

PaddleUK Marathon Racing Committee

2026 Annual Consultative Meeting Minutes

Present at the meeting. *Names were taken by registering in the online chat function prior to the start of the meeting. As a result, names of those joining later may not have been collected:*

Committee

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)	Holly Mobbs (HM)
Evan Shephard (ES)	Joe Fitzpatrick (JF)
Sally Hartland (SH)	Lee Barnett (LB)
Roland Lawler (RL)	Brian Chapman (BC)
Graham Warland (GW)	Mick Nadal (MN)
Dan Seaford (DS)	

Club representatives

Sally Hartland (Banbury & District CC)	Julian Medina (Kingston Kayak Club)
Millie Armitage (Chelmsford Canoe Club)	Evan Shephard (Reading Canoe Club)
Margaret Chapman (Kirkcaldy Canoe Club)	Ena Blackburn (Newbury Canoe Club)
Vicky Simmons (Bradford on Avon Canoe Club)	Simon Eskriett (Gailey Canoe Club)
Doug Pemble (Addlestone Canoe Club)	Emma Riley (Fowey River Canoe Club)
Jo Bates (Falcon Canoe Club)	Jim Rossiter (Wey Kayak Club)
Andy Birkett (Richmond Canoe Club)	Lynne Fender (Nottingham Kayak Club)
Stuart Quinton (Pangbourne Paddlesport)	Joe Fitzpatrick (Bishop Stortford's CC)
Julia Lawley (Solihull Canoe Club)	Dave Martyn (Wey Kayak Club)
Oliver Harding (Bisham Paddlesport Club)	Tim Scott (Norwich Canoe Club)
Richard Walker (Tamar Valley Nomads)	Dave Smith (Worcester Canoe Club)
Alex Burt (Army Canoe Union)	Duncan Roeser (Wey Kayak Club)

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and reminded attendees of the reason to have an ACM as an opportunity for individuals and clubs to express any concerns or discuss ideas that can help improve our sport.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Consultative Meeting

The minutes of the 2025 Annual Conservative Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Report from the Chairman, Stan Missen

The Chairman directed attendees to review his report circulated in the papers prior to the meeting:

My last report was in May 2025. Since then, we have witnessed some fantastic performances at all levels and we have all had the opportunity to enter what seems like, endless events; weekly at Club and Hasler races, Nationally and Internationally. We need to be truly thankful that we have clubs and volunteers willing to give their own time to provide us with so many competitive opportunities. Sadly, this year, as last, we are seeing some of our long-standing Marathon Racing Committee members retiring and not wishing to stand again; a number after years of dedicated service. We must all thank those that have and continue to give their time and looking at the future, most importantly, we must all encourage and find the next generation to take their place. Without these volunteers our sport cannot thrive and prosper. Sadly, it is very hard to find replacements with the experience and dedication needed. Please think who you know and who might be willing to stand or be co-opted to help with committee work, helping form the direction of Marathon competition over the next 10 years. The European Championships in Portugal in June 25 witnessed some impressive UK performances across all sections, Senior & U23, Junior, Para and Masters with many medals but also some heart break. Of particular note was James Russell's superb performance, making British history becoming European Champion in men's K1. Also, Will Short showed his huge future potential, his performance keeping supporters on the edge of their seats! Just two of many notable results. We were pleased to be supported well financially, by Paddle UK grant funding which together with our own funds has enabled us to send teams to many events internationally. The German Nationals as a development trip. Impressive performances were seen in Spain, with our British K4 squads performing well. In July, Norwich CC hosted the National Championships with some closely fought competition. We were invited to send two paddlers to the World Games. Large numbers of British paddlers, of all abilities, competed at the annual Sella Descent, in Spain during August. September saw the World Championships in Hungary where we were able to send a full team whilst helping support a large unfunded Masters team. As we moved into the 25/26 season a large entry turned out for the Hasler finals, hosted by Worcester CC. Despite some testing weather, with high winds and a swollen river, the challenging conditions saw some competitive and hard racing which really challenged paddlers at all

levels. Another opportunity for our young development paddlers was sending a team to the French Nationals in October. Jointly with the SRC we have supported JDS development days. The early part of 2026 saw a huge entry at Waterside A of 500 but disappointingly less numbers entering the following races despite reasonable weather. We sent a team to the Waterlands, a fantastic event to gain that vital big start line experience and challenging water & portage conditions. Again, we managed to provide a small but useful financial contribution to help support the DW committee with their event. We encourage clubs to look at opportunities to enter junior teams in 2027 to balance the current dominance of the school's entry that the DW now sees. We have continued to help and support Schools racing with the National Schools championships held at Hawley Lake. The Short Course Nationals 26 was held at Manvers Lake for the first time, a new venue to compete at but entries expected from Northern areas did not materialise and we were slightly down on previous years. The event went well with competitive racing and some impressive portaging! Our aim to is rotate the location of this event into different regions giving as many as possible opportunities to take part. Your committee have continued to listen to any feedback received, making changes to our racing rules and dealing with incidents and protests where they have not been able to be dealt with by the club organising officials. Examples of unfairness in our rules have been addressed, and small changes have been made where beneficial. We have revisions relating to portage 'paddle past' rules, to help those that need this to enable them to continue to compete. We continue to monitor and listen to club and paddler views and encourage you to contact us, throughout the season about any matters relating to our discipline, not only through this annual consultative meeting.

4. Guest Presentation, Billy Butler

Billy Butler delivered a presentation to attendees on his paddling career, his many achievements including the pursuit of paddling records, setting new benchmarks for the paddling community and inspiring others to train hard to take on these records. Billy also talked about his PaddleCast podcast with Betsy Ray.

