

DEVIZES CANOE CLUB

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on:

Wednesday 16th November 2022

Present: Mark Bouch, Paul Papworth-Smith, Lindyanne Ehrnrooth, Sue Colby, Stuart Colby, Charlie Mayo, Albert Ehrnrooth, Bev Hunter, Trev Hunter, Mark Ball, Nick Prichard, Graeme Burgess, Nick Poole, Anna Overton, Emma O'Hare, Ann Slator, Chris Jones, Jenny Jones, Juliet Fooks, David Reynolds, Beverley Reynolds, Danny Mason, Vicky Cains, Ellie Johnson, James Mahoney, Nigel Chivers, Debbie Ryall, Cathryn Martin, Hannah Snowsill, Ian Thackray, Tereza Thackray **Juniors:** Philippe Ehrnrooth, Gus Cains, Max Poole, Arthur Hunter-Hopkins, Cam O'Hare, Connie O'Hare, George Kenny, Lewis & Jake Reynolds, Fred Johnson, Bethany Martin

Apologies: Andy Allen, James Papworth-Smith, Jules Ward, Andrew Park, Charles Jenkins, Dan Colby, Jon Scaplehorn.

The Chair outlined the agenda, conduct of the meeting and the voting process for AGM resolutions. We have a total of 167 members of all categories. The chair welcomed all members, and especially junior members, participating in the AGM. Only senior and young adult members can vote according to our constitution. The total number of voting members is 116. Only members present at the AGM may vote. 31 voting members were present.

The 2022 AGM covers the reporting period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Item 1. Apologies

The secretary read a list of apologies received.

Item 2. Minutes of previous AGM

No questions or comments were received from members before the meeting, and there were no comments from the floor. The Chair asked the AGM to agree to these minutes as a true record of the last meeting.

Proposed: Mark Bouch

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

Item 3. Trustees Report

The Chair introduced the Trustees' Report for the year ending March 2022. The report was circulated before the AGM and comments have been incorporated into the document. The Chair summarised the Trustees Report, highlighting the club's excellent post pandemic recovery, as evidenced by the level of club activity and achievements this year.

2021/22 was the year of recovery and our focus was:

- Restoring a full development programme
- Restarting introduction to paddlesport and school programmes
- Increasing participation to at or above pre-pandemic levels
- Retaining and recovering pre-pandemic membership levels
- Rebuilding the club's community spirit and ethos.

The main effort (our top priority) for 2021-2022 was **the restoration of club operations and activity levels to at least pre-pandemic levels**. The Trustees' report includes a full summary of our activities and achievements in 2021-22.

Measures of success.

Three measures are directly connected to the club's vision:

1. Participation
2. Competitive excellence
3. A varied development and activity programme

1. Participation

Participation data is imperfect. We cannot yet trust the data, but we are improving data capture through fob readers and confident the participation is increasing.

Membership has increased and continues to increase by between 8% and 11% per year. This is ahead of our forecast increase. If this trend continues DCC will exceed 200 members by 2025.

We started to measure retention this year. We tend to lose 15% of members every year (non-renewals). When we surveyed members that had left in 2021/22 the dominant factor was an inability to commit time to the club once activities and work recommenced post pandemic. There is no suggestion that we are losing people because they are not having a positive experience at the club.

2. Competitive excellence

We continue to compete well in both marathons and sprint, but it gets harder to achieve as our paddlers promote to more competitive divisions, so ranking amongst UK clubs is not the only measure of success. Progression has been excellent with individual promotions (especially junior paddlers) very strong in 2021/22.

We need to keep feeding paddlers into the lower divisions and especially need to get adults to compete at sprint regattas:

- We must continue to send larger teams to marathon events in every division. The more paddlers we have, the more points we get. A placing in Div 9 is worth the same points as a placing in Div 1, so novice paddlers can make a big contribution by entering in the five local Hasler marathon events and enabling DCC to qualify for the club finals.
- We are now the best SW region club in sprint - even though the SW is the biggest region in UK by number of racing clubs. We have improved to 3rd equal in marathon in the SW, and this is based on competing (with a larger team) in only five or six of the regional events.

