

## **CHAIRMANS REPORT AGM 21 March 2019**

If you take a look around not a lot has changed in the past year and if you glance at the board showing our development ambitions you could say we are in a static transitional period of the club's life.

So, if you all read my report from last year I'll hand you over to the Captain then we can move on and agree subscriptions.

Did I say Captain? – Ah we haven't got one – I'd better do that bit then.

From a committee perspective club management became slightly challenging with the workload slowing through key people having to or not being able to commit time to their role. Apart from the summer junior issue that arose, and the subsequent time taken to resolve we lost input from the Captain, Men's Captain and both Safety Advisors due to changes in work health and family responsibilities. I thank Richard Warne Mike Spruce Helen Gray and Mark Rawlinson who all gave extra time and commitment towards our members rowing experience and I thank all on and off the committee who have given their time supporting the club, in addition to their efforts on the water.

For results on the water we recorded 59 regatta or head wins through 2018. We recorded 27 Adult wins and 32 Junior. If competition results were the only standard we worked to, which it is not, then we could say the spread is a fair reflection of the resources we all have to share.

### **Highlights of the year:**

We bought an 8 – and in its first two competitions we recorded wins – at Shrewsbury & Richmond

The composite Master's men's quad recorded 4 wins – should have been 5 but that's another story, I can tell you all about that at the bar later

The Women's Quad win Gold at British Masters

Chris Boys beat his own world record on the ergo.

Recently Victoria Starr went to Long Beach USA for the World Rowing Indoor Championships and won Gold in the Vet C category in a time of 7:19

Juniors win Victor Ludorum at Molesey and shared the award again at Maidenhead with Henley. Despite a slow start in September for the junior squad as we re-arranged coaching management, I can report the squad is in good shape – recently recording wins at Weybridge and Burway for boys and girls in age groups 13 14 & 15.

Only this week the WJ14 quad won silver at the Junior scullers Head resulting in 3 of our junior quads to trial this coming Sunday to represent Thames London Inter-Regionally.

Adaptive squad recorded wins at Marlow Town and Maidenhead and also competed at Isis Oxford and Phillis Court– so competition opportunities are slowly increasing for the squad.

Away from our activities at the club and racing at events the men's 8 train regularly at Walton on Saturday mornings which does relieve a bit of pressure on our often crowded river. We held a training camp at Henley and two groups have given coastal rowing a try at Studland bay.

Finally, we did undertake Big Row and raised £4000 towards our funding.

You can see from this report that as a club we are fairly active across all squads and I thank the coaches and helpers who all strive to make it happen.

Each year there are beginner rowers who join us and our current challenge on the senior side is to provide a learning pathway to enable them to integrate better with the established senior squads.

## **Club Hub**

On the subject of funding the collection of our annual subscriptions should be interest to us all – it is through subscriptions that we pay for our boats. It is often a challenge to whoever is membership secretary for them to ensure all are paying the correct fees at the due time. It is impossible for one member to know personally all our members as we all operate in our separate squads. It is important that the committee manage funding efficiently and there are all sorts of policies in place we all have to abide by including protecting personal data.

British Rowing have introduced free for club use a membership management system known as ClubHub and we have enrolled in the system to help us with the management of our membership.

I say the system is free for club use but there is a finance charge levied by British rowing for payments made through the system, but we can discuss that in more detail when we come to the Treasurers report and our proposed fee levels for this coming year.

Currently this new system allows members to manage their own club membership and engage with British Rowing online all in one place. New features to the system will be introduced by British Rowing eventually combining with BROE for race registration and all the other membership services BR offer.

## **Moving on to Club Development:**

In the current financial climate the 'grand development plan' we see portrayed on the wall is not feasible at this time. Any development will need to be progressed in phases.

The current planning application will expire later this year if we do not achieve a start on the project, but it is not an insurmountable problem to move a development forward.

We have almost secured additional land that which once completed will allow a project to proceed and will certainly provide opportunity to expand in the future – as we all know working space for looking after our boats and providing a land training area is key to developing our facilities beyond where we are now.

Obtaining Charitable Status is an avenue we have considered as a route to take that should increase the opportunities for obtaining funding, but this committee currently hold the view that it is not feasible to follow this route without appointing a paid for position as a head of any proposed charity. It is not possible for the additional work required to be taken on by enthusiastic volunteers – the risk of any procedural failures would be detrimental to the future of the club.

With regard to funding we currently have £50k set aside towards development. We will have the imminent cost of the land to pay for but there will be limited funding immediately available to improve our facilities. At present we are researching how we can make best use of the additional land. In broad terms if we are able to remove a proportion of the boat racking out of the current boathouse we will be able to create dedicated space for land training and refurbish the current indoor facilities to suit our current needs.

In a small way we have removed some of the current clubroom furniture and have dedicated space for some of the ergo's. In the short time we have made use of the space in this way we have seen increased use of the training kit. There is less wear & tear on the machines and the social area has not been overtly compromised.

You will have received ahead of this meeting a more detailed description explaining the options we need to consider before we can make any more progress with club development. I attach copy with this report. Hopefully you have all taken time to read it and I know some of you have already replied with views to the secretary. We wish to continue the conversation so that the incoming committee receives a broad cross-section of views from the membership so that we can have informed debate on what our priority requirements are as we enjoy our sport and time at the club.

Before moving on to the Treasurers report I ask for any questions from the floor regarding Rowing or the Development. Any questions on rowing first please.

Paul Woowat  
Chairman