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| WYC Burgee Medium | **Notes from the**  **Whitstable Yacht Club Meeting of Sailors**  **1315 hrs Sunday 24 November 2019** |

**Present:**

Robert Govier (Chairman), Sally Gostelow (Sailing & Membership Secretary (minutes)), Ruth Oliver (Senior Instructor, Sailing School), Nicky Whatley, Roy Davis, Mark Grinter, Peter Gowing, Geoff Bush, Patty Baker, Richard Jones, Mike Oliver, Paul Kelly, Tom Oliver, Max Hunt, Neil Reynolds, Peter Heyes, Peter King, Liz North, Ali Nicolson, Jo Phillips, Ian Embry, Julie Puckett, John Cooper, Jon Bloice, Philippa Bloice, John Boorman, Steve Gray, Kevin Hall, Paul Fincham, Rob Spaughton, Hilary Bradshaw, Christian Brewer, Phil Emery, Tony Clements, Nigel Brown, John Berrington, Fef Griffin & Andy Guerin.

Apologies received from: Richard Maltby.

**1 Welcome**

The Chairman opened the 15th meeting of sailors by explaining the purpose was to discuss the programme of sailing at Whitstable Yacht Club. Any ideas and feedback discussed at the meeting would be taken to the Sailing Committee or General Committee for further consideration.

**2 WYC Club Racing Programme 2019 and 2020**

The Chairman reflected on another good year of sailing at Whitstable Yacht Club. WYC hold significantly more club races, of a significantly higher quality than most other Kent and UK sea sailing clubs.

The Chairman summarised the 2019 sailing year so far:

* The weather in 2019 was a year of all or nothing with a large number of high wind events in Whitstable, therefore our ability to sail was affected, although it was fun to watch some of the brave Laser sailors trying to break a speed record!
* Only 54 of 81 club series races have been sailed so far – 67%, which is significantly down compared to 2018 and 2017 (88% of 81 races in 2018, 78% of 69 in 2017).
* All club ‘events’ were sailed, however like club racing, all were affected by poor weather. 16 of 28 ‘event races’ were completed, with Whitstable Week being significantly affected with only 3 of 10 sailed. Again, this was significantly down compared to 2019.
* Whilst the majority of the cancellations were simply down to too much or too little wind to go afloat, one of the Wednesday evening cancellations was due to drifting marks in rough seas. The Sailing Committee is looking at options of how this can be prevented, and all of the buoys were checked for weight and rope/chain following that issue. Kevin Hall is currently looking into organising the laying of small permanent marks which larger buoys can be attached to, as and when required. This will alleviate the need for safety crews to be handling too much heavy chain and tackle for club racing. John Boorman advised that lifting the heavy tackle is a health and safety concern. Richard Bradburn expressed his concern that permanent marks may antagonise the local fishermen and when used by WYC in the past, they often went missing. Ian Embry believes that weed accounts for a lot of the problems with drifting marks this season.
* The Chairman also acknowledged that there had been less races run from the Committee Boat this year due to a problem with the mooring at the end of the season. This was being reviewed and a better mooring solution is expected to be put into place for next season.
* Whilst it’s disappointing when racing is cancelled, 2019 seems to have been an anomaly on an upward trend in terms of the number of races sailed. Even with the cancellations, we still sailed more races than many local clubs even schedule.
* In addition to club racing, Richard Maltby has organised a series of cruises throughout the year and Sunday & Wednesday improver sessions for sailors who want to go out but do not want to join in club racing, they continue to be very popular.

The Chairman advised that the Sailing Committee were working on the 2020 programme. The season will commence with a working party on Saturday 7th March followed by racing on Sunday 8th March with the last race scheduled for Sunday 13th December. Therefore, 83 club races are currently planned for 2020 (a similar number to 2019), plus the usual club events.

Where possible, tide and other events permitting, 2 races will be scheduled per day over the summer months, there are 11 days when this will be possible in 2020.

As a result of changes to the May Bank holidays due to VE day and to the tides, Open events are planned on the May Bank Holidays. The Club Championships will be moved to the August Bank Holiday weekend; the RNLI Pursuit Race to the second May Bank Holiday; with a special one-off event with 2 races for the VE Day Friday Bank holiday in May. Phil Emery expressed his concern that moving the Club Championships to the late August bank holiday would leave no contingency to reschedule a major club racing event in the case of adverse weather.

Whitstable Week is planned for 3rd to 7th August 2020.

