Notes from the
Whitstable Yacht Club Meeting of Sailors
1200 hrs Sunday 18 November 2018

Present:
Robert Govier (Chairman), Sally Gostelow (Sailing & Membership Secretary (minutes)), Tony Clements, Nicky Whatley, Mike Oliver, Tom Oliver, Ruth Oliver, Andrea Oliver, Mike Swain, Roy Davis, Paul McNally, Iggy McNally, Sarah Wren, Peter King, Richard Maltby, Fef Griffin, John Boorman, Paul Fincham, Martin Akers, John Gibbons, Steve Gray, Geoff Bush, Paul Kelly, Nick Hawkins, Mark Grinter, Niall Martin, Marc Dumas, John Phelan, Andrew Guerin, Ian Hender, Donna Hender, David Proctor, Theresa Page, Ian Embry and David Figgis.

Apologies received from Richard Bradburn (Commodore), Kelvin Tolson (Beachmaster), John Berrington and Patty Baker.

1 Welcome
The Chairman opened the 14th 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 2018 and 2019
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 2018 sailing year so far:

- 71 of 81 club series races sailed so far – 88%, which is significantly up compared to last year (78% of 69 races) and maintains a long-term upward trend in the percentage of races the club sails.
- All club 'events' were sailed except for the Dawes Cup. A few days were lost, but a total of 23 of 28 'event races' were completed.
- The majority sailed are due to the great sailing conditions and facilities at Whitstable Yacht Club, and the hard work of our volunteers, race officers, Hon Bosun and safety boat team.
- The few cancellations were caused by too much or too little wind.
- In addition to club racing, Richard Maltby has organised a series of cruises throughout the year and Wednesday evening improver sessions for sailors who want to go out but do not want to join in club racing which have proved very popular.
The Chairman advised that the sailing committee were working on the 2019 programme. The season will commence with a working party on Saturday 9th March followed by racing on Sunday 10th March. The last race is scheduled for Sunday 15th December. That makes 85 club races currently planned for 2019 (4 more than 2018), plus the usual club events.

Where possible, tide and other events permitting, 2 races will be scheduled per day over the summer months.

Whitstable Week is planned for 29th July to 2nd August 2019.

A draft of the 2019 programme has been provided on 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.

Mark Grinter asked if, on two race days, races be limited to a maximum of one hour. Robert advised that if there were any concerns regarding the length of races then sailors need to discuss with the RO on the day.

3 Events Policy and 2018/19 Events

The Chairman reported that in 2018 the club hosted the 505 National Championships, Merlin Rocket Open, B14 Open, Wanderer Open and a Dart 18 Open. WYC also hosted LaserFest, Whitstable Week and the Forts Race, which attracted sailors from other clubs.

In every event sailors commented on how much they enjoyed sailing at Whitstable, and commented very favourably on our facilities, the quality of the racing and the high quality of the staffing at the events from club volunteers and safety crew. These events have had a positive impact on the club’s profile, and raised funds for the club, both directly through entry fees, or through bar takings.

The Chairman raised a vote of thanks to everyone who has helped support an event in 2018, 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. In the 2017-2018 club financial year we gained income of over £10k and profit of £5k, equivalent to ~7% of subscription fees in the same period.
The Chairman asked the attendees their opinion on a change to the open meeting policy which was introduced in 2005. He stated that we currently have a race management team who are used to running events and are enthusiastic to do more and we’ve demonstrated that hosting an event does not prevent club sailing. The club also needs to find additional income in order to reduce the need to increase subscriptions. He suggested relaxing the rules and the following was agreed unanimously by attendees:

- no open events will be accepted over bank holidays.  
  [Change agreed by attendees: allow open meetings over bank holidays]
- only opens will be accepted for classes that are sailed at the club.  
  [Change: allow open meetings for classes not sailed at club]
- there will not be more than one open event per month.  
  [No change]
- WYC will not accept more than one major championship a year (a major champs being one that is longer than a weekend).  
  [Change: WYC will accept more than one major championship a year if race management team are willing]
- 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.  
  [No change]
- classes nominated to support an open meeting will not have series racing on the weekend of the open.  
  [No change]

Steve Gray suggested “doubling up” on classes for open meetings where possible. He would also like more large buoys to be available for club racing as currently the larger ones are prioritised for the open events which leaves the club race with small ones which are difficult to see.

