

**Paddle UK Marathon Racing Committee**  
**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 9.00am**  
**on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at Cropredy Village Hall**

**Present:**

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)	Holly Mobbs (HM)
Evan Shephard (ES)	Roland Lawler (RL)
Joe Fitzpatrick (JF)	Dan Seaford (DMS)
Graham Warland (GW)	Lee Bennett (LB)
Bryn Price (BP) (online)	Sally Hartland (SH)
Kat Wilson (KW) online	Mick Nadal (MN)

These people are referred to by their initial's 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**

Nanette North (NN) Kat Wilson hoped to join. (KW)

**2. Approval of minutes August 2025 MRC Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025 were approved by the committee with no amendments.

**3. Matters arising from MRC meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

*a. Change to Racman system to include ages for GS paddlers*

ES confirmed this was now complete.

*b. International Kit – Update re what is available from Hummel and opinions for athletes plus costs*

JF confirmed the current plan is to stay with ICON for International kit as Paddle UK cannot provide what we need currently. He never received a full booklet of kit available from Hummel, only a screenshot, so not ideal. JF now holds a stock of kit so timescales should be less of an issue for future events. This has been a major issue in previous years. HM added that kit requests were now on a digital form, meaning all requests in one place for ease. HM also confirmed that Paddle UK discipline specific branding was available on the Google Drive and we do need to ensure that we are using it.

*c. Follow up on criticism received regarding selection and policy*

SM discussed that NN had received rude and blunt emails regarding selection. SM spoke with Paddle UK who confirmed we need to be clear on our disciplinary process and who it applies to. Paddle UK have issued a new disciplinary process which will go on MRC website. Any complaints we receive need to be handled in line with their process and then if needed Paddle UK can step in to support us.

GW informed the committee that Paddle UK are updating the Code of Conduct and that athletes will complete direct via a link. GW noted that James Hinves confirmed that Paddle

UK will add our addendum to the Code of Conduct, specific to marathon trips and drawn up due to incidents in past years.

**Action: MN to ensure the link is in the rules, SH to amend the template to include “Marathon” specific headings and in body of text and HM to update website. HM to add link to Code of Conduct to website.**

#### 4. Finance

##### a. *Treasurers Report*

The committee were updated that the budget is looking good for this year with profit of at least £1.6k but potentially up to £10-12k depending on how Paddle UK handle the minibus sale & purchase. This is great news given we had thought there was potentially to be a small loss this year with the cancellation of races mainly due to weather. Our reserves are maintained at a reasonable level around £44-45k.

Financial management of the logistics of international trips by GW and KW helped a lot by coming in under budget during 2025. Their efforts were appreciated by all.

##### b. *Four year plan & PUK requirements*

Paddle UK require us to produce a 4 year plan which was last completed in 2024; this helps to justify the grants that they give us. Our next plan is not due until 2028. We have received reasonably good correspondence from Paddle UK with regard to what they will support us with this coming year but there does seem to be a strong emphasis on all disciplines moving toward self-funding in their generation of income requirements as we go forward..

**Action: All to look at existing document with comments to HM. HM to co-ordinate who is responsible for each section, minor updates needed to existing document.**

##### c. *2026 Season PUK Grant expectation*

Paddle UK had been pushing us for our 2026 budget, it was confirmed that we couldn't provide that before this meeting and that we also needed an idea of grants we would receive from them in order to put together our budget. We should be hoping for grants of around £50k from Paddle UK. This is not going to be split as it has been before and it will be up to us as to how we split going forward.

##### d. *2026 Budget approval (draft)*

JF has put together a draft budget for approval by the committee: this document was approved. JF outlined the major points of the budget. The subject of self-funding athletes going to internationals, to increase team size, without the restriction of cash was again considered. Although this was discussed as an option with various ways it might be delivered it was agreed that none of the options were currently viable without widespread repercussions.

