



General Meeting of the United Kingdom Surf Rowers League

Sunday 9 November 2014
On the rising of the 2014 AGM
@ Perranporth Surf Life Saving Club

MINUTES

In attendance: Mike Lord, Jenny Jones, Khalil Isaac, Jon Baglow, Gary Walters, Stuart Cooper, Phil Martin, JR, Ian Knowles, Pete Gaisford, Scott Bentley, Louise Gapp, Becky Knowles, Nick Beringer, Cris Ballinger, Dan Berriman, Gareth Allen, Katie Marquardt

1) Apologies

Steve Kendall, Jo Carter, Spike Gaisford, Aaron Jones

2) Minutes of General Meeting 17 November 2013

Approved.

3) Matters Arising

i) Walkie Talkies: walkie talkies have been made available by First Response in 2014 and have been used on occasion. Officials would like to continue to have this facility.

ii) Helmets: The Chairman thanked everyone for being accommodating about the new rules on helmets brought in for 2014. RK informed the meeting that should clubs or rowers wish to buy helmets, Westcountry Watersports at Mylor Harbour has offered to give a discount for purchase of 6 or more. RK is happy to run a list of anyone who is looking to replace a helmet or buy a batch of club helmets and further information about the makes and styles can be emailed in the new year. Contact admin@uksrl.co.uk

4) Survey Results

The Secretary thanked everyone for their support and participation in the survey. The results were talked through (copy attached).

Discussion points: what was the status of the survey versus the members of the UKSRL Present and voting. The Secretary confirmed that the survey is not binding but that the views of 40 respondents should be considered when looking at the issues raised – it was a representation from the rowers.

5) Event costs and implications for races & sponsorship of Events / UKSRL

The Chairman outlined the services that First Response provide i.e. risk assessments pre-event, paramedic support, on the water life saving , and gave an indication of some of the issues encountered in the past e.g. a no show be pre-arranged safety cover. The results of the survey were outlined to the meeting on this specific issue. The Treasurer outlined the costs of putting on events and the primary overhead was the safety cover. A number of discussion points followed:

A club offered to provide the safety cover for a race day at their venue. Concern was raised because this would mean that there would be a standard of safety cover for 5 out of 6 events and a different level of cover at 1 event. This opened up the organising officials to liability due to this inconsistency.

Sponsorship of events / membership fees. Other discussion points:

- Clubs could raise funds to help cover events costs but it was noted that clubs preferred to keep any sort of local fund raising e.g. a raffle.
- The number of races could be reduced but there was no appetite for this.
- Pay as you go for racing was a logistical headache to administer. The UKSRL's overheads do not vary according to the number of competitors.
- Concern was raised that increasing the fee would put off new entrants to the sport.
- An observation that day tickets helped with those wanting to try out racing.
- A further observation that there was nothing to stop surf lifesaving and boat clubs offering a reduced membership for new rowers. It was thought not to be the role of the UKSRL to offer discounts for the racing overheads given the day ticket option.
- The UKSRL could be more obvious about the role of first response and the other overheads of the UKSRL – the accounts aim to do this in part.
- It was pointed out that often it's the same people who are asked to fund things, with rowers having to find raffle prizes or ask family and friends time and time again.
- If we want certainty of events we should just put the membership up to a level that covers costs as there was a risk that a club could commit to raising funds and then not materialise.
- Sponsorship for events should still be sought but that because this was uncertain the operating costs of the events should not be reliant on this. If sponsorship is found then this will ameliorate costs and enable funds to be used for something else e.g. an open day.

AGREED that membership levels should cover the costs of putting on race events and that the risk that clubs did raise funds or sponsorship not being found was too high risk a strategy.

NOTE: this discussion took place before the membership levels for 2015 were set due to an adjournment of the AGM so that the decision could be properly informed.

6) Racing:

i) Dates and venues of Summer Series 2015

The Chairman asked that the pattern of racing was discussed. The Secretary outlined the responses in the survey concerned with weekend racing the pros and the cons.

Discussion points:

- The travelling was a key point for the weekend events.
- A number of formats were put forward: S/D/D/S UKOpen; D/D/D/S
- It was previously agreed that we would try to have an event at one new location per year, to expand possible audience.

AGREED That the Double/Double/Double/ Single so weekend racing will continue finishing with the UK Open.

The Committee will investigate venues and dates. The only certain date at the moment is Watergate Bay will be on 11th July so this is likely to be the Cornish Carnage Weekend. Watergate will include us in their publicity so we needed to commit to a date as soon as possible.

18/11/14 UPDATE: due to the possibility of holding the UK Open and the European Championships in Wales during the European Surf Life Saving Champs in Wales at the same location, the Committee is investigating the possibility of a D/D/D/D in conjunction with the European Surf Rowers League.

ii) Dates and venues UK Open Surfboat Championships

With the European Surf Lifesaving championships in Wales, it was proposed that Wales be the focus for the UK Open and the European Championships. This will be explored by the committee – beaches & tides etc. in liaison with the club representatives for the Welsh clubs.

iii) Pointscore – quick review, Q&A

A quick recap of the current point score was given, due to concerns raised during the season about consistency of application. The Chairman reassured the meeting that this has been reviewed and no disadvantage to any crew occurred and that any errors were picked up on the day.

iv) Race Comms Plan

The Secretary outlined that a communications plan for events was going to be drafted and clubs views sought on delivering this comms plan at a local level. This is with a view to increase exposure and audience attendance at events. If the clubs and UKSRL can compile a portfolio of publicity, the UKSRL and clubs can then use that portfolio to seek sponsorship in the future.