5. Election of Committee Posts

The MRC elects places on a rolling basis, for a period of two years with the election of the Chair taking place annually. We had 6 retiring members who had served their 2-year term (Stan Missen, Mick Nadal, Bryn Price, Roland Lawler, Sally Hartland, Lee Barnett). 5 (Stan Missen, Bryn Price, Roland Lawler, Sally Hartland, Lee Barnett) stood for re-election and 1 did not (Mick Nadal).

Since none of the roles were contested, there was no need for a vote. The Chair noted there were two unfilled places and a request was made for new members.

The MRC can co-opt members at any time to serve on the committee or for the purposes of undertaking specific work or projects. Anyone interested in joining the MRC is welcome to contact the secretary at any stage to discuss options and needs that they may be able to help fulfil.

6. Finance - report from the Treasurer, Joe Fitzpatrick

The Treasurer gave an overview of his report circulated in the papers prior to the meeting, stating that the MRC is in a good position financially. There are a number of expensive international trips coming up but pointed out that GW and KW were doing an amazing job keeping costs down:

The committee is in good financial health overall. Finances are being carefully managed and monitored, while investments are able to happen (e.g. "new" minibus purchase). The MRC income is made up of Paddle UK grants and race levies from marathon races. Levies can prove unpredictable due to race cancellations and numbers attending events. For example, in 2024, the Hasler Finals were cancelled which contributed to a potential loss. Competitors numbers are, however, holding steady and slowly returning to pre-COVID levels. Our annual profit or loss is also very dependent upon international costs and where the European and World Championships are actually held in any one year. For example, in 2026, our finances will be tighter due to the World Championships taking place in Argentina. The MRC cash in bank at circa £50k is around 50% of the annual committee expenditure supporting domestic and international racing, development opportunities (JDS) and our major events. Paddle UK prefers the committee cash reserves to be less than £50k, ensuring we do not have excessive cash but use our income and grants to further our discipline activity and support paddlers and clubs at all levels. It is important to note that we cannot assume that PaddleUK grants to Marathon will continue to increase in the future and could, in real terms, reduce. Marathon needs to continue to work towards self-sufficiency to stabilise its long-term future in this country.

7. Short Course Nationals in 2027

The Chair updated everyone that the date for the Short Course Nationals for 2027 was likely to be the 2nd May with the venue yet to be confirmed. Holly Mobbs will be stepping back from leading this event and Lee Barnett will be taking over.

8. Flat water archive and results - <https://canoeingresults.com>

The Chair informed every one of the canoeing results website, managed by Peter Keane from Bedford Canoe Club. Peter is pulling together a record of previous results across all disciplines and requested that if anyone had anything to share, either results, yearbooks or memorabilia they could be shared via peter@churchendservices.co.uk

9. Wild Card Entry to Hasler Finals

The Chair introduced a new wild card entry scheme for the Hasler finals.

It was outlined that clubs demonstrating consistent participation but falling outside standard regional qualification can apply for one of three annual wild card spots, with expressions of interest to be submitted at the end of the Hasler points season. The scheme will be trialled this year.

The proposed rule change is below: -

Proposed Rule: 35.c Wildcard Club Entry

35.c.1 Objective: To promote inclusive competition and support club development, Wildcard spots shall be available for the Hasler Final for clubs that remain active throughout the season but fall outside the standard regional qualification spots.

35.c.2 Allocation: The MRC shall make available up to **three (3) Wildcard spots** annually, subject to host venue capacity. The number of available slots in a given year will be published with the race entry details.

35.c.3 The "Active Club" Threshold: To be eligible for the Wildcard draw, a club must demonstrate consistent participation. A club is deemed eligible if they have been represented by **at least one (1) paddler** at a minimum number of races, calculated as follows:

- **The Target:** Participation in more than **50% of "Eligible Races"** or a minimum of **three (3) races**, whichever is higher.
- **Eligible Races include:**
 - Any Regional Hasler race within the club's home region.
 - The National Marathon Championships (Long Course).
 - The National Marathon Championships (Short Course).

35.c.4 Selection Process:

- **Application:** Eligible clubs must submit an "Expression of Interest" to the MRC within 14 days of their final regional race or the 1st September whichever is sooner
- **The Draw:** If the number of applicants exceeds the available Wildcard spots, the MRC will conduct a random draw.
 - Where sufficient interest has been expressed the MRC will divide the entries into pools to ensure a regional spread. The process for this will be determined on a case by case basis once entries are known.

35.c.5 Limitations:

- A club successfully attending the Final may not apply for a Wildcard spot in the following season.
- Paddlers competing for a Wildcard club must still meet individual eligibility requirements as per **Section 36**.

10. Issues raised by clubs or individuals for the MRC to consider at future meetings

- i) Billy Butler suggested establishing a rotating junior international competition with other nearby countries to give our juniors the opportunity to connect and interact with other teams. It was agreed that it would be considered and SM noted Billy's willingness to assist.

- ii) Both Vicky Simmons and Julia Lawley raised concerns about the K2 110% rule's impact on point allocation; SH confirmed that the rule will change to 115% from 1st September 2026, following committee review and trials.
- iii) Vicky Simmons queried the status of the seven-race rule trial; Mick clarified that it has become permanent for the Southwest and Midlands, with data showing no significant negative impact on participation, though Emma Riley expressed concerns from a Cornish perspective as numbers were reduced as other clubs from the other end of the region did not need to attend. Emma is to forward info to the committee for consideration.

It was requested updates to the results website to reflect the seven-race rule. ES acknowledged that this was on the to do list.

- iv) HM informed clubs about the new participation certificates for GS races, which are now available through RMAs and encouraged clubs to distribute them to support engagement.
- v) SM acknowledged the long service from MN to the committee (some 22/23 years) and thanked him for his contribution.

SM thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8:45pm.