

**British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee  
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 3pm on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

*Held via online web conference.*

**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. Present**

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)  
James Smythe (JS)  
Dyson Pendle (DP)  
David Enoch (DE)  
Siobhan Urquhart (SU)  
Roland Lawler (RL)  
Brian Chapman (BrC)  
Scott Hynds (SH)

David Sackman (DJS)  
Jim Rossiter (JR)  
Bryn Price (BP)  
Mick Nadal (MN)  
Graham Warland (GW)  
Kat Wilson (KW)  
Nettie North (NN)  
Dan Seaford (DMS)

These people are referred to by their initial's hereafter in the Minutes.

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Ward.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The minutes of the meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> February were approved by the Committee. They will now be published as final.

**Action: JS**

### **3. Matters Arising**

- a) No further progress on selling the trailer during lockdown. KW has advertised it on a new online canoe & kayak selling group.

### **4. Governance**

- a) The Committee discussed the resumption of racing. Some clubs are aiming to test events in line with COVID restrictions, such as online-only briefings and results, and no competitor refreshments. Most events involve local stakeholders and this results in the most risk-averse dictating the terms. DMS mentioned that the rowing club whose pontoons are used by Reading CC's planned race wanted to jet-wash the pontoon between each boat using it!

British Canoeing are particularly concerned about what happens 'off the water' as the risk of transmission is greater. Currently no events are allowed to have spectators by law, even if this seems to be universally flouted in community sports. Paddlers congregating in groups of more than six is also something that race organisers can do little about. DP asked if there was a date from which on-bank restrictions might be relaxed. According to the latest lockdown routemap, some restrictions will be lifted from 17<sup>th</sup> May (although outdoor groups not racing will not be allowed to exceed 30), with the remainder hoped to be lifted on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

It is important to note that spectators also should not exist currently at events, again making compliance very difficult, although not impossible.

The MRC ( and BC ) want to encourage clubs to run races as long as they can do so within their own and national safety rules. GW pointed out that although we have suspended the Hasler *points* system for this season, race organisers must still submit their risk assessments and that these must cover COVID.

JR pointed out that clubs are trying to organise events appropriate to their location, particularly outdoor space that is not shared with the public.

British Canoeing have published a checklist for event organisers, which MN will share with RMAs.

**Action: MN/BP**

b) Under British Canoeing's plans to overhaul the membership and insurance system, paddlers taking part in a race will be covered in the following ways:-

Membership type	Third party / personal insurance	Waterways licence
'On The Water' membership	Yes	Yes
Club associate membership	Yes	Only when using an insured club boat
Event Ticket	Yes	Planned from launch of new system

British Canoeing have stated that the new system will be in place by November 2021, which means we are unable to fully develop it into the race management software at this stage and must continue with the current methods for validating membership until at least then.

BRC questioned whether British Canoeing will be able to supply the membership status of Scottish or Welsh association members via its API. This needs discussion with Barry at BC. As it was thought possible. Stan has also taken the matter up with Anna at BC.

## **Action: BRC**

JR pointed out Wey KC's frustration that they are paying twice for waterways access under this new system. They have to pay for Club Associate memberships at the usual rate, and buy waterways licences for the River Wey separately ( due to its special status ) This problem may affect other clubs.

These changes are intended by British Canoeing to put responsibility for membership, and therefore insurance and waterways licences, onto the paddler and not the race organiser or the MRC. An advantage of the new system will be that all paddlers will have a single membership number that will transfer between Event Ticket, Club Associate and full member status if this changes. This will make it much easier to track individuals' ranking and qualifying status in the Hasler system.

c) JR raised a question about the eligibility of RMAs to attend MRC meetings under our Terms of Reference, having been informed that he is not able to attend SRC meetings. We confirmed that this is detailed in the ToR document (item 5.7) and that RMAs have a standing right to attend as non-voting members. This does not necessarily apply to other regional bodies such as Chairs of the English regions which we may decide to invite on a case by case basis.

## **Action: JS to remind RMAs**

d) The organisers of the National Championships prefer that we should not organise the ACM at this year's Nationals, to avoid a need to congregate. This will be scheduled for the week following and held online. A system to allow voting under our one club, one vote system will be set up.

## **Action: JS**

JS requested that those seeking re-election should notify him by mid-June. SM, NN, DE, DP and GW are up for election by rotation, with one empty place up for election. NN confirmed her willingness to stand again.

## **Action: DE, DP, SM, GW**

## **5. Finance**

DE has slightly amended the current year budget to allow £2,300 for new Hummel GB team kit and £2,500 for items requested by the gender equality group.

