

Minutes of the Parkstone Laser Fleet 2011

Friday 25th November 2011
19.30 in PYC Committee Room

Present:

Donald Macdonald - Laser Class Captain (DMD)	56
Colston Nichols - Laser Vice Captain (CN)	69
Rosie Connell - Minutes Secretary (RC)	78
Steve Tyler (ST)	MR3694
Richard Linford - Vice Commodore (RL)	169027
Nigel Pearce (NP)	42
Peter Norman	13
Chris Guy (CG)	33
Peter Taylor (junior) (PT)	14
Ken Brown (senior) (KB)	48
Mark Scott (MSc)	19
Roger Hakes (RH)	195031
John Lyons (JL)	15
Bob Alexander (BA)	39
Matt Southam (MSo)	28
Ann Keates (AK)	20
John Keates (JK)	29

The Laser Class Captain (DMD) and Laser Vice Captain (CN) arrived late. Perhaps they were having a crucial discussion about important class matters, or maybe they were just in the bar.

DMD therefore opened the meeting at 19:36 in the traditional manner, using the gavel given as a gift to the Laser class by Stuart Bromidge to mark the end of his year as Class Captain in 1987. He welcomed the Laser sailors present as well as Steve Tyler, representing the sailing committee.

1. Apologies

Alan Fisher	23
Andrew Hartley	12
Roberta Hartley	10
David Hartgill	67
Peter "Here comes the bride" Gordon	26
Lis Gordon	186371
Helen Baillie-Vincent	60
John Ridd	195033
Gary Wakefield	21

2. Minutes of the last meeting

CN proposed that these were a true reflection of the 2010 meeting. KB seconded this and said they were fantastic and another good laugh.

10. General committee - input & questions

ST reported that the Laser fleet turnout was slightly down but this was due to a change in how numbers were counted which in effect meant that all classes were down by roughly the same amount, so effectively numbers were the same. This year duties and retirements were not counted in the turnout numbers hence the drop in numbers.

Duties for the class are calculated based upon the list of lasers in the handbook. DMD felt that this list was not up to date and has marked out people on the list who no longer have a Laser. ST has asked DMD to speak to Nikki Riggs about this as she bases the duties on the contents of the handbook.

Race officers and those on rescue duties will soon be required to tally with red tallies.

There have been 128 recorded incidents reported by the Harbourmaster, but only 4 of these involved yachts. ST informed us that the Harbourmaster is considering stopping us racing over the shipping channels as he considers this to be particularly risky.

Methods of communication are being improved, and as well as our class captain passing on information the club website is also being improved. Dutyman will have more information and the club is adding specific instructions for the roles of PRO, ARO, rescue duties and the U-flag boat. These instructions will also be included on the email reminder that is sent before duties.

There have been incidences where the sailors have broken the U-flag rule and ST wanted to make us aware of the seriousness of this offence which could lead to removal from the club. Two sailors were recently asked to appear before the general committee to explain their actions - on this occasion the U-flag breach was put down to extenuating circumstances. ST declined to name the sailors involved when asked, but the class captain has personally acquired two extra U-flag duties. CN wished it to be noted that he was not at all bitter that he went back and avoided the RIB, unlike DMD and the other bloke.

ST reported that Saturday afternoons were proving very successful with the Flying 15 fleet and asked if anyone would like to join. BA was keen so DMD suggested he buy a Flying 15. ST listed the benefits of an empty club, easy parking, better winds in the afternoon, more space on the water, more room in the changing rooms etc. When asked about rescue cover ST explained that there would be self-cover, and there was some debate about whether lasers needed safety boat cover. ST said there would be an option to move next autumn if we were interested. DMD said if we did move, we wouldn't want too many other fleets to join us as they might introduce safety. PN asked how it work if other classes did join. NP pointed out that too much of the club usage was concentrated around the racing sessions, and that the rest of the time the club lay empty and was, he felt, underused, so Saturday sailing would expand the amount of time the club was used for. This matter will be discussed further later in the meeting.

ST informed us that crew names are now to be given at the beach hut. JL asked what the basis of the requirement was, and ST explained it was health and safety (which made DMD very happy). PN asked if it was so we knew who we were looking for, and ST confirmed this was the reason. DMD pointed out that it would make the queue for tallies even longer and asked if there could be a list of regular crew to save time, or even a permanent tally number that each individual always used for the year. CN didn't

understand the problem with queuing and said he never queued, but PN pointed out this was because he was always late. ST said that they were looking into options to minimise congestion at the tally hut.

