

COMMODORE'S LOG – No. 4

Executive Committee were not able to meet in September due to absence and illness, however, three important documents have been produced for the good governance and compliance of the Club and were adopted with minor revisions at the last Executive Meeting on the 27th October.

The Executive is keen to ensure that the Club is compliant with standards of best practice in every facet of its business. To this effect we now have in place a Health and Safety Policy, a Child Protection Policy and a Planning and Strategy document containing the aims and ambitions of the Club for the next year or so. Under the duty of care owed to all our Members and Guests the Club would be deemed lacking, if such policies were not in place and acted upon if the situation so required.

Harbours

The immediate past Commodore, Chris Fairbairn recently criticised the Club on Channel Television (Wednesday 28th October), for being "tight lipped" over the Harbours plans for the St Helier Harbours, and in particular, the old drying Harbour. I had not been asked to comment prior to the broadcast about the current situation which, to the best of my knowledge, is as contained in my last Commodore's Log of August. However, I do understand his frustration regarding the lack of definite plans and their publication to the Membership. A presentation had been scheduled for the end of September but has been put back to November due to further revision and programming changes as well as States protocol.

What I can confirm, is that the Harbours have been made aware of the issues that concern us; being the loss of drying berths, the number of new berths and their cost and the impact on the heritage and appearance of the Harbour.

The first meeting was attended by Yacht Clubs and St Helier Boat Owners Association, in June that gave the briefest out line of plans. The second was a meeting of the Marine Leisure Growth Group, at the end of June and the third was as part of the Marine Traders group in August. I duly reported the meeting in my Commodores Log Number 3. The presentation of the plans is eagerly awaited.

A full update and a letter from Harbours are on the club notice board.

No further meetings have taken place since the publication of the August Log update but the next meeting of the Marine Leisure Growth Group is scheduled for the 24th November.

I am attempting to arrange an informal meeting between Harbours and interested parties in an attempt to allay some of the misconceptions that abound and improve communication on this issue.

Planning and strategy

This document outlines the Mission and values of the Club in line with the constitution and the aims of the Executive and each Sub Committee for the next year or so. The document is valuable in that it will; unite the efforts of the Executive and Sub Committees, It will inform the Membership and will provide an opportunity for debate on content and priorities for future years. It will also promote the aims of the Club to both local and national authorities and potential sponsors.

This "Member's document" is freely available to any member from the office and written comments and suggestions will be most welcome.

Health and Safety

At the last review our auditors Moore Stephens, highlighted the lack of a written policy and procedure. Since then and with the generous and expert assistance of Doug Taylor-Fitch, a Health and Safety schedule has been produced and a monitoring procedure put in place.

We are very grateful to Doug, a long standing Member of the Club, for his professional expertise and valuable contribution to the Club

Child Protection Policy

Whilst all those who come into contact with young persons during Club activities have been Police checked, and many of who, including myself, have attended a Child Protection Course the implementation of a Child Protection Policy is much more involved.

The document has been produced by Angie Vallois, herself a youth worker with specialist knowledge in this area. The document is largely adapted from RYA guidelines and policy and framed for our own circumstances. The Club policy has been independently reviewed Cathy Philips, of the Jersey Child Protection Committee and has been highly commended and held as example for other clubs to follow.

Both Angie Vallois and Steve Pearl are the Club Child Protection Officers and are familiar with the necessary procedures to follow.

My grateful thanks and that of all the Executive go to Angie for such sterling and important work on behalf of the Club.

Sailing

As the season draws to a close, Julian Barber and his team are already well advanced with the Sailing Programme for 2010. Amongst the varied programme of inshore and offshore series is the Bi Annual Race to La Trinity-sur-mer, 350 miles via Belle Ile, to a Reception in one of the top sailing centres in France, renowned for challenging sea, beautiful Breton country side and fine cuisine.

This seasons racing has seen larger fleets and competitive classes, and this is down in large part to Julian and his Committee and the enthusiasm of the competitors and bodes well for next year.