With income assumptions remaining unchanged, the net result is that the MRC would need an increase of £5k on the expected £35k central grant in order to balance the budget and retain a £50k reserve. The vast majority of expenditure is still dependent on being able to send a team to the World Championships in late September.

DE and SM are meeting British Canoeing's finance team in late April. They

will be raising concerns about BC appearing to withhold central grant money after the MRC has already committed it to a budget.

## 6. Domestic Racing

a) DJS reported that he had met with Will Abson and Matt to discuss the development of our race management software. The new version of 'RACMAN' will see a lot of functionality taken out of the on-the-bank software, and moved online. Points and promotions for example will only be calculated once the race organiser uploads race data.

A series of online templates will be made available to race organisers to fit custom race formats, and which will output custom RACMAN files for use on the day. Matt is about to start developing the on-the-bank software component.

As mentioned above, DJS will be checking that the British Canoeing API gives access to live membership status for all home nations associations, not just English BC members. **Action: DJS**

The expectation is that the vast majority of race entries will be made online. At the point when the Race Organiser decides to close pre-entries, the system will insert the latest Ranking List into the race-day downloadable file, along with entries already made. From that point, only racers whose names (and therefore, BC membership status) already appear on the Ranking List will be able to late-enter the race.

The changes to U14 racing will also be accommodated into the new system. The existing RACMAN software may have to be used to bridge the gap if races with U14 classes occur before the new system is ready.

The Committee were asked to let DJS know as soon as possible about their reporting requirements for the results system. For example, counts of junior and senior entries for race levies. **Action: ALL**

JS asked about including date of birth in the system. DJS confirmed that it will be there, and used to ensure correct class assignment for age-group racing, while still allowing people to 'race up'.

The Committee agreed that our practice of reporting results and awarding prizes on the day would usually be unchanged, except of course where COVID measures require a change. It was felt important to retain the 'presentation' element ( prize giving ) after a race.

b) JS presented the conclusions of the Gender Equality sub-committee (comprising Holly Mobbs, Jan Alexander, SU, DP and JS).

The Committee discussed the need for a trophy to recognise the winner of the senior women's K1 national champion that is as impressive as the Wilkinson Sword given to the men. JS reported that efforts to get a new trophy design were not successful as agreement could not be reached on design, or the need to spend up to £1,000 on this. Neil Urquhart of Banbury CC had volunteered his own Army sword as a prize for the Women's race, and the Committee felt that this would fit the bill. RL volunteered to make and have it mounted, in a similar way to the Wilkinson Sword. **Action: SU, RL**

The Committee agreed to purchase two changing tents for each region that wanted them, for female, and if necessary junior male use. Race organisers should be encouraged then to use them at their events with the aim of providing more acceptable and private changing. This needs to be published to the RMA's in each region so we can centrally source suitable tents and numbers. **Action: MN/BP**

Over the remainder of this season, JS will refine a system of national ranking points for men and women, which will be published as the season progresses. This will take into account Hasler results, National Championships and Assessment Race results, and will allocate points equally to male and female competitors based on their finishing position versus their gender group. **Action: JS**

The Committee agreed to write to Race Organisers regarding equality of classes and prizes in gender-based races, and to tackle any specific disparities directly with race organisers. **Action: MN/BP**

SM reported that he has asked BC to set up a corporate account with a national supplier, to help Race Organisers book event toilets at a discounted rate. **Action: SM**

We will also include guidance in future for Race Organisers to avoid organising briefings too close to race start times, as this creates a rush to use toilet facilities which disadvantages women. **Action: MN/BP**

SH reported that Elmbridge CC are planning to use pre-recorded online race briefings in future.

c) JS also reported back on the progress of the Speed Series, organised jointly with SRC. JS has spoken to Tim Scott and impressed on him that this series was dreamed up primarily for the benefit of developing sprint racing, with MRC assistance, so it was imperative that SRC get behind it and play an equal part in any organisation. Wendy Dodson has been actively involved as an SRC rep, but unfortunately Kevin Hipkins has resigned from the SRC due to pressures of work. JS has led the group to come up with a concept and programme, and DP has developed that programme and will be trialling it at Norwich as soon as feasible. We are awaiting feedback from SRC on the work done so far.

d) The Junior Development Squad has been replaced by a **Racing Skills group** comprising the Talent Dept, SRC and MRC. This is still being discussed by the group and no days have yet been scheduled. SU has stepped down from the group after leading the extremely successful JDS, and GW is keen to do so also due to other commitments. NN has volunteered to be involved from the MRC side, and Alice Bray is leading from the SRC side. **Action: GW to introduce NN to the group**

## 7. Major Events

a) KW reported that Reading CC are proceeding with the intention of running the Nationals on 10-11 July, and have booked the Promenade at Caversham. The Reading Circuit is being run as a test event, the success of which will decide if the Nationals can proceed.

