

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE NSOA HELD AT THE ROYAL NAVAL CLUB, LONDON, ON TUESDAY MAY 8TH 2012 AT 3 PM

PRESENT Jenny Riley - Chairman
 Chris Stonehouse - Secretary
 Jill Fleming - Irish Forum
 Eddie Harper - Editor Squibble

 Mike Barsby Lou Bibby
 Fran Blackburn Malcolm Blackburn
 Peter Marchant Brian Pettit
 Pete Richards Steve Warren-Smith
 David Wines Paul Withers

APOLOGIES were received from Andrew Porteous, Sally Everitt, Tony Saltonstall, Gerard Dyson, Sean Clarkson, Max Evans, Ian Morton, Ian Waite, Kit Noble

CHAIRMAN Jenny Riley welcomed the members to the meeting and introduced Paul Withers, the new representative from Weymouth SC, who had taken over from Alan McDine.

THE MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday November 7th 2011 were accepted by the Committee as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

STROPS - Fran Blackburn, as Chairman of the Championship sub –committee, reported that the question of strops for the Nationals was ongoing. ACTION FRAN

LOADCELL - Concern had arisen regarding loan of the NSOA loadcell, originally minuted from March 2008 to remain with Tony Saltonstall, Chief Technical Adviser and Measurer, and used solely for the Inlands and Nationals. Unfortunately, there were often calls from fleets to borrow it and, although the loadcell was recalibrated in annually, there were worrying inaccuracies at Plymouth that had curiously varied from day to day.

Mike Barsby reported that Straightpoint Ltd, the calibrators, had suggested that there were possible problems with an aluminium loadcell and subsequently had recommended the use of Crosby shackles and 19mm diameter pins to ensure accuracy. His own steel loadcell had stayed accurate and required little adjustment after a lapse of eight years .

It was agreed that Malcolm Blackburn, Chairman of the Technical sub-committee, would review the cost of a second instrument for the NSOA. At the same time he would enquire whether a loadcell might be loaned from the RYA for special events. It was noted that the tare weight specified should be zero at 680kg, although it was accepted that the rate of tolerance was never less than 1% or plus/minus 7kg.

ACTION MALCOLM

PHOTOS FOR PARKERS - Mike reported that Bruce had not responded to an offer to supply him with new photos and the Chairman asked if he would kindly take the matter up again.

ACTION MIKE

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2013 – confirmed dates September 14/15 at Weymouth

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CLASS MEASURERS - Secretary Chris Stonehouse reported that updating the list of Class Measurers had proved more time consuming than had earlier been assumed and believed that the current list had been reduced because the RYA no longer posted renewal declaration forms annually.

Steve Warren-Smith offered to sort matters out, ensuring that the next RYA list in July would reflect the true position. He would also contact Derek Jago and Pete White regarding ratification. In the meantime it was agreed that the present RYA list would appear in the Handbook.

ACTION STEVE

HON TREASURER'S REPORT - Treasurer Andrew Porteous had sent a draft of the accounts for the year ending April 30th 2012 pointing out that Lonton and Gray had not settled their account for the last two advertisements, although Pete Richards said that they had promised payment and had a further advertisement pending for our current publications. Jenny agreed to contact Ian Gray as soon as possible.

ACTION JENNY

Overall Andrew was far happier now that the overall balance sheet was in the black and the Secretary agreed to contact him re points from the Committee, including the cost of the website and the additional honorarium to Webmaster Sean Clarkson for £750 for his work on the new website, which was a quite excellent. They also noted that the Euro exchange rate was not favourable to us regarding Irish subscriptions; that the outstanding build fees for four new boats had been settled; and that the costs of circulating Squibble and the Handbook had increased along with their size and postage rises.

The final balance sheet and drafts would then be circulated to the Committee for approval before posting on the website with Notice of AGM.

ACTION ANDREW/CHRIS

Sadly Andrew would be standing down at the AGM2013 and, like most Committee members, his term of his Office has been extended by several years – he will be a hard act to follow and the Committee are truly grateful to him for his financial guidance and expertise.

HON MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT - In a written report Sally Everitt stated that at the time of writing 320 Full Memberships had paid leaving 63 still to come in, and that 36 Associate Members had paid leaving 15 to settle. Needless to say further subscriptions were still arriving daily.

She had attached a list of non-payers, which Jenny read out and would send to all Fleet Captains. Jill also requested a copy.

ACTION JENNY

Pete disliked the late date for printing of the Handbook and the inevitable inclusion of events that had already taken place. However, the only way to avoid this would be to bring the subscription date of March 31st forward, which was rejected as being too complicated, requiring members to alter their standing orders – some standing orders were still not updated from the last increase! To make alterations in a year when a new Membership Secretary was taking over would be particularly inappropriate.

