**Guildford Rowing Club Committee meeting minutes, 20:00 - 22:00 8 January 2020**

held at the Guildford Rowing Club boat house

Present: Claudine Chiplin (welfare), Helen Gray (vice-captain women), Ben Hopwood (vice-captain men), Andrew Isherwood (junior parents), Georgie Moore (social, acting chair), Rachel Morris (safety), Ian Pigram (vice-captain adaptive and note taker), Mark Rawlinson (vice-captain junior), John Redmond (boatswain), Danny Skillman (treasurer), Mike Spruzs (captain) and Richard Warne (secretary).

Apologies: Paul Woowat (chairman)

Georgie chaired the meeting

Georgie proposed and all agreed, that those wishing to speak should raise a hand.

1) Letter to committee discussion

Helen mentioned the wider discussions about managing disagreement in the committee and how we might “do better”. Mike thought the previous meeting worked well. Danny considered the more formal club house setting better than a house for the whole committee, for which there was general agreement. Mark thought the key break-through was to listen to a point or perspective, since we can't all be aligned. Helen saw that as a “good thing”. Rachel noted that the committee represents all parts of the club and we work towards a common good, which might not reflect individual aspirations.

Richard considered email exchanges as another challenge, suggesting that email responses be delayed. Claude said we should sometimes pick up the 'phone for an easier and better conversation.

Andrew, Helen, Rachel and Claude led a discussion on conduct, respect and the quality of conversations with our club members. We should strive to better understand the needs of others, Claude mentioned the term “emotional intelligence” – i.e. manage our own emotions to better manage difficult relationships with others. Rachel mentioned the Insights four colours, again being aware of ourselves.

e.g. <https://www.mudamasters.com/en/personal-growth-personality/insights-discovery-part-1-4-colors>

2. river status

Mike tried to get in touch with the National Trust, so far without success. Rachel Spruce mentioned to him that two years ago divers noticed a gap beneath the weir. The go-ahead was given for a repair, but the weir failed before this. The Borough Council mentioned to Danny that the weir would take two years to replace.

Helen, Mark and Ben are keeping the rowing conversation going. Richard included the Master's too. Mike mentioned alternative locations such as Walton (less of an option) and Weybridge (keen to help, but limited times) Rowing Clubs. Helen thought we could go back to them now we have an extended time without water.

Richard noted that Red and Yellow boards on the River Thames are a problem (for us and others).

Mike used Dapdune Wharf on Tuesday. There was some flow, but manageable (Ian: plus sediment build-up in inconvenient places). We have an issue with boats in a number of locations, although that is more likely to impact events. A booking system would help.

Mark described the difficulty recovering boats with juniors at Dapdune, where two or three adults are required to be safe. Rachel asked whether the ropes were tight and they were. Rachel has experience of double pontoons with Sailability and would come back with details of a pontoon contact. Mark mentioned the muddy and slipper steps from the pontoon.

3. club development

Richard previously circulated land acquisition documents. He met with Laytons solicitors before Christmas. We were not happy with the initial draft document from Guildford Borough Council, especially map details. John worked with colleagues to re-draft the map with sharper boundaries (a copy was displayed). Richard was concerned that the Council required a 12 m wide strip to access the water meadows. The Council also need access to the culvert gate, which isn't a big issue. We are close to getting back to the lawyers and will then produce a document for the club to share with the committee. We should soon know if we have a good deal. Sam has a contact able to produce a project phasing proposal. Laytons will present a revised plan to the Council.

Claude asked whether there was a visual version of the plan. The reply was that we could walk out there (Saturday morning?). The footpath redirection notices are already in place.

Danny reminded us that we no longer have planning permission, it lapsed last September.

A brief discussion regarding the chance of a price reduction evolved into a summary of events that led to planning permission being granted when funds were no longer available. Issues raised by the Environment Agency were difficult to address, although the Council were very supportive of our needs. Sam's opinion regarding temporary structures was the Council would need convincing and planning permission might be required, depending on scope.

In discussion about the plot downstream from the Weyside, Andrew (see his previously distributed document for details) mentioned that they are probably obliged to provide water based services. The current developers are different from those that Robert Hall and Danny originally assessed. Richard thought it was worth talking with them.

4. Extraordinary general meeting

Andrew asked to better understand the purpose of an EGM. Mention was made of focusing members' attention. In reality the timing (close to the Annual general meeting) doesn't make sense.

As Helen put it, we're probably better off focusing our effort to get club members to participate at the AGM. Mark considered a committee meeting “open day”. Andrew mentioned a perception by some that it was risky to be on the committee. In trying to move the club forward we need new energy and ideas. Claude thought it would be a good idea to be more open and transparent with our working. Mark considered personal risk and liability needed more clarity and documentation. Richard said we were an unincorporated association, there is therefore some risk.

The basic line in the discussion was that the committee must ensure we have robust safety procedures and risk assessments etc in place and that we should ensure club members follow these guidelines. If we do so then we as a committee will be seen to have discharged our responsibilities to club members.

In conclusion it would be useful to open up committee meetings to club members and publish the minutes.

5. membership of sub-committees

This topic relates to work on funding and development and having appropriate people in the room. The funding sub‑committee evolved from a need to seek funds for an existing plan when funding evaporated. Richard agreed with Mark about defining terms of reference. Danny mentioned his cross-over involvement in both areas. Andrew was happy to draft terms of reference (Mark has one too). Mike suggested we review these.

6. 2020 subscriptions

Discussion revolved around our waterless plight.

Mike thought the adult beginners were quite supportive and are trying to do “other stuff”. Danny observed the juniors embracing alternatives to rowing. Danny thought a decision on the subscription was not urgent. Rachel to talk with Danny about funding for adaptive rowers which might benefit the club.

7. banking and digital signatures

Danny listed the four current bank signatories: Paul, Leone, Danny and Rachel Spruce (they are hence out of date). Danny currently makes electronic payments. Danny has sole control of the deposit account.

When Mike worked Clubmark he observed that our constitution requires dual signatures (selected from the GRC 1880 directors, i.e. Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Club Captain). We should instigate electronic dual approval (which uses a small key pad device) for both accounts. We were in agreement with this.

8. safety audit

Mike led the conversation which focused on a need for a central document location. Issues to be addressed need progressing (e.g. completing of back-stay fitting [mainly boats currently sitting on a rack]). The discussion progressed and Helen thought it sounded like a health and safety management system, because we need to know where to find items. Rachel described this as increasing visibility at club level. Helen asked whether ClubHub could accommodate safety documentation – it can. Danny thought all documents should be visible to members on the club website. Rachel thought a committee document area (possibly encrypted) should be there too. Various other document options were noted, but access for all members tended to be an issue. Helen commented that a safety document working group would be helpful. Danny thought it was up to Mike and Rachel.

9. rats

Danny asked whether we should have a yearly contract with the “Rat Man”. The response was YES.

Danny agreed to contact the council with regard to waste at the pub.

Andrew thanked Georgie for successfully chairing the meeting.