



## **Northern Regional Rowing Council**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 Nov 2020 at 7.30pm on Zoom**

**Draft for approval as a correct record at 2021 AGM on 16 November 2021**

**Present:** 47 representatives and 6 observers recorded (list at end).

*Michael Laing was in the Chair and he welcomed delegates to the meeting. He ran through Zoom protocols. There was a brief pause to remember those in the rowing community who had passed away in 2020 and the Chair referred to Clive Hole's funeral coming up that week.*

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Catherine Bowman, Gordon Clark, Colin Lawson.

#### **2. Approval of minutes of AGM on 18 November 2019**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

#### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

None not otherwise covered.

#### **4. Officers' reports for 2019-20**

*N.B. Written reports were at [www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html](http://www.nerowing.com/nrcminutes.html) before the meeting and were generally taken as read. They remain available there.*

##### **4.1 Regional Representative (Gabrielle Moore, Durham ARC)**

Gabrielle presented a short report on the NRRC training grant scheme. Training covered in applications during the year included courses in first aid, capsizing and recovery, trailer driving and S&C. The Treasurer confirmed £1661.50 was paid out in year ending 30 Sep 20 for training grants, separate from the £3000 on Covid help for clubs (see next item).

##### **4.2 Secretary (Colin Percy, Tyne ARC)**

Colin said 2020 started well with the well-attended Club Development Conference in January, though feedback had shown next time perhaps more could be done on club development as such than on hands-on rowing topics. But planning for the 2021 conference was on hold with Covid.

He said the Exec Committee meeting in February at Tyne ARC was 'normal' but after that much use was made of Zoom as Covid took over. The scheduled meetings in April, June and September were supplemented by two more in May and July. Improving contact between clubs became a

priority and two Zoom inter-club meetings were held in June and July, the latter concentrating on competitions, notably the LDS series.

He confirmed that active clubs had received help with returning to rowing under Covid, with £250 to each of the 14 open non-academic clubs and one school in the summer and later £1300 to Durham College Rowing for the colleges.

He said the Exec Committee had spent some time on its new constitution and on how best to wind up the affairs of the Northumberland County Amateur Rowing Association (subject of separate reports). One failure was perhaps talking about but not really doing enough on social media and the internet to spread news and keep clubs in touch with one another under Covid or otherwise; one for 2021's first meeting.

#### 4.3 Treasurer (Alan Granlund, Durham ARC)

In the accounts as circulated beforehand, Alan had reported a deficit over the year of £8054.33, leaving £15573.93 in the bank at year end (30-09-20). LDS net income in autumn 2019 had been well up, but costs on other items had increased too, for example on the conference and then Covid-related. There were also some exceptional one-off items.

He said he was concerned for the current year, with no LDS income at all, and even though we had reasonable reserves, we needed to be prudent. The Chair confirmed it very probably had to be a year of retrenchment. In reply to a query, he said that as we were part of British Rowing with no separate legal status, we could not generally apply for Covid-related help ourselves.

#### 4.4 Coaching Education Coordinator (Eddie Bryant, Durham School BC)

Eddie reported on the work of his team of tutors and assessors. Covid had caused great disruption to courses with 1<sup>st</sup> for Sport responding slowly to providing more content online, but he was hoping things would move early in 2021. Assessment for those already through Level 2 training had also been held up but he hoped this too could happen soon. He asked any individual or club wanting training to get in touch

#### 4.5 Junior Rowing Coordinator (Pauline Higgins, Queen Elizabeth HSBC)

Pauline drew attention to the item in the report on the Junior InterRegional Regatta, which it was hoped would run in 2021 on 24 April and back at Nottingham It had not run the last two years. She said she was looking at regional trials and wondering if should be either the usual trial at Cambois or a series of mini trials at different venues. Views were being sought. It was suggested the early affiliated competitions in the region in 2021 (if run) could perhaps be used.

#### 4.6 Long Distance Sculling Series Coordinator (Richard Mortimer, Durham ARC)

Richard spoke to his short report on the autumn 2020 series, which in the end had not run at any venue primarily because of Covid. The go-ahead from BR allowing competitions to run from 10 October came too late to allow the Regional Council to proceed with confidence, despite two venues being willing. The Chair said that although the Single Scullers Head test event on the Tyne in September went well, the amount of extra Covid-related work

that went in to a relatively modest event was instructive.

