



# Dovey Yacht Club / Clwb Hwyllo Dyfi

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## Meeting Minutes: DYC/CHD Annual General Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 @ 20.30 hours.

**Present** at DYC (as signed in on register of attendance):

Full members: (with voting rights)

Des George, David Mason, Kate Stevens, Neil Plater, Lynn Crossley, Jennie Druett, Terry Whitburn, Juli Collier, Freddie Collier, Mark Anslow, David Chell, Frank Nickless, Helen Hardman, Steve Hardman, Sue Mason, Mark Crossley, Don Gillespie, Robin Druett, Richard Ward, Keil Carthy, Mark Faith, Meryl Gover, Clare Faith, Duncan McLaughlin, Lisa Gardner, Tom Gardner, Debbie Bartlett, Dave Bartlett, Grant Hickson Snr, Wil Brookes, Grant Hickson Jnr, Brian Hickson, Bob Usher, Steve Bedder

Social and other categories of membership.

Rob Strange, Clair Strange, Chris Green, Gail Green, Amelia Carthy (junior),

**Attended by "zoom / video link":** None.

**Meeting Chairman:** Des George. Meeting notes by Steve Bedder.

**Apologies for absence:** Huw Jones-Williams, Dan Stevens, Mary Bowden, Tony Bowden, Fiona Peate, Francis Peate, John Green, Josh Cooper, Rhi Cooper, John Tildesley, Tim Brown, Pauline Brown, Sue Gallespie, Colin Granger, Jane Grainger, Liz Plater, Gay Richardson, David Richardson and Jo Hickson.

### Welcome.

- 1) Commodore Des George (DG) opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Des explained the AGM format and noted full members were entitled to vote.

### Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting.

- 2) Copies of the 2023 minutes had been issued in advance of the 2024 meeting and paper copies were provided at the 2024 meeting.
- 3) DG asked if there were any questions concerning the 2023 meeting minutes. None raised.
- 4) DG asked if the 2023 meeting minutes were accepted. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Grant Hickson Snr and seconded by Neil Plater. Agreed by those present by show of hands.

### Commodore's Report.

- 5) The Commodore's report had been issued in advance of the 2024 meeting and paper copies were provided at the 2024 meeting.
- 6) DG asked if the meeting felt it was necessary for him to read the report in its entirety. David Mason commented the report was long; others commented it was comprehensive. Thanks were given to DG for producing the report. It was agreed DG would highlight the most important points for discussion.
- 7) DG noted he was aware there was tension within the club and complaints and questions had been provided over the previous weeks. These points were responded to within the Commodore's report. DG noted further questions had been received within the last few days and a separate sheet was provided titled "*Questions for the 2024 AGM*". DG emphasised he was keen for all members to have opportunity to consider these points, and to raise further comments as necessary. DG noted also there was a need to discuss the sailing schedule and proposed the general questions provided be discussed as AOB, at the end

of the main meeting, and the sailing schedule be discussed after the AGM (with those not directly concerned with the sailing schedule welcome to stay or leave as they chose).

- 8) Finance was discussed as report. A few errors or mis-allocations had been identified in the run up to the meeting. These had now been corrected. In general term finances are "OK" with "surplus" in 2023 much the same as 2022. However there had been some big maintenance expenses in 2023, such as balcony steelwork and facia repairs and new polycarbonate panels to replace the potentially dangerous glass.
- 9) DG noted 2023 bar activity was much increased in 2023 over 2022, (almost double) albeit with associated increase in costs. Des expressed special thanks to Clare and Rob Strange for stepping in to run the bar (part way through 2023) and making it work so well. The meeting gave thanks to Rob and Clare and applauded their efforts. DG noted the bar pricing structure of was carefully reviewed and it was appreciated by members that bar prices represented very good value. DG continued to explain the 2024 figures for the bar for first 6 months showed surplus at approximately £7000, which helped support the sailing side and, for example, safety boat repair costs.
- 10) Grants were discussed as report. DG expressed special thanks to Huw Jones-Williams for his fantastic work on grant applications which had resulted in funds in 2023 for a new safety boat and sailing training.
- 11) DG noted that sailing training was going very well. The local youth project "Storm Chasers" was a 2023 success story. DG noted he was over-joyed recently when the local schools visit was held. The children left DYC/CHD having had a great day on the water. DG described the visit as fantastic and noted it could only help break down some of the historic barriers between locals and DYC/CHD, and hopefully attract further young sailors.
- 12) DG advised new signage was being considered for the main facia following the balcony remedial works.  
**Action: Shore team.**
- 13) DG thanked Lisa Gardner for her work on producing the monthly new letter.
- 14) DG thanks Grant Hickson Snr for his hard work in many ways at the club, including many hours on the safety boat and in the last few days (yet again) cleaning the club house windows.

