

**British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee  
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 10.30 on Saturday 18 February 2023,  
at Elmbridge Canoe Club**

**Present:**

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)  
Graham Warland (GW)  
Evan Shephard (ES)  
Anoushka Freeman (AF)  
Scott Hynds (SH)  
Bryn Price (BP)  
Siobhan Urquhart (SU)

David Enoch (DE)  
Mick Nadal (MN)  
Jim Rossiter (JR)  
Roland Lawler (RL)  
Dan Seaford (DMS)  
Holly Mobbs (HM)

**Attending via zoom:** Kat Wilson (KW), Dyson Pendle (DP), Brian Chapman (BC), Joe Fitzpatrick (JF)

SM welcomed Anoushka Freeman and Joe Fitzpatrick to the meeting, both of whom have expressed an interest in joining the MRC, and had been invited to attend in order to understand more about the committee.

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 David Sackman (DJS) Nettie North (NN).

**2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting 19 November**

With an amendment to P6.iv, which should have attributed the action to DMS rather than DJS, the minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2022 were approved by the committee.

**3. Matters Arising**

- a. *MRC Trailer* - interest from the Dutch team seems to have gone, due to budget issues on their side.  
**Action: KW to re-advertise on social media and ebay**
- b. *IT agreement with Will Abson* - the agreement is with Will Abson.  
**Action: Agreement signed subsequent to this meeting.**
- c. *Closing dates for races* - information has been shared with clubs regarding the importance of keeping closing dates as late as possible.

- d. *Handbooks* – these have been sent out to all the MRC
- e. *Nominations* – James Smythe has been nominated for a BC award. If the MRC are to put forward nominations for King’s awards in the future, it was agreed the process needs to start well in advance, and probably before BC send out information as lead times can be short.
- f. *ITO nominations* – none was received for this year. BC advised the exam is now in three parts, with the first being an online test re rules, with successful candidates then attending a suitable international event, (in 2023 the World Championships, Denmark), for a scenario discussion and working alongside a current ITO, followed by the evaluation.  
**Action: BC to liaise with DMS to progress his interest  
 BC/DMS to develop a UK system from the ICF one, to produce a UK national system for Technical Officers which could lead on into the ICF.**
- g. *MRC encouragement to increase participation in races other than Hasler series* – HM has produced an initial graphic which will be added to and shared throughout the year to raise awareness of non-Hasler races. Often such races have additional aspects that improve ability and performance.

BP advised police cadets in Maidstone are now introducing paddling into the DoE syllabus which might be an entry point for juniors, and might be included in the schools’ programme in the future.

**Action: HM to republish the graphic during the year  
 SU/GW look at changing November meeting to avoid clash  
 with the RLSCC Avon Ascent/Descent race**

- h. *Accessibility matrix* – BP has shared an initial draft with some SE clubs.  
**Action: BP to produce next draft for May meeting  
 MRC to include rule change for race accessibility officer for 2024 season.**
- i. *Code of conduct for international paddlers and supporters*  
 It was agreed to have a meeting with all athletes required to attend, prior to an event to set out the expectations of behavior, including the requirement to stay in the official team accommodation. Information also to be published on the website prior to an event to educate parents/supporters.  
**Action: GW to produce guidelines**

BC confirmed the ICF will be tightening up availability of official access accreditation at events, which will only be provided in advance, or to personnel nominated by the Team Leader.

#### 4. Governance

##### a. *Recruitment to MRC Committee*

Three people have expressed their intention of not seeking re-election or standing down at the ACM – Dyson Pendle, Kat Wilson and Siobhan Urquhart.

Anoushka Freeman and Joe Fitzpatrick have expressed an interest in standing for election, and attended the meeting to get a greater understanding of the committee's working.

Methods of encouraging younger people to join were discussed, including having online/hybrid meetings online and ensuring that committee members can, and do, claim expenses if needed.

**Action: SM to discuss with other key disciplines how they recruit  
HM to produce post for website and social media to encourage people to stand**

## 5. Finance

### a. Budget

DE advised BC have accepted the budget and allocated £45,000 to the MRC. This includes an additional £5000, presumed to be for the para team expenses, in line with the extra funding given last year.

To date, not much has been spent from the budget, other than on coaching courses via the bursary system.

