

Minutes of the Blakeney Sailing Club Committee meeting held 30th November 2024

Present:

Angela Harcourt (President), Andrew Bassett (Commodore), Jane Armstrong (Treasurer), Sean Moore (Rear Commodore Flotilla), Trish Moore (Membership Secretary), Sue Gregory (Secretary), John Myers (Vice President), Rod Jeffreys (Bosun), Simon Hibberd, David Rowe, Marcus Flint, Rosie Ferguson and Jane Bassett
Justin Plumpton also attended the meeting.

Andrew thanked all committee members for volunteering and gave a special welcome to the new members.

He stated his aim to chair the meetings so that they are kept as short as possible whilst ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to give their opinion. To help with this the main issues for discussion will be on the agenda first, with reports by exception, as last year.

The club is in a strong position, with the number of members holding up well and a healthy bank balance. Indeed, judging by the feedback at the RYA Eastern Regional Conference that Alan C and I attended last week the Club is in a stronger position than most. Most sailing clubs seem to face the similar problems and indeed additional ones if they have a clubhouse! There are a number of ideas from this conference that we can consider taking forward and I will present these at the next meeting.

However, we face some challenges due to an ageing demographic, competition from other activities, other family commitments, cost of living etc. Getting volunteers for duties continues to be a problem and we need to make sure we don't put too big a burden on the same people. We need to consider reducing the number of sailing events and review whether the types of events are what members want. A survey may be the best way to do this. To attract new members, we need to consider reinstating the Discover Sailing weekend and advertising the main sailing events. We also need to try and involve the local population more (particularly youngsters).

1. Apologies:

Alan Collett (Vice-Commodore), Alan Robinson and Amy Howes.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The draft minutes of 7 September 2024 were approved.

3. Review of actions/matters arising (not on the agenda)

Slipway advisory notice/signage

The Dinghy Park Management Committee (DPMC) has agreed in principle to contribute £250 to this work with the Club paying the balance of £350. John Seymour is arranging for the work to start early next year.

Action: Ongoing

RYA website club/centre locator

Sue reported that this required further work/investigation.

Action: Ongoing

Noticeboard pictures

Due to data protection issues this was no longer considered.

Action: Closed

Further discuss replacements for Cookes Posts

Rod explained that the posts are constructed in reinforced concrete and the post on the west bank is beyond repair. The post on the east bank is leaning to the south but otherwise appears okay. We need to decide whether to do nothing, repair the west bank post or to repair both posts. The cost for replacement with one green oak post is £830 and for two £1520. The Blakeney Harbour Association and the Cooke family may be willing to donate towards the cost. Rod was asked to find out the contributions which would be made, before the committee makes a decision.

Action: Ongoing

Add Radio Licence and First Aid holders to Member Mojo for 2025

Action: Complete

First Aid Course 2025

Sue stated that three members and Dylan attended the course held in June 2024. We will find out when membership forms are returned how many members are qualified. It was suggested that other clubs also run these courses and a better option could be to contribute to the cost of members attending elsewhere.

Action: Ongoing

Officer nominations 2025

We still need a new membership secretary and someone to look after the trophies.

Action: Ongoing

To advise BHA on approval of CCTV funding

Andrew reported that he had informed BHA that the committee had agreed to contribute £1000 to the planned installation of CCTV on the dingy Park (email 27/9/22024).

Action: Complete

Donations to Blakeney Regatta Committee, RNLI, Glaven Caring

Action: Complete

Social event October 2024

Action: Complete

Life membership proposal Edward Allen

Action: Complete

Review Blakeney Regatta

Action: See below

Broads Sailing event 2025

Action: Ongoing

Contact blind sailor re possibility of sailing next season

Action: Ongoing

Respond to Patsy re mugs and phone numbers

Action: Complete

Seafly Open practice race

Action: Complete

Justin summarised his SWOT analysis on the Blakeney Regatta which had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. The Regatta is a good spectator event and a great

opportunity to encourage those who haven't raced before to take part. However, the number of participants has declined in recent years. We need to encourage more non-racing members, improve marketing and re-engage with the local community. He outlined a number of specific suggestions, including a linked social event and a novice prize.

Simon thanked Justin for the analysis adding that we need to ensure we get the best dates and tides for the Regatta.

John M suggested we should market and advertise the event more in advance.

Marcus felt that we need to re-think how the Regatta fits in the sailing schedule.

Jane A asked how we could connect to the other regatta in Blakeney and arrange for our event to be publicised in their promotional flyers etc. Andrew said that we need to engage with the Regatta Committee – through Patsy Seymour and Jane Temple.

Sean suggested aligning the event with the greasy pole competition as this always attracted a lot of spectators.

Simon felt that we should hold the event at the end of Fun Week and advertise on appropriate websites. We could also reserve a few places on the dinghy park for visitors to the event. We need to reduce barriers.

Justin agreed to head a team for the project, Rosie and Simon volunteered to be part of this.

Sue suggested we include kayaks and paddleboards in the event.

Justin will report back to the committee in due course.

