

NRC Executive update May 2020

Recreational and Explore Rowing report

A virtual meeting of the Recreational Rowing Committee took place on May 11th, at which it was decided that the 2020 annual British Rowing UK tour on the River Thames in August should be postponed until 2021. In the meantime the committee aims to promote touring and recreational rowing to existing and potential new members by gathering together media including memories of previous tours, and promoting the benefits of recreational rowing as a lifelong activity beneficial to mental and physical health, fitness and well-being. Promotional material could include footage of rowing on waterways around the country and throughout the world.

It may be feasible to host a 'virtual tour' where rowers aim to cover the distance of a specified tour by rowing indoors or undertaking other measurable challenges. The idea of hosting a touring webinar was also put forward.

With current resources the requirement to maintain social distancing will make recreational rowing particularly difficult during the pandemic. There was concern that plans for the return to rowing after lockdown will focus predominantly on training for competition, and that only single sculling will be practical for the foreseeable future. This will be unhelpful to recreational rowers who often have limited experience of single sculling. With suitable equipment in short supply within clubs this is likely to hinder skill development, member retention and recruitment.

The committee has embarked on a rewrite of the Tourers' Handbook, a publication first released by British Rowing in 2012, and is seeking approval from BR to produce an updated version which additionally can be offered in online format.

Taking into account recent guidance on the phased return to rowing and the decision taken already to postpone the national tour it appears unviable that the Great Tyne Row can be staged on August 15th as intended.

With a site assessment needed at Derwent Reservoir ahead of the August round of the Sunday League the reservoir remains closed, although the Sailing Club has organised a virtual sailing regatta.

Colin Lawson

Recreational Rowing Co-ordinator