

Russell Boating Club Annual General Meeting

Sunday 25 June, 2023

RBC Clubhouse, 46 Matauwahi Rd, Russell

Meeting commenced at approximately 4:10pm

Our current membership stands at 336 of which 227 are full voting members. 42 voting members were in attendance, three short of a quorum needed to conduct formal business. However, Bruce Mitchinson gave his Commodore's report and summarized the business we wish to consider. A number items of general business were raised from the floor.

1. Welcome

Commodore Bruce Mitchinson welcomed members to the meeting, including our Patron, Tony Hanlon.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kiki & David Nicholson, Ian & Chris Holt, Fletcher Sunde, Barry Newland, Annie Hill and Jeff Tucker

3. Members Passed

A minute's silence was observed in recognition of the passing of RBC member Maggie Sales

4. Commodore's Report

Bruce thanked the Committee for their work in the past year, noting in particular –

- Barry Newland's support as Rear Commodore and his role as Club Slipmaster.
- Mark Thomson's work as Mainsheet editor and help with junior sailing.
- Helen Thomassen's management of our social events program, with help from Kaye Whelan and Shelley Te Uki, and her oversight of the kitchen, bar and cleaning functions.
- Stephen Pepperrell's guidance on changes to kitchen management and leadership of our Etchell's fleet.
- Mike Bennett's support of our racing program and the great effort involved in travelling to our monthly committee meetings from his farm.
- Our secretary Ian Holt for his efficient handling of Committee meeting records, his work on the Club website and for managing our compliance documentation.
- Scotty Thomassen's role on the building subcommittee and support of social events.
- Jeff Tucker's support as Club Treasurer for the past 3 years; Jeff is standing aside at this meeting to allow someone new to take on this role.

Unfortunately, due to work and family commitments, Joel Page and Jed Roberts had to step down from the Committee part way through the year.

Bruce also acknowledged and thanked –

- our bar staff, Maddie Sigley and Martin Allen
- our new cleaners Marni and Bronwyn

- Jackie and Selina Haines for looking after the kitchen and cleaning prior to December.
- Our book-keeper Trish van der Sande, who also plays a critical role in many facets of the Club's operations.

Other issues to report

- We have seen a marked improvement in our finances from having the kitchen operate independently. However we are still finding it challenging to keep the books balanced.
- The Committee believes membership fees should ideally cover typical club expenses, with revenue from Tall Ships being used to fund improvements. Currently the surplus from Tall Ships, a record \$15000 in this year's event, is helping to fill a gap in meeting our basic operating expenses.
- Annual Yachting NZ affiliation makes a large dent in our accounts, roughly equivalent to our current operating deficit. The Committee is recommending that the YNZ levy of \$29/person (\$58 for Full Family and Family Associate members) be added to our current membership fees to reflect this (Note: these figures were corrected in the subsequent meeting on 2 July to \$27.50 and \$55 respectively).
- The Committee would also like to re-introduce a previous policy of offering a 1 year limited membership to visiting boaties that would be free of the YNZ levy. We also propose to cancel the membership of those who fail to pay annual dues for two consecutive years.
- Our auditor recently advised that they no longer provide auditing services and it has proven difficult to find another firm willing to undertake this work for an organization of our size. If we are able to find an option, we believe the cost will be very significant.
- Although the Club's rules require that we have our annual accounts audited, there is no legal requirement that we do so. Upcoming changes to the regulation of incorporated societies will almost certainly place our annual turnover well below the threshold that would make auditing necessary.
- We currently use Xero to track our accounts, we employ a book-keeper to manage accounts and payments, we have a treasurer on the Club Committee to oversee this process, accounts and payments are reported and discussed at each monthly Committee meeting, and we have our year-end financial statements prepared by an independent accountant. The Committee feels that these measures provide a sufficient level of oversight and suggests that we drop the audit requirement.
- Our 2023 Tall Ships Regatta was a great success and we are looking to further enhance the event. In one month we will call a meeting to review the last event, assign tasks to volunteers and discuss new ideas.
- Raising the clubhouse has been on the back-burner for a few years. However, the Committee has agreed to restart this process and are planning to call a separate meeting to discuss this issue.

5. Honorary Members

The Committee is recommending the continuation of honorary Club membership for the coming year for the following people in recognition of their service to the club:

- Lynette and Warwick Cooper – Tall Ships
- Anthony and Nicole George – Tall Ships

- Tristan Kiddie – Youth sailing coaching
- Ross Norman – Causeway and access repairs

14. General Business

Simon Taylor asked if building funds could be used for maintenance rather than raising the building. Bruce indicated that because some of the funds have been donated specifically for raising the building, although we can use the funds for other purposes in the short-term, we need to pay those amounts back into the building fund when able.

