

Northern Regional Rowing Council

AGM – 14 November 2022

Secretary's report - Colin Percy

Meetings of the Executive Committee in 2021-22

Our first meeting after the 2021 AGM was a short session in December with new members including incoming Chair, Tim Morris, especially in mind. Plan and priorities for 2022 were discussed, including being more outward looking around the region's clubs and making better use of social media.

Four regular meetings were then held in 2022, in January (Zoom), April (Zoom & in person), June (Zoom) and September (Zoom). The following paras covers issues perhaps not covered in individual officer reports to this AGM. Minutes of and papers for all Exec meetings are at www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html.

The January meeting agreed to purchase the competition communications equipment (radios, megaphones etc) from Novocastrian for £900 (a bargain) with Dan Lockey volunteering to look after it. It was hoped this would more than break even (it has). Training grants seemed in high demand at that point. A conference in 2022 was still hoped for at this stage, though did not materialise. Now planned for January 2023

The April meeting discussed how to improve both reporting within the Exec and contact with clubs. In retrospect I am not sure we have got much better over the year - to look at again in 2023! Richard Mortimer, however, had at short notice managed the migration of the web site and Exec email accounts to a new host, saving money and getting a better service. Many thanks. A revamp of the website in 2023 is now a priority.

The meeting saw the standing down of Alan Granlund as Treasurer (more thanks) and the stepping in of Pauline Higgins. The Chair agree to take up with BR the problems caused at competitions regarding substitutions, i.e. (a) late changes in crews when combined with club hopping causing ill feeling and (b) massive jumps in CRI's after entries closed and BROE not stopping this automatically.

The June meeting right at the end had a discussion on the possible changes in how British Rowing individual member subs were collected. A draft new format would have a smaller per capita annual fee (maybe £25) but a 'levy' on each seat entered in competitions, maybe £1.50 a time, collected through BROE. This was opposed by most present as it would unduly impact on our region with its plethora of local competitions. Many people, especially juniors, entered two or three races on one day and would lose out big time.

Alan Meegan, our interim BR liaison person, attended the September meeting on Zoom. He answered question on changes within British Rowing at the top. The issue of subs as from June was discussed with him and he said he would take the comments back to the CEO. Some worked examples based on real numbers of race events entered were promised by members (and later sent). No news on this as at 13 November. Maybe tomorrow, as Alan is back at the AGM!

The September meeting also discussed alleged unprofessional behaviour of club officials at one or two competitions. Although reported in at least one case to the competition organising committee via umpires, it seemed to get a bit lost in the system, maybe not being considered serious enough to engage the competition or British Rowing fully. It was

agreed that the Exec should look in 2023 at whether the region should take on some responsibility for welfare issues, especially at the lower level such as that reported which might not be serious enough for British Rowing to get involved. Discussions are in hand as at 13 Nov.

Virtual meetings on Zoom continued to work well in 2022, though we had one hybrid. As at 13 Nov there is no decision as yet on Zooming or not for 2023 meetings. Dates for 2023 Exec meetings based on the 2022 ones have been circulated for comment but not fixed yet. An extra short Exec meeting in early December 2022 is planned to set priorities for 2023.

New club affiliations

Not covered in the last item is that at the two later Exec meetings we discussed two new rowing clubs coming through the system for affiliation to British Rowing. The Regional Rowing Council must agree such applications before BR gives final approval, having seen the documents submitted to BR. One from South College at Durham University was unproblematical, though a bit of advice was given on wording of their constitution. We agreed it at the September meeting and British Rowing has now approved it and they are racing at Rutherford we understand.

The meeting also heard about a second application from a new club proposed in the Chester-le-Street area. A sub group of the Exec had considered the application documents and advised that there were significant inconsistencies between them and that much was not clear on governance, links to other organisations and on current and ultimate location of rowing on the water.

The sub group recommended that the application as it stood should not be agreed and that, if British Rowing agreed, discussions should be held locally with the applicants to see if a satisfactory set of documents could be achieved. After discussion, this was agreed. These discussions with reps of the new club are ongoing as at 13 Nov with an Exec decision maybe possible at the extra meeting in December.

Situation at Chester-le-Street ARC

The club has only been involved very marginally through successive chairs in the ongoing discussions between British Rowing and Chester-le-Street ARC on the issues that led to the suspension of the club's affiliation. However, in recent weeks we (NRC officers) have been asked and have agreed to sit in on some meetings at the club to observe how the improvements that are in hand there are coming along. This is being done now and we hope an early resolution is possible.

CP
13-11-22