A draft of the 2020 programme has been uploaded to the website and the final draft will be posted before the programme goes to print in January. The paper copy will be sent by March.

**3 Events Policy and 2019/20 Events**

The Chairman reported that in 2019 the club hosted a 505 Open, Merlin Rocket & Tasar Open, B14 Open, Wanderer Open,Tornado National Champtionships and a KSSA event. WYC also hosted LaserFest, Whitstable Week and the Forts Race, which attracted sailors from other clubs. Also the RYA “Push the Boat Out Day” was very successful in bringing in new members.

In all events, sailors commented on how much they enjoyed sailing at WYC and also spoke favourably regarding our facilities, the quality of the racing and the high quality of the staffing by club volunteers and safety crew. Despite the Tornado Nationals being cancelled due to poor weather, 8 visiting boats turned up and paid their entry fees even after sailing had been cancelled! These events have had a positive impact on the club’s profile and raised funds for the club, both directly through entry fees and through bar & social takings.

The Chairman raised a vote of thanks to everyone who had helped support an event in 2019, from the organisers to the safety boat team, volunteers doing duties and boat owners who moved their boats. These high-quality events could not be run without them.

The Chairman reiterated that the purpose of hosting open meetings and national championships is to encourage club members to compete at a higher level and raise the profile of the club in the sailing world. Whilst it has not been to raise money, events have always aimed to cover their costs and larger events can make a significant contribution to the club funds.

Every year at the Meeting of Sailors, attendees are invited to re-confirm their support to the Open Meeting Policy, which was introduced in 2005. The Chairman reminded attendees that at the 2018 meeting the attendees had unanimously agreed to relax the policy on:

* open events over Bank Holiday weekends, to allow events where they made sense for the club;
* to allow opens to be accepted for classes that are not sailed at the club;
* more than one major championship a year (a major champs being one that is longer than a weekend), as WYC will now accept more than one if a race management team is available and willing.

These changes were too late to affect the 2019 season but have changed the programme for 2020.

The Chairman listed the main events scheduled for 2020:

* B14 Open – 9th & 10th May;
* Forts Race Weekend (Open to monohulls again this year. New format being further developed to appeal to a wider range of boats). – 23rd & 24th May;
* Merlin Rocket Open and Tasar National Championships – 20th & 21st June;
* LaserFest – 11th & 12th July;
* Sprint 15 National Championships – 22nd to 24th August;
* Tornado National Championships – 19th & 20th September.

The policies that remain unchanged are:

* there will not be more than one open event per month;
* club racing will take place on open meeting days (except the Forts Race) but priority for safety boat cover will be given to the open meeting;
* classes nominated to support an open meeting will not have series racing on the weekend of the open.

Robert asked for any comments on the events policy and 2019/20 events.

John Cooper raised his and that of the Merlin fleets concerns regarding the change to the policy for the following reasons: WYC should be encouraging members to sail over bank holiday weekends; it is difficult to get volunteers to help out on bank holidays and there is a tendency to over commit ourselves; members are required to move their boats too often.

Geoff Bush asked if cruises were going to be scheduled in the programme or held on an ad hoc basis. Robert suggested that it would be worth scheduling some in the 2020 programme and also schedule safety cover, whilst other cruises can be organised on an ad hoc basis and advertised to members via facebook or What’s App. Julie Puckett was concerned at the number of club races being replaced by open events.

Robert agreed to raise the above concerns with the Sailing Committee. Mike Oliver asked John Cooper to send his comments by email for the Sailing Committee.

Geoff Bush thanked the Chairman and all concerned for the very informative and high quality information provided on the club’s website.

**4 WYC Cadets, Training and Social Sailing**

The Chairman asked Ruth Oliver to comment on WYC Training. Ruth reported as follows: “We have had a successful 2019 despite the weather not always being in our favour.

Starting in April with two cadet courses and a dinghy instructor course, having 6 new DI’s was a bonus at the start of the season.

Prospective assistant instructors over last winter we trained to deliver theory sessions and I am pleased to say that all 7 now have their certificates after a number of practical hours. This is a rolling programme so we will be continuing to train cadets over the winter in order to have that stream of instructors coming through over the next few years.

In total we have had 66 cadets achieving certificates on courses and 53 adults, a total of 119 slightly down from 2018 because of cancelled courses unfortunately.

Cadet sessions have also been very successful 97 individuals attending over 19 sessions with an average of 30 per session. Thank you to all the parents who have stepped up and given us as the training team a massive help over the last year.

