly reduced cost basis using whatever equipment they had to hand. This led to a lot of stress for those organising events not being able to rely on a consistent standard of safety cover being provided at each event and is not something that the current committee is prepared to return to. Our sport can legitimately be described as “extreme” depending on the conditions but at the end of the day it is simply a sport that we do for fun and making sure that everyone goes home safely remains paramount. The committee also believes that if we are to get the new clubs competing and attract new rowers then it is vital that we present a professional and responsible image.

So how did we arrive at the fees stated above? We simply assumed that the costs of running the league in 2017 will broadly be similar to 2016 and that rower numbers will also remain similar. In 2016 we had 55 full members and so if we are to generate enough membership income to cover our running costs then we need to raise approximately £130 to £140 per rower. However, after much debate at the AGM, in order to insulate members from such a significant rise it was agreed to raise the cost of full membership to £100. However, it is important to appreciate that at this level without a significant increase in membership numbers in 2017 and in the absence of any sponsorship income we will be digging further into our depleted reserves in order to stage the 2017 series of events. The committee will review matters again at the end of 2017 and may well have to seek a further increase in fees for 2018.

There is no getting away from the fact that this is a very significant increase however we believe that membership fees still represent excellent value for money when you consider that full membership entitles you to attend and compete at 5 races. Many of you will participate in other sports such as triathlons and cycle races so will know the cost of those as a comparison.

You can all help us to reduce future increases in membership by doing all you can to attract new rowers to the sport and supporting those new clubs with boats so that they turn up to races and spread the costs over a larger membership.

We will of course continue to seek sponsorship opportunities wherever we can and such funds can then be used for specific growth and development issues.

Day tickets will remain available but there was a long debate about the continued availability of day tickets with some arguing that they should be scrapped whilst others putting a case that they are vital to ensure clubs can consistently crew boats. In the end we have decided to keep the tickets available however they will be set at such a level to encourage rowers to take out a full membership if competing in a number of events.

In the face of these new increased fees the issue of paying by standing order was raised. In theory this would be possible but the committee have concluded that we do not have the administrative resources to administer such a process checking who has paid, who has cancelled their standing order and who still owes membership. Therefore membership remains payable in full as a one off payment.

Finally, we would remind rowers that this is your money and nobody on the committee gets paid for the time they spend organising events on your behalf. Any surplus funds retained by the league are applied to running events or in the development of our sport.

Scott Bentley

Treasurer, UKSRL

On behalf of the UKSRL Committee

