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**2025/03/16**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 16th March 2025 4.00pm at the Club**

Present: David Figgis DF (Commodore), Terry Davis TD, Maureen Bush MB, Mike Oliver (Rear Commodore House) MO, Philippa Bloice PB.

The meeting was quorate with 34 voting members. All reports had been circulated with the agenda.

1. The Commodore welcomed the members to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Steve Gray, Glenn Cook, Richard & Pauline Davis, Chris & Bob Bell, Huw Reynolds, Andrea Oliver, Richard Jones, Jo -Phillips – proxy Andrew Provan.

**3 Minutes of Previous AGM held on 24th March 2024**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Proposed by John Cooper seconded by Kelvin Tolson.

**4 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**5 Correspondence**

There was no correspondencenot dealt with before the meeting.

**6 Commodore’s Report**

My first year has flown by. It seems a very short time since Andrew Jackson passed me the Commodore’s burgee at the last AGM, (which was spotted flying in the Med in June.) The main reason for the speed has been the caliber of the WYC General committee. I didn’t appreciate how much is done behind the scenes.

There are several people I would like to mention by name and apologies to all who I have left out. We wouldn’t be club we are today, without the continual support from our wonderful volunteers. You are needed and all greatly appreciated.

Social events at the club are running well, ranging from talks on the “Crab and Winkle” railway line which over 40 members attended to our New Year’s Eve bash which sold out in late November and proved we can still fill our clubhouse.

Other events included the Whitstable Week Ball, the Winter Ball at the Marine Hotel, various music nights, pool, darts, major sporting events like 6 nations and Americas Cup, book club, art club and much more.

Andrew and his team are beginning to make the club full and vibrant again and of course helping with the bar turnover.

These extra events both encourage and create more work for Richard and his bar team, who are always warm and welcoming. Richard does well to keep prices as low as possible but sadly due to Government policy we might need to increase prices come April.

Steve and many others have been responsible for yet another successful year on the water running both internal and external events.  The shortened Whitstable week worked well and is being repeated this year. Training under Jo and Ruth is going from strength to strength, with cadets going out in almost all wind conditions and again courses are selling out quickly. My favourite last year was not a RYA course but our own in house “Transition to Racing”. The energy and enthusiasm shown by all involved was fantastic to see with the range of ages, from 10 to 70, all progressing and many entering club races later.

Our clubhouse and other buildings are a huge asset to the club however they are also a significant financial burden. The upkeep is being eased by Mike’s management rather than the firefighting of the past and to Maureen’s renting out of various rooms as offices. Maureen’s tight financial management has allowed us to survive.

Far too much time and money over the past years, has been spent on our legal fight with the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company, for the continued use of the beach, which of course we need for boat storage and to sail off. Terry Davis, General Committee member and ex-Commodore has spent months looking over plans, organizing people and lawyers and hopefully getting our future sorted. This has not been cheap and while we are owners of the best sailing club in the world, we are consequently cash short. But things will get better.

**7 Rear Commodore’s Sailing Report**

The focus in 2024 was bringing improving sailors, both young and old, into wider club activities and the racing programme. The Improver sessions were well attended and our new ‘Transition to Racing’ programme proved a success. There were 17 starters in the cadet racing series and 19 in the follow-on ‘Transition to racing’ race series – there will be a 7 race series combining cadets, improvers and TTR in 2025 to help further bridge this gap.

The club has a strong programme for cadets with weekly sessions which were frequently fully booked and of course Cadetfest. The ‘On Board’ schools programme saw children from St Mary’s and Joy Lane school experiencing sailing for the first time with some going on to join the WYC cadets.

At the top end of cadet racing Joe Barton had a superb year winning the Autumn All-in-Handicap series outright and finishing 2nd in the Town Regatta and Winter AiH series. Also performing well were Olly Low, Jack Taylor, Finn and Freya Crockatt and

George Massingham and many WYC cadets have become instructors which helps bring through the next generation of young sailors.

The 2024 season saw a 12% growth in the number of boats starting races with the number of races in the year being about the same. There was strong growth in the number of boats competing in the club race series (Spring, Autumn etc) with All-in Handicap up 56% and Lasers up 24%. This was balanced by fewer starts in our feature races partly due to weather but also fewer races due to the combination of the August and Town regattas.

Our 2024 Club Champions are Robert Govier and David Figgis – that maybe a first for a current WYC Commodore! Whitstable Week was won by Rick and Sarah Perkins with a consistent performance in varied conditions, the Town Regatta by Dickie Ledger and Sarah Oliver and a breezy Laserfest was won by Harry Newton.