Paul McNally asked if more open events for youth classes could be held, eg RS Fevas, 420s and 29ers.

David Figgis was keen to see events held for only profitable classes.

Ali Nicolson raised his concern that it could be difficult to find volunteers to own and run open meetings for classes not sailed at WYC.

The Chairman listed the main events scheduled for 2019:

- The Whitstable Forts Race, 18th & 19th May. New date and format for 2019, and now part of the Allen Endurance Series, so open to monohulls!
- Wanderer Open, 15th & 16th June. Racing Saturday, Cruise on Sunday
Merlin Rocket and Tasar Open, 22nd & 23rd June.
LaserFest '19, 13th & 14th July.
CadetFest, 12th to 16th August.
KSSA Autumn Regatta, 14th September.
Tornado National Championships, 28th & 29th September.

4 WYC Training Centre
The Chairman asked Richard Maltby (Club Principal) to comment on WYC Training. Richard reported:

- A total of 160 people had completed a course. 74 cadets have taken part in cadet sessions with on the water sessions averaging close to 30 per session. A turnover of £22k was achieved. He raised a vote of thanks to Ruth Oliver, Training Administrator and Senior Instructor for her service to the club, its members and cadets. Training rests with volunteers and he thanked both Wendy Fitzpatrick and Mick Martin and also many of the sailors and parents.

- Club racing: cadet friendly races to be included in the programme where the RO will be asked to set a shorter course and a RIB will be on hand to give on the water coaching.

- Instructors: dinghy and assistant dinghy instructor courses are scheduled for the winter months.

- Challenges: windsurf tuition was disappointing this year however plans are being put in place for tuition through 2019.

- Participation: junior participation is rising faster than adults, however, there is a need to get more non-sailing parents engaged.

- Next season: there will be more recreational sailing on offer ie laid back Wednesdays, Social Sundays which will be shown in the sailing programme.

6 Encouraging new members and sailors
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. 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.

The Chairman asked for any other suggestions of programmes, that could be used to encourage sailors, and for volunteers to lead them.

Fef Griffin reported on the success of the Wednesday evening improver sessions which give inexperienced sailors confidence to progress to racing.

Paul McNally would like to see more sailors taking out cadets as crews and for WYC to find ways of linking experienced helms with potential cadet crews.

Sarah Wren asked if WYC had a “buddying” scheme. Robert repored that members of the sailing committee made contact with each new sailing member. The Laser fleet were currently doing a very good job at welcoming and integrating new members into their fleet.

7 Volunteering and Duties

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 Chairman commented that the committee boat has seen a lot of use this year, with an attempt to run as many races as possible away from the mooring. The committee boat has proved itself as a very capable and suitable platform for running races, which has been commented on by several visitors to the club. He thanked John Cooper for his continued work coordinating the driving and maintenance of the boat, and for everyone who has trained as a driver, and/or helped with the maintenance this year.

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.

The Chairman also mentioned that he was working with Sally to make the duty allocations more explicit when the programmes are sent out in March, as some members still seem to be not realising that they have been assigned duties.
Paul Fincham asked the Chairman to clarify whether members who carry out extra duties, above and beyond their rostered duty should be exempt from the rostered duty. The Chairman stated that all members are currently expected to carry out one duty, so technically they are not expected to do more. However, there are a lot of volunteer members who carry out far more than their one duty.

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. If any member is interested in these opportunities, please contact him or the other members of the sailing committee.

8 Any Other Business

The Chairman opened the meeting for any other business.

Jo Phillips reminded members of the on-going "Ramp it Up" fundraising initiative which has so far raised in excess of £9k. All proceeds from the Christmas raffle would be put towards the ramp fund. Andrea Oliver reminded members of the forthcoming craft fair and Robert also pointed out that a number of social events had been organised over the coming months and are advertised on the website.

Robert reported that the ramp has become slippery and would need constant maintenance.

Mike Oliver asked if there was any update on the oyster racks. Paul McNally reported that the Oyster company were appealing and an inquiry is to be held in January.

Ali Nicolson raised a vote of thanks to Robert Govier for all his hard work in organising another excellent season of sailing.

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 9 December after the last race.

Chairman
18 November 2018