



Northern Regional Rowing Council

Draft Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting – *for approval on 24-04-23*

30 January 2023, held online via Zoom at 7.30pm

Present: Helen McMillan (Chair), Charly Curtis (Vice Chair), Eddie Bryant (member), Pam Walton (Coach Education), Gabrielle Moore (Masters Rowing & Regional Rep), Richard Mortimer (Umpiring), John Mulholland (Safety), David Squirrell (member), Colin Percy (Secretary), Pauline Higgins (Junior Rowing & Treasurer), Dan Lockey (LDS & Equipment), Mark Hyson (Member), John Carter (Recreational Rowing), Louise Forster (Competitions), Alan Meegan (British Rowing, observer)

		Action by
1	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Catherine Bowman (ex-Competitions), Ryan Cooper (Student Rowing), Paul Nicholson (Para Rowing).</p>	
2	<p><u>Minutes of last meeting of Executive – 8 December 2022</u></p> <p>Agreed a correct record as circulated.</p>	
3	<p><u>Matters arising from minutes not otherwise covered</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
4	<p><u>Vacant posts update</u></p> <p>Following discussion at the last meeting Colin confirmed that John Carter had taken up the post of Recreational Rowing Coordinator. Louise Forster since the last meet had confirmed she was willing to take up the post of Competitions Coordinator, so this was now operational. As well as looking at the competitions calendar, she would work with Richard Mortimer on ensuring competitions were properly resourced to provide suitable arrangements for umpires. The meeting confirmed this arrangement was acceptable. Colin would meet both John and Louise to ensure handover happened adequately.</p>	CP/LF/JC
5	<p><u>Transgender issues in rowing</u></p> <p>Gabrielle had asked that this item be placed on the agenda following discussion at the national masters committee and a feeling that the policy line taken by British Rowing in September 2022 (see</p>	

	<p>www.britishrowing.org/2022/09/british-rowing-announces-revised-trans-and-non-binary-inclusion-competition-policy-and-procedures) had not been discussed fully with members. This echoed the current policy taken by World Rowing (FISA), allowing some trans women to compete subject to testosterone levels being suppressed for 12 months prior to competing. There was concern that the recent British Rowing position had not been the subject of sufficient consultation and discussion before being adopted.</p> <p>Richard Mortimer said that the policy and related issues had been discussed at a recent NRUC meeting. From a local perspective, then competitions and umpires attending could only be guided on the day by the gender shown by BROE for any particular athlete and would not themselves be involved in deciding who was assigned to which gender. He had reported on various views from umpires in the region, some strongly expressed, including that trans women, if they had been through puberty as male had a built in advantage, even with testosterone suppression.</p> <p>In the Executive meeting Helen as chair said that in part it was a question of inclusiveness vs fairness, but that everyone would have their own view on where that balance lay. There was some discussion around this and also the need also to look at the practical issue of whether providing safe places for women at rowing competitions was necessary.</p> <p>Looking at the bigger picture, Alan and Gabrielle indicated that the position of both World Rowing (FISA as was) and the IOC were relevant, as indeed were discussions within other sports. It was not a static picture by any means. They suggested British Rowing would be keeping their position under active review and there may well be further changes from them in 2023.</p> <p>In the light of these likely changes nationally and internationally, the meeting agreed that the NRRC should not take a fixed position itself now but that it should encourage British Rowing to consult widely as part of its likely review in coming months and the NRRC should discuss the matter again then. [N.B. See https://worldrowing.com/2023/03/15/world-rowing-adopts-tighter-rules-for-transgender-women-athletes for details of a very relevant change in the Bye-Laws announced on 15 March 2023].</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p><u>Progress at CLSARC and at Lambton RC</u></p> <p>Colin’s written report summarised the position on both. British Rowing had recently agreed in principle to lift its suspension of the affiliation of CLSARC, subject to the imminent adoption of a new constitution. Monitoring of club operations for 12 months would also be undertaken.</p> <p>In his written report Colin said discussions with what is now Lambton Rowing Club had continued, though stalled a bit over Christmas. A site meeting on the Lambton Estate was held two days before, involving Helen, John and Colin. They saw the good indoor spaces available to them and the stretch of the Wear proposed for rowing with the landing</p>	

