

British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee

Minutes of the Annual Consultative Meeting held on 21st July 2018

Riverside, Caversham, Reading.

1. Present at the meeting were:

Richard Gilbert-Johns (Southampton)*	Mark Wilkes (Chelmsford)
Katie Williams (Elmbridge)*	Lizzie Broughton (Richmond)*
David Glover (Cambridge)*	Tom Sharpe (Richmond)
Penny Glover (Cambridge)	Matthew Villaruel (Ealing)
Tim Scott (Norwich)*	Dwayne Morton (Elmbridge)*
Dyson Pendle (Norwich)	Roland Lawler (Elmbridge)
Teresa Gregory (Independent)	Kat Wilson (Reading)
Stuart Fisher (Independent)	Evan Shepherd (Reading)
Gary Partridge (Truro)*	Gareth Wilson (Reading)
Mark Pearce (Longridge)	Colin Chudley (Bristol)*
George Scammell (Longridge)*	Laura Hussey (Leighton Buzzard)*
Roger Edwards (Devizes)*	Catherine Guy (Leighton Buzzard)
Ollie Harding (Longridge)	Siobhan Urquhart (Banbury)
David Millar (Exeter)*	Alice Murphy (Banbury)
Katharine Millar (Exeter)	Jo Bates (Falcon)
Jim Taylor-Ross (Exeter)	Steve McCluskey (Pangbourne)*
David Green (Exeter)	Dan Golder (Banbury)
Paul Thompson (Wey)	Elena Golder (Falcon)
Margaret Chapman (Kirkaldy)*	Graham Warland (Banbury)
Brian Chapman (Kirkaldy)	Stan Missen (Bradford on Avon)
Mo Moule (Chelmsford)*	James Smythe (Bishops Stortford)
Pete Moule (Chelmsford)	Mick Nadal (Nottingham)
Norman Mason (Nottingham)*	David Enoch (Nottingham)
Keith Moule (Chelmsford)	
Ali Pendle (Norwich)	
Deborah Wilkes (Chelmsford)	

*Voting representatives of each club are indicated with an asterisk

Apologies for absence were received from Jim Rossiter (Wey), Dan Seaford (Reading) and Alan Laws (Lincoln)

2. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the 2017 Annual Consultative Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

- a. Following the 2017 Nationals and ACM, the MRC introduced an Open C2 and an Open Women's C1 National Championship class, which have been incorporated into the Nationals programme from this year.
- b. The question of being able to earn club Hasler points by racing out-of-region was discussed by the MRC. Because the Hasler Series is a regional competition it was felt that this would change the nature of the competition and so was not approved.
- c. With the introduction of new cross-discipline kit from Errea from British Canoeing, Masters are now able to buy replica kit directly from BC for racing and representing the country at international competitions.

4. Report from the Chair, Stan Missen

The Chairman, Stan Missen delivered the following report:

The purpose of the ACM is to briefly report upon the year, consider the financial picture and to elect the incoming committee to run marathon competition. It is most importantly a meeting for clubs and members to have an opportunity to voice concerns and suggest changes and improvements for consideration for the coming season. We will open the floor for questions once the more formal items have been dealt with.

I am pleased to report ongoing, very positive dialog with David Joy's team, at BC. There is a real feeling now that even as a non-Olympic discipline, BC fully recognise the contribution Marathon racing is making to our sport, with the increasing participation numbers that are being seen in clubs and in competition.

We have seen some terrific performances on the international scene. It would be unfair to single out any one performance, as a huge effort, attributable to many, has seen our athletes, both and junior and senior achieve considerable successes.

In July 17, we sent Woman's K4 compete in Spain. In September Lani Belcher brought home our first world championship gold medal for some time. Whilst this must be a high point, examination of results show the full strength and breath of our paddlers on the international circuit. The 2017

Hasler final trophy was won by Chelmsford, after a hotly contested season, and finals hosted at Richmond. The Geoff Sanders trophy was won by Glasgow. Our plans were to send teams to all the normal major internationals, but in addition, in the early 2018 season we were able to send a development team to the German nationals; in May a small team was also able to be sent to The Bilbao international.

Performances both on and off the international stage however demonstrated the depth of our national competition, with our variety of venues and rewards that marathon racing brings at all levels.

Your committee have been supporting more development opportunities – taking ‘up and coming athletes abroad’ supporting Race training days and with the very welcome increase in our central grant from BC for many years, introducing the training and financial assistance programme to train race specific coaches to work within regions and clubs.

We have been working with BC to achieve more on athlete’s general welfare, acknowledging that there are outside demands, not just training demands but such things as exams that can bring extra pressures on younger athletes.

We have been pleased to see more club members to step forward to assist with logistics, driving and staffing international and development events.

We are working toward greater dilution of authority from above and down to the Regional marathon advisors who have a closer and often better understanding of their regions requirements. In recent years, we have of course introduced an election procedure for RMA’s as the importance of this role is expanding and is likely to continue to do so.

A huge amount of work has been put in – headed by James Smythe – to producing the MRC 4-year strategic plan, which will feature as an ongoing BC requirement, detailing and outlining your committees plans and financial needs.

New rules have been devised, and now published, to develop U12 racing with the objective of enabling swifter and easier development path into lower divisions, hopefully smoothing the path from Lightings to divisional status racing.

The year has not of course been without its challenges. Assessment and Selection for our National team has been under the spotlight with some disaffection of the process and its clarity – accordingly my priority with your new committee will be to set up a review panel to look in detail at the current process and make recommendations for robust policy for the 2019 season.