The Chair noted there was a nomination for a new person to take on the LDS coordination role and Richard said he welcomed this, as he had many other roles ongoing. He would support whoever took it on.

#### 4.7 Events Coordinator (Catherine Bowman, Hexham RC)

Colin Percy once unmuted stood in for Catherine who could not make the meeting. He said that following closely after the last AGM clubs in the region had run three affiliated events (Rutherford Head, Tyne United New Years Head and Durham SBH). Weather then intervened with Tyne Head and the inaugural Derwentwater Head cancelled due to bad weather. One day of BUCS 4s & 8s Head squeezed in and then lockdown came. Only the Newcastle University trial event in early autumn as just mentioned had relieved the competitive gloom since then.

Catherine had undertaken the usual coordination of the competition calendar for the next rowing year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022). Colin said this was in place, though still needed British Rowing approval. It was on the [www.nerowing.com](http://www.nerowing.com) calendar page. In conclusion he said that there was still a discussion going on with BUCS about whether their 4s & 8s Head would run in February 2021 and, if it did, Tyne Head would have to move date.

#### 4.8 Regional Rowing Safety Adviser (John Mulholland, Tyne ARC)

John said that most items were as usual, but with the addition this year of Covid. He said that should clubs have concerns or questions about Covid he could perhaps help but more particularly could contact others more knowledgeable. Club safety audits were needed very imminently.

Incidents were down, not surprisingly, from 205 to 101 for the year, but some clubs had not reported any at all. So he urged clubs to ensure reports are made. He said it might be important to individuals who later wished to make an insurance claim to make an incident report, though it was not his role to adjudicate in such matters.

The Chair said that the Regional Council had drawn back from offering advice on Covid-related matters to clubs, as British Rowing had been doing a good job and there was a danger of just confusing matters if we had put out our own slant on them.

#### 4.9 Chairman of Regional Umpiring Committee (Richard Mortimer, Durham)

Richard had taken over from Peter Hoare as Chair during the year, with Dilwyn Jones from Tees RC as Secretary. There had not been much practice for umpires at competitions with cancellations. Umpires were getting older of course and there had been further retirals. He said we needed new recruits as always and that theory training online would start soon, followed hopefully by live practice if competitions restarted. It was a transferrable skill if people moved around rowing regions, he suggested.

#### 4.10 Masters Coordinator (Gabrielle Moore, Durham ARC)

Gabrielle reported on various discussions at the national committee, and the long-awaited report on building a successful masters squad is nearing publication, including how to feed in new people from learn to row and so on.

Masters handicaps are being looked at, especially at the older end of the age range.

#### 4.11 Recreational Rowing (Colin Lawson, Durham ARC)

Colin Percy stood in for Colin Lawson who could not make the meeting. He was also standing down from the role and from the Sunday League steering group; so many thanks were due to him for all his work.

The Sunday League had not run in 2020 due to Covid. In 2019, numbers of entries had fallen off a bit, though not too dramatically, and it had been intended that running the 2020 series would be accompanied by a review of all aspects, leading to a bit of a reboot if necessary in 2021. A tentative set of dates and venues for 2021 has been put together, but the steering group needs to meet and take stock of how to reboot without information from 2020 to help.

Gabrielle Moore and Pam Walton agreed meeting was a priority, with the former asking that clubs think now about how the Sunday League might evolve and also see if they could find some further volunteers to help. Colin said in conclusion that that the Great Tyne Row steering group was also meeting shortly to look at a date for 2021, probably in August.

#### 4.12 Para Rowing

John Mulholland asked about para rowing, as there had been no report. The Secretary said that the previous coordinator had dropped out and with Covid it had not been possible to get moving on this again. This was a further action for 2021.

#### 4.13 Feedback on student rowing

The Chair asked David Squirrell, DCR Captain of Colleges, to update the meeting on college rowing. David said that the last two years had been hard with poor weather and now Covid. College officers had done a huge amount to keep things moving despite all this. Experience was not being built up as quickly as normal and some of the most experienced had moved on. As a result many colleges would welcome help from the northern rowing community. Ways of doing this were discussed, especially in relation to Durham ARC.

