HARLOW (BLACKWATER) SAILING CLUB

MINUTES FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 24th November 2024.

Mark Batt (Commodore) called the club's Annual General Meeting to order at 12.05pm and welcomed those members present.

PRESENT: 33 members with voting rights signed the attendance register

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
   Lawrence Maudsley, Edward Skinner, John Bowers, Marcus Wallace, Barbara and John Salmon, Norman & Maureen Mills, Peter & Jenny Robinson.

2. **Minutes of 2023 AGM (held on 19.11.2023)**
   These were agreed to be a true record.
   Proposer: Mark Batt   Seconder: Peter Hardie   Carried unanimously.

3. **Annual report of the committee.**
   Mark Batt (Commodore) gave the committee report.

   I would like to thank you for coming to your AGM. This year we have achieved the following:

   Club Health and Safety: *The Club policy on safeguarding, young children and vulnerable adults has been updated and is available on the website. A number of committee members and other members involved with supervision/training of children and adults have undergone DBS checks. Clive Tarling has taken on the role of Deputy Welfare Officer.*

   Club Equipment: *Purchased quick release M/L trapeze harness for use with the Club Bahia and have recently purchased RS Vision as another double handed training boat from Club member Dave Connor for a discounted price. We have also purchased 12 almost new life jackets of various sizes from the Sea Scouts which are stored in the Sail Loft.*

   Club Improvements: *The refurbishment of Purchase of new freezer for galley. During the year Hazel Mason agreed to take on a role co-ordinating the galley which has proved successful in ensuring the galley remains fully staffed and provides high quality food. A recent food hygiene inspection awarded the Club 5 stars and the Club was highly commended.*

   A new drinks cooler and small freezer have been purchased for the bar.

   Several of the Clubhouse windows which had blown, have been replaced.

   A new laptop computer has been purchased for the race box.

   Storage of fuel is now in an appropriate locker away from the Clubhouse.

   A new storage area has been created under the Clubhouse for members equipment previously stored in the container. The container is now used to store lawn mowers and other equipment so that no fuel is stored under the Clubhouse.

   On the water: *We continue to have successful joint dinghy racing with MBSC. The safety boat cover on Saturday afternoons for casual water sports and training continues to be popular and will continue next year. The Saturday evening sailing series has not proved successful and it has been agreed that it would be replaced with more of the casual water sports/training days.*

   Club Publicity: *New signs by the top of the jetty and on the gate – thanks to John Wilmott. A successful Open Day was held which coincided with a village garage sale event and the Club was included on the map of locations for this event. Many thanks to all that helped on the day.*

Club membership: *We have had a successful year attracting new members and currently have 104 memberships which is the highest number for over 10 years. We continue to attract cruiser members and 3 new moorings have been commissioned this year.*

Club Week/Socials: *Mark invited Lydia (Social Secretary) to give her report.*

We have held some successful social occasions this year and on behalf of the committee I'd like to express my thanks for your support in coming to these events.

In March we marked the sailing tradition of putting the boats in the water with a Fitting Out meal. Following feedback from the members we changed the timings to a lunchtime which has proved to be a good move and seems popular. Our end of year sailing tradition to mark the Laying Up of the boats was fully booked. We can cater for 36 people for a 3 course sit down meal. On both occasions there was a fun, informal atmosphere in the club. It was great to see people spending time together socially and out of their wetsuits. Special thanks must go to Marjie for her culinary skills and homemade delights.

In the summer we had the Commodore's BBQ and our Club Week. Lots of fun was had on and off the water, with tasty food and daily varied entertainment. It was a great team effort, and we were delighted that new and 'old' members joined us across the week. Although attendance is increasing each year, we would still love to see more members at the club enjoying the water and events we put on during that week. This year we had 70 out of 195 members join us. It is a fun, low key week with the option to join us for part or the whole week. The only cost to members and their guests is for food/drink. The date for next year is TBC.