My report could not be complete without thanking Alan Laws and his long suffering wife Christine for all their hard work, the time and the enormous commitment that both have put in prior to his retirement from the committee earlier this year. Not only was Alan a very early member of the MRC, joining right back in 1969 - but he was at the helm and steered the formation in those early days of Long Distance racing into the current marathon racing of today; holding post as Chairman for an incredible 28 years! Alan was instrumental in devising and bringing the first World Marathon Racing championships to be held, to Nottingham back in 1988 and had been present to represent us in his many years as a member of the ICF. Appropriately, a perpetual trophy will be awarded this weekend named 'The Laws Trophy'.

5. Election of Committee Posts

- a. The MRC elects committee places on a rolling basis, for a period of two years, with the election of the Chair taking place annually. Six ordinary committee places, plus the Chair were therefore up for election at the ACM.
- b. Stan Missen was re-elected unopposed as Chair of the MRC for the forthcoming year, by a show of hands.
- c. Following a ballot with one vote per club present at the meeting, Kat Wilson (Reading), Tom Sharpe (Richmond), Siobhan Urquhart (Banbury), Mick Nadal (Nottingham), Roland Lawler (Elmbridge), and James Smythe (Bishops Stortford) were all elected as members of the committee for the forthcoming two years. JO Bates (Falcon) acted as teller.
- d. The MRC would like to record its thanks to Scott Hynds (Elmbridge) and Nanette North (Cambridge), two candidates with excellent volunteering records who sought election to the MRC but were not successful. It is hoped that they and other such candidates will try again in future years.

6. Finance

- a. David Enoch (MRC Treasurer) presented the committee's income and expenditure for the previous financial year to October 2017, as well as projections for the current year. These showed expenditure of £77k, against income of £69k, and a net £8k decrease in the MRC's reserves.

- b. The Strategic Plan provides for the MRC to retain a reserve of roughly £50k, so the current and future annual budgets are set in line with this target.
- c. The increase of the Racing Levy for senior entries to £3, agreed at the 2017 ACM, is expected to contribute an additional £6k in the current year, despite the cancellation of some of the larger early-season races due to weather conditions.
- d. British Canoeing has increased the MRC's annual grant for the first time in many years, raising this from £25k to £35k in 2017-18 on the condition that the increase was invested in sport development not left in reserves. This surplus has been invested in subsidizing the new Race Coach training scheme, and sending a team to an additional junior development international this year.
- e. Nevertheless a £7k loss is forecast for the current year, which will bring reserves down to the £50k level planned for. It is hoped that BC will keep the grant at its new level, especially as we are facing higher international costs in 2019 with a World Championships in China and a World Cup in Norway.

7. Coaching & Development

- a. Jim Taylor-Ross outlined the MRC's investment in subsidizing course fees for volunteer coaches training for the new Race Coach course. The additional BC grant money has enabled the MRC to support the development of coaching excellence in all clubs, and the SRC has recently decided to match the MRC's funding to further boost the programme. £600 per course of four candidates is available, up to a maximum of ten courses in the year. Subsidies are given on condition that the candidates are not employed coaches, and that the courses are advertised to ensure breadth of take-up across clubs.

8. Domestic Racing

- a. The new rules for U10s racing will come into effect from 1st September this year. Clubs are advised to work closely with their Regional Marathon Adviser if they encounter any teething problems with the new rules and classes.
- b. Chelmsford CC asked if race organisers could have access to better information on U12 paddlers before races, as is the case with the ranking list for those already in the divisional system. MRC agreed to look into this.

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- c. Graham Warland of the MRC has worked with the DW Committee to identify a set of DW Preparation Races, with the dual aim of better preparing paddlers for DW, and also boosting “classic” races across the country. A set of eighteen races has been identified, including some new events, and will be publicised via both committees.

9. International

- a. Tom Sharpe presented a paper raising concerns about a lack of transparency in the current MRC Selection Policy. This was said to be discouraging athletes who are unsure of the targets they must meet to be selected, and also discouraging athletes from racing enough assessment races to give the Selection Committee the right evidence to base decisions on. Teresa Gregory reminded the meeting that this issue had been raised in 2017 also.
- b. Stan Missen replied that the MRC had discussed the issue in 2017 but the Selection Committee had decided not to change the policy at that time. However, the MRC would conduct a full review of the selection policy and internationals plan generally this summer, involving a wider group of committee members, to find ways of solving these problems while keeping the best bits of a system which had served the discipline well over the years.

10. Major Championships

- a. At the time of the meeting, venues for the 2019 National Championships and Hasler Final had not been identified, so Stan Missen asked the clubs to discuss options including sharing the organisation, and looking at new venues to cater for these large events. The MRC would also advertise for venues and organisers.

11. Other Discussion

- a. It was noted that the ACM does not cater for “Any Other Business”, as items for discussion are submitted in advance to the Secretary. However, the final section of the agenda allows for questions to be raised, for discussion in upcoming meetings by the MRC.
- b. Exeter CC asked about opportunities for lower-ranked paddlers in “Senior” age groups (18-34) at the National Championships. The divisional races previously offered at the Nationals were discontinued some years ago. Chelmsford CC countered by making

the point that the Nationals are the peak of our sport, and that paddlers had the opportunity for once to race the very best in their age group.

- c. Teresa Gregory asked if the MRC can look into ways of developing C1s, especially internationally, via the selection policy.
- d. Reading CC and Longridge CC raised the issue of promotions in K2 races and non-Hasler races (especially longer distances), which have caused perceived over-promotion of paddlers within the Hasler system.

The Meeting ended at 7pm with the Chairman thanking all those who attended. The next meetings of the MRC are on 25th August and 19th November, clubs are welcome to submit items for discussion to the Secretary James Smythe two weeks in advance of these meetings.

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