

**British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 9.00 on 19 November 2022 at Cropredy
Village Hall, Cropredy**

Present:

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)
Siobhan Urquhart (SU)
David Sackman (DJS)
Graham Warland (GW)
Bryn Price (BP)
Dan Seaford (DMS)
Roland Lawler (RL)
David Enoch (DE)
Evan Shepherd (ES)
Holly Mobbs (HM)
Brian Chapman (BC),
Mick Nadal (MN)
Jim Rossiter (JR)

Attending via zoom: Nettie North (NN)

These people are referred to by their initials hereafter in the Minutes.

If your initials are down for action please ensure that you follow up the matter concerned and report the outcome back to the Secretary well before our next meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kat Wilson (KW), Scott Hynds (SH), Dyson Pendle (DP) and Nettie North (NN) when unable to attend via Zoom.

2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11 September

The minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2022 were approved by the committee.

3. Matters Arising

a) *MRC Trailer* – the trailer has been washed and serviced and is ready to sell.

Action: SU to advise KW of above and find out what is happening

b) *IT agreement with Will Abson* – agreement has been drafted and sent to Will Abson, waiting to be signed

Action: DMS to progress

c) *South Cerney update* – SM has recently received correspondence from British Canoeing on this.

Action – SM/ES to monitor

d) *Update on MRC minibus plans* – MRC minibus has been tidied up at a cost of £500, and will be kept for now, as BC cannot guarantee they will be able to provide alternative transport whenever needed. An annual re-fresh will cost around £100.

e) *Sale of MRC K2s* – completed. The MRC has NO squad boats now.

f) *Advice to clubs re closing date for entries* - MN circulated a timeplan for race organisers.

Action: MN/GW to circulate timeline to race organisers, clubs, team leaders and paddlers, and put link on race request info. HM to put it on the MRC website.

g) *Norwich query on portage time allowance* – done

4. Governance

a) Handbook

It was agreed the MRC will participate in the Handbook again, and will order 65 copies for sale/circulation. Short-course race information needs to be included.

Action: GW to order Handbooks. ES to add short-course information.

b) King's Awards

If anyone is aware of someone who should be put forward for a King's Award, to advise SU.

Action: All

c) ITO Nominations

BC advised none of the current ITOs appears to be interested in carrying on. DMS confirmed he is interested – BC/DMS to liaise. BC advised other countries have NTOs, and this might be a stepping stone to encourage people. The current ITO syllabus is being updated, and BC thought we could produce a national system based on that

Action: BC/DMS to liaise re DMS nomination, and producing a UK NTO syllabus

d) MRC Committee

There is a need to encourage new people onto the committee well in advance of the ACM. It would be preferable to have greater representation from the different regions.

Action: HM to publicise on the website and social media and encourage interest.

5. Finance

a) Budget

DE presented a preliminary budget.

- It was agreed that training camps should be shown in the budget as evidence of the MRC's commitment to training.
- DJS advised BC should pay for DBS checks and that could be removed.
- Funding the MRC Coaching Bursary was agreed for another year.
- There is money in the budget for MRC grants towards changing tents for clubs/regions without suitable facilities.
- Short Course – ES advised hope that it will be self-funding next year.
- Costs for para athletes racing internationally have not been included at this stage, as it is unknown if they will have international opportunities. A foot note to be added that it is the MRC's intention to support para athletes, but that it would require additional funding from BC to do so. It was noted that taking additional para athletes to events has an impact on the overall costs for the event, with staff requiring to be out longer etc.

(The budget has gone forward as the official budget since the meeting)

b) Annual Accounts

DE advised there had been some unusual one-off income payments this year – a grant from Leaside and the sale of the K2s, but there had also been a significant increase in costs for international trips, in particular Sanabria.

c) Coaching Bursary

It was agreed to continue with £5,000 for coaching bursaries for another year

d) Alternative Funding

SM advised that the MRC was likely to need to increase funding from sources other than BC

HM has approached a company for advice re securing sponsorship for the international teams. It was recommended that, a “shopping list” of different levels of benefit/costs packages is produced for potential sponsors.

DE advised we might need to increase athlete contribution or reduce the number of athletes sent in order to get better balance between international and national costs.

SM suggested race organisers might want to formally consider including SUP at races, which would provide an additional source of levies.

To help cover the rising costs to the MRC of IT support (DMS) and medals etc at the major events, it was agreed that the levy would be increased at the Nationals, Short Course Championships and Hasler Finals by £1/per person (excl GS paddlers).

