

Chairman's and Commodore's AGM 2022 Report

It gives me great pleasure to present this report on the activities of the General Committee and on the Club's position for 2020 and 2021.

2020 represented the first year of the Club's new 3-year Club Strategy. Our previous Club Strategy focused on developing the Club to become more sustainable, the focus for the next 3 years is to become more resilient and robust.

Our overall vision is to be recognised as a leading sailing club both locally and throughout the Solent sustainably supporting the interests of our members.

Our key strategic goal of the Club remains to be an informal, family-friendly sustainable and resilient club, supporting water-based activities in all its forms and providing a range of experiences both on and off the water.

To help deliver our Club Strategy, we have defined 4 key strategic themes:

1. To maintain membership recruitment and retention
2. To facilitate Member and Non-Member Development
3. To integrate Marketing and Communications to improve the Club Brand
4. To develop a Sustainable and Resilient Club for the future

This strategy is supported by a 3-year Management Plan and an annual Business Plan to ensure we deliver on our strategic goals.

We have also changed the Governance of the Club, with the General Committee now focusing on strategic issues, but supported by a Member Services Committee and a Board Sub-Committee, the later focusing on the financial and operation planning for the Club.

2020

We started 2020 in a very strong position. We had the highest number of members at the start of the year, together with the lowest attrition rate for many years. Also, the forecast for our external events business was the strongest we had ever had.

However, at the end of March when the country was forced into lockdown, due to the Coronavirus, the Club had to close all its operations for the first time in our history.

I activated the Club's Major Incident Protocol, which allowed us to establish a Major Incident Committee to provide leadership and management for the Club throughout the crisis.

Overnight, the Club became a virtual Club. I was impressed by the way our members, through their creativity and innovation, developed new ways of keeping everyone engaged. We discovered Zoom meetings to replace our physical section meetings. New eRacing took the place of our dinghy racing series and new social groups were established, including Quiz nights, Book Clubs, Coffee Mornings and the Motor section held a dinner party online.

As soon as Government restrictions started to be lifted, the committee developed a phased Pathway Plan to open the Club ensuring we provided a safe and secure Covid environment for our members and staff alike and that we were compliant with the latest legal requirements.

By May, we were allowed to access the Dinghy Park and Marinas and the Harbour Master allowed sailing to recommence within the Harbour.

We were also creative and started up a new takeaway service from the Club to provide drinks, snacks and meals to members and the public. We installed Portaloo's to support members visiting the Club whilst continuing to advise members to come "sail ready". Our Dinghy program, started operating under severe Covid protocols. Our showers and Teabar remained closed.

By July we were able to reopen the Club fully with our restaurant service ; yacht and motor cruises could start again, together with dinghy racing and cruising. Our RYA training programme started, albeit with reduced numbers to ensure social distancing. However, our external events business was a major concern.

Throughout all of 2020, the loyalty of our members was outstanding and the numbers returning to the Club after we re-opened was higher than we predicted. Supported by the Government's Eat-Out-On-Us scheme, followed by our own "Dine-Out-On-Us" scheme.

However by November, the Club was forced to close again by the Government due to rising numbers of delta variant, both locally and nationally. Although we were allowed to re-open again in December, our usual Christmas, and New Year celebrations we understandably curtailed.

2021

2021 started with again the club being closed as all the Country was placed under Tier 4 restrictions. We became a virtual club once again and restarted our previous on-line activities. By March the harbour was re-opened for leisure sailing. By April we were allowed to re-open a Garden Service and our RYA Training could re-start under strict bubbling guidance.

By May we were allowed to welcome members back into the Clubhouse and section socials restarted. July represented the full lifting of government restrictions. We decided however to continue the table service in the main restaurant, as it was welcomed by members, whilst maintaining a hatch-type service within the garden.

Despite the disappointing start to the year, we managed to complete a full programme of dinghy racing and yacht and motor cruising, with only a few being cancelled because of bad weather.

Our Club and RYA Training Programmes were oversubscribed and the number of members having 1-1 coaching sessions significantly increased over previous years.

From July, our external events business started to recover, albeit with smaller numbers attending weddings and parties. By the end of the year, our Christmas Party season was almost back to normal.

Most importantly, the number of members increased significantly. So much so, we have decided to hold the membership to around 1150, which represents about 2500 members. This is to ensure members continue to have a positive experience coming to the Club.

This growth in membership has undoubtedly had an impact on our facilities. Our dinghy park is now full, ticketed events are selling out quickly and at times the car parking can be a challenge.

Our other, non-sailing members' activities have returned to some degree of normality:

- Winter Lectures
- Pilates and Yoga classes
- Club rambles
- Classic Cars
- Computer Club
- Art Group (starting soon)
- And of course, our Section Socials on Friday evenings.