RL (as Vice-Commodore) spoke as an additional committee representative on a few matters. Firstly, RL informed us that Boatwatch has now been renamed Clubwatch, and was an opportunity for members to help the running of the club by looking after its assets. It involves members coming to the club in the evening and keeping a general watch on the yard, marina and moorings until they want to go home. RL encouraged as many of us as possible to take the time to participate, and said that if each dinghy sailor did one duty a year then then we'd have more than enough people to cover every night of the year. RL said there had been a huge spate of boat thefts this year, mainly from boats on the moorings, and as we were all big strong chaps he felt we could positively contribute.

RL encouraged us to all display stickers on our boats, and to gently encourage any boats you see without stickers to please put them on!

RL also made a plea about rubbish in the yard and asked that we pick up any rubbish we see as well as our own, so that the yard could stay as tidy as it was at the beginning of the year. KB asked for more waste bins please, and RL said he already has plans for this. DMD said more bins would help and said he felt much of the waste came from the youth sailors. He pointed out that the club was at its messiest during youth week. RL asked that we also encourage any youth sailors to pick up their own waste. ST said there was a "clear up the yard" session at the end of Youth Week.

ST told us about a RYA initiative called "Push The Boat Out" - as a celebration of olympic sailing the intention is to get everyone out on the water on the 21st July 2012. Parkstone plans to hold a similar event to the box opening/Royal Wedding event.

ST also explained that Poole Week 2012 had been moved and was now to run from 26th-31st August 2012. This was due to the Mirror Europeans being held during the original Poole Week and using the top triangle for their racing. Due to low tide there will most likely be two days where racing will take place in the bay, or possibly channel tide races. It was acknowledged that there had been some negative feedback about this.

ST and RL then invited the attendees to ask questions which they would attempt to answer on behalf of the general committee.

PT stated that while on rescue duty he had recovered an Iso which was not a club boat. He wondered if these incidents were recorded to show the club in a positive light. RL said he was not sure of the formal process. RH pointed out the benefit of these rescues, as without the club RIB assisting that event would have required the RNLI being involved in rescue. NP likened it to a "close call report" in training. RL stated that it is a requirement that we assist all seafarers in distress, but suggested we radio any such incidents back to the box so they can keep a log.

NP asked that times on website items be made clearer, although said overall the PYC website calendar was improving. DMD sends emails for laser events. RL took the opportunity to tell us about Charlie, who has recently joined the office as an events coordinator and is in charge of the calendar. Charlie formally worked for the RYA and her role will include events management, open meetings, social events, Poole Week, Youth Week and private functions. In addition she will be doing general PR work for the club and

assisting with the website. NP thanked RL and said he feels the general office atmosphere has improved. ST said that Martin Pearson usually likes events to start at 19.30, so most events do.

NP suggested the club might offer incentives for those taking part in Clubwatch, for example a complimentary drink at the bar. CN suggested a bottle of port. RL will discuss although does not want to encourage those on Clubwatch to be inebriated.

PN asked about rescue boat coordination, and reported that sometimes the PRO isn't quite sure what to do with all the RIBs. He asked if it was part of the PROs training as safety cover was not always evenly distributed. ST explained that race officers vary in their experience and in how they choose to manage their resources. Both RL and ST said they nominate an ARO to coordinate the RIBs when they are the PRO. ST admitted that the quality of race officers is, at times, inconsistent, and RL agreed that the standard of safety boat and U-flag drivers can also be variable, but as RL explained we are reliant on volunteers and not paid servants. In an ideal world, RL said, all safety boat operators should hold not only their powerboat level 2 but also their safety boat certificate. However were this to be enforced the quantity of drivers would plummet even though the quality would improve, and as such we work with what we have. ST added that the club is always looking for young capable race officers.

DMD had received two emails for discussion with the committee; both on the same topic of Monday night race fees. Some lasers choose only to race on a Monday as they prefer the short courses. They are required to pay the full race fee despite only racing once a week, and this season, with its high winds and low tides, has made the cost per race expensive. The emails were therefore asking for a reduction in race fees for those who only race on a Monday.

ST explained that it was up to the class to decide whether this matter should be taken forward for discussion with the General Committee.

Some debate ensued.

RL explained that there is a blanket fee for storage and racing, and regardless of whether dinghies race they are required to pay the race fee. Adding caveats to this would prove difficult to police. He likened it to a gym membership, where the fee you pay is fixed regardless of your level of usage.