BC made the committee aware that boat transport to Argentina is likely to be in the region of 750 euros per boat. (round trip from Rotterdam) Transport may also take around 40 days plus customs each way. BC also confirmed that following the confusion regarding payment for ITO's in Hungary, the ICF Marathon Committee are in the process of defining what the process should be for next year and this will be communicated upfront. This will be finalised

at the ICF January meeting. There are no current plans for a European World Cup in 2026.

It was agreed that the budget confirms that we do need a substantial grant from Paddle UK to deliver our objectives. Other than this grant our biggest income source is the c.£27k from race levies which we never know the full outcome of until around ¾ of the way through the year.

Our income and expenditure both sit around £108k for the coming year based upon current expectations.

JF discussed that Paddle UK had wished us to include participation numbers. ES confirmed that these can be pulled off the system and can include events such as DW, Wey Hare & Hounds etc. Post meeting there was discussion regarding the totals with James Hives.

**Action: ES to send participation figures to JF. JF to send budget and figures requested to James Hives.**

## 5. Domestic Racing

### a. *Proposed venues and dates for 2026*

The following dates were confirmed:

Short Course Nationals	-	Manvers Laake - 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2026
Long Course Nationals	-	Wey CC (Chertsey) - 12 July 2026
Hasler Finals	-	Richmond CC - 20 Sept 2026

HM confirmed that Manvers was very keen to host us for the Short Course Nationals, they are set up for large events and Paddle UK have invested a lot into the centre there.

JF asked the question as to whether there was a back up venue given that Richmond had to cancel due to river conditions last year. DS pointed out that this is tricky to do for national events but that Reading could potentially step up at the last minute, although ES pointed out that this is the same stretch of water so may have the same issues.

For 2027, DS confirmed that we provisionally have Glasgow for Long Course Nationals at Strathclyde Park with Southampton hosting the Hasler Finals. Short Course Nationals will not be confirmed until we see how this year runs at the new venue. Glasgow has construction work going on and BS suggested we look at this again in April 2026 as works were six months late starting. DS stated that Glasgow could be pushed back to 2028 with Reading hosting in 2027 if necessary.

DS confirmed that we now have 6 established venues: Wey, Southampton, Richmond, Reading, Norwich and Worcester with Nottingham, Gloucester, Hurley/Bisham/Banbury and Burton Phoenix as potential venues.

The issue of suitability of races being uploaded to our race entry system was raised and a discussion was had as to if events are using the race entry system whether they should pay a levy.

A discussion also took place around risk assessments. A requirement for all races listed on our calendar as Marathon racing rules events. It was confirmed that going forward risk assessments submitted to the RMA or the MRC safety lead ( MN ) must be run through the Paddle UK risk assessment toolkit and then ultimately submitted to Hannah ( Safety officer ) at Paddle UK. Risk assessments should be published on each race event site . Race organisers must submit a race request form and tick to say they have completed a risk assessment to the required format. The meeting agreed that we cannot 'approve' risk assessments but can require them to be adequate, which the PUK tool kit should enable all race organisers to have confidence in.

*b. Hasler Final qualification for smaller clubs*

A discussion took place around encouraging participation at Hasler Finals, clubs just missing out on qualifying and then clubs qualifying above them only sending small teams or no teams. Several possible solutions were discussed.

The committee agreed that as a first step the possibility of a National Wild Card system being introduced should be progressed, with 3 wild cards being available each year, meaning additional clubs being able to attend the Hasler Finals. Clubs would need to register their interest in entering the wild club draw for the year. Their paddlers would still need to qualify for the Finals in the normal way (3 races). It was agreed that this could probably be rolled out for a trial period on 1<sup>st</sup> January for the current season.