DE noted that entry numbers were lower than usual for the early races. If this trend continues, this will have a detrimental effect on the income raised through race levies.

There are no plans to amend the budget at this stage.

### b. Treasurer

DE advised he would be standing down as Treasurer this year. Joe Fitzpatrick has expressed an interest in taking on this highly important role, if elected at the ACM. He has had conversations with DE, and will have sight of the bank account going forward. If elected, it was agreed JF would take over the day-to-day business of the accounts, with DE helping for the remainder of the financial year, and with the 2024 budget.

SM noted DE's good control and management of the MRC finances has been a significant factor in its good relationship with BC.

## 6. Domestic Racing

### a. Cost/environmental impact of distances between races

In response to issues raised by clubs, it has been agreed we should consider the financial and environmental impact of the distances some clubs must travel to qualifying races within their regions. A proposal for all regions to just count their top 7 results, as is currently the case in the Midlands, would make a significant reduction in most regions. The risk of a reduction of numbers racing and on race income from outlying clubs was noted.

A regional championship was suggested as another way forward. This could rotate around the clubs, thus giving each one an opportunity to host a significant revenue-generating event. It could also provide a "major event" for those from clubs which do not qualify for the Hasler Finals, and who don't have a suitable race at the National Championships. Regional champions might be offered automatic entry to Hasler Finals.

Other suggestions included: prioritizing some races in each region and reminding clubs of the MRC minibus and trailer that could be hired, and possibly reducing costs.

**Action: SM/MN to consider further and take proposals to the clubs at the ACM, whilst remaining wary of introducing too many changes too soon.**

*b. Participation levels*

It has been noted that some clubs who qualify do not send many paddlers to the Hasler Finals, which is unfair on those who miss out on qualification. Suggestions included all qualifying clubs to send a minimum number/a percentage that reflects their number of qualified paddlers. It was also suggested that clubs who host a Hasler race but do not qualify might be offered a number of places at the Finals, in recognition of their support.

**Action: MN/SM/BP to look at options to present to the clubs at the ACM.**

*c. Effect of double promotion at Hasler Finals*

This was raised as a result of a K2 double promotion which, because done post-event, meant points scored on the day were counted towards the Finals' results, unlike any double promotions in K1, which were dealt with by the results system.

**Action: Review after 2023 Finals.**

*d. Promotion time to Div 3*

ES reported that, whilst the speeds in Divs 1-3 have not varied much, the promotion time to Div 3 from Div 4 has reduced by approximately half a handicap point, and this should be rectified to ensure paddlers are fully ready for their promotion.

Progressive paddlers should be encouraged to try *racing up* a division for experience and to help development, rather than waiting for promotion.

**Action: RL to be more stringent on promotion to Div 3.**

**Paddlers to be actively encouraged to race up for experience.**

*e. Div 1 K2 Races*

Following feedback from paddlers, there will be Div 1 K2 races in 2023 at Nottingham, Worcester, Norwich, Reading, Falcon and Richmond. Those race organisers can still run a Div 1 K1 race, but paddlers are encouraged to race K2, having requested these opportunities. Participation numbers will be reviewed at the end of the season.

*f. Geoff Sanders*

Clubs have asked that points for the GS series are published during the year, so they know where they are in the standings. The GS points are currently being added to the new results programme, so this information should soon be readily available. To help build the profile of the GS series, it now has its own page on the website, and updates will be reported there throughout the year. With the racing no longer being separated into boys/girls classes, clubs are to be encouraged to award additional medals – to the fastest boy/girl, as well as the top 3, and other prizes where possible.

There was some discussion whether GS races should be kept at U14 or revert to U12. ES advised that the U14s are usually either promoted straight into Div 9, or are right at the back of the field, and so do not greatly affect the results for the U12s, and it does provide an entry race for the new, older paddlers.

## 7. Coaching

### a. JDS

There will be another summer camp in August, but the MRC will not be underwriting it as last year.

The Worcester JDS day was cancelled due to the flow, but there was a successful K4 day at Reading.

HM advised that there needs to be more help from the joint steering group to run the events.

### b. Senior coaching

HM/SH advised they had attempted to run something for seniors, but there had been no available time due to other training camps and racing etc. Those not based at Nottingham would like more group training opportunities, while those at NKC already have that. RL pointed out there are a number of Div 1 paddlers around the SE who could train together, but don't.