NOTICE OF AGM on WEDNESDAY JULY 11th 2012 AT 6 pm - A draft was circulated and the date of the AGM at Abersoch altered to read Tuesday July 2nd 2013 at South Caernarvonshire (sic!) Yacht Club.

It would be posted on the website before the end of May.

ACTION CHRIS

TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE

JIB FURLING - A proposal had been received from Dave Best, seconded Dick Batt, to change rule C.10.4 (a) 'the jib shall not be furled while racing' to 'the jib can be furled while racing'. In consultation with the RYA the sub-committee would suggest that this should read 'the headsail may be lowered or furled while racing' and this had been accepted by Dave.

(NB THIS PROPOSAL HAS NOW BEEN DEFERRED AND IS NOT AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE AGM AT DARTMOUTH)

In 2008 it had been agreed by the NSOA to conduct trials on furling jibs during racing and an attempt was made to ascertain clear guidance on whether furled jibs downwind led to increased speed. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, this had proved extremely difficult to assess and definite conclusions could not be drawn.

It again left the Committee to consider a possible modification which might be perceived to give an advantage during racing. They had no desire to render helms, who chose not to fit furlers, either from personal preference or for financial reasons, to feel that they were uncompetitive. Jenny had made a compilation of points that had been received from various members and fleets and asked that they be considered during discussion.

The only possible indication of an advantage had been a marginal increase in speed square downwind, although Paul Withers felt that this would only be true in winds below seven knots. However, he believed that a rule change that encouraged sailors to fit furlers because of a perception that there might be improved performance could result in safer sailing. The ability to reef quickly and easily in deteriorating weather conditions should eliminate the need for crews to venture on foredeck in large waves, as well as increasing visibility when manoeuvring between races and approaching or leaving moorings. He thought that the cost of additional equipment might well be recouped as reduced flapping of jibs would increase the life of the sail.

David Wines confirmed that furling jibs had been introduced on grounds of safety for those very reasons. The Committee had revisited the question on more than one occasion since then and had been happy with the current ruling. They were especially concerned not to impose any increased costs (minimum £100-£150) on a one design fleet that had proved successful for many years.

Any support from recent fleet emails mainly highlighted the safety aspect, although there had been some criticism of the furling gear itself, the creases sometimes created on the luff of the jib and the problems with spinnaker, jib luff and forestay getting tangled in a rushed spinnaker drop. River racing and short legged courses were not ideal for furler+spinnaker either. Malcolm, who had designed the original drum, had made adjustments and felt that this should run smoothly now, proving cost effective as wear and tear on the jib had been enormously reduced.

Brian Pettitt agreed that there was no evidence to support improved performance and Mike said that it would be helpful to make a well-informed decision based on a possible speed difference. Malcolm offered to return to fleet trials at Abersoch, where they would make a concerted effort to reach a conclusion as to the viability of furled jibs during racing. Other fleets could be invited to make a contribution where applicable.

Consequently, the Committee found themselves in the position of being unable to take a 'party line' on the proposal owing to lack of information and differences of opinion on how the boats, owners and class would be affected by any change. All agreed with the Chairman that she call a poll for the AGM with proxy voting permitted. Similarly the sub-committee were also unable to make a recommendation owing to differing views among its members.

MAST CHOCKS/RAM ETC - It had come to the notice of the Technical sub-committee that some owners had fitted various devices for restricting the movement of the mast in the mast hole. However, discussions with the RYA concluded that our rules were insufficiently robust to either allow or preclude. Our rules are based on the premise that if it doesn't say you can, then you cannot.

Jenny circulated copies of the Guidelines and Criteria for Rule Change and requested that any decisions should be based on these (NB these can be read in full on the website under a separate tab)

Again the Technical sub-committee, taking into consideration the various devices known to be in use including chocks, had found themselves split and asked the NSOA Committee for a decision. Malcolm did not think the suggested RYA wording would outlaw the use of strop rings round the mast as part of the kicker system, which were not uncommon among the fleet. The banning of mast rams would be difficult to police as they were below deck and out of sight.

In discussions the Committee were concerned with outlawing strops, but were strongly in favour of tightening up on observation of current rules and banning any restriction of movement to the mast by devices below deck. Similarly they disliked the use of chocks, which would be easier to police, but felt they were an unnecessary complication in a simple one design class. Jenny again asked them to consider their views in the light of the guidelines that were circulated earlier.