RC pointed out that the Thursday lasers/Toppers Ladies do have a reduced fee for their once weekly usage. RL said that it would be very difficult to keep track of who sails when, as Nikki operates a paperbased system. DMD replied that this information is already produced by Nikki for statistical use.

NP felt strongly that the Monday night racing encouraged new and less confident members to come out on the water, and as such we should consider a discount. PT asked for the race fees which DMD informed us were £82 a year for lasers, and £26 a year for Topper Ladies.

JL felt many sailors could only attend once a week, for example those with work commitments who only attended on Saturdays, and RL agreed we would not be able to discount those people as then every fleet would argue this and a substantial amount of

money would be lost, thereby increasing the race fees for everyone who regularly sails. As JK pointed out, increasing everyone else's race fee wouldn't make things fairer.

PN asked for clarification that there was now one single race fee, as in past years there had been a Monday supplement. DMD confirmed that one single fee for all racing now applies.

NP said we should encourage new sailors, and if the race fee were discounted it would encourage them. He said that Monday night racing did not require use of club facilities which RL disagreed with as there are still RIB costs, hot water, changing rooms, bar etc.

More debate ensued.

NP said many new laser sailors would not be able to complete on a Wednesday or Saturday as they were not sufficiently skilled. However RC pointed out that all the races have new sailors at times, and Saturday in particular has had many "learner lasers" who have coped. JK (a man much revered by the Chinese as his wisdom has grown with age) felt it was not necessarily wise to encourage inexperienced lasers to go out on the night with the least amount of safety cover. NP suggested we all look after our fellow sailors, but PN felt it was difficult to aid a laser from a laser. PT suggested the race fee should become progressively cheaper the more races one sails.

DMD attempted to call us to a vote. The majority were against the proposal for a reduced Monday night fee. It will therefore not be carried forward for further discussion at General Committee.

NP stopped for a chat, and DMD nearly had to bang the gavel - given as a gift to the Laser class by Stuart Bromidge to mark the end of his year as Class Captain in 1987 - again.

3. General report - turnout, funds, & duties

DMD reported that our turnout numbers had actually increased if you looked at the numbers the old way. NP asked if any younger sailors were joining the fleet, to which JK reassured him there were sailors younger than NP joining. DMD said that there were young sailors turning up to race, and KB agreed, and said he felt everyone in the fleet was young.

Class funds had been checked and approved by MSc and now stood at £643 having started at £720. Funds had been spent on sail numbers, and there are still around £50 of these to be sold. Also DMD had awarded a prizegiving mug to everyone who had attended the laser prizegiving this year, the cost of which was from class funds, and had also spent some money on wine at The Canteen. PN added that the mugs were excellent prizes (unless dropped, RH added). DMD happily reported that the fleet is much better off than it was when he was first appointed Fleet Captain.

There were no laser "no shows" for rescue duties this year, DMD reported. He said however that there are punitive moves to affect the class if someone doesn't turn up. DMD feels this is unfair and an individual punishment should be given. DMD ensures that duties are shared between everyone who keeps a laser in the yard.

4. Election of Officers

No nominations had been received, and the officers were unanimously reelected for yet another year. Proposed by NP and seconded by BA.

Therefore for yet another year we have:
Donald Macdonald - Laser Class Captain
Colston Nichols - Laser Vice Captain
Rosanna Connell - Laser minutes secretary

5. Class Duties - rescue, ARO/PRO, Monday PRO

DMD informed us that rescue duties would be run the same way as in previous years. The most experienced class members would be covering Monday PRO for dinghies, with the lasers covering two weeks out of three.

AK asked if those doing box duties would get recognition in the form of class points - DMD said if these duties were rostered as class duties then yes, points equivalent to a second place would be given.

DMD asked if we wanted to volunteer to run the Arripay again and all were in favour. This year, DMD is planning to remember to take the ODM for the start of the race.

6. Class Race Courses - how was 2011?

DMD asked what we thought of courses, and after a variety of answers the consensus was that Wednesday night courses had been particularly poor. AK felt this was due in some cases to unfavourable tides, but also due to race team mistakes and poor courses which many of those present agreed with. PN felt some of the races had been too short, with some only 35 minutes. DMD asked why we thought this was, and if we had any ideas to improve things. It was generally agreed that Wednesday nights were more stressful with time limitations as people were rushing from work, and none of the laser sailors had opportunities to suggest suitable courses to the PRO. AK said that it was tricky for the race officers to coordinate so many fleets, and PT agreed that last minute wind changes could make things difficult. CN said that computer data proves when the shifts happen and how much of a balls up has been made.