**Action: ES, HM & DS to discuss further how to write in rules and confirm details. Once done this could be published on the website and clubs wishing to be included in the wildcard draw for 2026 Long Course Nationals, could apply.**

*c. Suggestion from Andy Nevitt that MRC offer assistance to Wolverhampton Canoe Club to run Ironbridge Marathon in 2026, following the race not running this year due to financial risk*

MN talked about the fact that there had been difficulty finding a race organiser for the race and also that Ironbridge and Bridgnorth rowing clubs had both put their prices up for using their facilities making running the race unviable. MN has spoken to Shaun Hensley about the possibility of him organising the race. The matter seemed to perhaps be more venue and parking difficulties, than the financial side. It was agreed that MN would speak with Shaun expressing that we are sympathetic for the situation, we are unsure how we can help to organise the event for the club but would try to support any progress he makes. DS did confirm that the committee could assist with IT support and that other clubs in the region may be happy to offer help on the day.

**Action: MN to speak to Shaun Hensley and also Andy Nevitt**

- d. *Concerns relating to rule 30e regarding K2 points. Should K2 racing be subject to some revised rules*

It was discussed whether the rules should be amended to 115% of the time for K2s rather than 110%. The question was raised as to how many boats this actually affected and also whether the opportunity for more points may encourage more people to race. Any changes would be from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

**Action: ES to model Gloucester, Banbury and a couple of other Hasler races to see the difference the rule change would make and report back to the committee over next few months.**

- e. *Preventing clubs advertising their race on the race management system when they haven't submitted their race calendar request form*

GW raised the concern that clubs were advertising their races on the race management system without submitting their race calendar request. Clubs have to tick a box to confirm they agree to carry out a risk assessment in line with MRC guidelines either on club website or MRC race entry system.

**Action: GW to confirm wording on the entry management system relating to risk assessments to include "having regard to the Paddle UK template" See item 5a. above.**

- f. *Dates for National events in 2027*

See 5a – possible venues agreed but actual dates not yet fixed.

- g. *Prize giving process at National Events*

A discussion took place as to how the committee could help ensure prize giving at National Events ran smoothly and it was suggested we compiled some guidance with suggestions as to how prize giving should be carried out. DS did confirm that the relevant trophies will now be included on read out sheet. The objective being to streamline the process so that those attending are ready to collect their awards and those travelling long distances can get underway.

**Action: DS and HM to put guidance for prize giving together**

- h. *Hasler Finals rule amendment to reflect that ranking office adjust post-event is ignored/not reflected back to the race results on the day*

MN has amended the rules to include the wording that when the committee find it necessary to adjust promotions retrospectively, this may involve adjustments to points when deemed appropriate.

- i. *Two-year review regarding qualifying/participating race numbers following the introduction of the 7-race rule.*

The rule was introduced on a 2-year trial basis to endeavour to reduce the miles necessary for outlying clubs to travel to events.

The 7-race rule was reviewed by the committee, with entries at clubs being compared pre

and post introduction. It was evident that the impact of the 7-race rule, as far as numbers entering events, was very small. It was felt that the factors that have greater effect on entry numbers is often the date chosen for the race and start times, especially when tidal waters are involved. It was decided that no change to the rule is necessary.

*j. Number of Hasler races one club should be allowed to run in a season*

There are currently only 5 clubs running more than one Hasler race per season. The committee are happy to leave the rule as it stands. A Hasler event has to be requested by a club and approved by the MRC to be included in the club competition. There has been a suggestion that marathons have so many events that it is overwhelming the available dates for other disciplines events. The committee did not think that this was a real problem.

*k. Addition to rule 10 regarding Assistance to Competitors and 'paddle throughs' to be looked into.*

It was agreed that an addition was needed to Rule 10 to ensure we are looking after paddlers safety as we encourage more paddlers with disabilities to participate. It was agreed that new wording should be used dealing with points. Particularly; a competitor may receive food and drink during a race. Competitors with a disability may receive assistance at a portage but no other assistance unless approved before the race by the organiser.

This should be extended to - Where a paddler is not capable of self-rescue, their club should provide a chaperone and must inform the organiser more than a week in advance of the need to do this. Organisers must then inform marshals of the situation. Chaperones should not give a wash and cannot score points.