David proposed that mast chocks, mast rams, or any device, which intentionally or unintentionally has the effect of controlling or constraining the natural position of the mast in the mast spar hole, is illegal. All in favour.

Jenny would email all fleet captains informing them of the need to enforce this ruling within their members.

ACTION JENNY

Jill Fleming reported three other suggestions from the Forum

1. That electric bilge pumps be permitted during racing
2. That correctors be place fore and aft in the hull to 'spread the weight'
3. That bigger spinnakers be permitted

The Committee considered all the suggestions and in reply pointed out that electric pumps could be fitted to boats on moorings, but not used while racing; that there might be a problem with rotten floor boards contributing to increased central weight and correctors misplaced were not the answer to poorly maintained boats; and that, although bigger spinnakers had been trialled in the past, they had not proven beneficial or been accepted as an improvement within our one design class.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SQUIB APP - Lou was to ask Sean if it might be possible to have a Squib App ACTION LOU

2015 EASTERN CHAMPIONSHIPS - Brian requested that Medway SC be added to the list of would-be hosts of the Easterns in 2015 ACTION FRAN

INLANDS 2012 ENTRY FEE - Mike reported that the entry fee for the Inlands would be £60 per boat

WEBSITE PICTURE EDITOR - Jenny was delighted to announce that Tony Gibson of Stone SC had volunteered as picture editor for the website

2012 SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS PLYMOUTH - David reported that he was concerned with rising costs for this event and was reviewing the situation. ACTION DAVID

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.50 pm

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NSOA GENERAL COMMITTEE on NOVEMBER 12th 2012 at THE NAVAL CLUB, LONDON, at 1500

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NSOA on JULY 11th 2012 at ROYAL DART YACHT CLUB at 1800

Chairman's Report. May 2012.

It has been a very busy 4 months for your Chairman. There is, as ever, a lot to talk about at this meeting, so my first plea to you all is to keep our comments brief so that we can finish by 6.00pm in time for an early supper.

- First, the good news. Bryan and I represented the NSOA in South Africa at the Hunter19 Championships in March. I made a Squib and Hunter Flag to take with us and it was used as the Class Signal. It was most interesting sharing their problems with class rules and membership. We had a great time coming 8th out of 18 and Paul and Tim can't wait to join us in Dartmouth this Summer. I really hope that someone will continue the exchange next year.
- Mike Barsby and I have made a Squib DVD and I sent out 45 copies to every Fleet and others who I thought might find it useful. I really hope that you have seen it and that clubs have found the opportunity to play it and so promote the Squib Class. I am pleased with it and I had 3 replies to say thankyou!
- After a huge effort by Sean and Ricky, our new Website is up and running. The old one was described as a patchwork quilt held together by bits of string. It had served us well, but was 10 years old and needed revamping to make it easier to change and update. I sent a message to all fleet captains to tell all their members to have a look, so everyone should have seen it by now. I also have a new Website Picture Editor in Tony Gibson from Stone so hopefully the gallery will be kept full and up-to date. I sent a bouquet to Ricky and some sailing Gloves to Sean to say "thank you" on your behalf.
- I have made a new Squib Poster and E-mailed it to every Fleet Captain so you should all be seeing it in your Club.
- I have been very busy with technical discussions of all matters. "Death Knell" of the class has been mentioned on several occasions. I am interested in change but not for change sake. We have a successful class, based on an excellent One Design formula. If we consider change it must be for the benefit of the class as a whole, not because of a few individuals. If sailors want change we have a democratic system in place to make sure that we consider everyone. I agree with Mike Barsby when he says "I believe we should spend our efforts in maintaining the class as a simple inexpensive boat that provides the greatest inclusion and level racing for the maximum number of sailors." I am not going to let significant changes happen by accident on my watch and I want to say a huge thank you to Malcolm for his awareness and thoroughness in sniffing out potential problems and giving his full effort and time to finding solutions. We have a strong and loyal class and we need to nurture it.
- For three people, this should be their last committee meeting. Max Evans was our Class Chairman before David Wines and we owe Max a big thank you for all his work with the Squib Class. Mike Barsby is stepping down after many years as Publicity Officer. He was responsible for the original website and the class owes him a huge debt with the "corporate identity" he created, especially the square logo. He has been a source of knowledge and experience in a Squib matters and we will miss him on our committee. Sally Everitt is also stepping down as Membership Secretary after 4 years. She has made a superb contribution sorting out membership lists and enquiries and we are all grateful for the time and effort she has given to the NSOA
- Finally, I shall be standing down as Chairman at the Abersoch Nationals and I shall be needing a replacement. Please give this some thought and if you have any ideas let me know as soon as poss.