

British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 2pm on 9th March 2019

Eastwood Hall, Notts

1. Present at the meeting were:

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)
Mick Nadal (MN)
David Enoch (DE)
Roland Lawler (RL)
Dan Seaford (DS)
Siobhan Urquhart (SU)
James Smythe (JS)
Graham Warland (GW)
Jim Taylor-Ross (JTR)
Richard Ward (RW)
Dyson Pendle (DP)
Scott Hynds (SH)
Brian Chapman (BRC)
Jim Rossiter (JR)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Kat Wilson, Tom Sharpe and Keith Moule.

2. Co-option

Having steered the MRC's development of the new Race Coach course to the success it is today, Jim Taylor-Ross has decided to move on to working towards the establishment of a British Canoeing discipline committee for Ocean Racing (OR). He has recommended that Scott Hynds of Elmbridge CC be co-opted to the Committee to take on the coaching development role in his place. Scott is a course tutor and qualified assessor for this qualification, and has run several courses supported by the MRC initiative.

The Committee recorded its considerable thanks to Jim for his work. We also agreed the co-option of Scott to take his place.

3. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2018 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair, with one amendment on the Committee Roles table. They will now be published as final.

Action: JS

4. Matters Arising

The following matters were noted that were not covered by the current meeting agenda:-

- a. DE reported that the trailer has still not been sold and needs to be this year, although there has been some interest from the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland. DP reported that it is currently listed for sale on eBay and Auto Trader.

Action: DP

5. Governance

- a. MN reported that the 2019 Handbook has been published online, on the MRC website. It is saved as a PDF file for straightforward printing.

RL asked that we reconsider the decision to not print our rules in the Racing Handbook, as this could be considered as a split between the marathon and sprint sides of canoe racing. It was pointed out that the main reasons for the switch to online were that changes to the rule book would not need to wait a year for publication. We still contribute to joint sections of the Handbook including club colours, and of course we co-ordinate the racing calendar. Nevertheless it will be tabled for discussion at our August meeting (**Action: JS**).

JS asked for ideas on how we can better communicate changes like this, and where the rules can now be found, as few visit the website without prompting. SU and JS agreed to co-ordinate a newsletter e-mail list, combining the lists of race organisers and RMAs used by GW and MN, and adding to this anyone wishing to be kept up to date by the MRC in this way. It is important that we still communicate with event organisers and athletes and are seen to be open and accessible as a committee.

Action: JS, SU

- b. A Declaration of Interests form will be emailed to all Committee Members by JS, and should be returned to JS to coordinate all replies, before sending to BC **Action: JS**
- c. SM reported from the BC Discipline Chairs meeting, that a high number of responses had been received to a BC satisfaction survey, and that a large number of these had come from people involved in Marathon. Nevertheless there was no separate data provided on satisfaction from marathon-specific respondents.

Members of the Committee had not been aware of the survey at the time, so this was felt to be a missed opportunity for MRC to benefit from BC initiatives like this. To some extent it was thought that the numerous BC emails that flood inboxes at times, meant that the survey had not been noticed by some at the time.

Action: SM to raise at next Chairs meeting

- d. The Committee congratulated Jim Rossiter on his appointment as a Vice President of British Canoeing, at the BC AGM that morning. Jim reported that he intends to work proactively in the role.

6. Finance

- a. DE reported that the 2017-18 accounts had been approved by British Canoeing and the auditors. The 2018-19 central grant has been retained at the £35k level. The Committee welcomed this support from BC.

At the start of the financial year (Nov 1st), the MRC reserves were around £50k, and will be maintained at that level in line with our long term budget plan.

- b. In terms of assets, we need to sell the trailer this year which no longer has book value, and is being kept at NWSC. DP is working on a sale as reported at 4a above. The minibus also now has no book value, so we would normally replace it around now every 3 years. We would expect to pay around £24k to buy a new one, but manufacturers have stopped building similar size minibuses to the spec we need. So, we may need to buy and convert a van, but thanks to Brexit, manufacturers have paused production (!)

- c. Purchase of a new bus will therefore be delayed until the situation is clearer, and the current bus retained.