*With regard to 'paddle throughs' it was agreed that paddlers should request at the earliest opportunity and no later than the date of their entry, for 'paddle throughs' and they should have a realistic reason for needing a paddle through. Just being slow through a portage is NOT a valid reason. Guidance should be given to race organisers with regard to who should be eligible for a paddle through and paddlers should be identified to other paddlers in the race, maybe with **red tape along the top of number boards**, especially if a marshal is expected to give instructions at the portage location. It should also be clear in the rules that the paddler with the paddle through has the responsibility to show good sportsmanship - rejoining the race in the most appropriate position, not gaining position or time. Wording should also include that if a paddler comes into a portage with a group, they should leave with the majority of the group. It is unreasonable to expect them to wait for a paddler that has fallen over, broken a rudder etc. But likewise, they should not be able to gain advantage by going out with the lead boat, who might have completed the portage very quickly when compared to the others. **Action: Wording review paddle through by MN***

*l. Racing behaviour and language; penalties/deduction of points. Should race organisers submit report to MRC when complaints are made?*

A discussion took place regarding the above and whether the MRC should be notified if complaints are made to the Race Organiser. Several complaints have been made at events that the MRC was never aware of or consulted over. This particularly arose due to an incident where a complaint was made direct to Paddle UK. Both SM & MN had not been aware of the incident on the day or afterwards until PUK made contact. MN spoke at length to the clubs involved and eventually established full details to enable the matter to be closed. The committee agreed that where possible the Race Organiser should handle the complaint in the first instance. If the complaint cannot be resolved at club level, the Race Organiser should notify the MRC. The MRC should notify Paddle UK if necessary. All should follow the appropriate procedures. Race organisers should be directed to the new disciplinary document from Paddle UK and this will be distributed via RMA's

**Action: SH to amend the Disciplinary Document to be Marathon specific; HM to issue comms to share on website and to race organisers via RMA's.**

- m. National Championships Age Categories and Distances which will be implemented during 2026.

It was discussed previously that the Masters race distances should not be 4.5miles and should be increased to 10,000m (approx 6 miles), unfortunately, this was overlooked at the 2025 Nationals. The question was asked as to whether the race schedule could accommodate extending the race distances further based upon a paper submitted by BP.

ES was sure the already agreed distance increases would not be an issue as far as timings were concerned, the issue would be whether there were any restrictions on the rivers etc to accommodate the distances.

BP had put together suggestions for standardising the distances for masters' paddlers in line with the distances at international events.

It was agreed that increasing the distance to a range of between 8,000m and 10,000m would allow leeway for clubs where an exact distance of 10,000m was not viable.

The other matter was whether we should include a 79+ age category at National events. It was agreed that this was possible as long as 4 or more boats of that category were at the previous year's event.

## 6. International

- a. *Article re becoming qualified ITO official*

BC thanked HM for putting this together stating it was lovely to have an interview on becoming a qualified ITO official.

- b. *Trailer towing – experience and condition of minibus on returning following international trips*

Unfortunately, the Paddle UK trailer was damaged on a recent international trip. Paddle UK

have offered to provide an instructor to give drivers some towing tuition. On the same trip, unfortunately, the minibus was returned without rubbish being removed from inside. Volunteer staff and drivers will be notified that they should not leave rubbish in the minibus.

*c. International Selection Policy and Season Planning for 2026*

KW will no longer be involved with the Selection committee and will concentrate on logistics with GW. SM has previously circulated information regarding discussions with Paddle UK and particularly how much flexibility can be put in the selection policy. RL has been asking for more discretionary powers, using the experience of the selectors, for some time. PUK confirmed that we must have a policy and it must have measurements in it so that we have

justification of who is or isn't selected. Measurements and what good outcomes we have, as well as what poor outcomes could happen, must be measurable. Paddle UK did agree there is ability to have more flexibility using the selectors knowledge so long as measurable data was also used.

With KW leaving the committee, another voting member needs to join the selection committee and NN proposes that Lizzie Broughton becomes a voting member. This will also leave an opening for an athlete representative. It was suggested that the Selection Committee should ask the athletes who they would like to represent them.

GW has already lined up a Team Leader for Romania. It was agreed that the team size should be 16 + 5 for this trip and that includes Tim Scott who is there for our para-athletes.

**Action: SH to communicate with NN regarding Athlete Representative**

*d. 2026 ICF ITO Nominations*

DS, MD and BC have all submitted their availability. The ICF policy is one ITO per country unless more are needed and where possible they try to achieve gender equality.

**Action: BC to submit nominations to JH at Paddle UK**

## **7. Any other business**

*a. Minibus - JF*

The purchase of the Mercedes minibus has gone ahead. We now have a newer, lower mileage vehicle. Hopefully more income will be generated by the hire of the vehicle.

*b. Paddle Activity Card - SM*

A new initiative from Paddle UK to try to eliminate the issues with clubs completing very few details on portal for Associate Memberships. The Paddle Activity Card will enable paddlers to transfer between clubs and disciplines. Any questions should be directed to JH.

*c. MRC Welfare Internal Policy & Procedure - HM*

No comment from the committee

*d. Masters & Masters Kit - SM*

A number of Masters have voiced that they are unhappy with not being recognised as an

official entity. The reason for keeping Masters as an informal group at present is that if it becomes official then we have to then adhere to a selection policy and meet all the requirements of the team manager's toolbox.

e. *Clash of dates with other disciplines - SM*

There was a clash with the Nationals this year, with the Junior/U23 Sprints. Unfortunately, we cannot always avoid these clashes but we should try to avoid them as much as possible.

e. *Interest from Holland to adopt our Hasler system for racing in Holland - DS*

DS has been approached as they wish to adopt our Hasler format/programme for their racing. They would like to start next year and would like to leverage our technology. The question was asked if we could give them the first year free and then monetize after that.

**Action: ES & DS to explore further**

g. *Media coverage of events – HM*

HM asked for it to be minuted that the coverage of events both nationally and internationally on our channels is all volunteer run and so an expectation that events get covered because they are happening should not be held by individuals. If the community want things covered, they need to send their request to the committee with suitable high-resolution photos that can be published on both the website and social media channels.

h. *Queries on Entry System going to Paddle UK - HM*

It appears that any queries on the entry system get directed to Paddle UK rather than the MRC. HM suggested that something needed adding to the bottom of the site to say that the online entry system is run by the MRC and that any queries related to the system should be directed to us.

i. *Hotels on French Nationals trip - LB*

A parent approached LB about the issue with the hotel booking for the French Nationals trip this year where juniors arrived at the hotel and the hotel had re-sold the rooms we had booked. The first priority for the staff was to sort alternative accommodation across two other hotels, which although not ideal being in two hotels was achieved quickly. Parents were notified once athletes were sorted with new hotel rooms. Some parents would have preferred to have been notified earlier, rather than when sorted. It was felt that the action taken by our staff on the trip was correct.

j. *Promotions/Demotions on results – RL*

There are more and more D notices appearing on the results which are affecting negatively on the promotions. Is there a way to ignore the excessive demotions for the automatic promotions?

**Action: ES will run through a couple of options and report back**

k. *Request from German Team Leader about attending our Long course Nationals – BC*

BC will also mention Short Course Nationals to them as well as Long Course, although he thinks timing will be better for them for Long Course.

#### **8. Future Meeting Dates 2025**

- a. Early March 2026, online – evening
- b. ACM – Early June, online with guest speaker
- c. End of August ‘new committee’ - on line meeting – evening
- d. 21<sup>st</sup> November 2026 – All Day Meeting – Cropredy Village Hall

The meeting closed at 2:30pm