Action Justin Plumpton

4. 2025 Sailing Programme

Marcus has had an initial discussion with Andrew, and it had been agreed to use the Blakeney specific tide data. He considered that the best prediction of High Water (HW) and the most meaningful heights. The differences in HW times based on the Hull Data were a maximum of 15 minutes, which was within the variation due to pressure and wind.

He was preparing a draft of the sailing schedule and will be calling for a Sailing Sub Committee meeting shortly, to include Andrew, Simon, Alan R, John M and Sean. This would be based on the Blakeney specific data but would still include data height for Hull.

A request for a date for the Morston Regatta had already been received. Simon suggested that this should not be considered until a draft schedule was available.

Marcus suggested having more than one midweek race per week if tides allowed for this.

He suggested that the Racing WhatsApp group be used for members to indicate the intention to enter races to encourage others to attend.

Rod asked that we do not start the season too early in the year as it was difficult to arrange for all the equipment to be set up.

Andrew stated that in view of lack of volunteers for duties and numbers racing we needed to consider reducing the number of sailing events next season. Simon pointed out that this would reduce the number of opportunities to sail.

Marcus said that a number of clubs were finding duty cover a problem and Brancaster were going back to allocating duties rather than asking for volunteers.

Rosie suggested asking for volunteers to fill Dutyman by a certain date, after which duties would be allocated to those who hadn't yet volunteered.

Justin said that if those who live away from Blakeney were allocated duties, they would probably make an effort to attend even if outside the holiday periods.

Andrew pointed out that having Flotillas on Mondays following racing at the weekend reduced the number racing and made it more difficult to get volunteers.

Sean felt we should consider combining the racing and flotilla events and pointed out that some racing members also wanted to attend the flotilla events. He suggested that half the flotillas should be held on racing days.

5. Report from the Equipment Sub Committee

Rod thanked the members of the Equipment Sub-Committee and other volunteers for their support, and also George and Angela for storing Lapwing. Maintenance tasks were planned, for Lapwing, Club Hut, Patrol Boats and the Outboards. The 5-year warranty on the outboards expires in June 2025 and we need to decide whether we continue servicing and winter storage with Marine Tech. He stated that he is also looking at options for replacement outboards with electric starters which would be an advantage.

Andrew asked if any major items of equipment need to be considered for replacement. Rod stated that other than the outboards he had not identified anything for next year.

Marcus asked if more helms could be assessed and approved as there were a few who are not yet on the approved list and others that may have dropped off. He suggested a date in the programme for this. Rod said that this was normally carried out on a more ad-hoc basis, and he did not personally vet everyone but got reports from other trusted helms.

6. Social/Training programme

The social committee will continue to meet and Rosie offered to join.

Andrew asked about a Fitting Out Supper and Sue suggested that the Blakeney House event might fit the bill if it could be arranged again.

Sue suggested reviewing the Harbour Rooms BBQ and Andrew advised that Alan R had offered to hold a sailing club BBQ at his home.

Sue stated that we need to find out if we can hold another event at Bayfield Hall next year and, if so, we need suggestions for a speaker.

7. Meeting Dates

A discussion took place as to when the committee members preferred to have the meetings, after sailing or on another day. It was agreed to review this further when the schedule is available at the next meeting which was to be held on 8 January.

8. Matters for regular report, to be made by exception only

- Commodore's report – nothing to report

- Vice-Commodore – no report
- Rear-Commodore’s report (racing) – nothing to report
- Rear-Commodore (Flotilla) – nothing to report
- Bosun’s report – nothing to report
- Treasurer’s report
 - Jane reported that when the accounts were reviewed it was found that Stripe had recorded a member’s subscription, but this had not been passed on to the Club. She was investigating the cause of this problem.
 - She asked if the standing order to the BHA could be cancelled as we now have corporate membership. This was agreed by the committee.
 - Jane asked that committee members provide details of any proposed expenditure to her by the next meeting.

Action All

- Secretary’s report
Sue informed the committee that BPC an agenda item on the BPC meeting this week is revisiting the merits of charging for use of the dinghy park as opposed to donations, following previous discussions.

She asked the committee what should be included on the hut banner for next year. She will ask Steve Soanes if he can produce it for us. She also suggested having posters for the noticeboard advertising upcoming events.

- Membership Secretary’s report - nothing to report
- Marketing
Amy had sent a report which Sue read out. She reported that the club now has 1095 followers on Instagram and asked for contributions for the Glaven Valley News and facebook.
- Dinghy Park Management
It was reported that the DPMC were now looking at having two CCTV cameras in the dinghy park to ensure full coverage of the area.

13. Any other business

- Angela asked if the club still wanted to keep the marquee which she and George kindly store. It was decided that this was no longer required and could be advertised to members for sale.

Action Sue

- Jane A reported that Teresa Schrem who works at North Walsham High had asked if the committee would consider sponsoring the school to provide pupils who were to be attending a training event with tee shirts. The committee agreed to this request.

The next committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 8 January at 7pm, venue to be decided.