The ambition is to run a full-scale event on the water but with controls on pedestrian 'flow', spectators and portages. Portages may not be possible if it proves difficult to manage the overlap with the public footpath.

DE enquired about prizegiving; the Committee agreed to let Reading know by 17<sup>th</sup> May (date of PM's update on lockdown easing) whether trophies would be presented at the event. **Action: KW.**

It is proposed that medals can be collected rather than awarded, and the Committee agreed that engraved medal plates would not be required this year.

b) South Cerney will not be able to host a major event this year despite all the hopes. It is understood that the facilities are not now likely to be developed to allow for full scale sprint racing so investment from HQ is unlikely to follow. The Sept 19<sup>th</sup> date is still being kept open by the MRC as the date of a hoped-for inter-club event to replace the Hasler Final in 2021.

## 8. Internationals

a) JS updated the Committee on changes to the Assessment programme. The early season assessment events had to be cancelled; the Nationals will now be an assessment event and we will need to schedule a separate short-course race.

b) DP has ordered new Hummel kit from British Canoeing, who are only able to offer us a small amount of kit for free despite imposing this change of supplier on us. We may also not get what we want, as British Canoeing have pre-ordered the stock/sizes. DP has pointed out to them that stock without GB branding as we were given with the previous supplier, Errea is not satisfactory. SM and DE have made our feelings clear to BC on this change and the fact that we are wasting all the money spent in good faith on Errea stock.

As on-the-water kit is not being supplied we will maintain the current stock and kit from Icon.

BP reported that the Masters will make their own arrangements this year again as BC cannot be relied upon. Again disappointment was expressed. They have recently used British Masters athletics tracksuits for our Masters paddlers.

c) BRC presented excellent work he has done to outline the requirements for hosting a World Championships in the UK, and a first attempt at a shortlist of venues. Sites with insufficient size and facilities, or links to racing in order to source the volunteer manpower, have been set aside. Some further suggestions were discussed. The MRC must make a recommendation by September this year in order to secure BC support and bid in time for a 2026 event.

( post meeting discussions with BC have now seen this date alter to 2027 )

A working group of BRC, JS, Jo Bates and Ivan Lawler, with input from Gemma Wiggs, has been set up to progress. JR also offered assistance if required.

**Action: BRC**

## 9. Coaching & Development

SH reported back on progress in Race Coach qualifications.

Agreement has been reached with BC on appropriate rescues to be trained and assessed on for kayak race coaching.

BC have decided that the appointment of Tutors and Assessors should be approved centrally by BC; the technical advisory group including MRC and SRC members is involved but not a decision maker. Both SRC and MRC have questioned if this is a missed opportunity but BC are sticking to their guns.

BC have also advertised a bursary totalling £50k for course and assessment fees for club-based coach candidates, the entry deadline has now closed.

The 'Core' coach training requirement, covering generic coaching skills, can now be done online.

First Aid qualifications for race coaches must be renewed every three years. The first course must be a two-day course (although there are no stipulations around specificity to water or paddlesport, only duration), and refresher courses can be one-day.

The Safeguarding course certificate will now also need to be renewed every three years – SH is seeking clarification on this. It looks like this refresher course will be on line at a small cost.

## 10. Communications

JS suggested that the MRC plan a couple of online community forums and briefings each year, as online calls have proven to be successful at engaging lots of people during lockdown. Content needs to be timely and relevant, so initially these will be organised on an ad-hoc basis when needed.

JS will organise a first event for mid-May when we know more definitively if lockdown will continue to ease.

**Action: JS to co-ordinate**

## 11. AOB

NN reported that she is working with Alice Bray of SRC on how to better support small clubs, and will report back at the next meeting

## 12. Meeting Dates 2021

- a) Annual Consultative Meeting and MRC elections, online in the week following the National Championships.
- b) September meeting tbc (**action JS - possibly meeting 'in person'**)
- c) All-day meeting 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Cropredy. 9.00am start, finish at 3pm. (**Expected to be in person**)
- d) All meetings subject to restrictions in place at the time.

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm.