



GBR IRC Committee Meeting

Thursday 10th September - Lymington Town Sailing Club & Zoom

MINUTES

Present:

MS - Mel Sharp (Chairman)
AP - Andrew Pearce (Poole & RORC)
BM - Barrie Martin (Classics)
ST - Stephen Tudor (Vice Chairman -Wales)
CB - Chris Brown (co-opted)
JF - Jack Fenwick (RYA)
JP – Jon Pegg (South West)
NJ – Nick Jones (Solent)
PJ – Paul Jackson (Essex)
DB – Des Balmforth – (Scotland)
JETS - Jason Smithwick (Rating Office Director)
JH - Jenny Howells (Rating Office Technical Manager)
ES - Emma Smith (Rating Office Technical Team)
SM - Sally Moss (Rating Office Technical Team)

1. Welcome from the Chairman and introductions

(Due to us having 3 new members the discussion developed and covered subjects that would have normally been included in item 11. Area and fleet reports)

The committee members were welcomed via Zoom. Nick Jones, Paul Jackson and Jon Pegg were introduced as new members.

NJ introduced himself and apologised for having not attended a meeting previously, although he commented racing in the Solent has been very quiet due to Covid, but the racing that has been organised and gone ahead post lockdown was organised very well.

PJ introduced himself as a new member and advised he was from the Essex area and was part of the Race Management Team for the IRC Nationals and J-Cup, and PRO for East Anglian Sailing Association.

AP commented that there has been limited racing in Poole but it has started up again in July with two weekend regattas plus two more organised for the end of September. All evening racing has been lost with no intention to restart. He was doubtful any Poole winter series would happen and thinks that 2021 will be very similar to 2020.

BM was pleased to inform the committee that Cowes Classic went ahead with 20 boats

taking part and was successful under the new guidelines.

JP introduced him himself, based in Plymouth and currently running a sail loft. He is proactively trying to get racing/sailing going within Plymouth and surrounding areas. The usual scenario of Clubs racing in different ways remains a problem but he feels Covid has been a positive in that respect as everyone has joined together.

JF said that a lot more families are now sailing together due to Covid-19 which is a short term positive, and reports there has been a lot more club level activity with the maximum 6 crew requirement.

PJ made it clear that in Essex if anyone did not have a valid 2020 rating they were not allowed to race under IRC and were then made to race local handicap, in response JETS explained that using an invalid IRC cert is not allowed and is unfair on those who hold a current one. There had been instances of clubs initially offering to accept lapsed certificates but who had subsequently requested 2020 certificates.

ST said that the Welsh Championships checked every entry to check they had 2020 certs and if they had not revalidated they were helped very quickly to get a valid IRC cert.

BM expressed a concern within the Classic Fleet that fully crewed boats always do better and there was lots of discussion amongst crew about crew number. AP agreed and wondered if there could be an option for two certs between cruiser and racers. JETS explained that clubs are permitted to control crew number in the NOR and trying to define between a cruiser and a racer and a sportsboat would be very difficult. AP thinks there is a clear misunderstanding regarding crew number and that maybe the Rating Office needs to make it clearer, JS agreed that an article would be added to our next newsletter. (ACTION R.O.)

2. Apologies for absence

David McGough, David Murrin, Des Balmforth, Richard Babbe, Simon Britten, John Stewart, Richard Woof, Stephen Parry, Laurence Mead, Paul King, Ian Macdonald, Eddie Warden-Owen, Chris Stone, Janet Grosvenor.

3. Committee membership

MS advised that we are always proactively looking for new members, and we are currently seeking someone to represent Sussex area.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee Thursday 14 September 2020

a) Agree the minutes

The 2019 the minutes were signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

b) Matters arising

- The proposal to remove Endorsement if a boat changes ownership was decided against due to the extra cost and workload for owners. Due diligence is done by the rating office when processing certificates.

- Sail stickers are still being reviewed. A new IRC certificate format showing IHC serial numbers in 2021 was confirmed
- All contact details for Committee Members have been added to our website.
- SER Scheme is still limited to just 6 events and this year. RTIR was the only event using it but unfortunately the event was cancelled. We will continue to limit the SER scheme as it doesn't promote participation in IRC
- Panerai has been removed from the Sponsor name from the Classics events.

CB joined the meeting

5. GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual Report

JETS highlighted that Covid 19 had dominated IRC certs which has resulted in both IRC certs and income being down, although in the UK the South Coast is the main area for racing when the guidelines changed.

IRC numbers were more affected in the Mediterranean especially in France where it has been against the law to sail at all.

It was noted that certificate numbers in August were greater than usual due to racing starting up later in the season. A 25% discount on certificates was offered in August to promote the restart of sailing, this is not the rating office usual policy.

The Advocate scheme continues to work well and owners enjoy having an advocate to talk to on a one-to-one basis and to guide them through applications and queries. Other member of the committee agreed with this and said they also have received positive feedback about this scheme.

Weighing and measurement has been quiet, again due to Covid but it is picking up later in the year as sailing restarts.

