



**Northern Regional Rowing Council**

**Draft Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting – *for approval 29-04-24***

**29 January 2024, held at 7.30pm on Zoom**

**Present:** Helen McMillan (Chair), Charly Curtis (Vice Chair), Pam Walton (Coach Education), Gabrielle Moore (Masters Rowing & Regional Rep), Richard Mortimer (Umpiring), Louise Forster (Competitions), John Mulholland (Safety), Colin Percy (Secretary), Pauline Higgins (Junior Rowing & Treasurer), David Squirrell (member), Eddie Bryant (member), Jasper Bird (Student Rowing Rep), Dan Lockey (LDS & Equipment), Daniel Armstrong (Social Media Officer), plus Elliott Kay (Junior /coach at DARC) for Item 5.

		Action by
1	<b><u>Apologies</u></b> Mark Hyson (member).	
2	<b><u>Minutes of previous meeting 25 September 2023</u></b> These were agreed a correct record as circulated.	
3	<b><u>Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere</u></b> Referring to Item 4 last time Alan Meegan was asked if there was any progress within British Rowing on helping juniors financially to attend events on the national or international pathways. He referred to advice he gave last time about seeking various sources of funding locally, helped maybe by having regional hubs of one sort or another and a regional strategy too. He said Nathaniel Reilly-O'Donnell, Head of Pathways at BR (and our AGM speaker) was well aware of the issue, but money direct from British Rowing was unlikely. Helen suggested that the lack of more direct action and support from the national level was very disappointing and Pauline mentioned BR's statements on promoting inclusivity and diversity. The meeting agreed that NRRC should contact Nathaniel to seek a discussion with him.	
4	<b><u>Discussion with Alan Meegan, BR liaison contact</u></b> Alan said he did not have a huge amount to report. He had sat in on recent meetings where the major problems with pennywort came up. He asked that if it was an issue in this region, could word be passed back.	

	<p>He also mentioned a charity RALPHH (<a href="http://www.ra-lphh.org">www.ra-lphh.org</a>) that is active in facilitating rowing and other sports clubs in getting defibrillators. This was good in principle, but he warned that the conditions under which they were provided included clubs signing away limited liability. He warned against doing this without seeking specialist legal advice. The scheme did not have BR backing, at the moment anyway. It was agreed to inform clubs in the region of Alan's concerns</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b><u>Junior Inter-Regional Regatta regional rules</u></b></p> <p>Elliott Kay from Durham ARC had asked to address the meeting about one aspect of the rules governing how the NRRC invites interest in regional trials and then selecting crews for the national JIRR. He said he was representing that night junior coaches at seven clubs in the region. The local rule in question was one which prevented any 'rowing up' of a rower from one age group to the next, i.e. J14 to J15 or J15 to J16 in any crew. This covered entries for the regional trials and thus also for our selection to the JIRR itself.</p> <p>Helen invited Pauline to respond on the rationale. She said that her priority was the full range of rowers in the J14-J16 range. She said that, for example, a good J13 crew gaining a place and in effect replacing the best J14 crew was not fair on the latter. She thought the call for a change in this rule was very late. She felt that a full discussion of all coaches in the region was needed and it was difficult to get in contact with all coaches and thus to organise a meeting or discussion at short notice.</p> <p>Elliott said that there were examples of where allowing one junior to row up would fill a gap and allow, for example, a J16 crew struggling to fill all four places. Pauline said there were other ways of assembling crews, including composites, not that she was very keen on them.</p> <p>Eddie said let's discuss what we want to get out of the trials and JIRR itself. His impression was that coaches at the moment were working more for their own juniors rather than putting the region first and helping put the best crews out. He felt that performance was very important. Pauline said she was also keen to see the team do well, but using JIRR to widen participation was as important in her view.</p> <p>There was discussion in relation to Elliott's statement on what had been discussed and by whom and whether there was widespread support for what was being suggested by him. Elliott and others present felt there was such support. There was a suggestion from a Committee member again that this debate was very close to the trials and JIRR itself. Helen as Chair said she felt we were too far down that path to have a full discussion before JIRR of those directly affected and then conclusions brought back to the Executive Committee. She asked Pauline to convene a meeting of junior coaches and discuss this and any other related issues and report back to a future Committee meeting not too far in the future.</p> <p>John noted that the lack of a conference this year mean that there had</p>	

