



GBR IRC Committee annual Meeting
Thursday 14 September 2017
Lymington Town Sailing Club

Minutes

Present:

Full members

Mel Sharp – South West (Chairman)
Michael Webster – South East (Vice Chairman)
David Cooper – JOG
Richard Woof – Weymouth
Barrie Martin – Classics
Stephen Parry – Solent
Stephen Tudor – Wales
Andrew Pearce – Poole/RORC
Des Balmforth – Scotland

Co-opted members

Chris Brown

Honorary members

Paul King

RYA Nominee

Jack Fenwick (latter part of the meeting)

Observers

Matteo Zuppini

RORC Rating Office

Emma Smith (Secretary)

Jason Smithwick (Director of Rating)

Jenny Howells

Charlene Jackson

Andrew Yates (Consultant)

Mike Urwin (Consultant)

1. Welcome from the Chairman and Introductions

Mel Sharp, the Chairman, welcomed everyone and each member around the room introduced themselves and what area they are from.

2. Appointment of new Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mel Sharp advised that Ian Macdonald had come to end of his term as Chairman. Ian was thanked for his contribution as Chairman over the past 9 years.

Mel Sharp, with the unanimous approval of the committee, was appointed Chairman with immediate effect. As per the email vote earlier in the year Michael Webster was appointed Vice Chairman.

3. Committee membership – new members and other changes

Members were invited to suggest suitable additional members to the committee.

There was discussion that members such as Jason Payne-James and John Stewart have not attended a meeting for a while and we should look for others in their area.

Emma Smith confirmed we needed new member for the Solent, East Coast and NI.

The question was raised how as to how we recruit new members. Are certificate holders aware that committee even exists?

It was suggested that an email be sent out to all current 2017 IRC certificate holders to give some information about the committee and inviting new members to apply. **ACTION RO**

4. Apologies for absence

Jason Payne-James, Richard Babbe, Terry Hunt, Frank Reed, Andy Hill, Nick Elliott, Janet Grosvenor, Eddie Warden Owen, Phil Hagen. During the meeting an email arrived to confirm Ian Macdonald was unable to attend due to problems with his flight

5. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IR Committee held on Thursday 15 September 2016

Minutes approved (signed by Mel Sharp).

6. Matters arising

a) Offshore Special Regulations

Jason Smithwick presented an update but advised that there haven't been any submissions distributed by World Sailing as yet.

There has been a revamp to OSR to make it simpler for owners and World Sailing is currently developing an online tool. An in-built plan review system is also being developed.

All these submissions will be available on www.sailing.org

The Annual World Sailing conference is taking place in Mexico in November so Jason will report back after this with an update.

b) IRC Future Update

Chris Brown asked for an update on 'advanced' Autopilots which was discussed at last year's meeting, when James Dadd had said it would be brought up and discussed further at the IRC Technical Meeting. Mike Urwin advised that unfortunately it hadn't been discussed further.

David Cooper reported that RORC do not allow any boat to use autopilot in their races. Chris Brown still has a strong view about them and feels they should be included in the calculation of rating.

Michael Webster went on to say that at Royal Dartmouth they use the non spinnaker TCC a lot at the Dartmouth Regatta and that everyone needs to be made more aware that IRC is for everyone and not the high end boats. It was a general consensus around the room that IRC is perceived as being only for professional sailors.

Jason Smithwick confirmed that autopilots are permitted under IRC but maybe this is something the Rating Office and Race Organisers need to address for the future. It was noted that a distinction would need to be made between advanced and basic autopilots.

Mike Webster thought that clubs needed to be flexible, for instance in Dartmouth they allow people to race non-spinnaker for a series.

There was a discussion about rating crew number, Jason Smithwick pointed out this is a big policy decision.

7. GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual report

Jason Smithwick summarised that there was a slight increase of 42 boats and that the successful Club Start Up scheme is to continue into 2018. For those that are in Year 2 (last year for Start Up offer) continuing support was offered where appropriate.

Michael Webster reported how successful Start Up has been in Dartmouth. He thought the RO should be generous with discounts as it saves the office a lot of time, and there is a huge risk of losing IRC owners if the discount to the clubs is stopped.

It was confirmed that the IRC weighing and measured discount was being offered this year and will start in October rather than November.

MyIRC (online application portal) is being developed and is a success in the Rating Office. Future plans are to roll it out internationally, and for IRC certificates to be available on owners' personal MyIRC accounts; there is also the possibility of running limited trial certificates online.

David Cooper asked about optimisation for rating break points; Andrew Yates pointed out that people should be asking their sailmaker for the best sail for their boat, not choosing based on the rating.