	<p>sites (some distance apart). All are subject to a written agreement between the Club and the Estate on what access is allowed. The first reactions of those visiting were generally positive but with a feeling that to get a new club up and running safely given the constraints of various sorts was a big challenge.</p> <p>Colin said the paperwork covering the information needed for affiliation itself and the linked process to review safety was well underway, but finalising it was a slow process and had to be done thoroughly. Governance and welfare were not topics dealt with in any detail in the documents required by British Rowing for affiliation, i.e. the ones that pass through our hands. It was common knowledge that there some concerns around the region about how the new club would operate given what may have happened at the pre-suspension CLSARC. British Rowing have already been asked by NRRC officers to be to look at these issues to satisfy themselves all was well.</p> <p>Those attending the site visit confirmed they were reassured about many aspects of rowing on what was a new stretch of river to rowers and one which was some distance from indoor facilities and the public highways (unless normally locked estate gates could be used - arrangements are in hand for this). John thought the venue was inherently safe but that as at all clubs the right policies and procedures needed to be in place to reduce risk to an acceptable level.</p> <p>Members of the committee generally indicated that the NRRC seemed to be moving towards approval at regional level, but that if we did get to that point, our response to British Rowing should include a covering letter or email asking them to consider wider issues beyond our direct remit. It was agreed that if the application documentation was ready by late February or early March then another special Executive Committee be called to consider approval.</p>	CP
7	<p><u>Lead Welfare Roles</u></p> <p>Eddie reported that there was no news from BR on the possible pilot project in this region. There was a new safeguarding officer at BR and he would be meeting them and Jacqui Traynor soon. He would make enquiries.</p>	EB
8	<p><u>Applications for training grants</u></p> <p>Gabrielle reported that there was a steady flow of applications. These are being dealt with by the sub group. Any applications raising wider issues than covered in the guidelines would be brought to the Exec. She would give a summary of grants paid, approved or in hand at the next meeting.</p>	GM
9	<p><u>Competitions update</u></p> <p>Colin would meet with Louise and Catherine Bowman, the retiring coordinator, shortly and a review of dates for regional events in 2024-25</p>	CP/CB/LF

	<p>January she reported income of £13206 (much from LDS race fees) and expenditure of £9118. The balance in the bank was now £25584.</p> <p><i>Pauline Higgins (as Junior Rowing Coordinator)</i> said the focus at present was the Junior Inter-Regional Regatta, with regional trial on 11 March at Cambois. She was seeing if anything could be done to help Lambton RC as a one-off to get some of their juniors into the trials and the competition on 22 April (if selected) through cooperation with another club. In her written report she looked at GB junior selection, the national junior committee, Northern Region women's training days and DiSE. Richard reported later he was working with Pauline on BROE, entries and timing for the JIRR trials.</p> <p><i>Pam Walton (Coaching Education)</i> said there were Level 2 Club Coach courses coming up at DARC in February and Tyne ARC in July. In her written report she mentioned UK Coaching and their free subs offer, the need for coaches to keep up to date with first aid and safeguarding certificates and DiSE.</p> <p><i>Richard Mortimer (Chair of Northern Region Umpiring Committee)</i>. He said in his report that we had 27 licensed umpires, an increase year on year of two. Exams were due for a number of existing trainees and new trainees will start training soon. The Rules of Racing for 2023 were due out by 1 April - minimum weights for coxes might change. Investigation on uniform/kit was ongoing. Work on scrutinising documents and officiating at local competitions continued.</p> <p>The National Umpiring Committee met on 7th January with Richard representing the Northern Region. Joint National Umpiring Secretaries Gregg David and Katy Young had been appointed to replace the position previously occupied by Paddy Ibbotson. Sam Simons, NUC chair, would be standing down having held post for 6 years. British Rowing will be advertising nationally during selection of a replacement.</p> <p>Umpires/Officials welfare and expenses were coming under some scrutiny. British Rowing was likely to standardise things for national competitions (Nat Champs etc.) and whilst there will be no mandated standards regional competitions should consider what they are doing to support officials at all levels.</p> <p><i>Alan Meegan (contact person for us at British Rowing)</i>. Alan welcomed the opportunity to attend. He had contributed already on trans gender issues. He mentioned avian flu as a safety issue with outbreaks near one or two rowing clubs. Advice could be provided by the national safety adviser. He said he had given Colin an update on requirements/advice on launches and launch driving, mainly covering Environment Agency waters, but of interest to all. He had asked Colin to circulate this with these minutes.</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>RM/PH</p>
12	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Tech issues</p>	

	<p>Richard had submitted a written report covering non-umpiring issues. He said the video conferencing web camera was faulty. He was trying to get the supplier and manufacturer to agree who would repair/replace.</p> <p>He said that the new email/web site hosting arrangements seemed to be going well. No progress yet on the new web site. He wondered about a doing a local backup of the contents of both web site and emails. He could create this on his own infrastructure. It was agreed this should be done.</p> <p>He updated the meeting through the written report on timing technology and capabilities. New tablets for timing would be needed quite soon. He described where he had got to with being able to publish results online in real time for competitions which used the Oar Online software system. The system could also output results to big screens in venues and soon automatically to Twitter and Mastodon and there was an app for Android phones too.</p> <p>He might come back with a proposal to purchase a battery pack for use at venues or locations with no AC power handy. Durham Regatta was increasingly using these. From Dan he knew that a request to agree the purchase of some megaphones and a radio for use at LDS events and hire to others was likely. It was agreed this purchase could be authorised by officers.</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>RM</p> <p>RM</p> <p>RM</p>
<p>13</p>	<p><u>Dates of meetings in 2023</u></p> <p>It was agreed that meeting dates for this year would be on Mondays 24 April 23, 19 June 23 and 25 September 23 with the AGM on 20 November 23. Gabrielle said she had booked DARC for the AGM on 20 November 23.</p>	

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Thanks to Richard for arranging the Zoom.

Colin Percy

Secretary

Northern Regional Rowing Council

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Web page for NRC meetings: www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html