

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Stort Boat Club held on 27th October 2020. (Zoom Meeting)

The meeting convened at 8.00 pm via Zoom due to the Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time.

Attendees:

George Cutting (Commodore)
Graham Smith (Vice Commodore)
Mike Newman (Membership Secretary)
Bob Langley (Editor)
Michael & Sue Banyard
Robbie & Sue Barrett
Janet & Roy Bowman
Lorraine Newman
Roger & Ann Reding
Maggie Smith

1. Welcome

The Commodore welcomed members saying that due to the Covid 19 restrictions in place, Zoom has come to our rescue.

2. Apologies For Absence

Martin Fidler
Celia Cutting
Bunty Langley

3. Minutes of The General Meeting held on 24th February 2020

No comments.

4. Adoption of those Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.
Acceptance proposed by Bob Langley.
Seconded by Michael Newman.

5. Matters Arising

None raised

6. Commodore's Report

The Commodore explained that he would be happy to take questions under this Agenda Item. The minutes of the previous meeting and agenda for this meeting were sent out on 13 October 2020. If members had problems opening or printing them please let the committee know so this can be resolved.

The Commodore thanked Bob Langley for his sterling work in preparing and sending out the recent issue of the Stort Reporter

Maggie Smith and Banny Banyard continue to be active on club matters via Facebook.

Covid 19 restrictions have had a significant impact on our boating and events this year; however when allowed, NB's Tugby, Tintagel and Tara Rose have been out cruising on the river and probably others. Also with careful planning and in cooperation with our venues we have been able to enjoy club pub lunches in September and October. The most recent one in October at The Nag's Heads in Bishops Stortford was attended by 16 Members.

As agreed at the previous GM in February, £100 donation was paid last month to Whoosh Canoes in Sawbridgeworth.

Following a reference to Waterside Stortford in the Commodore's Report, Mike Newman asked for some clarification as to what was meant by 'floatation devices'? The Commodore explained that following a request to Waterside Stortford from the Police to install two floatation devices, aka Life Rings, CRT have agreed to fund two orange life rings and the Town Council have agreed to install them between London Road and Station Road bridges.

The Commodore substituted for Mike Newman at the IWA Zoom Meeting with CRT on 11 September, chaired by Paul Strudwick. There was a lively debate from the Regional Chairman and Ros Daniels introduced us to her new team explaining that they would need to become familiar with their new roles. Charlotte Wood (Operations), Sarah Lee (Customer Services) and Matthew Symonds (National Services Manager).

The Commodore raised the subject of the demise of the Lee and Stort rivers from the perspective of leisure boaters. He explained that CRT needs to understand the changes occurring on the Lee and Stort rivers that are deterring leisure boating. Over some considerable time he has been trying to get the message across.

Uxbridge Clubs have adopted some locks, is this a possibility for the Lee and Stort?

Bob Langley explained that he had raised much the same concerns in 2009, are CRT listening? A bit of déjà vu.

The future and viability of the Stort Boat Club needs to be discussed and agreed and will be the dominant topic of this meeting. It is covered under Agenda Item 13 Open Forum.

7. Treasurer's Report

As of 13 October 2020 and with the likelihood of no further payments being made this year, the Club's bank balances currently stand at:-

Current Account:- £1,098.86

Savings Account:- £201.79

It was reported that Martin, our current Treasurer, has tendered his resignation due to the recent and sad loss of his wife. He is moving on from boating but has agreed to stay on as Treasurer until the AGM in February 2021. The Committee and members expressed their thanks for his hard work and wished him and his family all the best in their future ventures. We are therefore seeking a treasurer for the club, essential for it to operate effectively and within its current constitution.

Martin has kindly scoped the work involved which he has said is not onerous, (estimated at around 1.5 hours per month). He is prepared to help in the handover particularly with a teach-in with the EXCEL spreadsheet he has set up for the accounts. It was agreed that the treasurer need not attend the meetings in person if this was to be the stumbling point, however obviously more desirable.

After some considerable debate over both the secretary and treasurer roles in the club, Sue Banyard said that she was prepared to take over from Martin as treasurer. However the Commodore asked that she take time to consider her decision and not be pressured purely by the dilemma the club is facing at present.

8. Secretary's Report

Nothing to Report

9. Membership Secretary's Report

Mike Newman said that he was not aware of any new membership requests/proposals or of any resignations. At present there are Circa 50 members and 36 boats registered in the club; no change since the last meeting in February 2020.

10. The Stort Reporter Editor's Report

The Commodore asked that we say a big thank you to Sue Barrett for all her hard work in preparing and sending out the Stort Reporter over many years. The meeting attendees all thanked her for such commitment and sterling work.

Bob Langley who has taken on the role of Editor explained that the Stort Reporter will now be prepared in A5 format and issued every 3 Months. It will be available on-line in PDF.

The Commodore asked that any members who have difficulty with this change should contact the Committee for help. Ann Reding explained that to read the Reporter you will need Adobe Reader installed which can be downloaded on-line.

11. Future Events

Due to the current Covid 19 Restrictions, the only event planned in the club's calendar is the lunch at The Nag's Head in Bishops Stortford on 18 November 2020. Subsequently cancelled.

The Commodore said that we must live in hope that the situation will improve and that the Government may be able to relax the current restrictions.

Mike Newman asked whether we would be able to meet for the next planned lunch with a group of 12/15 members. Is this achievable legally and affably as a get together?

Ann Reding said that the September lunch had worked well and The Nag's Head did well to accommodate us within the current rules.

The Commodore said that there had been no real difficulties in organising the September lunch but the new rules were more onerous. He has contacted the venue and it would need us to sit on tables in twos to comply with the current rules.

It was agreed that this was not ideal and that the November lunch should be cancelled; it was accepted that we must stay within the rules and Government Guidelines.

12. Close of Formal Meeting

Having covered Agenda Items 1 – 11 inc., the formal meeting was closed and moved on to items 13.

13. Open Forum

The future of the Stort Boat Club was discussed at some length under this Agenda item having been touched on earlier under the Commodores Report.

The Committee suggested three options but invited other suggestions from members via the minutes.

- a. Continue as we are and try to find members to take on key roles (Viz, Treasurer and Secretary)
- b. Wind up the Club
- c. Look to the IWA adopting the club as a Special Interest Group and thereby taking over Key Roles. (viz, Treasurer).

Various suggestions were discussed including the possibility of combining with the New Stort Boat club. It was agreed following a lengthy debate that we should not be hasty or premature in our decisions given the very difficult year we have experienced.

Adoption by the IWA as a Special Interest Group may not be practical and further discussions and agreement would need to take place. Also it was pointed out that not all our club members are members of the IWA.

On balance it was agreed that we should try to fill the vacant spaces on the committee and continue as normal. It was noted that we have a strong membership, albeit now demographically spread across the country, but we are retaining our membership which currently stands at around 50.

It was agreed that we should review the situation next year when hopefully we are allowed to return to normal boating and events.

The Commodore reiterated that Sue Banyard takes time to consider her kind offer to take over as Treasurer of the club and not feel under any pressure due to the current dilemma.

14. Closure

The Commodore thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at around 21.30.

Minutes Prepared by:-

Graham A Smith 05-11-2020