

# British Canoeing Sprint Racing Committee

Annual Consultative Meeting October 19<sup>th</sup> 2019

## Chairmans' Report

I had originally intended that this report would mark the last of my tenure as Chairman of the Sprint Racing Committee. The last four years have been very busy ones to add to the nine years I had spent as Vice Chairman.

However, nothing is certain and when I stopped to look at what was still to do, I made the decision to ask the Sprint community for another year to try and accomplish more. Briefly these are:

- The computer system for the HPP regattas is still in development.
- The progress of the Review Group work will be presented to the ACM and that will inevitably bring further discussion and potentially change. As the review was initiated back in 2017 I would like to be able see its conclusion as the group was not intended as a permanent fixture.
- Having been closely involved with the development at South Cerney, The Cotswold Water Park I would very much want to see the first regatta there which hopefully can be in 2020.
- I would like to leave a clear progression of personnel for the committee and that currently will take some more work. Two more experienced and knowledgeable sprinters have agreed to stand as members for this coming period and this next year will enable them to get "their feet under the table", as it were.
- The level of volunteers for the HPP regattas is one of major concern.

Whilst looking back at the years that has gone by so quickly, I must start by thanking all the committee members over those years, for the help and guidance I have been given to try and move the discipline forward. Whether my efforts have brought about any success is not for me to say but to leave others to draw their own conclusions. Suffice to say I have endeavoured with my best efforts and will continue to do so should you, the clubs, so wish.

I would say that *all* the committee members have added much to the work that has been accomplished during the last year.

As ever it might be considered to be unfair to single out those for special mention but at the risk of being so, I would like to mention the following. John Hoile has been the stalwart Chairman of the Regatta Committee for some years now and has led his team of committee members and regatta officials to provide regattas at HPP of an ever increasing standard.

Innovations in presentation and programme have increased the level of

attraction to the sprinting community as is seen by the numbers of competitors taking part.

John leaves the committee this year and I am very sorry to see him go. His cheerful and sound advice along with the hard work he has put in to both the Committee as Vice Chairman and the Chairman and leader of the Regatta Committee will be sorely missed.

Phil Caisley has decided that pressure of work requires him to leave the committee but will be able to continue his work on the Regatta Committee and that is indeed good news. Thanks to him for his help and technical skills on the SRC over the period he has been there.

This brings me to Cathy Wynne.

She is our rock.

Her work and countless hours as both Secretary and Regatta Chief Official are legendary and the attention to detail is minute. You can be sure she keeps her Chairman on the straight and narrow. My personal gratitude is considerable.

It would be fair to say that *all* the members of the SRC and the RC have worked above and beyond the normal call and I thank them for their support.

The work of a Chairman is to lead and guide but also to follow the advice and democratic decisions of the committee as a whole.

The creation of the current development plan was a piece of work that should help the work of the committee for some years to come. Its architect was Trevor Kirkham although much modified with the collected wisdom of the committee members. I believe it is fit for the purpose it was created and is capable of being modified but more importantly used as a daily tool to instigate and measure work done. In this we have to thank Margaret Chapman in adapting the original document to the "Daily Tool" that operates to ensure we keep on top of our aspirations and objectives.

The work of the Chairman is also to represent the SRC at a number of British Canoeing organisations within the Governing Body.

I have attended quite a number of such meetings during the past year.

The International Panel that creates and oversees the GB Team Selection Policy and GB teams has 6 members. 3 from the Performance Department and 3 selected by a BC Board appointed panel from applications received from independent BC members. All 6 have an equal vote. The panel has met 6 times this year.

The SRC Chairman sits as a non-voting observer of this panel.

All the BC Discipline Chairs meet twice a year to consider matters of general commonality. This has proved very useful over the years. Indeed the basis of the current arrangement follows on from the initial "Competition Liaison Group" started in 1976 and yes I was there too.

The English Council, now with a name change to English Forum, also meets twice a year where the Competition Disciplines and Regional Development Teams also come together with the Board of BC and staff management leaders.

The World Class Management Group, also with a name change this year also meets twice each year to deal with matters relating to the Performance Department.

Whilst not a part of the SRC Chairmans remit I have also tried to advance the level of canoeing at the Albert Dock in East London, being a Trustee for the Management there. The Directors meet 4 times a year.

The SRC has overseen excellent regattas this year at HPP despite the horrific weather at one of them. Overall though the weather has been kind to us and we have seen good racing.

The SRC does want to hear suggestions as to potential changes and whilst many we have had in the past have not worked out, this will not stop innovation. Indeed, the SRC set up an Independent Review Group some time ago and this is due to report in full anytime. A presentation will be made at the ACM and the clubs will have full opportunity to comment on it before any action is taken.

There will be discussions from items sent in by Norwich CC on the ACM agenda and hopefully what comes from them will be useful for the future.

Congratulations go to all our medal winners especially Lizzie and Liam. A full report of the GB Team will be in the meeting papers from the GB Team Manager, Justine Willmott.

The SRC has been able to help a number of GB Team members this year with financial support where they compete in non-Olympic events. This has been partly from reserves but also with help from central membership funds. The help has not been enough in many people's opinion and highlights the UK Sport approach of only funding Olympic races even if the others are in the ICF World Championships programme. However, the committee still has to run on a deficit budget eating into reserves at a dangerous rate. The plans to spend more on better IT to help the regattas both at HPP and elsewhere are still in the pipeline but should bring tangible benefits.

We are fortunate to be able to thank the PD for the K2 that is the prize for the club winning the Inter Club Annual Medal Competition which included Paracanoe and Mini Sprints as well as the Championship Medals.

Volunteers. Ah yes. The lifeblood of our sport. At this time there is a band of really good volunteers working both on the admin and at the regattas. Their number though is dangerously low and we desperately need many more. The more we have, the less onerous their work, as it can be divided further to ease the time involved.

There is much joy in the camaraderie of being part of a successful operation as many of you will have already found working in your clubs. Achievement of new skills adds to the pleasure and these can be part of the work at the regattas. So, I ask that you all consider if you can add to your own workload or persuade or cajole others to help.

In this vein I welcome back to the sport and to the committee elections two "newcomers" to the SRC membership.

Ian Wynne who needs no introduction as an Olympic medal winner and coach and David Lawrence, long time member of the Royal CC and as you will see from his personal details a very successful flatwater paddler.

It has been a privilege to be the Chairman for the last years and hopefully with your support I can continue for further period to try and add further progress to the work I have seen start.

Alan Laws  
27<sup>th</sup> September 2019