7. Domestic Racing

- a. JTR is heavily involved in discussion with British Canoeing about forming an Ocean Racing Working Group, with the intention of this becoming a full Discipline Committee over time. Names for this working group are being shortlisted from experts in the discipline. Events and coaching have evolved organically, without formal recognition. The main aim for 2019 is to establish this group, and prepare a GB team for the 2019 World Championships. The MRC and Ocean Racing group regret the calendar clash this year between a marathon assessment race and the British Championships (Icon Classic) ocean race as a few athletes are seeking selection in both disciplines; we will work together more closely in coming years to avoid this situation (**Action: GW; JTR**)
- b. The MRC recorded its considerable thanks to JTR, who is stepping down from his role co-ordinating the coaching scheme after a highly successful implementation, to focus on Ocean Racing. The ongoing contribution from RW was also noted.
- c. MN met with John Hatton and Guin Batten to review published safety advice for Marathon, and author a marathon-specific section for the PaddleSafer document, compiled across all disciplines. To some extent this was prompted by a number of recent incidents at events. Wording has been amended carefully to protect race organisers and make it clear where safety responsibilities lie. The aim to improve safety all round. MN confirmed that we are now in line with British Canoeing documentation and approach to safety. **Action: SU/JS/MN to communicate publicly**

SH asked if there had been discussion about safeguarding and mixed changing areas at races, including the risk of strangers accessing those areas. MN reported that BC have policies in place for this and that we should refer to those.

British Canoeing will also be producing a new risk statement for race detail documents (**Action: MN to distribute**)

RW thanked MN for his work in this area, which is of considerable

support to the development of discipline coaching

- d. Race management software: TS and DS have been working in parallel on different aspects of a new software system, to be an evolution of the RACMAN software of late 2018, taking into account feedback and DS's experience from race software development for Reading CC events.

This will be ready for race implementation at the first events of the season (7 April at RLS and CAM), and will take care of all on-the-day race admin at this stage including timings, results and P&Ds. It can, if required, be appended to an online race entry and payment system, but this will be released publicly at a later date to keep the initial launch simple.

The BC membership check API is of limited current use to the race-day RACMAN software as it requires an internet connection, but can be incorporated into the online entry module.

DS, on behalf of the MRC, plans to publish the code in full, for contribution and comment, in May. The motivation for publishing it is both to make use of the community talent in software development, but also to avoid a repeat of the situation where a software developer could privately own the system and try and regulate its use. MRC will claim intellectual ownership of the code, licensing it for free use in canoe race organization.

SM asked if race organisers can get training in the new system as this had been discussed before, as some people were not using HRM in the past, or the v1 of RACMAN, as they should have. DS agreed to consult with training experts at his club to identify how training could happen; DS also plans to be present to observe it being used at early races. **(Action: DS)**

JS suggested the idea of moving to a system where first-time racers are required to register into a central database as a one-off advance requirement before entering a race; this would ensure a clean database of racers, safety awareness, registration of emergency contacts, and would be in line with national sprint racing regatta practice. **(Action: JS to bring proposal to next meeting)**

SM reported that it seemed that British Canoeing has planned to allow non-members to buy multiple day tickets for competition,

which is not allowed for the purposes of the race entry under current marathon rules. Our rules therefore need revision if indeed BC allow this within their new event entry system.

(Action: SM to clarify with Anna at BC)

MN reminded us of the importance of having late entry as an option on some races which are dependent on conditions, like the Ironbridge race.

DS confirmed to DP that the new system will run the National Championships, and also accept chip timing inputs.

- e. GW has already posted a notice via the website about races available with a paddle-past option for paddlers unable to portage due to disability. The issue of water accessibility in the first place, and safety in case of a swim is also a concern. Such information will be requested from race organisers for publication in the 2020 calendar.

- f. There were complaints about inadequate toilet facilities at the Frank Luzmore, which apparently led to “privacy” breaches by paddlers before the race start. Richmond CC, the organisers, had been advised by Elmbridge CC (race start hosts) of the need for portaloos. These can apparently be hired for £138 for 3 excl VAT.

With the advent in recent years of increasing entry fees to help improve events, clubs should be aware of the need to actually do that and not merely use the increased revenue to produce enhanced profits; particularly those events having know large entries.

(Action: MN to advise Race Organisers, and also to publish details of the facilities in race information.)

- g. SM reported back from the British Canoeing Chairs meeting, and said that BC had asked if we (all Disciplines) were documenting our ambitions enough. JS pointed out that there are limits to what we can achieve alone in terms of participation, inclusion etc; hence our strategic approach of supporting coaches, race organisers and clubs as much as possible. JR asked about whether we planned to formally include SUPs, and his concerns about safety as they can fall on top of other craft. SM confirmed that a previous meeting had agreed to delegate this choice to the specific race organisers, who

may choose to run separate SUP classes (as they have done in the SW region) if such issues can be covered. JTR reported that Ocean Racing now splits craft classes for collision risk and safety reasons.

- h.** SM also reported that certain potential international venues may be supported by regional funding, especially Strathclyde, which he will be visiting. BRC reported that a committee of water user groups at Strathclyde is being formed to lobby the local council for more support. Albert Dock is also being promoted by Alan Laws, however the Committee expressed concerns about the level of wash refraction at this venue. The ICF are seeking a venue for the 2021 World Cup, and BRC believes Strathclyde would be a good option.