### **Treasurer's report**

- 15) The treasurer's report / management accounts for 2023 were presented. DG noted refer to Version 2 and asked were they accepted? Proposed by Meryl Gover, seconded by Neil Plater. Voted as accepted.

### **Election of Officers.**

- 16) DG explained the club's Articles of Association and Byelaws require the appointment of Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Treasurer and Secretary. For quite a few years no one has stepped forward to take on the roles of Vice-Commodore, Treasurer and Secretary. (Note Secretary is "Company Secretary" not "Sailing Secretary").
- 17) At a practical level DG has undertaken the duties of Treasurer and Company Secretary, filing reports to Companies House etc.
- 18) The result is the club is operating contrary to its own Articles but is unable to change this in the absence of persons willing to offer themselves for these roles. DG commented he is aware some members want him to step down as Commodore, but for the continuity of the club he is prepared to continue and fulfil these roles and tasks, until others can be found.
- 19) DG noted nominations had again been invited for these "traditional roles" roles in 2024 in the lead up to the meeting, but none had been received, therefore yet again they remain vacant.
- 20) Steve Bedder (SB) noted the club does have a "second tier" of management in "**The Shore Team**" and "**The On the Water Team**" and commented he himself preferred a simple job role on "**The Team**", rather than an antiquated title from a document originating in the 1950's.

- 21) DG explained due to the club operating contrary to its own Articles it was necessary to ask for a mandate from the members to allow for continuation in this effectively non-compliant arrangement.
- 22) Freddie Collier (FC) offered a proposal that rather than continue with Articles and By Laws which did not fit the management structure, would it not be better to amend the Articles to recognise the reality of the present team arrangement. His proposal was met with enthusiasm, and was seconded by SB. A vote confirmed this should be investigated further. **Action:** DG & FC to discuss way forward regarding the necessary amendments to the Articles and Bylaws.
- 23) DG was asked by the assembled meeting to continue as Board member in the role of Commodore and Treasurer and he was thanked enthusiastically for his ongoing hard work.
- 24) The remaining Board positions were discussed.
- 25) DG reported Mark Crossley was stepping down from the board after many years' service, and all thanked Mark for his valued contribution.
- 26) DG reported Huw Jones-Williams was also stepping down from the Board this year. DG commented again on Huw's hard work securing grants and looking after the SOPS and insurances etc. DG advised Huw was going to continue as a member of "**The On The Water Team**".
- 27) DG then provided some good news and reported nominations had been received from Freddie Collier (FC) and Neil Plater (NP) to join the Board. FC was proposed by DG and seconded by David Mason. NP was proposed by DG and seconded by Bob Usher. A show of hands confirmed these appointments.
- 28) Other existing directors: David Mason, Steve Bedder, Kate Stevens and Jo Hickson had confirmed their willingness to continue. A further show of hands confirmed these Board positions for the coming 12 months.

#### **Appointment of Auditors.**

- 29) DG explained the role of the club's auditors Major and Evans, from Machynlleth, which included pay roll and Companies House documentation and proposed they be re-appointed. This was seconded by Neil Plater and a show of hands confirmed their re-appointment.

**The formal section of the AGM concluded at approximately 21.10 hours.**

There then followed "any other business".