Lesley Blundell asked if it possible to upgrade the ladies toilet so that the cistern fills more quickly. Simon Taylor indicated that there is a valve that allows the water flow to be switched over to higher pressure.

It was suggested that we look into getting support from the Lottery Grants Board to help maintain the dock.

John Grant suggested we investigate how Bay of Islands Sail Week manages the auditing of its financial statements

Simon Taylor suggested increasing the number of working bees to about 5/year

Simon also expressed concern that many people still feel estranged by events surrounding COVID restrictions at the Club and suggested that a meeting to discuss the issue might help to restore camaraderie.

The meeting concluded at 4:42pm.

Russell Boating Club Annual General Meeting

Meeting # 2, Sunday 2 July, 2023

RBC Clubhouse, 46 Matauwhi Rd, Russell

Meeting commenced at approximately 4:00pm. 34 voting members were in attendance. As this was a follow-up to the meeting held on 25 June as provided by our Club rules, a quorum was not required.

1. Welcome

Commodore Bruce Mitchinson welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Scott Colebrook, Mark Baird, Kevin Philpott, Gary & Karenne Wilson, Fran Woodcock, Lu Pollock, Barry Newland, Richard Stephens and Jonathan McInnes. Bruce Mitchinson moved that apologies be accepted. Scotty Thomassen seconded. The motion was carried.

3. Commodore's Update

Bruce thanked those who had provided comments and feedback following the meeting held on 25 June.

In response to concerns raised at that meeting about the continuing impact of the Club's handling of COVID-19 restrictions, Bruce acknowledged that there is work needed to repair relationships damaged as a result of those actions and to restore the camaraderie the Club has lost. He accepted responsibility for the measures that were taken and apologised to members who were excluded from the Club during that period.

On behalf of the Committee, Bruce expressed thanks for Jay Howell's leadership of our junior sailing program.

Regarding the question of Yachting NZ affiliation, Bruce indicated that we would have further discussion of the issue over the next few months (see also further discussion under Fees).

Similarly, on the question of auditing of Club financial statements, he indicated that we would revisit this issue once reporting standards being defined under the new Incorporated Societies Act have been finalised later in the year.

4. Scrutineers

Simon Taylor and Steve Allen agreed to act as scrutineers for the formal business of the meeting.

5. Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

Terry Blundell moved that the minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting distributed to members be accepted as a true record. Simon Taylor seconded. The motion was carried.

6. Financial Statements

Stephen Pepperell moved that the unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023 that were distributed to members be accepted. Scotty Thomassen seconded. The motion was carried.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members

a. Commodore

Bruce called for nominations for Commodore.

Annie Hill nominated Bruce Mitchinson and moved that he be re-elected. Stephen Pepperell seconded. The motion was carried.

b. Vice-Commodore

Bruce called for nominations for Vice-Commodore. None were received and appointment was deferred to a future Club meeting.

c. Existing Committee Members

All current members of the General Committee, including Secretary Ian Holt and Rear Commodore Barry Newland have agreed to continue in their positions. Scotty Thomassen moved that the following be elected:

- Mike Bennett
- Ian Holt – Secretary
- Barry Newland - Rear Commodore
- Stephen Pepperell
- Helen Thomassen
- Scotty Thomassen
- Mark Thomson

Mark Thomson seconded. The motion was carried.

d. New Committee Members

Jeff Tucker has tendered his resignation as Club Treasurer.

Mark Thomson moved that Fletcher Sunde be elected as a new member of the General Committee and that Kevin Philpott be elected as Club Treasurer replacing Jeff Tucker.

Leslie Blundell seconded. The motion was carried.

Fletcher Sande is elected to the General Committee.

Kevin Murray Philpott is elected as Club Treasurer replacing Jeffrey William Tucker.

8. Honorary Members

On behalf of the Committee, Bruce Mitchinson nominated the following people as honorary Club members for the coming year in recognition of their outstanding service to the Club and moved that they be accepted:

- Lynette and Warwick Cooper – Tall Ships
- Anthony and Nicole George – Tall Ships
- Tristan Kiddie – Youth sailing coaching
- Ross Norman – Causeway and access repairs

Tony Hanlon seconded. The motion was carried.

9. Patron

On behalf of the Committee, Bruce Mitchinson moved that Tony Hanlon be elected as Club Patron. Leslie Blundell seconded. The motion was carried.

10 Accountants

On behalf of the Committee, Bruce Mitchinson moved that our current accountants, Hartnell Grond Walker, be re-appointed for the coming year. Terry Blundell seconded. The motion was carried.