	<p>not been a ready-made focus for junior coaches to get together. Colin said maybe under the banner of the Regional Strategy we could have such a discussion, amongst others. Pam said she might be having a wider session for all coaches and JIRR could be on the agenda. Elliott asked for the meeting sooner rather than later.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b><u>Regional strategy</u></b></p> <p>Colin said that he hoped Gabby and Helen as our lead contacts with British Rowing nationally would lead on this, though he would of course support the initiative in terms of administration and other inputs. He thought the strategy process and the club development conference should be worked up together as a means to involve clubs and competitions. <b>It was agreed</b> to have a short discussion at the conclusion of this meeting to consider a date for those interested to have an workshop on moving forward on the strategy. [<i>Later agreed as 10 Feb at DARC</i>] .</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b><u>Financial arrangements</u></b></p> <p>Pauline as Treasurer said she wanted to get the finances a bit more organised in terms of being clear what has been agreed in the past, is being agreed here at the Executive Committee, monitoring actual spend, etc. She was working with Gabby on keeping a closer eye on grants for training so that we were clear what claims for grant payment might be coming forward and when. She said getting financial statements from British Rowing was difficult. Richard confirmed this was the case. On getting statements on LDS payments he suggested contacting Jeff Elms.</p> <p>She said she would also like clarity on liability for financial loss, for example if her laptop was hacked into and money from the NRRC's bank account was taken. Colin said he thought we should ask British Rowing. Richard said there was insurance cover, he thought, for us as Executive Committee members but was not sure if it extended to banking. Colin said he would try and clarify with BR and their insurers what cover the regional rowing councils and their officers get at the moment and if any gaps existed.</p> <p>Pauline asked for advice on liability for problems caused by equipment when hired out. Dan said he would look at our hire agreements with clubs; we were off-loading our PA equipment, though, which was probably the main liability. Helen on banking suggested Pauline looks at getting a two signature set up online. Taking a wider view on money, she felt that a discussion on whether the bulk of our spare income being used on grants for training would be useful quite soon.</p> <p>Pauline, in the context of assessing what income based on number of BR members in our region, said it would be very useful to start receiving again the stats on national and regional membership. Colin said he would make enquiries.</p>	

## 8 Officer reports

*N.B. Reference should be made to written reports, at [www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html](http://www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html), as these were taken as read at the meeting. Key points or formal decisions only are mentioned here.*

*Secretary (Colin Percy).* Colin said his main work had been around processing the application for affiliation by Senate Boat BC (sitting under Durham College Rowing). The constitution was now in his view acceptable. There were some other documents to submit and also the safety audit to be completed to John Mulholland's satisfaction, but these should be fairly straightforward.

It was agreed to delegate to Helen as Chair with advice from others as necessary to sign off this application if all documents had been submitted to BR and were judged acceptable to us. John could sign off the safety audit under his authority as regional safety adviser. In conclusion he said Infinity Boat Club had been approved for affiliation by the BR Board since the last meeting of the Exec.

He recommended that Louise Forster be agreed as Competitions Coordinator and Daniel Armstrong as Social Media Officer, the constitution not allowing this at the AGM. **This was agreed.** Helen welcomed them to the Executive, and also Caroline Scholl as Recreational Rowing Coordinator, elected at the AGM.

*Competitions (Louise Forster).* Louise said she would like retrospective approval for moving the Chester-le-Street Spring Regatta to avoid a clash with the JIRR trials. Pauline asked if Louise could slot in the JIRR trials for future years on the same weekend. There was discussion on possible changes to dates of national competitions.

*Umpiring (Richard Mortimer)* Richard referred to his written report and said he was keeping busy.

*Junior Rowing (Pauline Higgins)* Pauline had nothing to add to her written report and the main item discussion. Colin asked if the format for the forthcoming Ponteland Junior Head remaining as last year was acceptable. Pauline said she had no reason to suggest any changes.

*Coach education (Pam Walton)* Pam said she was progressing on courses as per her written report. In answer to a question on delays in assessing Level 2 coaching candidates, Pam said that poor weather had not helped with many outings for assessments cancelled, but the national shortage of assessors was not helping, with new Level 2 assessors not being assessed themselves very quickly.