Our top junior paddler, Mollie Ball, gained a place at the Olympic Hopefuls regatta (representing GB), and we now have juniors ranked in marathon Div 3 and in Sprint Boys & Girls A/B.

3. A varied development and activity programme

Organised sessions restarted in July 2021. We don't know exactly what percentage of our membership participated in the structured programme, but we will track this and report it next year.

We don't yet have a single measure of paddler progression outside of competitive events. We will aim for this from 2023.

We've been very successful at getting numbers through the introduction programmes and absorbed most senior and junior adventure group paddlers, and some racing paddlers, as new members. But in the junior section, demand exceeded our ability to integrate new paddlers into the racing groups leading to a junior waiting list.

This is a long-term systemic challenge which requires additional coaches, additional equipment, and facilities, all of which will need to be developed to keep pace with our forecast growth.

Our performance on school and youth programmes has been outstanding. These ensure the club is used during the quiet working day periods and contribute a healthy income to the club.

Quality

After several months of hard work, the Club achieved accreditation under British Canoeing's Quality Club programme, demonstrating that we met the highest possible standards of governance and safeguarding.

Over the next 12 months we will take action to meet new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion measures. We will also evaluate whether the club should begin a programme of activity to achieve Champion Club status for talent or junior development.

Thanks & Recognition

Many people make significant contributions to running the club on and off the water. Much of this is unseen. The Chair proposed a vote of thanks to all volunteers and thanked individuals:

- Nigel Chivers. Consistent championship of adult development and the management of our first ever full Hasler event at Chippenham in May 2022.
- Nick Poole. Picked up the coordination of junior race entries and towed the trailer to most, if not all, regional marathon events in 2021/22.
- Bev and Trev Hunter. Contributions too numerous to list, but they include our first mini-sprint regatta at Lechlade, training a number of 2022 national champions from Devizes and planning the club's first trip to the Ghent regatta in Belgium.
- Ian Thackray who retired from a key position as safety officer this year.
- Ann Slator, who won a BC Outstanding Contribution award this year and
- Dan Colby, assisted by Sue and Stuart. They delivered our winter marathon training and the most successful ever club team to compete the Watersides and DW marathons.

Strategic Development

Wadworth & Co have announced their intention to move brewing operations to a new site from mid to late 2023. The brewery has announced that the majority of their current site will be sold to Backhouse Housing for development. Plans will be subject to public consultation from 14th December 2022.

DCC has been actively engaged with the consultation process. A club working group is looking at the feasibility of three options identified in the Wiltshire Council 2022 Wharf Development Brief Update. We intend to publish a feasibility paper when the development brief itself is subject to a formal consultation process in the next few months, and we will continue to have conversations with all important stakeholders involved.

There were no questions from the floor on the 2021/22 Trustees Report

Resolution

The Chair proposed a resolution to accept the Trustees' report and approve its submission to the Charity Commission.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

Item 4. Governance

Devizes Canoe Club is a "Charitable Incorporated Organisation" and was registered with the Charity Commission on 27 March 2014. A CIO brings the advantages of limited liability (a bit like a registered limited company) and combines the advantages of a registered charity. It files a single set of accounts and an annual report to the Charity Commission.

Being a charitable organisation confers many advantages including exemption from business rates and access to grant restricted to charities. It means that Trustees and Members have no liability for the club's debts should the club cease to trade for any reason.

It also has some responsibilities. We are governed by our CIO constitution and nominate trustees to conduct the club's business, including financial and asset management. Trustees are directly responsible to the Charity Commission on behalf of our members.

The Club is governed by the CIO Constitution. This important document, agreed with the Charity Commission, sets out the CIO's powers and scope, including things like trustees' and members' liabilities and duties. We suggest you

read it. It is our primary governance document and in the event of a conflict with any other policy, the constitution prevails.