2010 also marks the 70 Anniversary of the liberation of British troops from St Malo in June 1940. Steve Pearl and Rodney Challinor, (organiser of the 60th), event are putting together a programme for the weekend of 18th- 20th June and it is hoped that as many Clubs, yachts and motor boats will make this event special, recording the heroic chapter in the club's history.

New RIB

We are still awaiting a suitable name, but the RIB has seen action with the youth training programme and acted as safety boat for the bay race series. Harbours have allowed a 50% discount on the mooring fees at La Collette as support and contribution to our Youth Sailing initiative. This kind gesture is much appreciated.

Rib Section

A programme of events has been put together for next year, including advanced RIB driving skills. The programme will also be arranging trips to adjacent ports in company. I am delighted that several applications for Membership have been received as a result of this new section and sure it will provide exciting and enjoyable boating experience.

Harbour Security

The Boat Watch scheme is a joint initiative between The Club and St Helier Boat Owners and was launched 2 months ago with a dedicated 24 hour number for informing the Coastguard about matters that may need their intervention, be it suspicious behaviour in the harbour, or around boats or just to advise them of a problem that needs the attention of the marina or harbour staff.

The **Boat Watch** number is **Tel: 447705** please put it in your mobile

The Function Room now known as “The Westward Room”

Following an informal ballot the name Westward Room emerged a clear favourite with 35 signatures, Training Room 2 signatures, and Members and Commodores “ Nil Points!

I am pleased that the name chosen reflects the long history of the Club and probably its most famous yacht, with close connections to the building itself, as the area adjacent to the new room had been the sail loft for the great yacht.

The room is finding many uses for meetings, events, youth sailing and RYA training and interest is also being expressed by connected outside bodies both States and Commercial, for use as away-day seminars. The TV and WiFi are proving useful facilities for training and lectures.

The building snagging is practically complete, save for one or two persistence problems that are proving harder to resolve, namely the swing door to the galley and the galley floor drain.

Building Renovations

The House Committee has been hard at work obtaining estimates and plans for the Dining area refurbishment. I fully support and understand the reasons why the project has not brought forward sooner. One project at a time is all our resources can handle efficiently. However the project is scheduled to commence some time in February and will include the up grading of the walls and a new timber floor, lighting and redecoration. February should prove to be the least disruptive to the workings of the club and provide an opportunity for the installation of a Fire suppression system to the galley, to comply with the building insurance policy and to ensure the minimum disruption to the galley in the event of a fire.

Whilst on matters of House I was annoyed to discover that a recently installed “customiser” system fitted to the men’s WC had been removed as some mindless act of vandalism or theft. The cost of which was £457 and its repair will be in the region of £380. That is over £800 of Club funds wasted! The Executive under our ever-watchful Treasurer, Charles Blampied and Mike Stevens’ House committee, go to great lengths to ensure the club receives value for money on all expenditure and to have their efforts undermined in such circumstances beggars belief!

2010 Jersey Boat Show

We have been given advanced notice of the 3rd Jersey Boat show on the 1st – 3rd May. The event has quickly become an established date in the calendar, enjoyed by sailors and non-sailors alike. I would very much like the Club to be represented in some way, promoting what we do and raising the profile of the Club, RYA courses, sea safety, and generally attracting interest in membership from potential sailors.

To do this effectively we will need a budget and volunteers to man a stand for a few hours on a rota basis and talk about the club, we may also put on a show and events if resources allow. Please contact the office if you may be able to assist or require further details.

New Members

Such was the demand for new Membership application an extra interview night was arranged. It is interesting to note that in the October interviews, of the 35 applications, the vast majority already had some level of RYA qualification and boating experience; only one application was declined on the grounds of insufficient interest in boating.

I am delighted that the Club seems relevant and progressive and attractive to new Members and continues to be a popular and friendly place to enjoy boating and yachting. I will do my best to ensure that it remains ever thus.

David Langlois

Commodore

Friday, 30 October 2009