The aim of all our social events has been to provide an opportunity for members to socialise off the water and to get to know each other better. We price our events to cover costs including heating/cooking costs and make a small profit. Any profit made is reinvested to improve future social events. This year the profit from our social events (which includes profits made in the bar and galley during Club Week) has been spent on, a BBQ, fridge in the bar to keep more drinks cool, set of kitchen knives, new crockery (bowls and plates) and spoons.

Please do join us at these events. It is a great way to become involved and make new friends.

Duties and DutyMan: *We are a self-help club and the success of our programme relies on members doing their share of duties and volunteering their help whenever possible.*

The jetty is an important asset to the Club and requires regular cleaning. Unfortunately, the allocation of jetty cleaning duties on DutyMan was not successful with members not undertaking their duties. The committee has agreed to continue with jetty washing duties for another year and explore ways to simplify the equipment set-up and possible investment in more efficient washers.

Future Projects: *Replacement of Clubhouse wooden cladding which is rotten in places and improving insulation.*

The commodore ended by thanking the members of the committee for their help running the club and also other members that give their time to help out, as without this the club would not survive.

4. Treasurer's Report.

Sandra Hockley (Treasurer) gave her report:

As at 31.10.24 the Clubs bank account stood at £21,606.44 in credit which is £4,431 up on last year. Over the year we had a very successful open day and again our membership numbers have increased. There has also been an increase in cruiser membership.

Over the year we have held successful social events including our annual family week. Reorganization of the running of both bar and galley have also made a difference too. All these things have enabled us to pay off the outstanding Jetty Loan in full (£3470) well ahead of time.

As in previous years, we have continued to upgrade the bar and galley facilities etc. and replace one of the Club's dinghies with a RS Vision dinghy.

The RNLI celebrates its 200th anniversary this year and we have made a £220 donation to them. Please see the letter received from the RNLI which is posted on the notice board.

I would like to thank Anthony Gray for carrying out the independent review of the annual accounts. This concludes my report.

The Club accounts were agreed.

Proposer: John Hawker Seconder: John Wilmott Carried unanimously.

5. Election of Auditor and Trustees.

Anthony Gray was proposed to continue as auditor for the club accounts.

Proposer: Terry Sharman Seconder: Rod Martin Carried unanimously.

The current trustees Mark Batt, Mike Bryant and Barry Knights are willing to continue.

Proposer: John Hockley Seconder: Peter Hardie Carried unanimously

6. Agreement of subscriptions for 2025.

The committee had recommended an average 4% increase in subscriptions for 2024 to cover increases in clubs running costs (rates, insurance, energy etc.) and to assist with financing club improvements with a larger proportional increase in storage charges for kayaks, SUPs and windsurfers.

John Wilmott commented on the need for the Club to ensure it remained competitive, although he supported the proposed increase. Barry Knights commented that he thought the proposed increases in proportion to the increase in other costs.

Martin Tarling queried the £10 rise in single membership being a larger proportional increase compared to family membership. Tony Everitt commented that this was as a result of rounding up.

Dave Connor asked whether a social member category could be introduced. Tony Everitt informed the meeting that since the Club was CASC registered to benefit from lower rates and gift aid it required a high percentage of its members to be actively involved in sporting activities and a social membership category was not viable. Dave asked about temporary membership. Mark Batt commented that this was not required as non-members were encouraged to visit the Club (for up to 6 occasions) before being asked to join. John Hawker commented that members of the public are also encouraged to come into the Club when it is open. Barry Knights commented that new members joining have the following years membership included. Sandra Hockley commented that members could also pay fees by monthly direct debit.

As an aside, Brenda Case asked whether an additional double-handed kayak could be purchased for the Club.

There were no further comments regarding the proposal.

Proposer: Barry Knights Seconder: John Case Carried unanimously.