#### **Any Other Business.**

- 30) This section of the meeting was based on the written questions which had been received immediately prior to the meeting. (Please note: many other questions, received earlier, have been answered within the body of the Commodore's report).
- 31) **John Green asked the following written question:** "*What progress has been made by the Committee in its investigation into less strenuous ways to bring sailing dinghies over the sand at the beginning and end of leisure sailing and racing? Last year, jet washing the sand from the concrete slipway looked promising but in the end was laborious and labour intensive for a short-term gain*".
- 32) DG referred to his report issued previously of the pump trials with the hire diesel pump on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023. (Re-issued recently by watts app on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024).
- 33) DG also referred to his report dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 concerning buying a diesel pump for meeting with other slipway users / stake holders. (Re-issued recently by watts app on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024).
- 34) The subject of the sand clearance produced the most stimulating and animated debate. DG confirmed the diesel-powered pump experiment in 2023 had worked, and he had come very close recently to buying a second hand unit from southern England.

- 35) Mark Anslow asked from the floor: *“What are the headline costs associated with the pump proposal?”*. DG explained the hire pump would be £450 per week, which would not be sustainable. However, a second-hand unit would be up to £8000. (The pump almost purchased was £6500). DG said he had previously reported the AAI had offered to cover the purchase cost. There would then be a forecast annual operating cost of £6841. (This is for insurance, maintenance, storage, fuel and paid operators, as its likely volunteers will likely be difficult to find).
- 36) Steve Hardman asked from the floor: *“Last year at the RS300 competition the slip way was cleared, (with diggers) why was this not done for us now? (i.e. Ready for Dovey Fortnight)”*. DG explained local farmers were busy in the height of summer, as were contractors, and none were keen on getting their expensive machinery in the sand and salt. Further the beach is busy in the summer so there are H&S issues. The RS300 competition was later in year (9<sup>th</sup> September 2023) when beach was quieter.
- 37) Des explained the issue of sand clearance off the concrete slipway linked in with the DYC lease renewal. The draft lease tried to impose DYC as being responsible for 35% of slipway maintenance. This was simply too open ended and not acceptable. There were also liability issues to consider. It is known that the slip way under the concrete is breaking up and there is concern if the public injure themselves on broken concrete, exposed by DYC sand clearance, who would be liable?
- 38) Freddie Collier confirmed the RNLi position that such risk caused the RNLi to not become involved in slipway maintenance or sand clearance. Freddie C added: the main slip way has its own hazards being close to the jetty, on a flooding tide with a west wind, and maybe always better to walk up the beach away from jetty anyway.
- 39) Steve Hardman asked: *“Could church bay slipway be used for dinghy launching?”* DG said yes, but be aware of risks sailing through moorings, and near the jetty at certain states of tide and wind.
- 40) Richard Ward asked: *“why doesn’t the harbour master clear the sand on this public slipway?”* DG clarified it is not a public slipway in the way Church Bay slip is. At meetings with Gwynedd Council, they had reported they simply do not have sufficient budget to clear sand as they used to and had to prioritise other public services.
- 41) Helen Hardman asked about the Outward-Bound tractor, and if OB can use a tractor why can’t we. Further could DYC come to an arrangement with OB to use their tractor to pull dinghies up. DG reported this had been investigated. OB do help DYC but only allow certain trained current OB employees to drive their tractor. Even ex-OB staff, fully trained cant drive it. It must be recognised OB are very generous with their help to DYC, pulling red tubs up mid-week for example, but their tractor is essential to their operation and their control over operators is fully appreciated.
- 42) Julie Collier suggested using temporary matting as used at Silverstone race circuit in muddy overspill carparks for example. DG said he had enquired with the manufacturer and had been told it would not be suitable for use on our beach. Post meeting note. The DYC watts app group has produced several alternative ideas on temporary matting / boardwalks. See further note below.
- 43) Someone (SB missed name sorry) suggested installing a winch at the top of the slipway. Some said winches not very quick, introduced “lines under load” hazards and had been tried in the past.
- 44) Post meeting note: From the enthusiastic debate it is readily apparent this sand / slipway issue is one of the most important issues concerning members. From the DYC watts app group it is apparent members have many worthwhile ideas on this subject. If all options and known costs and suppliers details could be submitted to [sailing@doveyyachtclub.org.uk](mailto:sailing@doveyyachtclub.org.uk), or put on the DYC WhatsApp group, the On the Water Team will review, collate and put the members associated costs and ask for a consensus on action to be taken. As of 01/08/2024 options seem to be:
- A. Do nothing
  - B. Buy and operate a second-hand diesel-powered pump (part funded by AAI).