JK found the Poole Week courses bizarre this year as often there was no second beat. This was due to the decision to keep us away from the committee boat. There was some discussion about the sailing area and suggestion that we should stay entirely in the top triangle (AK) and that this would minimise problems with crossing the channel and ferries (JL). AK said she suffered with bad wind by Brownsea. JK said his problem was with the length of the legs in the course, so shortening the course was difficult.

PT moaned about racing in the bay and didn't see why the legs were so long when the marks were movable. BA replied that bay racing had been a complete disaster and explained there had been a debrief. Part of the problem was due to buoys not being ready on the RIBs. DMD pointed out that it was up to the race officer to check the RIBs had all the marks they would need. RC reminded him that the race officer for the Arripay had forgotten the ODM.

AK asked how best to challenge unsuitable courses. BA will share our thoughts with the general committee, and DMD will discuss with the sailing committee and with Bob Moberly.

JK was concerned about the back of fleet being a long way behind on long legs in Poole Week, without the ability to shorten, which would potentially make the races too long. PT likes the simplicity of Mondays, but JK said this would be too difficult with a 45 minute start sequence. AK said she felt the race officers were anxious to get things right, and suggested a separate finish line so those finishing do not clutter the start.

DMD said he didn't have any feedback on good races as he'd been in Leeds on all the decent days. PN suggested that we have a very long beat up to a small triangle which we go round and round and round olympic style, then run down to the finish (I did try to draw this, but unfortunately it looked like a phallus and will not therefore be published - ed.) Therefore we'd be out of everyone's way and away from the start/finish line but would still get nice short course racing and easy potential for an early finish which would cover stragglers as well.

DMD said he does let the race officers know what we like but they still cock it up and give us a sausage. He said the PROs need nudging at the time of the race. Generally DMD thought ad-hoc courses worked better, and JK agreed that the numbered courses only worked when the wind was spot on. DMD suggested we nominate someone sensible who can come early(ish) on a Wednesday and talk to the race officer. AK will try to do this.

DMD said he was very happy even racing in the shallows if it made a good course, but PN said he preferred it when the water was at least ankle deep.

7. Class entertainment and events

DMD asked if everyone had been happy with the events over the last year. RC said she had been very happy and thanked DMD for his hard work in organising the events. DMD asked for suggestions of venues that might be suitable for the 2012 Laser Prizegiving as he is looking for somewhere different. PN suggested The Coffee Club in Westbourne which DMD will investigate. CN was concerned that a Westbourne venue may be too convenient for CG and RC. KB also suggested The Custom House. DMD will look into it.

Provisional likely possible dates for the event: Sat 25th February or Sat 3rd March 2012 (TBC).

8. Training

DMD reported that he had no specific training plans for the coming year other than the usual novices training that takes place in May. This year it was very successfully held in June.

NP informed us that the club may be considering employing a senior instructor over the summer periods to offer tuition for those at a lower level, and to offer "free sailing" sessions where safety boat cover would be provided in a given area. This idea had been used at Spinnaker Sailing Club, where the revenue had increased from £20,000 to £100,000 over 4 years. CN asked if Spinnaker was open to outsiders and NP confirmed

that it was. DMD pointed out that Spinnaker's sailing area is safer than that of Poole Harbour which might make it more suitable as a sailing school.

NP also asked if people were still interested in attending training sessions on some Friday nights in the summer. NP is away for most of the summer so cannot organise these himself and wondered if someone would commit to running them. CN said he would be happy to assist but would not commit to being there every Friday, and AK said she felt it was important the sessions were run regularly in order for them to be successful. NP suggested DMD could coordinate by mass group email, but RC pointed out this is surprisingly time consuming and relies on DMD actually being at home with a working computer.