11. Membership Fees

On behalf of the Committee, Bruce Mitchinson moved that membership fees for the coming year be set as listed below, including a one year Temporary Membership category for visiting yachties -

- Full Membership, increased from \$115 to \$140
- Full Family Membership, increased from \$160 to \$215
- Associate Membership, increased from \$75 to \$100
- Family Associate Membership, increased from \$95 to \$150
- Junior Membership, to remain the same at \$48
- Temporary (1 Year) Membership, set at the Full Membership rate of \$140

Bruce explained that the recommended increases are needed to address a budgeted operating deficit based on the past year's membership fees. The Committee believes that our fees should be set at a level sufficient to fund our ongoing general operations, with additional revenue, e.g. from Tall Ships, being used for enhancements to the Club.

Bruce also noted that all memberships other than honorary and life members attract an affiliation fee (\$27.50 individuals, \$55 family) levied by Yachting New Zealand.

There was some discussion about the value of Yachting NZ affiliation.

Steve Hardcastle noted that Yachting NZ funds legal representation on behalf of all boaties in cases that impact us, e.g. in marine resource management and environmental issues.

Bruce pointed out that the Club gets its insurance at favorable rates through a group scheme provided by Yachting NZ. Yachting NZ also strongly support youth sailing, and membership is necessary in order for our coaching staff to be certified to run our learn-to-sail programs. Bruce pointed out that the Club began over 50 years ago as a sailing club, and expressed the view that it would be disrespectful to that heritage to withdraw from Yachting NZ.

Simon Taylor noted that the issue of Yachting NZ affiliation has been considered by the Club's committee on many occasions over the years and that disaffiliation has always been found to be impractical.

Mark Thomson pointed out that the way the sport of sailing is structured under the rules of World Sailing, any yacht race run by an organisation that is not affiliated with their national authority results in all competitors in that race losing eligibility to participate in any future event organized anywhere under the auspices of any affiliated organisation. Disaffiliation would therefore make it impossible for the Club to run any future racing events, including Tall Ships.

Bruce noted that funds set aside for raising the clubhouse are a result of specific donations and fundraising events and that these are held separately from those used for our regular operations. Membership subscription fees do not contribute to those funds. Bruce indicated that some additional meetings would be held in the coming months to discuss our plans for the clubhouse.

Simon Taylor asked how the bar is handling visitors now that we have a separate kitchen operation. Bruce explained that although we do not enforce a strict '3 visits' policy as we have at times in the past, we do require visitors to be signed in at the bar by a member.

Bar Manager Maddie Sigley pointed out that those who sign visitors in are expected to take responsibility for those individuals while they are in the Club.

Simon noted that welcoming visitors into the Club is a good way to encourage new people to join the Club as members, but that our current lack of a Club Captain makes it more difficult to take advantage of this opportunity.

Mark Thomson suggested that when signing visitors in, we should record their email addresses so that we can send them a follow-up note to acknowledge their visit and encourage them to consider Club membership.

Steve Hardcastle asked whether any consideration has been given to offering discounts at the bar to members. Simon Taylor noted that doing so would provide an additional incentive for visitors to become members and

also reward those who have chosen to do so. Shelly Te Uki noted that our Point-of-Sale system is capable of handling discounts and that the Swordfish Club and RSA both offer such discounts to their members. Shelly also emphasised the need for Club members to maintain a friendly and welcoming attitude toward visitors who come into the Club.

Stephen Pepperell reiterated that an increase in fees is necessary to allow the Club to maintain the clubrooms at the level we need for the Club to remain relevant. We currently need to upgrade the toilets, repair furniture etc but don't currently have the budget to move forward with these projects.

Steve Hardcastle expressed the view that an increase in fees is necessary partly because the Club has failed over a long period in the past to increase fees in line with expenses. Bruce Mitchinson noted that keeping the fees low has not seen an influx of new members sufficient to offset our operating deficit.

Bruce pointed out that with the increases proposed, our membership fees will still be \$30-\$60 below those of other clubs nearby.

Fletcher Sunde expressed the view that by making it more feasible to upgrade the Club facilities, raising fees may attract more people to become members.

Steve Hardcastle seconded the motion to raise fees as proposed. The motion was carried.

12. General Business

a. COVID-19 Impact

Claudine Maynard gave an eloquent statement about the continuing hurt and division caused by the exclusion of some members during COVID restrictions. She expressed an interest in the Club having a discussion about how things could have been handled better and what we could do in the future if we are faced with a similar circumstance.

Her statement was warmly received with a round of applause.

Scotty Thomassen undertook to facilitate discussions about the issue with the Committee, those involved and affected and the Club at large with the hope of repairing the damage that was done and preventing it from happening again in the future.

Kaye Whelan expressed the view (also on behalf of Barry Newland) that if the Club can address this issue in a positive way and make this known, it could serve as an example to other clubs in Russell and contribute to healing for the whole town.

b. Fundraising

Fiona Mohr asked if the Club had considered seeking charitable trust status as a way of opening up other grant and fundraising opportunities. She noted that there are other boating clubs in New Zealand that have charitable status and expressed a willingness to help the Club explore this opportunity.

The meeting concluded at 5:03pm.