On the water, we now have a very active Rowing community. The Club has hired a Cornish Gig for the year, so we will be making a decision later this year as to the future of rowing within the Club.

Wing Foiling took off during 2021 and it is pleasing to see the radio control model boats have started up again

With the Club returning to some degree of normality and as we learnt to live with Covid, after, I decided after 18 months of fortnightly meetings to stand down the Major Incident Committee in September.

However, by the end of the year Omicron had become a variant of concern and was started to gain hold.

2022

Finally, as we enter 2022, I can report that the Club is in a strong position. The membership remains high with a low member attrition rate. We have over 70 bookings for our Training courses, and we have a strong Book of Business for our external events. The Club programme for the year has now been uploaded onto the website. I am sure with your continued loyalty and support the Club will have a successful year.

Throughout the whole Covid crisis, we have continued to invest in the Club and its facilities. We have installed two new pontoons to replace our ageing pontoons which were becoming a health and safety hazard. We have updated our furniture in the garden and improved our accessibility with a new ramp and steps in the garden. Recently we had to buy a new cooker for the kitchen, and we will be buying a new rib shortly to support our training activities. Recently, we have migrated our tills onto a new system, and you will be noticing some of the new facilities available to you shortly to improve your experience in the bar and restaurant.

The Omicron infection rate is beginning to fall and the final Covid restrictions are being lifted. We will be reviewing our current Covid precautions shortly

However, it has not gone away. At the time of writing, we have 3 members of staff off work with Covid. We will continue to give priority to the health and security of our staff and members alike.

Without doubt, the Covid crisis has had a detrimental effect on our staff, their welfare and their mental health. We have supported our staff throughout. Financially supported them through the government's furlough scheme and in addition we introduced a Staff Support Scheme to provide external professional support if requested.

We have also improved the resilience of the staff teams. We have appointed deputies for all the key management roles within the Club. In addition, we are now recruiting casual staff who have previous experience in the hospitality business, rather than relying on a larger number of part-time staff who can only working limited number of hours. Also, this year we have started to invest in training for staff.

The role of the General Committee, and in particular, that of the Commodore, is to ensure the Club grows and progresses to the benefits of our members. I hope you will see that despite the Covid crisis, we have developed the right strategy and made the right decisions to ensure the Club is in a good financial position to ensure with your support, we will remain viable into the future where the Club continues to develop and grow, offering a welcoming and friendly environment, which provides an exceptional experience for all our members.

This has undoubtedly been a very hard 2 years for the General Committee. I do not think anyone who stood for the committee last year could have guessed the year we would have.

There are a number of members directors standing down and I would like to thank them for their support through this difficult time.

I would like to thank particularly all the Rear Commodores for an outstanding effort in engaging with their sections and keeping everyone up to date with excellent communications. We maintained our regular weekly On-Board Newsletter throughout, and I tried to keep members informed of our position through my Commodore Communications.

I must give particular thanks to the members of the Major Incident Committee, who have all put more commitment into keeping the Club going than would be normally expected throughout the last two years.

- Roger Marshall, our Club Treasurer, and Liz Adlington, our accounts manager, ensured we successfully received all the business grants and loans we were entitled to. Plus producing regular updates on our financial position.
- David Pearce for keeping on top of the Government Guidance and Restrictions and ensuring our risk assessments and guidance were compliant.
- Philip Brown (in 2020) for his knowledge of health services and systems, together with expertise in HR.
- Gavin Crick (in 2021) for his financial expertise and also his knowledge on restructuring business.
- Tom Dewey for keeping the Club ticking over during the lockdowns and preparing the Club for its reopening.
- Manu Jenkin for converting guidance into practical procedures within the Club, plus liaising with our HR partner to ensure our staff received the correct advice.

The growing success of the Club is very much a collaborative and team effort. I would like to thank Manu Jenkin for her strong leadership and tenacity. She is ably supported by Lucy and Carolyn in the office and they provide a warm welcome to members entering the Clubhouse. Drew Gibson for organising and delivering a top rated Training Programme and courses. Tom Dewey for his business leadership in developing our successful external events business. David and Josh for organising our year-round social programme and the delivery of good service in the restaurant , Andy and Keith, Craig and Alex for producing varied and appetising menus throughout the year. In addition, the Club is supported by nearly 50 part-time casual staff and instructors.

And of course, there is a key member of the team missing, and that is my wife Alison. She has been my rock and of great support to me throughout the crisis. And she has got used to me saying I am going to the club for a few minutes, knowing that I will be away for the rest of the day

After just over 4 years, I am now standing down as your Commodore. Undoubtedly it has been a very challenging time for both myself and the Club, but it has been very rewarding and in the main very pleasurable.

It has been an honour to serve and lead this Club

Thank You

Tony Mobbs
Commodore.