Action: BRC to liaise with TS

8. International Racing

- a.** SM and JS reported on concerns raised by Anna Palmer about perceived discrimination or dismissive behavior towards Women's C1 racing, including a report of an incident where an MRC member was involved in making 'fun' of the class. SM reminded the Committee that the MRC robustly opposes any such views, and that elected members have a responsibility to act on behalf of the whole sport. An email has been sent to Anna to reassure her of our position and about the fairness of the selection process.
- b.** JS circulated details of the first 2019 assessment race, to be held at Reading. This is the first to use the 2019 format, involving a short race, a 12 or 8 mile race, and a 5k TT, which the selectors believe will provide a clearer set of evidence on the most capable athletes for selection to any given team.

The committee reminded JS to enforce the club vests rule, and also that BC now required any athlete selected for a GB team to have completed a Clean Sport workshop. Additionally, athletes selected for an ICF event will have had to complete the ICF online anti-doping course. A Clean Sport workshop has been scheduled for the Junior Development Squad weekend at Longridge, and also for juniors at the Reading assessment race. GW agreed to get a list from Gemma at BC of athletes who have completed the BC and ICF courses.

Action: GW

DP asked if athletes who had been selected last year still had to complete all the forms requested; GW confirmed that they do, to meet BC requirements and for logistical reasons because personal details like passports change.

DP also reported that the ICF had not notified ITOs yet this year about whether they were needed for internationals. DS also asked about how he could qualify.

Action: JS to request that Gemma ask ICF CAM about 2019 ITOs; and get details for DS

- c. The Committee were not sure whether GB kit had been ordered for 2019, as KM was not able to attend the meeting and the BC deadline for ordering via them had just passed. DP volunteered to take over kit management if KM were unable to continue in this role.

Following the meeting, JS spoke to KM who expressed his concern that he was not able to commit enough time to his MRC duties; as a result he was happy to hand over kit responsibilities. He had made a comprehensive order for 2019 kit, which DP is now taking over, as well as making arrangements to collect the current stock of kit from Keith.

DE also pointed out that there is no kit yet for the German Nationals team, who as a 'B' or 'development' team selection do not race in the white GB vests or receive a full tracksuit.

Actions: DP to confirm kit arrangements for early season internationals, and to take on management for 2019

- d. JS reported that Ivan Lawler had made a very generous offer to loan new Nelo boats to the team selected for the 2019 World Championships in China. As a Nelo supplier, Ivan can reserve a fleet of new boats and get them shipped with the Nelo container to China, saving us the hire costs (although we would pay shipping). The boats would then be sold by Ivan after the event. This arrangement saves the MRC a lot of organization, and the athletes concerned from losing their boats for a long period.

Action: JS to accept; thank Ivan and provide team size estimates (between 8 and 9 athletes)

- e. British Canoeing had circulated a list of the internationals they are supporting in the years ahead, with a slot available for 2024. This will be discussed by TS's internationals planning group.

Action: TS

- f. British Canoeing also asked the Chairs Group whether each discipline had set an international medals target. JS commented that this is difficult in Marathon, due to the overlap of athletes with Sprint. In an Olympic qualifying year like 2019, many of the best marathon athletes may be receiving performance funding, and be attempting a qualifying performance in Sprint, both of which may make them unavailable for key assessment or international races. The growth of Ocean Racing is creating yet another racing crossover discipline.

The Committee felt that we should explain this pathway crossover in our Strategic Plan, as isolated medal targets are difficult to set. We must also make efforts to schedule assessment races that align with Ocean Racing now, as well as Sprint. It was accepted that in a crowded calendar this would not be easy but is even more necessary going forward.

Action: JS / Selection Committee

- g. GW reported that he is authoring risk assessment documents for international staff.

Action: GW to have ready for first internationals

9. Coaching

- a. SM reported that the marathon community had provided the greatest share of responses to the coaching survey circulated by British Canoeing. However, MRC staff including those coordinating coaching for all racing disciplines, had not seen the survey.

Action: SH to ask BC if there are any useful insights for our racing coaches

- b. RW gave the update report on Coaching, starting by expressing his thanks to Jim Taylor-Ross for having implemented a highly successful scheme from scratch.

The MRC's total subsidy in 2017-18 to coach training was £3,500, matched by the SRC, thanks to Alan Laws. The joint support has made it a proper cross-discipline racing scheme.

The subsidies have made a big difference to courses running: 70 individuals have benefitted, 20 on core modules and 50 on race-specific modules. The bottleneck of qualified *assessors* is still holding back the qualification process, although Tim Scott of Norwich CC has now joined SH as a qualified assessor.