7) European Surf Boat Championship – representations from UK

The ESRF will be notified that UK clubs support a Welsh venue for the ESRF due to the surf lifesaving events happening this year. It's the year of the Welsh!

- 8) Gallipoli 100 & Surf Boat Transport –
An update was given by the Secretary. Shipping in containers is looking like the cheapest option. The UKSRL should look to obtain boats in multiples of 3 due to container capacity. Work is ongoing with the ASRL to secure certainty about the boats age and condition, with photographs and biographies being requested.
It was acknowledged that the boats are likely to be so cheap (cheaper than the cost of a set of oars and rowlocks) that we couldn't really be too fussy.
AGREED that the boats will be allocated to interested clubs by ballot, noting that it was open to clubs to swap should e.g. a certain make of boat be preferred.
FURTHER AGREED that should the number of boats not fill a container i.e. up to 2 boats may be needed to ensure full containers shipped to the UK, that the UKSRL is authorised to use its financial reserves on a short term basis to bring the boats into the country for onward sale to future recipients.
- 9) Surf Boat Development
i) 100 years crews
ii) Novice
iii) Masters category
iv) Open Days
- Discussion points:
- How can we include rowers not in set crews. Proposal for wildcard crews where interested rowers are put together on the day.
 - Further suggestion for invitations to other rowing clubs to participate for free – Navy etc, have an invitation race.
 - As numbers are low, we should include any categories within the main race events rather than separate them out.
 - Question as to where have our members gone as low numbers – the chairman responded by pointing out that 2 clubs stopped rowing at the same time – Bude and Bournemouth, which took chunks of members out of the rowing picture.
 - Noted it often hinges on individuals – without whom rowing activity falls away.
 - Mixed crews were suggested too, to enable more rowers to get to race.
 - Use the weekend race time more productively to encourage additional activity.
 - Taster / open days with an invitation to other clubs.
 - Have a veterans category seeing as most rowers are masters already!
- 10) Sweeps school
The President outlined that a funding application is being pursued to help clubs pay for sweep schools e.g. for travel and overnight expenses for sweeps to visit developing clubs to share knowledge and training. It was further suggested by the Development Officer that at every event, the time should be utilised productively to share experience and knowledge on incidents or questions.

11) AOB:

Boat weight classifications

It was proposed that the boats be weighed to ensure they were equivalent and that competition was evened out.

Discussion points:

It was noted that whilst this on the face of it would seem fair and it would be an interesting exercise to get the boats onto a weighbridge, what would it result in?

Issue that the boats would need properly drying out before a true weight could be ascertained.

Surely everyone is going to make sure their boats are as competitive as possible.

It is highly unlikely that any boats are lighter than the specified weight at construction, given the age and condition of boats.

There was no support for this proposal.

Starts and crews creeping forward

It was noted that on the start line during the season, the starter had the boats lined up and then whilst waiting for correct conditions, boats would creep forward, up to half or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a boat length.

Discussion points:

A carding system was proposed e.g. yellow / red etc.

The Chairman noted that the starter would be between knee and hip depth.

It was pointed out that on beaches sometimes a boat could be on the sand at one end of the line and quite deep at the other.

In response, it was pointed out that this is why draws are done randomly so that lane draw ensures no advantage or disadvantage. The boats could choose not to be as far out as the starter.

A check starter was proposed, as was experienced in Montpelier who ensured a proper line up.

AGREED to implement a check starter for events as was seen in Montpelier.

Sharing boats

A question was raised concerning shared boats. If a club has 2 crews and 1 sweep, could the racing be arranged so that those 2 crews did not race one another so that they could row the boat they were used to with their usual sweep.

Discussion points:

This proposal was against the principle behind the honesty of the lane draw of ensuring random racing and a fair allocation of surf and beach conditions.

The pool boat scheme was there to facilitate crews without a boat.

It was noted that there was nothing to stop a club coming to a private arrangement with another club that has a similar boat, to minimise the disruption for the crew. Any damage to a boat under a private arrangement could not be dealt with under the UKSRL's pool boat scheme.

There was no support for this proposal.

Round UK Surf Boat Challenge

It was pointed out that the Bournemouth sweep was raising funds and awareness for a round UK surf boat charity challenge. This is likely to be in challenging conditions. They are asking for support from rowing clubs e.g. being able to sleep on the floor of rowing clubs. It was pointed out that the surfboat crews could row out to do a stint with the rowers.

There was an opportunity to raise publicity for both the charity row and the sport of surf boats more generally. Awareness to be raised with the clubs. There is a facebook page. Around the UK Charity Row 2015 or twitter @ukcharityrow15.

Meeting ends 16.53