7. Proposed amendments to Club Rules

Section 2(8): Members Conduct

The committee has reviewed Club Rule 8 (Members Conduct) in line with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and Guidance and advise that the current process fails to protect the confidentiality of Members including vulnerable adults and children. This proposal to amend Club rule 8 ensures confidentiality in the process, protects vulnerable adults and children and aligns with RYA recommendations. The proposed amendment reads as follows:

8a Conduct of Members

Every member upon joining the Club and thereafter, is deemed to have notice of, and undertakes to comply with the Club Rules and any Bye-laws and Regulations of the Club.
Any breach of compliance or any conduct which, in the opinion of the Committee, is either unworthy of a Member or otherwise injurious to the interests of the Club, shall render a Member liable to disciplinary action by the Committee, which may include suspension for a specified period or expulsion.

Before taking such disciplinary action against a Member, the Committee shall give the Member full opportunity of making explanation to the Committee (either in writing or in person) or to the Welfare officer in the case of safeguarding concerns, or of resigning.
A resolution to apply any sanction shall be carried by a simple majority vote by those Members of the Committee present and voting on the Resolution.

Appeal against suspension or expulsion may be made to a panel of 3 members not involved in the Committee's decision. This appeal panel shall be comprised of any Club Trustees not on the Committee and, if necessary, other Members of long-standing continuous membership of not less than 10 years.

Upon suspension or expulsion, the Member/former Member shall not be entitled to have any part of the annual Membership fee refunded and must return any Club keys, trophies or other Club property held forthwith.

Upon expulsion of a Member, the Member will be given at least one month to remove all boats and other property from the Club premises. After one month the Committee may dispose of the former Members property in accordance with rule 11f(ii)

8b Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection

Any Member who is involved with supervision or teaching of Vulnerable Adults or Children must be in possession of a clear basic DBS check. Committee Members should also have a clear basic DBS check. The basic DBS check should be renewed every 3 years.

The Committee may at its discretion request a basic DBS check on any Member.

Laura Davidson questioned the need for the last line regarding DBS check and asked in what circumstances this would be required. Following discussion, it was agreed that the last line was unnecessary since members requiring DBS checks were fully covered in the preceding paragraph.

The amended proposal was put forward for approval.

Proposer: Ron Suffield   Seconder: John Hawker   Carried unanimously.

Section 3(16): Constitution of the Committee

Tony Everitt outlined the reasons for the proposed change to the constitution of the committee.

- Firstly, difficulty recruiting to vice-commodore and rear-commodore roles which oversee either all matters on water or matters on land. The vice-commodore position is also traditionally filled by the next commodore (commodore elect). Proposal is to remove the rear commodore role but retain the vice-commodore position to be filled by the next commodore elect.
- Secondly, the current committee roles do not reflect the way the Club has developed to encompass not just dinghy and cruiser sailing but other watersports e.g. kayaking and windsurfing. This proposal suggests a new role for a watersports secretary to represent the non-dinghy and cruiser sailing water sports.

- Finally, the bar and galley are a very important social focus of the Club and have tended to be run separately. This proposal suggests a new role of hospitality secretary to oversee both bar and galley.

In summary, the proposal was for removal of Rear Commodore and Bar Manager roles to be replaced by a Hospitality Secretary (to oversee galley and bar) and a Watersports secretary (to oversee kayaking, SUP, windsurfing).

Proposer: Barry Knights Seconder: Peter Hardie Carried unanimously.

8. **Election of Officers and Committee.**

Tony Everitt explained that nominations had been received for all positions in the new committee structure (item 7 - approved at this meeting) apart from vice-commodore. The following were committee members willing to stand for a further term in their current role and new nominations received.

There were 2 current committee members who were no longer standing in their current committee roles but had indicated they would be willing to continue on the committee as ordinary members: Bob Parsons (Rear Commodore) and Clive Tarling (Sailing Secretary). Neither were present at the AGM so a vote of the membership was taken and a majority of those present nominated Bob Parsons.