We hosted a range of open events: the Topper SE training and travellers open, a combined Merlin Rocket and Tasar open and a Wanderer open. The programme included dinghy cruises led by Richard Maltby and ‘Paddle in Company’ sessions for Kayaks and paddleboards led by Kerry Collins – these will both be repeated in 2025.

The club has benefited once again from sponsorship by Holidaycottages.co.uk across many of its activities – adult and cadet bursaries, Cadetfest and Whitstable Week were all supported – and they are signed up for 2025 - many thanks guys!

WYC has an extensive racing, training and cadet programme which depends on members taking their turn in race management – thank you all. We are also very dependent on the safety boat team, recorder team and committee boat drivers to deliver the programme. We are hugely grateful to those who volunteer but we badly need more to spread the responsibility – so if you fancy helping out please contact Matthew Young, our new safety boat co-ordinator, Sally or me.

We hope you’re looking forward to the new 2025 season which started today – the schedule has been published and includes national championships for Tasars and Wanderers, the Solo Spring Championships, the return of the SE Toppers and a full programme of 107 club races – how many other clubs can match that?

Stephen P Gray - Rear Commodore Sailing

No of race starts: 2024 2023

Series races Handicap: 751 481 +56%

Laser: 609 492 +24%

Feature races All: 526 717 -27%

Total race starts 1,886 1,690 +12%

**8 House Report**

Mike Oliver outlined the limited projects completed due to financial restraints this

past year. This included a new marquee, various roof repairs to all properties, replacement security netting and carpentry to various club properties. Emergency fire training for staff and annual compliance testing completed. Mathew Young was thanked for assisting with various jobs.

Simon Reynolds has ideas for the Stroud shed – just waiting for money to be available.

**9 Finance Report and Presentation of Accounts for year ended**

**30th September 2024**

Presentation of Accounts had been circulated with the agenda.

The Accounts having been duly proposed by Jennifer Griffin, seconded by Ian Wild, unanimously approved by all present,

**10 Appointment of Independent Advisers**

MHA MacIntyre Hudson appointed Independent Advisers for 2025/26

Proposed by Jo Wyles, seconded by John Cooper, unanimously approved by all present.

**11 Election of Commodore, Officers and General Committee**

The following, having been duly proposed by Lousise Provan and seconded by Alistair Nicolson were unanimously elected.

David Figgis Commodore

Vacant Vice Commodore

Steve Gray Rear Commodore – Sailing

Mike Oliver Rear Commodore – House

Vacant Hon Treasurer

Maureen Bush Office

Terry Davis Property

Robert Govier IT

Jennifer (Fef) Griffin New members ‘Meet and Greet’

Richard Ledger Bar

Jo Wyles Training Principal

Andrew Provan Social events

**12** **Any Other Business**

**Beach Lease**

The Commodore announced the outcome of the beach lease: -

The beach area which the club occupies for boat parking is owned by the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company and has been in the past on a 15 year lease.

The lease renewals have been a significant cost for legal fees for the club.

Under Terry Davis’s leadership (Chartered Surveyor and ex Commodore), we now have a 99 year lease secured with huge perseverance, patience and skill.

The rent remains as for the past 15 years at £10,500 for the next 10 years wheron it will be subject to an increase of maximum 5%.

There will be a planning application for the Forge to have a seated customer eating area on the beach between the two breakwaters opposite their site. WYC as part of the lease negotiations has agreed not to object and will relinquish that area if planning approved.

If WOFC get their planning permission our rent over 5 years drops to £1 a year for the remaining period of the lease.

This lease is a legal document now watertight.

Maureen Bush reported that as part of the lease a survey of all the oyster trestles was completed this means the trestles cannot be extended into our area.

John Cooper stated Terry Davis had fought valiantly for years and the outcome was a huge success.

**Short term Loan request**

The Commodore asked the members if they could provide the club with a short-term loan: -

The club is asset rich, but the lease has not been a straightforward, easy, or cheap outcome with over the past five years legal costs exceeding £200k.

We therefore now have aa short-term cash flow shortage. We are hoping that this could be funded by members with short term loans of say £2-5,000 for no more than one year. Please, if you are in a position to help contact David Figgis or Maureen Bush at the office.

A free drink at the bar was offered to celebrate the New Lease and to thank everyone involved, especially Terry Davis. Thanks were endorsed by everyone present.

The meeting closed at 4.35pm.

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Chairman