Club Rules, approved by the AGM last year, provide working guidance on the governance of club matters not addressed by the constitution.

There is no mechanism to change the club's status back to an unincorporated structure or a limited company unless the club is dissolved.

Appointment of Trustees

The trustee committee meets infrequently, and as required, to agree on major changes in policy and exercise oversight and governance over the club's strategy, budget, capital spending plans and legal commitments. There are currently eight trustees. Between three and twelve trustees must be appointed.

One third of trustees retire annually. This year Paul Papworth-Smith and Juliet Fooks retire as the longest-serving trustees, and both have agreed to stand again. Lindyanne Ehrnrooth is nominated as a trustee having been appointed as Club Secretary in 2021.

The chair introduced the nominees for appointment to the trustee committee.

Bev Hunter noted the gender equality on our board of trustees.

No further nominations were received.

Resolution

The Chair proposed to elect all nominees as DCC CIO Trustees.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

The following people are duly elected as DCC CIO Trustees

- Mark Bouch (Chair)
- Paul Papworth-Smith (Treasurer)
- Lindyanne Ehrnrooth (Club Secretary)
- Ann Slator
- Juliet Fooks
- Sue Colby
- Andy Allen
- Chris Jones

Club Management Committee

The CIO Trustees delegate power to a management committee which meets once or twice monthly, to coordinate the operational management of the Club. The Management Committee are responsible for ensuring club operations comply with policy and best practice.

The CIO Trustees appoint the key management committee roles: Club Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary and invite the management committee to fill other key roles necessary for effective management.

The Chair and Deputy Chair divide their roles with Chair's focus being club strategy, development and governance and the Deputy Chair's focus being club operations.

The proposed 2022/23 management committee are Mark Bouch (Chair), Paul Papworth Smith (Treasurer), Lindyanne Ehrnrooth (Secretary), Sue Colby (Deputy Chair and Volunteer Coordinator), Emma O'Hare (Welfare and Safeguarding Officer), James Papworth-Smith (H&S), Stuart Colby (Facilities), James Mahoney (Coaching Group Lead), Anna Overton (Junior Programme Coordinator), Nigel Chivers (Senior Programme Coordinator and Captain of Boats), Jon Scaplehorn (EDI Officer) and Victoria Cains (PR & Media Officer).
Retiring at this AGM: Ian Thackray (Safety Officer)

No additional nominations were received. We would like to identify a member to fill the role of Club Social Secretary who will take over the role from Sue Colby now she has assumed the role of our Chief People Officer looking after our volunteers.

Resolution

To elect the proposed 2023 club committee.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

Item 5. Financial Report and Accounts

The accounts presented at this AGM relate to a period from 1st April to 31st March 2022.

Our treasurer, Paul Papworth-Smith, reported the Club's financial position at year-end.

It's good news! We are financially healthy as a club, but we need to tread carefully, because if we hold on to too much cash, we will not qualify for grant funding, hence we must operate a slim surplus. This restricts our ability to invest in growth/capital spending without grant funding. Not having a big cash surplus does mean that we are reliant on annual income through membership fees, boat storage and other programmes, but we try to keep these charges as low as possible.

REME fees (boats & members) are not featured in the accounts, but they owe the club a significant sum. We are negotiating a settlement with REME and may offer to acquire some of their boats for the club fleet.

Although DCC accounts are currently healthy, the bigger the club becomes, the more complex the accounting becomes. We maintained a reasonable balance between income and expenditure this year, but our costs are increasing to run the facilities and the programme whilst assisting members with the costs of competing and replacing or repairing our aging boat stock. Hence from 2022 we are introducing a proper budgeting system for all activities to keep ourselves in check.

It is essential to maximize income in 2023 through delivering programmes to schools and youth organisations and implement proper budgeting processes for all internal programmes and events. If we don't do this, it is inevitable that membership fees will have to increase or investment in the club and facilities will have to decrease. In 2021/22 we ended the year with a very slim operating margin of just £113.