Since only one nomination had been received for the rest of the committee positions it was proposed that the following members were elected.

Position	Name	Nomination
Commodore	John Hawker	Nominated by committee
Vice-Commodore	Vacancy	
Hon. Secretary	Tony Everitt	Willing to stand for a further term
Hon. Treasurer	Sandra Hockley	Willing to stand for a further term
Membership Sec.	Barry Knights	Willing to stand for a further term
Sailing Secretary	Vicki Riley	Nominated by committee
Cruiser Secretary	Steve Howell	Willing to stand for a further term
Watersports Sec.	Keith Martin	Nominated by committee
House Secretary	Neil Clark	Willing to stand for a further term
Publicity Officer	John Wilmott	Willing to stand for a further term
Social Secretary	Lydia Knights	Willing to stand for a further term
Hospitality Sec.	Hazel Mason	Nominated by committee
Committee Member	Peter Hardie	Willing to stand for a further term
Committee Member	Marcus Wallace	Willing to stand for a further term
Committee Member	Bob Parsons	Willing to stand for a further term on committee.

Proposer: Mike Bryant Seconder: Ron Suffield Carried unanimously.

9. **Any other business (AOB).**

Proposal from Ron Suffield to amend Club Byelaw 12

Club bylaw 12:

Dogs must always be kept on a lead and not allowed to foul anywhere on the Club premises, They are not allowed in the Clubhouse or changing rooms.

Proposal: That, dogs on a lead and under control, be allowed into the clubhouse.

Ron Suffield spoke to the proposal and pointed out that dogs were allowed in many establishments e.g. cafes, bars and felt that well-behaved dogs should be allowed in the Clubhouse.

John Wilmott pointed out that it was not hygienic with food preparation taking place in the galley, that not everyone likes dogs and he had experience of issues with dogs in bars. It was pointed out that whilst many establishments allow dogs, people have a choice of whether to go there whereas members only have the choice of the Clubhouse.

Hazel Mason felt that preparation of food would not be an issue if they made sure the galley door was kept shut and dogs were on a lead. She felt that there should be a clear set of rules for how dogs should behave.

Lydia Knights pointed out that bars and cafes have staff constantly wiping down tables and asked whether it would be fair to expect galley staff to take on this role.

Terri Sharman commented that she would not want dogs around at social events, with people eating food. Ron Suffield and others agreed with this.

Barry Knights commented that the Club grounds contain a lot of dog mess (not from Club dogs) which dogs coming into the Clubhouse may have come into contact with.

Martin Tarling commented that he has a fur and feather allergy but would this would not be an issue if dogs were kept under control.

There was further discussion and points made about potential trip hazard of dog leads in the Clubhouse, incidents of dog bites, access regarding support dogs and the risk of leaving dogs unattended on the veranda.

Elspeth Missen suggested a temporary trial of allowing dogs on a lead in the Clubhouse. This was agreed and the proposal was amended to:

That, dogs on a lead and under control, be allowed into the clubhouse for a trial period commencing 1st March 2025.

The initial vote on this proposal gave a result of 13 for, 14 against and 4 abstentions. However, given the difficulty in counting raised hands, a recount was taken. The recount gave a result of 14 for, 14 against. It was unclear whether the commodore has a casting vote in this situation so a third recount took place with 15 for and 13 against. Therefore, the proposal was accepted at the meeting.

However, a check of the Club rules after the AGM showed that a majority vote of at least two-thirds of those present was required for amendment of a Club rule. At no time, during the voting process on this proposal at the AGM was a majority of two thirds reached and therefore the proposal is not carried. Members will be notified of this error and change in outcome.

Mark Batt, the retiring commodore, concluded the meeting by awarding the Commodore trophy to Tony Everitt for his hard work in role of Club Secretary and supporting him during his tenure as Commodore.

John Hawker thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 1.40pm.