The Government furlough scheme has been used within the office and continuing, which has been a great help.

6. IRC Incentive and Support Schemes

a) IRC Advocate Scheme

IRC Advocates are those who are in clubs and co-ordinating applications within the Advocate Scheme. We held a very successful Advocate conference February 2020.

b) Single Event Ratings (SERs)

SERs continue to be limited to 6 specific events. There is no intention of adding more clubs to the list.

7. Development of IRC

a) mid-level club racing and b) IRC and UK rating systems

JETS confirmed there had been a slight upturn in VPRS, mainly due to the pricing at £20 a cert. The Committee were asked for their thoughts on VPRS.

JP said that VPRS has been around in Plymouth mainly for 2 or so years and promoted by two people who make it very apparent they are against IRC mainly due to saving money.

VPRS believe their system to be fairer to Sportsboats ie Hunter 707s.

One of the advantages to VPRS is that all their certs and data can be viewed online and the question was asked if IRC/Rating Office should do the same. The reason for not publishing all the data is the risk of regression to the formula which is unpublished.

JETS agreed that policing the sport is important so maybe opportunities to publish some data (for example sail data) could be an option.

MS it is important for clubs to have boats certs readily available for other boat owners to see.

AP advised that VPRS is a hotbed in Poole especially this being where VPRS originated from. It was suggested that Ruth Kelly, the creator of VPRS may not be able to continue with the administration due to personal reasons so this could be a good opportunity for IRC.

ST suggested that no intermediate system was needed if the introductory system (NHC) could be improved. JF felt that NHC is being treated as a rating system but it is not, it is a handicap system.

JETS confirmed that Regional Championships are so important for IRC. Poole have put in a great proposal for the National Championships in 2022, MS agreed it was a good idea for it to move to Poole.

It was agreed that a variety in course types is required, though some members did express a preference for windward-leeward courses.

c) Promotion and development of IRC in the UK

Everything is a promotional opportunity. Fewer people travel to events now so club/harbour racing should be promoted. Small, local events are popular.

Grass roots racing also needs performance handicaps such as NHC and a closer link with IRC would be beneficial.

8. IRC Championships 2020 & 2021

a) General review of Championships

JETS listed events that were cancelled due to Covid.

The Shanghai Cup in the Bristol Channel has been rescheduled for September.

b) 2021 Dates and Events

The following events were approved

- East Coast – Ramsgate 23rd – 25th July 2021
- National – RORC Cowes 18th – 21st June 2021.
- Southern – AP noted that Weymouth would be applying for 2021 although ES confirmed no application received yet – RW to be contacted (DONE)
- South West – Torbay's event did not go ahead this year so they Bob from Torbay Yacht Club was discussing with the other clubs in the SW rotation to

request to hold the event in 2021

- Inland – Windermere winter series.
- Welsh National – Pwllheli (Celtic Regatta) 2021 & 2022 event approved in 2019's meeting.
- Double Handed – RORC DH Nationals – Cowes 18-19th September 2021

JETS suggested we should encourage applications 2 years in advance

Des Balmforth joined the meeting

c) UK Nationals – format and location

Discussed above in 7.(a) Development.

d) Guidelines and suggestions

JETS pointed out the published **Race Management Guidelines** that include advice on course types and other aspects to take into account:

<https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/race-management/>

JF offered to include information about the Race Management Guidelines in the 'clubroom' newsletters to RYA clubs, this offer was gratefully accepted. (ACTION JF)

9. Rule changes to IRC

JETS told the committee that the IRC Technical Committee have been busy exploring code zeros, whisker poles, large roach headsails and multiple headsails but were not yet at the stage for any rule changes.

There has been a lot of talk about autopilots but there is no plan to account for them in IRC rating in the near future. It was confirmed that although IRC rules allow autopilots by amending RRS 52 Manual Power it is best for clubs to be specific in their NOR/Sis.

10. Meetings and Submissions

a) IRC Submissions to World Sailing

No IRC submissions.

JETS advised that he was attending the World Sailing but and the meetings would be fully digital.

b) Proposals from the GBR IRC Committee and any Submissions to the IRC Congress

No proposals.

c) IRC Congress

The committee were informed that date of the IRC Congress is the 17th October and was due to be hosted in London but is now being hosted digitally from Lymington.

d) GBR Report to the IRC Congress – 17-18 October

As reported under item 5.

11. Area and fleet reports – reports received before the meeting

To note the reports received:

Andrew Pearce

Poole

Simon Britten

Bristol Channel

John Stewart	Northern Ireland
Mel Sharp	Cornwall/South West
Nick Jones	Solent
Stephen Tudor	North Wales
Des Balmforth	Scotland
Chris Brown	High performance fleet
Paul Jackson	West Mersea

12. Proposed date of 2021 meeting

MS confirmed meeting would be around the same date next year but due to current situation with Covid-19 date and venue would be discussed next year

13. Any other business - As agreed at the beginning of the meeting

None