Question from the floor: What percentage of our income was spent on club kit?

Our total spend was £15k on kit, not including junior boats which were replaced from the event fund. This includes boats, paddles, Buoyancy aids and a defibrillator. Some of the expenditure was related to a 2020 capital grant. This was offset by around £11k in grants and some boats sales.

Resolution

To approve the 2021/22 accounts as circulated.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

Item 6. Membership Fees for 2023/24

Every year the Club's trustees recommend the level of membership fees, and the AGM approves the fees.

This year Trustees propose three resolutions:

- To maintain 2022/23 membership fees at the current level.
- To introduce a new category: 'Out of Port' membership @ 50% of fees.
- To increase boat storage fees by £1/month to an annual charge of £72/year.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

There is a very strong case for increasing membership fees to address the club's increasing costs. Membership fees have not increased since 2018/19 having been fixed during the pandemic. Raising fees by 10% across all categories would generate around £1,000 in additional income.

Our Trustees noted that cost of living increases affect all members and disproportionately affect those with lower incomes. The trustees want to send a strong message that we recognise the impact of increased costs on working families, and we don't want to add to your challenges.

Because we have additional income planned in 2023 from the Schools and Colleges programme, the Trustees recommend we leave membership fees at the current level for 2023, with the proviso that we intend to raise fees by 10% in 2023.

Resolution

To maintain 2022/23 membership fees at the current level.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

NEW MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Last year we introduced an U23 membership category. This year we propose an 'out of port' (OOP) membership. Our existing social membership caters well for non-paddlers but was not intended for people that intend to paddle occasionally, or race for DCC but are located elsewhere and rarely use club facilities.

OOP membership is intended to encourage paddlers that are members of other clubs and wish to paddle here occasionally or are remote from Devizes because of work or study but want to race for Devizes. In practice we have around three adults and one junior in this category, but we could encourage more people to represent the club if the cost was affordable.

Some might consider this membership needs some rules, and we will develop some guidelines. In principle an OOP member should:

- Be located out of reasonable travelling distance from Devizes (> one hour).
- May be a member of another canoe club.
- If a racer, will elect to represent Devizes.
- Only be able to paddle occasionally at DCC in holidays (if a student) or < once per month if working.
- Will not be eligible to store their boat at the club.

We intend to leave these guidelines as a matter of conscience. OOP membership will be declined for anyone abusing the spirit of the rules.

Resolution

To introduce a new membership category: 'Out of Port' membership @ 50% of fees

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

BOAT STORAGE

Previously boat storage has been a decision for the committee, not the AGM. Our boat storage is significantly under the level of charges made by other canoe clubs and has not altered since 2015.

Around 50-55 members benefit from having a storage slot and we plan to increase capacity slightly by 2023 by extending the space on the canal side of the boat store and moving canoes to the passage by the side of the building.

There are no direct costs associated with the boat storage, so this is not an inflationary increase, but our boat storage is already above full capacity and demand in 2023 will exceed supply.

Without this increase, we will be seeking to find another £600 in savings or additional income from events and other charges.

Questions from the floor:

1. There is concern about boat damage through squeezing six kayaks into a section.

MB answered that we are oversubscribed for storage, so must maximise the limited space we have. Members always have the choice to store boats at home to avoid the risk of damage in the store.

LE suggested that members take advantage of our recent purchase of tubular jersey boat socks available from the club for £30 (cost).

2. Canoes are wider than kayaks so should they attract different storage charges?

MB advised that trustees have previously debated this. K2s are wider than K1s and C2/C1s wider than some K boats. Trustees decided that all boats will be charged at the same price so there is no unintentional disadvantage based on boat preference.

Resolution

To increase boat storage fees by £1/month (to £72/year)

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE

With the published agenda complete and all resolutions addressed, the AGM was closed.