There has been some disagreement with Talent Club Partnership (TCP) clubs about whether their members qualify for subsidized courses, or whether such courses were covered by their grant money. BC's Charlie Barwis will be organizing courses for TCP clubs. Although a meeting was held, attended by SM and Alan Laws with BC staff looking at this matter, unfortunately no minutes have yet been produced from that meeting, nor has any clarification been given on the outcome of post meeting BC discussions that were going to take place.

- c. JS reported that national squad activity had not happened throughout the winter. KM had attempted to organize events following the Thames K2 races but these were not heavily supported by athletes.

The junior development squad however has been very successful this winter. SU reported on a very successful event hosted by Elmbridge CC, which earned £350 each for the club and MRC, while providing a fun, skills-based day for developing juniors.

A weekend camp is being run at Longridge on 6-7 April, with roughly 50 athletes of whom 35 are staying overnight. SH is co-ordinating the coaching side, with 10 coaches signed up, and enthusiastic support from the big clubs. Squad kit is also being organized.

The question of potential squad sponsorship was also raised, AD will be asked to consider as he had volunteered his help in this area at a previous meeting.

Action: SU to brief AD

Following the meeting, it was confirmed by British Canoeing that they will be winding up their SRS squads this winter, putting

added importance on the voluntary side for junior racing development. This should be factored into our strategic plan and the 2019-20 budget planning, if there is a gap to be filled.

Action: SU to discuss with JS

- d. SM reported that BC have started their cross-discipline volunteer training programme. Volunteers on this course with an interest in Marathon should be approached about standing for the MRC?

Action: SM/JS to send details to BC

- e. GW reported that Dan Golder is now qualified as a UKAD anti-doping tutor, and will be providing the upcoming seminars at Longridge and Reading.

10. Major Events

- a. A report from TS on plans to develop a sub-committee was deferred to the next meeting.
- b. Norwich CC has sent details of the National Championships to DS. The programme has been adjusted slightly to add a separate session for the now very large Mixed K2 race, avoiding a clash with the U16 assessment race. The pack and risk assessment were nearly complete (and were published after the meeting).

Matt Parkes of Norwich CC has been developing race management software for the event, but will need to liaise with DS to use the new RACMAN.

DP reported that Norwich are liaising with British Canoeing where their support is needed. A revised position for the portage is also being implemented following congestion at last year's Hasler Final.

- c. The Hasler Final has been moved to **Saturday** 28th September at Fairthorne Manor, Southampton, after the local authority was unable to offer grass parking areas in the case of wet weather. This now avoids the potential clash with a commercial mass participation canoeing event on the Thames, on 29th.

DS confirmed that there are no venues for 2020 as yet, so we must make another call for host clubs, including those who may be able

to co-host, or provide manpower at a third party venue. MRC are to offer a team for timing support as this is often seen as the area of greatest concern and difficulty for the hosting club.

11. Communications

- a. A revision of the MRC website, including a proposed section on safeguarding, was referred to the next meeting.

JS commented that he is not always able to add timely updates to the MRC website, such as race details, and as a result the contents are perhaps not changing enough to encourage people to visit. SU has agreed to provide content, but more committee members are needed to be able to post information on their area of expertise, without having to pass through JS.

Action: JS to approach individual committee members about posting content on the site.

- b. A report on C-boat comms by Scott McEleney was referred to the next meeting.
- c. JS and SU suggested a newsletter as a better way of communicating news in a timely manner to the whole marathon racing community. SU runs a successful newsletter for Banbury CC. They agreed to explore the idea of a newsletter.

Following the meeting, an invitation to sign up to the newsletter was posted on social media, and the resulting list of email addresses merged with our current lists of race organisers and RMAs. This totaled just over 400 individual addresses.

Update - A first newsletter was sent in early April, with JS and SU planning a monthly update in the season.

Action: JS / SU

No action on social media comms had yet been suggested from the working group of KM and AD who had volunteered in the autumn.

Action: JS to prompt the group for ideas.

- d. SM reported that helpfully BC had received offers from a large number of people to volunteer at the Lea Valley Slalom World Cup.

This showed real support for such events is out there. If we want to send a request to this database, we need to ask Laura at BC.

Action: TS to add to internationals planning

12. Any Other Business

- a. DP suggested that, in order for BC to verify competency levels of British paddlers seeking to enter internationals like the Liffey and Sella, paddlers should complete an online form to inform BC as well as the organisers' own entry form. This is also an important requirement for the BC insurers.

Action: DP to ask Gemma at BC (done following the meeting)

13. 2019 Meetings

- a. **31st May** at NWSC (JS to find a stand-in Secretary but to prepare papers) **7pm** BC offices.
- b. **ACM 10th August**, Norwich **6pm** Saturday, Nationals Weekend
- c. **8th September** (JS to approach Pangbourne) planned for **8.30am start**
- d. **16th November**, all day meeting, Cropredy. **9am to 3pm**

The meeting closed at 5pm