- C. Buy a second-hand farmers tractor.
- D. Build a DYC launch trolley (or 2) with huge balloon tyres, which dinghy trollies could be slid onto.
- E. Fit bigger wheels and tyres, or multiple tyres, to your own dinghies
- F. Buy lay out temporary matting ramp, to be laid out each sailing day.
- G. Arrange for cart horse to visit every sailing day.
- H. Other ideas please with details.

**Action:** Members submit ideas and the **On the Water Team** will review, collate and make proposals.

- 45) **John Tildesley asked the following written question:** “*What is the Malayan Garage mentioned in the accounts?*” DG explained the “Malayan Garage” is the new blue shed. Purchase was funded at £4648 by Gwynedd Council Harbour project. The shed was assembled and painted by DYC volunteers in 2023.
- 46) **John Tildesley asked the following written question:** “*Is there an obvious reason why the bar wages are so disproportionate compared to last year? The Cost of sales / sales margin remains similar?*”. DG explained that part way through 2023 Rob and Clair Strange stepped up and took over the running of the bar. This enabled fixed opening times to be agreed and notified to members. This has resulted in a greatly improved social side to the club and should be welcomed. DG explained in 2022 and for part of 2023 the bar was operated ad-hoc by volunteers, including himself and David Mason and others. This was not sustainable and was not meeting the demands of members. The present arrangement with Rob and Clair at the helm of the bar is wonderful and is showing for 2024 much improved revenue.
- 47) **John Tildesley asked the following written question:** “*Are there any plans to replace the DYC sign that used to hang on the balcony?*”. DG confirmed it is intended to replace the water facing signage. **Action:** Shore team.
- 48) **John Tildesley asked the following written question:** “*Has the role of Sailing Secretary, as stated in the “constitution”/ Bye laws / Articles, now been withdrawn as there is no mention in the agenda?*”. DG explained in the Articles of Association and Bylaws there is no reference to a Sailing Secretary, although this role has been valuable over the years. The Articles and Bylaws require a (Company) Secretary. (No one has offered to be Company Secretary, so DG continues to fulfil those duties on a temporary basis). No one has offered to be Sailing Secretary so The On the Water Team continues to fulfil those duties as a team effort. **Action:** find someone to be the Sailing Secretary.
- 49) **Post Meeting Note.** The On the Water Team wish to meet in September 2024 to review the progress made during the 2024 season, and to begin to plan the 2025 activities, calendar and Sailing Schedule. If you are interested in becoming the club’s Sailing Secretary please speak to an On The Water Team member, even informally, as it would be wonderful to get the 2025 Sailing Secretary appointed before that September OTWT meeting.
- 50) **John Tildesley asked the following written question:** “*It emerged last year that some directors are paid by the club for services to the club. You sought guidance from the RYA legal services to confirm that this was legitimate within the DYC Articles and this was confirmed to be the case, but they advised transparency and this was endorsed by one of the Directors. My question is:- As there is no mention of payments being made specifically to Directors in the accounts, or a note in the treasurer’s report, can we assume that no DYC Directors were paid anything in the financial year?*” DG explained no Director receives any re-imbusement for undertaking the role of Director. However, some Directors have received in 2023 some financial compensation for undertaking some specific activities such as sailing instructing or safety boat driving. This would be, for example, when fee paying customers are visiting the club to take sailing lessons. The RYA have confirmed

this is quite normal and in order. To provide clarity the following statement is provided: *No directors were paid for any duties where they acted as directors. Some did act as contractors or employees; Instructors are paid £160 a day, Senior instructors £180 and safety boat drivers in the region of £12 an hour depending on age and experience.*"

51) **Frank Nickless asked the following written question:** *"Will the Board consider a reduction in membership fees as this current year there was an increase of £20 to the single membership and £20 increase to the dinghy berth fees? On top of these increases there has been a 25% decrease in sailing days on the annual programme!".* David Mason clarified the increases in fees for the 2024 quoted by Frank Nickless are erroneous. DM clarified the increase from 2023 to 2024 was £10 for both single membership and dinghy fee. FN accepted this point.

52) Regarding the alleged reduction in sailing days for 2024, Steve Bedder stated he had counted the sailing days and races shown on the 2023 and 2024 Sailing Schedules and found 2023 showed 140 planned races over 59 days and 2024 shows 149 races over 56 days. Therefore, there were more actual races but over 3 days less. FN's claim that there are 25% less sailing days in 2024 is not correct. The proposal by FN to reduce membership fees is not, therefore justified.

53) **Frank Nickless asked the following written question:** *"We have now tried this new program and to me it has not been successful with only one racing weekend in June, traditionally the best sailing month with a lot of neap tides missed! The concept of racing every other weekend is not good for developing and improving the standard of sailing at the club, in fact the standard has deteriorated! However, one positive thing to emerge from the new program is that it is obvious that there is a demand for sailing on Saturday and Sunday! In its current format it is not inclusive for some of our regular sailors so I would recommend two different series one sailed on a Saturday and a different series on the Sunday. Maximum of 2 races per day following a traditional racing program!!"*.

DG noted the subject of the Sailing Schedule was to be discussed in detail after the main part of the AGM. However, the following written reply had already been provided to Frank Nickless by e-mail on 25<sup>th</sup> of July, which is provided below:

*"You say there was only 1 racing weekend in June. I don't think that's right. The 2024 schedule for June shows racing on 1st and 2nd June, 8th June, and 29th and 30th June. That's 3 weekends sailing racing plus a Sunday of cutter sailing. So, for sailing racing; 3 weekends with 2 non racing weekends. At Jennie Thompson's suggestion we did add in 8th June sailing racing but when it came to it no one wanted to race. (Correction: Alan Woodbridge expressed interest). The lack of racing weekend 15th June was the result of the Aberdovey Rowing Club holding the sculling event. They had agreed the event with the harbour master so we could not really, sensibly, try to sail on the same day...we all would crash into each other".*

*"With hindsight we could perhaps have racing sailed on the following weekend 22nd June after the bike ride. I think it's too early in the year to say the "golden weekends" have not been a success. We have plans to critically review the year late in the Autumn. I note you agree that there is a demand for Saturday and Sunday sailing. This new format came from member's feedback and was only an idea to try to get more people to travel to Aberdovey to sail. In my mind it's not cast in stone and for 2025, if it's agreed this was not successful, it can be abandoned or altered. Your idea of different series one sailed on a Saturday and a different series on the Sunday may be more attractive and should be discussed further".*

54) **Karen Babington asked the following written question:** *"What do you see as the biggest challenges to the club in the next year and how can members assist/help".* DG put the question to the meeting and commented he considered the main challenges to be developing and increasing our membership base and controlling rising costs.

55) **Karen Babington asked the following written question:** *"How do we come up with a succession plan for the Board?" (For encouragement of other board members)".* DG put the question to the floor,

but commented himself he could only make the membership aware of the need step up and share the responsibility.

56) **Juli Collier asked from the floor:** *"Is it true social members can't use the toilets?"*

DG said: Obviously the toilets are available for social membership. The showers and changing rooms are really one of the benefits obtained by those paying full membership".

57) **Grant Hickson Senior asked from the floor:** "in the accounts where is the value of the actual building shown". DG advised he would discuss this with the accountants.

58) With the completion of AOB the formal AGM was closed and then a discussion was held concerning the Sailing Schedule. See notes below.

59) Date of next Annual General meeting: July 2025. Date and time to be issued.

60) Distribution: Posted on DYC website and link provided to all members by email.

## Sailing Schedule discussion.

### Welcome.

61) Commodore Des George (DG) opened the discussion and outlined the complaints about the 2024 sailing schedule as he understood them. (See also Commodore's report for specific complaints that had been received recently).

- Reduced sailing as racing not every weekend.
- Not enough sailing racing. Less sailing racing than in 2023.
- No sailing racing in June 2024.
- Other activities get in the way of sailing racing.

62) Des opened up to the floor to get the discussion going.

### Discussion.

63) Juli Collier commented that to her, as a "sailing widow" it seemed that it was always the same people who organise everything and seem to be there to serve others.

There seemed consensus that getting enough volunteers was an ongoing problem.

64) Grant Hickson Senior commented regardless of the amount of sailing racing there was a clear demand for leisure sailing. Steve Bedder supported this and noted on a Thursday evening at Windy Club there normally more leisure sailors than the number of racers on a Saturday.

65) Grant Hickson Junior explained the logic behind the new for 2024 format of sailing Saturday and Sunday one weekend then missing the next Saturday. He outlined the hoped for benefits as:

- Increased attendance as worth traveling to Aberdovey for the weekend of sailing,
- Theoretically better sailing as on neap tides.
- Less volunteer fatigue as the OOD (or Organiser) for that "golden weekend" would manage the whole weekend and get the race management and safety boat teams organised.

66) Grant Hickson said it was obviously proving difficult to get volunteers for every consecutive Saturday, and alternate weekends off allowed them to do other things.

- 67) Wil Brookes enquired why not pay safety boat crews. Clair Faith supported the idea of paid rescue boat crew and thought it a great incentive for local young member. Steve Bedder commented there were not those suitable people around now, who had previously been paid, like Abi Hinton and Sam Nichols. For the relatively small amount of money, it maybe would not make much difference to someone stepping forward or not.
- 68) Grant Hickson Junior emphasised one of the best parts of the Golden Weekend idea was that one person would take his / her turn to organise a weekend.
- 69) Wil Brookes said the Saturday and Sunday format was perhaps too negative, or restrictive, and was difficult for those who go elsewhere (on a Sunday).
- 70) Frank Nickless acknowledged there was a demand for Sunday sailing and suggested maybe holding different competitions on the Sunday so those who could only come on Saturdays were not excluded.
- 71) Clair Faith noted some clubs have rotas for duties. Steve Bedder reported that Josh cooper had told him that at his previous club (Draycot?) they issued a list of duty dates each January, and it fell to members to do swaps as necessary. Steve B said he felt this was a bit dictatorial and we should as a group be able to get there by consensus and co-ordination.
- 72) Neil Plater said he felt the problem was just too few active sailors. He had seen looking after the dinghy park that only about 12 dinghies ever seem to move. Until we get the number of racing sailors up there will always be a problem.
- 73) Neil Plater noted at Windy Club there were often 16 leisure sailors. He has seen at windsurfing clubs the "master blaster" format where anyone can turn up for a race, without being intimidated. This fun format could increase participation.
- 74) Will Brookes supported this and said: *"the future is getting young people to come through (the sailing training) and into racing"*.
- 75) Des George returned to the idea that Golden Weekends help with volunteer fatigue as one person takes ownership for just that one weekend, just like Robin Druett does for the Chelmarsh weekend every year.
- 76) Clair Faith suggested more clubs like the Chelmarsh club are invited. All agreed this was a good idea. Rob Strange agreed inviting more clubs, and perhaps classes of boats, would get more sailors at DYC. It was agreed visiting clubs did make the club money, but maybe put more pressure on a limited pool of volunteers.
- 77) Sue Mason said the club had a wealth of knowledge and expertise and everything needed to make the club a great success. Sue said if the club failed it would become a restaurant, so the club must succeed; in this everchanging world every club needed to change, maybe every year.
- 78) Grant Hickson Senior noted the SUP relationship with Dave and Debbie was very beneficial to the club and maybe the accounts should show this.
- 79) Neil Plater supported this and confirmed his intention to build up the non-dinghy activities which would include foiling, wind surfing and kite surfing.
- 80) The meeting concluded at 10.15pm without any firm conclusions.

**Post meeting note.** On the water team to meet in September to review the 2024 season and discuss in a smaller group the format of the 2024 schedule. Prior to this, efforts to be made to identify a 2025 Sailing Secretary who can have an early-stage input into next year's plans in a genuine attempt to satisfy the members wishes.