*Regional Rep (Gabrielle Moore)* On grants, it was agreed to say that on grants then applicants should claim quickly, within three months of completing their course. Helen said that in relation to governance as referred to in Gabrielle's report, there was a meeting the next day for regional reps and chairs with the British Rowing CEO on governance. Richard asked if there was an opportunity to ask if the terms of

	<p>reference of regional umpiring committees (including the appointment process for chairs) could be clarified and amended as necessary so that regional rowing councils knew where they stood.</p> <p><i>Masters rowing (Gabrielle Moore)</i> Nothing to add to the written report, which covered dates and locations for future masters national events and ongoing consultation and discussion on moving such events around in the calendar.</p> <p><i>Safety (John Mulholland)</i> John referred to his written report. He drew attention to his summary of an incident on the Tyne when a coach fell overboard from a coaching launch. There were lessons to be learnt on use of crotch straps (i.e. wear one), how coaches if the only one on the water summon help and tin fish launches not being suitable for rescue. Gabrielle said these points should be circulated to clubs in not in the national monthly report.</p> <p><i>LDS (Dan Lockey)</i> Dan said that there was not much to report. He needed to convene a lessons learned discussion for the 2023 series and would do so soon. He echoed the comments made by Pauline on poor provision of financial statements on race fee remittances for the LDS series. On the matter of sale of the PA equipment, Hexham RC were lined up to purchase it for £750 and would share with Talkin Tarn as the only other user. Durham Colleges had ceased use in the last 2-3 years.</p> <p>He would be coming forward with a request to purchase up to 4 lifejackets and some radios, number to be advised. This might cost about £1000 overall. The meeting was happy to delegate the decision to the usual sub-group in line with current practice. Prompted by the need to come back to the Executive Committee on spend such as this, Pauline suggested we consider soon a minimum sum to be in the bank that could only be allowed to go below by a Committee decision. Pauline asked about phones rather than radios, but others said radios were best as everyone can hear what is being said, with phones as back up.</p> <p><i>Recreational Rowing (Caroline Scholl, with Colin Percy on 2 issues)</i> Colin under his Secretary's report had said that he was just emailing out to clubs about (a) setting dates and venues for the Sunday League and (b) to Tynemouth and other host clubs about the Great Tyne Row. Tides were problematical on the latter.</p> <p><i>Student Rowing (Jasper Bird)</i> Jasper raised the recent disappointing repeat of problems around cox weighing at a head race. This was despite our Competition Coordinator drawing the attention of organising committees to the very thorough guidance on weighing rowers and coxes. Lousie said the guidance was very clear on this. It was up to competitions to comply, but the situation would be monitored.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>(a) Helen asked that the meeting congratulate winners of British Rowing awards for 2023, announced just a few days before, including Committee member Pauline Higgins who received the Beryl</p>	

	<p>Crockford Award for Outstanding Contribution to Junior Rowing at an online ceremony just four days before. The meeting agreed congratulations to Pauline and also to the Junior Coaching Team at Tyne ARC (Coaching Team of the Year) and Ian Stonehouse, St Leonard's School BC (Lifetime Achievement Award). Commendations for other entries from the region were noted.</p> <p>(b) Richard said that Jeff Elms at British Rowing had asked him to provide some information on cancellation of competitions so that BR and their insurers could look at the viability of cancellation insurance.</p> <p>(c) He had also pointed out again to Jeff a long standing issue on BROE. A software fault means that means that the impact of making subs (after close of entries) on CRIs and in turn on banding limits is not being reported correctly when BROE flags up an infringement.</p>																	
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b><u>Dates of meetings in rest of 2024</u></b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Executive Committee</td> <td>7.30pm</td> <td>Mon 29 Apr 24</td> <td>In person, DARC*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Executive Committee</td> <td>7.30pm</td> <td>Mon 17 Jun 24</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Executive Committee</td> <td>7.30pm</td> <td>Mon 23 Sep 24</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Annual General Meeting</td> <td>7.30pm</td> <td>Mon 18 Nov 24</td> <td>In person, DARC*</td> </tr> </table> <p>* Zoom will be available</p>	Executive Committee	7.30pm	Mon 29 Apr 24	In person, DARC*	Executive Committee	7.30pm	Mon 17 Jun 24	TBC	Executive Committee	7.30pm	Mon 23 Sep 24	TBC	Annual General Meeting	7.30pm	Mon 18 Nov 24	In person, DARC*	
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The meeting closed at 9.30pm  
Thanks to Richard for arranging the Zoom.

**Colin Percy**  
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Email: [secretary@nerowing.com](mailto:secretary@nerowing.com)  
Web page for NRC meetings: [www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html](http://www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html)