### c. Athlete survey feedback

19 paddlers responded. HM advised other disciplines look outside of their discipline committee for providing additional resources such as training, rather than relying on the committee to do everything.

**Action: SH/HM to progress**

## 8. Major events

### a. Short Course

ES advised there would be a new car park, but otherwise the site will be the same as last year, and will run on much the same format. Target numbers will be 250 paddlers, and more volunteers will be needed on the day.

**Action: HM to recruit volunteers, SU to approach trade stands**

### b. Nationals 2023

DP advised there had been a problem with car parking, but a different field has been arranged. This will incur additional costs, and it was advised to keep those separate to the entry fee, so it is transparent.

**Action: DMS to send DP the current race pack. Sarah Walker will be the contact at Norwich CC**

### c. Hasler Finals 2023

At present there is no venue and no host club. GW has kept the last weekend of September free for an event.

It was believed BC have an arrangement with Dorney and that could be investigated (post the meeting, this was found not to be the case, and Dorney would be too expensive)

**Action: DMS to see if Wokingham would host as a venue – if nothing agreed by the end of March the MRC will have to step in and run this event.**

- d. *Proposal for regions to host major events in turn*  
Left for discussion at a future date, as time running out for this meeting.

## 9. International

### a. *Selection policy/logistics*

Short course race at the German Nationals before the main race day – the selectors had only just been made aware of this. If paddlers are there in time, so there are no budget implications, they may take part, but there is no intention of adding an extra day on the plan to do so. The German Nationals has not been well-attended by other paddlers recently, and KW agreed our future participation would be reviewed after this year.

Carnets - GW/DJS have a meeting with BC regarding carnets, and will advise KW and the selection committee of definitive dates following that.

BP asked for space availability on trailers for masters athletes – it was agreed last year this would now cost £100/boat.

SH advised that a Team Leader should have 100 euros in cash at each event, in case needed to lodge a protest.

HM noted British Canoeing state staff cannot share a room with an athlete, even if they are all adults. This may have ramifications for staff selection.

KW advised Jo Bates now involved with the selection committee and will help with logistics. GW asked for clarification as to who is doing what, to ensure no doubling up/gaps, as became an issue in 2022.

**Action: GW, DJS, KW and Jo Bates to meet and discuss**

BC updated on the inclusion of para classes following this meeting. As these come under the ICF Para committee, the intention for now is for it to be run in para boats with the existing para classification, but it is still hoped there will be an open class in 2023 as last year. The event remains a “demonstration” one for now, and not a full World Championship.

KW advised there was no venue for the selection event on 22 April – RL and SH offered Elmbridge, and agreed the portage would not be over the island.

**Action: KW/SH to liaise**

### b. *Sponsorship*

HM has produced a pack for potential sponsors for the 2023 major international teams and has already approached Precision Hydration. BP to advise on contact at Towergate (he is approaching SAGA for the masters’ team).

## 10. AOB

- a. ACM – SM to ask BC if we can use their online system (*subsequently found not to be suitable but will approach SRC who have a system*).
- b. RL expressed concern that we are becoming insignificant and would like to see BC promoting competition sports more (*this will be raised at the Discipline Chairs meeting in March*)
- c. JR asked if the competition element was being included in BC coaching courses. SH advised the MRC has a £5k in the budget, which is used as bursaries for club coaches. He also advised it is often the smaller clubs that are making the most of this, while a number of the bigger clubs have coaches who are not formally qualified.
- d. DP advised we need to get whatever kit is needed asap, as it is unlikely there will be any from Hummel this year – we may have to share what is already in circulation, particularly amongst staff. Subsequent update on availability obtained from BC  
Race kit is provided by Icon, so that is ok.

## 11. Future Dates

- 10 May – 7.30 pm **online**
- 2023 ACM, June 28 at 7.30 pm - to be held **online**.
- 10 September - 8.30 – 11.00 am ahead of the Pangbourne Hasler. At The Dolphin Centre, Pangbourne, first ‘new committee’ meeting after ACM
- Provisional - 18 November - 9.00 – 3.00 pm. All day meeting at Cropredy Village Hall. ( may be moved to 11<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> )

The meeting closed at 1pm.