Action: DMS to advise Norwich and, in time, whichever club runs the Hasler Finals.

6. Domestic Racing

a) Hasler Series Review

i. Proposal for clubs to be responsible for their promotions/demotions

Views on this had been collected prior to the meeting. It was agreed to leave the current system in place for now, but the MRC will continue to review, in conjunction with the clubs and RMAs.

ii. *Encouraging greater participation by qualified clubs at the Hasler Finals*

It was noted that some clubs who qualify for the Finals send very few paddlers, which is frustrating to see for those clubs who miss out on qualification. Suggestions such as all clubs being able to send a certain (eg 5) paddlers whether qualified or not were discussed, and whether individuals could qualify separately by doing more than 3 qualifying races.

Action: All to consider alternatives during the year and a proposal be taken forward to the ACM, with a view to implementation of any changes for the 23/24 season

iii. *How to minimise the environmental and cost impact of the distances some clubs have to travel to races*

There has been a request to review how clubs qualify, in order to reduce the distances some have to travel to in-region races. There is not standard system around the regions, and it was agreed standardising a percentage of races that can be dropped would be easier to implement.

It was also suggested that all RMAs should have an assistant to help cover a region.

Action: MN to look at a formula for regions to allow clubs to drop a percentage of races. SU to advise Devizes CC of no changes for the 22/23 season, but that there would be a review for 23/24.

iv. *The effect of a delayed double K2 promotion on the overall result*

This was raised in response to the Hasler Finals, when a doubly promoted K2 scored points on the day, whereas K1s with double promotion did not.

Action: ES/DMS to see if there is a possible solution to address K2 promotions

v. *Proposal to reduce Division 3 to 8 miles*

It was agreed to make no change to the current distance.

ES has been reviewing the promotions from Div 4 to Div 3, and believes the speed in Div 4 has dropped slightly over the years. Raising this make promotion a bit more difficult and the step up to Div 3 a little easier, whilst also enabling the slower Div 3 paddlers to get a demotion if required.

Action: ES to review and amend the promotion time with RL

vi. *Should races for older athletes be kept to 8 miles?*

It was agreed to make no change, but the amendment to the qualification time to Div 3 might help.

vii. *Has racing become a bit dull and, if so, how can we encourage a greater variety?*

It was agreed to help encourage clubs to run races rather than not do so because it's too difficult, and to help promote them via MRC communications. It was noted that

RLSCC were running a new Avon Ascent/Descent race that day, and this type of race should be encouraged and supported where possible.

viii. *Should the Mixed K2 class at the Nationals be split due to the size of field?*

It was agreed to leave the Mixed class as it is.

ix. *To review after the National Championships if 4 miles is a sensible distance for the U12s, as most are only racing over 2 miles in the Geoff Sanders series*

It was agreed to leave it as it is.

b) *Arrangements for Scottish qualification to Hasler Finals (BC)*

BC presented a proposal that Scotland is classed as a single region for Hasler Final qualification (rather than the current two regions) and 4 clubs would qualify (as supported by the current system). This was agreed.

c) *Letter from Vicky Metcalfe*

Vicky Metcalfe had been asked to give permission for a Div 1 K2 to run with the Div 2 K2 field at the Pangbourne Hasler, and felt the responsibility should have not lain with her. HM reported that a number of Div 1 and 2 paddlers were asking for more Div 1 K2 races. It was agreed to add these classes to some races.

Action: HM to work with the paddlers to identify a number of race venues where they would guarantee a reasonable number of Div 1 K2s.

d) *Feasibility for clubs to work together as a region to run major events?*

NN outlined the system mountain biking use, whereby competitors race for the club and then regionally at the major events. At this stage, asking clubs to race as regions was seen as too big a step, but clubs will be asked to work together as a region to run the major events.

Action: Raise at 2023 ACM

e) *Schools Racing*

HM reported there would be approximately 40 boats, including one state school which was competing for the second year running. The level of the paddlers was being capped to ensure it is a school rather than an additional club event, and requires a full buy-in from the schools. The event is now fully insured via BC

f) *Access*

The accessibility matrix was circulated. It was confirmed that this is not designed to impose changes to any event/course to make them more accessible, but to help organisers be more aware of their facilities and make them more accessible where possible – eg providing parking close to the racing for those with mobility needs. To deal with, The suggestion is that the club nominates an Accessibility Officer who can advise participants of the venue and course suitability, rather than this being another issue for the Race Organiser.

MN suggested the Accessibility Officer should be named at the same time as the safety Officer, when clubs register their race.