RC suggested that some kind of social network be used in order that members would know when free sailing or informal training were to take place. This would give us an idea of how many interested parties would attend and ensure we had a "rock star" to teach. With some groans from CN, RC suggested Facebook and Twitter pages which most of the attendees thought was a good idea. She volunteered to set-up and run these, and to also circulate a "Friday sailing" email list for those not into social networking. This was agreed. The Facebook page can be found by searching Parkstone Laser Fleet, or follow @ParkstoneLasers on Twitter. If you do not use these mediums, and would like to be added to the "old school" email list for Summer Friday sail training and other spontaneous sails, please email RC on rosieconnell@gmail.com

9. Boat Parking

PN reported that some twit (I think that's what he said) had moved his boat and in doing so had scuffed and damaged the bottom of it. It had taken him some time to find where his boat had been to, and consequently he was late for racing and now has a damaged boat. His boat was eventually located on the slipway.

DMD concurred that his boat had also been moved despite being parked in the designated winter dinghy spaces at the far end of the yard. RH had had his boat moved and damage.

PN wondered why there had obviously been a mass boat move when the position of the cruisers was known and all the boats moved had been legally parked in the designated area. DMD agreed there was evidence that a mass move had taken place. NP and DMD both agreed that this had also happened in previous years. RH also had his boat decorated by antifouling.

BA will take this matter forward to the committee. JK asked if it were possible to review the CCTV to find out who had moved the boats and how the damage had occurred. KB pointed out we pay a lot for storage given how small and tightly packed we are in comparison to other dinghies.

No-one mentioned racks, thank goodness.

DMD called order as he was running out of beer.

11. A.O.B

a) PT wanted to discuss the different scoring system that DMD applies for sailors at the front of the fleet using radials using radials, or different rigs. He felt his use of a radial was being penalised by being recorded on two separate score lines, and said we needed to encourage radial sailing. DMD said he did encourage radials and only penalised the good people, like AK and PT; and likewise PN and CN when they used their 8.1 rigs.

AK said radials were safer in heavy winds and BA agreed it was a question of seamanship, and likened it to reefing. CN said changing rigs was different to reefing and some debate ensued. NP agreed with the seamanship attitude and someone (it may have been BA) pointed out that on a yacht you could choose a larger or smaller jib.

PN said that it was against ILCA class rules and you couldn't sail two different rigs in an international regatta. RC said DMD's two-tier results system generally depended on whether you wanted to sail for experience or results. JK said he felt he was penalised by lack of skill, so therefore penalising the good people was fair. CG agreed with PN that rig swapping is not allowed in the class rules.

AK said she had trouble getting it up in windy weather so that's why she used the radial. She said the only fair solution would be a separate radial class. Debate ensued.

JK asked DMD if he had scored the other way.

DMD said the more results were split, the more other people got pushed down and generally things got out of hand. PT asked for separate radial results which DMD said was too difficult. PT pointed out that splitting some of the results was leading to lower numbers of people qualifying for the series. KB asked if Wayfarers could reef (they can) and BA said he felt people should choose the right sail for the conditions.

PN said rules were right.

AK thinks more and more people would sail radials if a separate radial fleet were in existence.

Generally, it was felt that PT needs to eat more pies. Maybe he should try the 2-pizza-Hartley diet.

b) JK asked when DMD was due for promotion as he had been Fleet Admiral for rather long time. He suggested he should become Sea Lord now.

c) RC wanted to welcome Bill Lauste in his new position as General Manager, on behalf of the laser fleet. Those present were all in favour. Welcome Bill! KB said he'd popped into the office for something and had briefly met Bill and thought "What a lovely bloke"

(Gary Wakefield joined us for the rest of AOB as his AB meeting had finished. There was also a chap with an enormous moustache who looked a bit like Oliver Bye - he considered joining in - but decided against)

d) BA asked if we could go sailing sometimes on the low water Mondays, and suggested we race off Baiter instead. DMD said this would mean more work and more rosters, and that Monday needed to be where it was because of novices getting back easily and not

fighting the tide, so there would not be any formal races held. However, if people wanted to just go sailing then they could. BA said he was usually sailing, and it was agreed that the new social networks could be used to communicate with other sailors to see if anyone wanted to join him.

e) BA asked about what we thought about racing on Saturday afternoons instead of Sunday morning for October only. Debate ensued. BA proposed a vote that the lasers continue to race on a Saturday afternoon until the clocks changed at the end of October. The fleet voted in favour of this motion.

f) NP asked that we all try attend the Club AGM and look at finances. He is keen that we take an interest in where our membership subscriptions are spent.

g) PN wanted to thank DMD.

h) CN suggested we all give DMD a round of applause, so we did.

Meeting closed at 21:45, and was followed in the traditional manner with beer and curry

Date of next AGM Friday 30th November 2012 at 19.30