The Chair asked Fergus Mainland from Newcastle University BC on the current situation. He said all rowing on the water had stopped there, though land training was still happening over Zoom. What would happen in the New Year remained to be seen. Harry Deakin said at Northumbria University BC it was much the same. They had got going well early in the term with good numbers of freshers starting but were now at a standstill.

John Mulholland suggested that clubs, not just colleges, might need some help getting back on their feet. He asked if British Rowing or the region could do anything. The Chair said this would be looked into. Pauline Higgins said that junior squads were in a difficult position with rowers moving up through the age categories, but not necessarily having the experience that would normally be expected at each level. Some understanding might be needed when competitions start again.

## **5. Winding up of Northumberland County ARA and use of its assets**

The Secretary referred to his written report. He said that maybe ten years ago the NCARA had shrunk in activities to just running the Tyne Head event in conjunction with Tyne ARC. This soon transferred 100% to TARC and NCARA became totally dormant. About four or five years ago the NCARA papers came to Russell Kernahan to sort out. Colin with his Tyne ARC hat on did discuss informally with Russell how to wind up the association and distribute the remaining assets, about £5000, to clubs in the NCARA area. But his health declined and he passed away before this could happen.

The issue re-emerged when Alex Shiel, a former treasurer of the NCARA, got in touch to say not only was he still receiving regular statements from the bank but was also now being told by the bank that as the account was not being actively used, they were going to close it. In discussion with Colin he had agreed that bringing the matter to the NRRC AGM for formal winding up of the NCARA and transferring the money in the sum of £5190.34 to the Regional Council's account seemed sensible. The Chair asked Alex to confirm this at the meeting, which he did.

After it being clarified what the NCARA area had been - the present local authority areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside - the report's recommendations were considered by the meeting.

It was agreed unanimously that:

- (a) In the absence of a functioning structure of its own, the affairs of the NCARA be wound up formally;
- (b) Clubs in the former area of operation be consulted about how best to use the money received from its account;
- (c) A scheme to dispense the money in the former area of operation be set up, advertised and implemented as soon as practicable.

## **6. Approval of a new constitution for the Northern Regional Rowing Council**

The Secretary referred his written report and the draft constitution, as previously circulated well in advance. He said British Rowing had asked all regions to adopt a new constitution, following their model and replacing the previous version, dating in our case from 2012. He said the changes were not huge, but did put clearer responsibilities on the Regional Council to implement policies and decisions agreed at the national level by British Rowing. The opportunity had been taken locally to align the wording with our long-standing method of electing our officer and executive committee members with named posts, as per the next item. And as a late change the explicit ability to have electronic meetings had been included.

It was agreed unanimously that the Northern Regional Rowing Council adopt the new constitution as circulated, to take effect from 1 January 2021.

## **7. Election of officers and committee for 2020-21**

Charly Curtis took the chair for the first election. He said that as there had only been one nomination, Michael Laing was re-elected as Chair of the NRRC without a vote. Michael took the chair again.

Michael referred to the nominations for other officer posts and for non-officer membership of the Executive Committee in the circulated list. That showed two nominations for the Long Distance Sculling Coordinator post, but since its publication one nominee, Pam Walton, had said she would be willing to pick up the vacant Recreational Rowing Coordinator post and withdraw from the LDS race. There were thus only single nominations for all posts and nominees could be elected without a vote. Richard Mortimer as Chair of the Regional Umpiring Committee would be ex-officio on the Executive Committee in addition.

The meeting agreed that it was content with the following list of officers and others to make up the Executive Committee of the NRRC:

Chair - Michael Laing (St Leonard's School BC)  
Vice Chair - Charly Curtis (Durham ARC)  
Regional Representative - Gabrielle Moore (Durham ARC)  
Secretary - Colin Percy (Tyne ARC)  
Treasurer - Alan Granlund (Durham ARC)  
Coaching Coordinator - Eddie Bryant (Durham School BC)  
Junior Rowing Coordinator - Pauline Higgins (Queen Elizabeth HSBC)  
Regional Rowing Safety Adviser - John Mulholland (Tyne ARC)  
Para Rowing Coordinator - Vacant  
Long Distance Sculling Series Coordinator - Dan Lockey (Durham ARC)  
Competitions Coordinator - Catherine Bowman (Hexham RC)  
Masters Coordinator - Gabrielle Moore (Durham ARC)  
Recreational Rowing Coordinator - Pam Walton (Hadrian BC)  
Student Representative - David Squirrel (Collingwood College BC)  
Member of the Executive Committee - Tim Morris (Talkin Tarn ARC)  
Ex-officio as Chair of the Regional Umpiring Committee - Richard Mortimer (Durham Regatta, Durham ARC)