Action: The paper was accepted as it is for now and BP to review it further. It could be implemented informally for the 22/23 season, and formally for 23/24.

7. Coaching & Development

a) JDS – review and 2023 proposals

The JDS team were thanked for their work this year, and it was noted that having dates already in the diary for the winter was greatly beneficial.

b) U23/Senior Training/coach development

HM is working with SH to identify, with the athletes, what help they would like from the MRC. A questionnaire has been circulated to this athlete group, and initial responses include requests for more opportunities to race Div 1 K2.

8. Major Events

a) 2023 Short Course Championships

This has been provisionally booked for the same venue, and for Sunday 7 May – which is now the Coronation weekend. There is no intention to pay for international athletes to attend this year, although their participation is to be encouraged.

There will again be 2 heats and 2 finals for male and females in each category – Junior/Senior/Vet, so everyone should still get two races, although it is likely that the C1 and para athletes may have a straight final, particularly if the C1 paddlers would like their own race.

b) 2023 National Championships

These have been confirmed for 22/23 July 2023 at Norwich.

c) 2023 Hasler Finals

No venue or date yet.

d) 2027 World Championships

BC advised that, despite local Scottish funding, there is not sufficient for a bid for the 2027 World Championships, so British Canoeing will not be putting forward an expression of interest in running it.

9. International

a) 2023 Selection Plans

The selection committee was approved as follows:

Chair

- Nanette North (IND)

Voting Members

- Tom Sharpe (RIC)
- Jo Bates (FOX)

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- Kat Wilson (RDG)
- Roland Lawler (ELM)
- Paul Dimmock (WEY)

Two non-voting, independent representatives

- Fay Lamph (WEY)
- Gemma Wiggs (British Canoeing)

Action: KW to clarify dates and locations of the major events.

b) Travel and logistics for 2023

GW has put together an outline of the process, and DJS asked for clarification at each event over responsibility for boat loading.

SM reiterated there must be better communication next year, and sufficient time between selection events and the international event to allow for the logistics team to get everything in place smoothly and cost-effectively.

DJS advised that the current proposed selection event for the German Nationals was too close to allow for the travel arrangements.

HM stated that, from a welfare point, accommodation should not include athletes sharing with staff, or seniors with juniors.

Action: SU to send GW's process paper to NN for confirmation and DJS to speak to KW re German Nationals selection times.

c) Feedback on Para Marathon Worlds

BC advised the ICF were unhappy with the way the Open Class had been requested. There may not be an Open Class in 2023, as it is felt it undermines para racing as a whole. There is also a timing issue between the sprint and marathon world championships which are very close in 2023, and with a shortage of international classifiers, it might not be possible to run a marathon event. There are no international classifiers in the UK

d) Post World Championships Feedback

SM reported there had been some behaviour by athletes and British supporters which had put the team staff under unnecessary pressure. This included athletes requesting to move to their own choice of accommodation, and supporters accessing the accredited areas. There was also a report of senior male supporters trying to access the junior female changing area prior to the race, and providing drinks support without accreditation.

BP advised the Portuguese security was not tight around the accredited areas, and accreditation could be bought for 10 euros.

HM suggested all athletes (and parents of juniors) should attend a pre-season online briefing of expected behaviour, and a pre-event one if necessary.

GW advised all athletes and parents of juniors sign a Code of Conduct form – this to be reviewed and see if it can be tightened up.

Action: GW/Selection Team to tighten up Code of Conduct, and the understanding of the expected behaviour by those on the team and their supporters.

10. Communications

HM reported the increase in usage and engagement on social media and the consequent rise in the profile of the sport. There has been good interaction with British Canoeing over the major events, and the athletes – particularly Beth Gill – have also done a great job.

HM reminded the committee members to be aware when online if they are representing themselves or the MRC.

SM asked that the MRC in futures gives greater signposting to where the livestream for the major events is, as it was difficult to find at times for the World Championships.

11. Environmental Sustainability

BP advised the community is already doing quite a lot, but should in particular be aware of picking up litter at an event – eg gel wrappers.

12. AOB

SM raised the recent online debates regarding the DW. The MRC had been asked to arbitrate, but had passed that on to British Canoeing's Governance Dept.

GW advised responses for the 2023 calendar were coming in slower than usual, and he would be doing another push. GW will also be asking for a club's risk assessment and proof of their public liability insurance cover.

JR asked if the MRC was working with the SRC for one racing committee. SM advised this might not be the right time, but was open to future discussions.

13. Future Dates

- March
- May
- July ACM
- September
- November

The meeting closed at 15.15.