Mel Sharp congratulated Michael Webster for his remarkable achievement with Start Up and promotion of IRC in the SW.

Jason thanked the Rating Office team along with Mike Urwin and Andrew Yates for their support and welcoming him to the office.

Stephen Tudor asked for IRL numbers to be included in the GBR area statistics, as many Irish boats race in the Irish Sea/UK.

Everyone agreed that it would be helpful to have statistics that included rating bands. It was pointed out that this information is freely available by using the IRC TCC listing on www.ircrating.org.

8. Development of IRC

a) IRC as a brand / PR and Publicity

Mel Sharp discussed that there hasn't been any real further action from the committee since the last meeting, and he is still very keen for IRC to become something you can't go racing without. Perhaps there is a need to look at more incentive schemes/membership options. Jenny Howells reported that Eddie Warden Owen was concerned about having too many IRC certificate holder offers (quality rather than quantity).

Richard Woof said that IRC should be aspirational. It was accepted that different groups need different things but simplicity is key.

It was mentioned that the IRC yearbook scares the average sailor off and that IRC needs to target the smaller boats. Mel Sharp suggested we split the yearbook and rule but Jenny Howells advised that the option had already been looked into and it was too expensive. Should there be a GBR IRC Yearbook? The issues are content and cost. However, the RO has already started sending out email newsletters to GBR owners.

VPRS is competing with IRC in Poole/Weymouth, currently £20 per ticket.

Jack Fenwick suggested that rather than trying to get 'lapsed' owners back into IRC it's better to "replace and grow" – ie. get new owners into IRC. Regarding VPRS etc., you cannot stamp out other options, just be better than them.

IRC could be made more prominent on the rorcrating.com website.

Jason Smithwick reported that the IRC pricing structure is under review with the intention of helping smaller boats.

In addition, it was agreed that the possibility of Direct Debit for paying for a rating, or paying for eg. 3 years in advance should be revisited.

b) IRC & ORC

Paul King asked if it was possible to make a better comparison of statistics between IRC and ORC. Jason Smithwick advised that it is not directly comparable. For example it was noted that in the Netherlands, they automatically send revalidated ORC certificates to their boat owners whether they have requested or not.

9. IRC Incentive and Support Schemes

a) Start-Up

Charlene read the report circulated prior to the meeting

b) Single Event Ratings (SER)

SER was limited to 6 events in 2017 with few complaints.

Andrew Pearce requested that the Rating Office consider SER being allowed for the International Paints regatta – Poole Regatta to encourage IRC.

However Richard Woof thought that it would be better not to offer SER at all.

10. IRC Championships 2018

The Double Handed Nationals were cancelled last minute at the Royal Southampton YC which was very disappointing. It was discussed as to whether this event should be offered to another club for 2018.

Confirmed dates for 2018, see attached list.

11. Proposed changes to IRC for 2018

The RYA had suggested some wording changes to the IRC 2018 Proposed rule changes. Nb. The final rule changes are now published on www.ircrating.org.

David Cooper suggested having links to direct us to helpful examples, such as a link to the World Sailing on how to measure sails. Mike Urwin showed David that all this information was easily found on the IRC technical section. However, David suggested having these links in the actual document even as a reference at the end of the document.

12. Area and Fleet Reports

These were briefly discussed, as all the reports were circulated by Emma Smith prior to the meeting. Des Balmforth reported that the new RC 35 fleet has been a great success and IRC is working well. The fleet is open to all regions and there has been some great social media/publicity.

Other issues raised

Chris Brown was disappointed no action was taken regarding the issue he raised in 2016 on IRC Rules 8.2.1 (short-handed certs) and 15 (manual power). The 2016 minutes on this matter are included below as a reminder -

i. autohelms and short-handed certificates – re IRC Rules 8.2.1 (short-handed certs) and 15 (manual power). Chris Brown raised the issue of the success of double handed boats, as new advanced autohelms are very good. He had done 4 hours testing of autohelm vs. human, and the autohelm consistently won. There was discussion about whether IRC should rate autohelms but there were concerns about different autohelm capabilities.

Fully crewed boats don't realise they can use an autohelm in IRC (nb. RORC bans it for fully crewed boats). James Dadd suggested that IRC rules could say autohelms are only permitted for short handed races, but it was argued that this is a race management issue. James Dadd offered to consider the issue and discuss with UNCL, and propose to Congress if necessary.

13. Proposed dates for 2018

It was suggested that we look at a venue possibly in Southampton but to avoid the Boat Show dates if possible. Emma Smith and Chairman to discuss further.