Our annual Cadetfest saw 30 pirates go on cruises to Shellness and Seasalter, as well as some fun windy days back at Whitstable. Again thank you to all the adult helpers, for driving the safety boats and keeping me sane for 5 days!

Social sailing on Wednesday and Sunday has been enjoyed by a small group, we have decided to only programme Wednesday evening sailing and Sunday sessions will be arranged on an ad hoc basis.

Push the boat out was also a huge success with 63 tasters and 11 new memberships. Again thank you to all the sailors we really can’t do days like this without you.

6 cadet friendly races were raced, more were programmed but due to weather cancelled. 14 sailors enjoyed the races with supported safety cover.

Next season we will be continuing weekly cadet sessions and cadet friendly races. We will be adding into the programme weekday adult sailing courses and powerboat courses both at weekends and week days. 7 cadet courses are also programmed into the busy 2020 schedule as well.

Lastly the income from 2018-19 was £29,041 expenditure £22,904 profit of £6,137.

Finally, a big big thank you to all the instructors, helpers, parents and the cadet committee from the training department. We could not do it without you all!!”

Robert added that it was good to see cadets now taking part in club racing and he hoped it would continue to grow. It was especially good to see many of the cadet parents helping out and becoming more involved with the club. Fef commented on the success of the rolling programme of Assistant Instructors being trained at WYC.

Robert raised a vote of thanks to Ruth for all her excellent work.

**5 Volunteering and Duties**

The Chairman stated that the club membership is showing an upward trend. A lot of this has been driven by the success of the cadet programme and WYC training, bringing new families and sailors into the club, but we do need more sailing adults to join and take part in club activities, and we always need more volunteers to take on responsibilities within the club. Holding open and national events, as well as maintaining a high quality of racing and WYC’s reputation as a top racing club will attract experienced sailors and sailing development to encourage members who are beginners onto the water to join in with club racing is very important. However, it is also important to encourage new sailors into the club, onto the water and into club events and to provide other ways of encouraging existing subgroups in the club onto the water and all of this need’s volunteers.

The Chairman reminded the sailors that the club relies on volunteers and sailing is especially dependent on the members to volunteer to support the club. He thanked the members of the Sailing Committee, recorders, safety boat drivers, General Committee, Bar Committee and everyone who has completed a duty this year. Also those race officers who have run the larger events.

The club has one of the lowest duty requirements of sailing clubs in the UK, only expecting the sailing members to perform one duty a year. That duty is important and the Chairman requested that everyone noted their duty and made every attempt to be there for it. He also asked for members to remind their fellow sailors of their duties to ensure everyone attends. He reminded everyone that if they are allocated a safety boat crew duty, they should call Ian Embry the week before the race to confirm they are needed. His contact telephone numbers are in the programme and on the duty reminder cards.

Whilst the Sailing Committee had worked to make duty allocations even more explicitly highlighted when programmes were sent out for the 2019 season, a significant number of people were still either failing to show up for duties, or giving short notice that they could not make it. The club is looking at online options for duty swaps and notifications, although this may not be in place for the start of the 2020 season.

The Chairman stated that the club is always looking for members willing to train as race recorders, committee boat drivers, safety boat drivers or open meeting race officers. An appeal has recently gone out specifically for race recorders. If any member is interested in these opportunities, please contact him or the other members of the sailing committee.

Richard Bradburn raised a vote of thanks for all those volunteer sailors who have helped with recovering the RIBs whilst the dumper has been out of action. Robert thanked everyone for their support.

**6 Any Other Business**

The Chairman opened the meeting for any other business.

Ian Embry suggested charging double boat parking charges for boats that are not used.

Christian Brewer reminded the meeting of the forthcoming Whitstable Harbour Day/Regional Boat Show in August 2020 – Kelvin confirmed that WYC are committed to taking part in the 2 day event and he would be looking for volunteers to help showcase WYC.

Richard Jones suggested that WYC look into nominating itself for the Yachts & Yachting “Club of the Year” award.

Peter Gowing asked whether the Sailing Committee could look into increasing the number of prizes awarded to the Laser fleet.

Fef Griffin provided the last suggestion of the meeting by asking if Laser sailors be given two duties a year as they are the most active and largest fleet at WYC!

Kelvin raised a vote of thanks to both Robert and Sally for all their work on the sailing programme.

The Chairman closed the meeting by reminding sailors that there are still three races left in the season, and Winter Series prizegiving will be held on Sunday 15th December after the last race followed by a Christmas Dinner.

Chairman

24 November 2019