## **8. Any other business**

8.1 Richard Mortimer described the imminent demise of Yahoo email groups on 15 December 2020, which the Council and individuals interested in rowing had used for a very long time for communication; it had been a shining example to others in its early days. Use had dropped off a lot in recent years and he asked for feedback on whether or not to replace it with another similar arrangement. John Mulholland said he was keen for a replacement as he used it as the regional rowing safety adviser.

There were no other comments so the Chair took this as agreement to proceed with a replacement. Richard said there would probably not be an automatic switchover and those on the list would be asked via the existing group to transfer if they so wished. He would liaise with the Secretary who currently ran it.

8.2 The Chair said that as many people would know, Wade Hall-Craggs had retired very recently as Head Coach at Durham University BC after 20 years. To mark this event it had been suggested to him that the Regional Rowing Council sponsor a bursary to help a younger coach for the region to complete their coaching education to a higher level. He had been contacted by a number of former DUBC rowers willing to make a contribution.

Wade is happy with this to proceed, not wanting a boat named after him or a brass plaque on a seat by the River Wear. Stephen Leigh was strongly in

support given Wade's contribution to rowing across the region. There were some suggestions as to other rewards, but not followed through. It was agreed to progress the bursary.

- 8.3 Sarah Hodge from City of Sunderland RC said she had some former junior rowers now at Durham University wanting to get in to coaching and willing to help at Durham colleges. She was asked by David Squirrel to contact him.

*The meeting closed at 8.40pm with thanks to Richard Mortimer for being Zoom admin.*

**Colin Percy, Secretary to NRRRC**

**Email:** [secretary@nerowing.com](mailto:secretary@nerowing.com)

**Club and competition representatives present:**

Gareth Bell - Gateshead Community RC  
Ella Bicknell – Hatfield College BC  
Oscar Brown - St Chad's College BC  
Eddie Bryant - Durham School BC  
Charlotte Carter - St Cuthberts Coll BC  
Charly Curtis – Durham ARC  
Harry Deakin - Northumbria Univ BC  
Stefan Escreet - Lakeland RC  
Chris Eke - Berwick ARC  
Alan Granlund - Durham ARC  
Harry Green - Stephenson College BC  
Sam Hawes - Grey College BC  
Oliver Hawken - University College BC  
Tom Hillier - Tees RC  
Sarah Hodge - City of Sunderland RC  
Pauline Higgins - Queen Elizabeth BC  
Lucy Holmes - Ebchester BC  
Henry Kilding - Stephenson College BC  
Michael Laing - St Leonard's School BC  
Jacob Lane - Durham University BC  
Ollie Le May - St Hild & St Bede Coll BC  
Steven Leigh - Tees RC  
Dan Lockey - Durham ARC  
Shelagh Lombard - Tyne ARC  
Fergus Mainland - Newcastle Univ BC  
Gabrielle Moore - Durham ARC  
Tim Morris - Talkin Tarn ARC  
Richard Mortimer - Durham Regatta  
John Mulholland - Tyne ARC  
Holly Parkes - Van Mildert College BC  
Colin Percy - Tyne ARC  
William Robson - John Snow College BC

Jiya Saggu - Durham Univ BC  
Ruth Scott - Cambois RC  
Alex Shiel - Tyne United RC  
Carol Singleton - Tynemouth RC  
David Squirrel - Collingwood College BC  
Ben Stephens - Tyne ARC  
Louise Summers - Tees RC  
James Thompson - Bede College BC  
Nigel van Zwanenberg - Durham Regatta  
Ewan Wallace - Trevelyan College BC  
Pam Walton - Hadrian BC  
Brian Webb - Chester-le-Street ARC  
Caiden Whittaker - St John's College BC  
Yasmin Zhuang-Mackie - St Mary's Coll BC

**Observers present:**

Andrew Cairns - Berwick ARC  
Richard Freeman - South College BC  
Cameron Lee - DCR Boatman  
Mill Luangamornlert - DCR Regatta Sec  
Franek Pauwels - DCR Coaching  
Jordan Wiseman - DCR Water Safety