



GBR IRC Committee

Minutes of a video meeting held on Thursday 9th September 2021

Present:

MS - Mel Sharp (Chairman)
ST - Stephen Tudor (Vice Chairman -Wales)
SB - Simon Britton (Bristol Channel)
NJ - Nick Jones (Solent & RORC)
AP - Andrew Pearce (Solent)
JW - Jack Fenwick (RYA)
CB - Chris Brown (co-opted)
BM - Barrie Martin (Classics)
RB - Richard Babbe (Channel Islands)
JW - Jeremy Wilton (RORC CEO)
JETS - Jason Smithwick (Rating Office Director)
ES - Emma Smith (Rating Office Technical Team)
JH - Jenny Howells (Rating Office Technical Manager)

1. To vote and agree a new Chairman and Vice-chairman

Proposed new Chairman: Stephen Tudor, Wales
Proposed by Mel Sharp and Seconded by Andrew Pearce

Proposed Vice-Chairman: Jon Pegg, South West
Proposed by Stephen Tudor and Seconded by Mel Sharp

MS noted that the last year has created a problem of apathy, adjusted lifestyles and in some areas a rise of local systems. Fewer boats are travelling and we need to look at how IRC works for local racing.

ST thanked MS for all his efforts over the last 9 years.

2. Welcome from the Chairman and introductions

a) A tribute to Stephen Parry.

JETS said that Stephen has left a hole in the Solent, he was involved in a lot of events and will be sorely missed by the racing fraternity and also by the Rating Office. JETS also worked with Stephen when at World Sailing relating to race management. He was a special person and we want to acknowledge his contribution to sailing.

SB said he had met Stephen during his Flying Dutchman days and had discovered they were distant relatives. The Rating Office had sent a card to the family, and it was agreed to send them a copy of this Minute.

3. Apologies for absence

Des Balmforth, Richard Woof, David Murrin, Robin Stevenson & John Stewart.

4. Committee membership

There were no new members and the committee is invited to suggest suitable additional members.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee Thursday 10th September 2020

Actions from the Minutes:

Crew number explanation and guidance had been completed.

JF confirmed that the IRC Race Management Guidelines had been mentioned in the race management section in the RYA race officials' newsletter.

The Minutes were accepted, with no other matters arising.

6. GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual Report

a) Receive the report – presented by JETS

It was noted that the Two-handed racing is still proving very popular despite losing it from the Olympics.

JW commented that the Performance 40 numbers were down at their Nationals, possibly due to Dave Swete's increased involvement and focus on the Cape 31s. However some boats had also been focussing on the Rolex Fastnet Race campaigns instead. NJ, AP and JETS to talk to Dave Swete to find out P40 plans/offer support.

JETS reiterated that Spinlock are not currently sponsoring IRC. The Rating Office has approached other companies for sponsorship but it is proving very difficult in the current environment.

It was also reminded about Seahorse extra owners' pages every other month (accessible to current IRC certificate holders).

MyIRC application portal – the Rating Office is looking at new developments or a re-write as technology has moved on. There is potential for e.g. instant sail data trials. Expanding MyIRC to be used Internationally is also being explored.

Carole Abbott left the Rating Office at the end of June; her time and efforts at the Rating Office for the past 30 years was commended and the committee asked for this to be minuted.

The report was accepted and ST thanked JETS.

b) Any issues raised

No issues arose from the report.

7. IRC Incentive and Support Schemes

a) IRC Advocate Scheme

Club Advocates coordinate applications and in return for support get 15% discount on certificate cost; a list of Advocates/Clubs is shown in the annual report. The scheme works well for clubs starting in IRC and where there is a good Advocate. An Advocates meeting is being held via Zoom next week.

b) Single Event Ratings (SERs)

It was explained that Scheme was only available for a handful of events, and how we do get the occasional requests from events but we do not want to expand it. The Rating Office prefers to come up with alternative solutions to encourage participation. There have been some instances of people trying to use their SER rating in their club for other racing; also clubs trying to use expired ratings for racing. This is unfair to all, and ratings can change.

8. Development of IRC

JETS asked for any marketing ideas to be sent to the Rating Office but we need actions rather than strategies.

JETS is meeting with the RYA to discuss a new entry level handicap system, as NHC has not proved successful. The desire is for a system that is compatible with IRC but can look after performance handicap fleets, backed up with good online systems. It needs to be automated and very low cost.

AP advised that VPRS is still strong in Poole and it is purely a cost basis. It was suggested a simplified rating system is needed to pull people back to IRC; also to attract the older boats coming back into racing. JW commented that the aspiration is to evolve a system that acts as an introduction to IRC and satisfies what people want.

JETS said that we also have to bear in mind how many IRC boats we may lose and the Rating Office needs to stay financially viable; it is currently supported also by work for the Swans and Maxis. A sponsored system would be perfect.

JETS and JW were congratulated for setting up the RYA meeting and the committee looks forward to hearing feedback.

9. IRC Championships 2021 & 2022

a) General Review of Championships

It was good to see the Championships being so successful this year. JETS advised that RORC want to make more of the Championships and that they should be seen as a route through to National Championships. Anyone who wins their local Championship will win free entry and berthing for the Nationals the following year; this offer is to be promoted soon.

b) 2022 Dates and Events

The following events were approved

- IRC Nationals – Cowes 10 -12th June 2022
- Poole 30th April to 2nd May 2022
- Ramsate Week 20-22nd July 2022

- IRC Double Handed – Cowes 10th -11th September 2022
- Welsh Championships – 5th -7th August 2022
- Inland Championships Windermere – Nov 2022 – March 2023

SB confirmed that Bristol Channel champs will run for 2 consecutive weekends, probably May. SB and ST to talk about cross pollination with Pwllheli.

South West rotation for 2022 has not been agreed and ES will follow up to see who is applying to host for 2022. ES confirmed Torbay had to cancel the 2020 event so they hosted in June 2021.

c) UK Nationals – format and location

JETS advised that RORC is running the Nationals in 2022, and it has been discussed about moving future Nationals out of the Solent.

AP said that the International Paint Poole (IPP) Regatta would be the perfect first venue, it is not far from Solent and is run over 3 days, and the racing is not tidal-driven in Poole Bay. In 2018 there were 160 boats. 2024 is the next regatta so the first possible event to host a Nationals.

MS said that he has always supported the Nationals moving and that we should start looking at potential venues that are high quality and accessible.

In 2020 the Nationals was run later in September and did not require Endorsed, to encourage entries, but went back to Endorsed this year. JETS would like to hear views on whether Nationals should be Endorsed. JF suggested that most people don't understand Endorsement, so would vote for opening it up.

JW agreed that it needs to be made as attractive as possible and dropping the Endorsement requirement would help with that. It was suggested that spot checks are carried out more frequently instead.

d) Guidelines and suggestions

JETS reminded the committee that race managements are published on the IRC website. There are additional guidelines for running GBR, Continental and World Championships; these are available from the Rating Office.

10. Rule changes to IRC

a) Proposed 2022 IRC Rule Changes from the IRC Technical Committee

JETS advised that the need to release IRC Rule changes to all countries at the same time was important to avoid any accusations of favouritism, so the proposed rule changes will be circulated when available. However, he summarised them verbally:

- Rule 17. Green power sources to be included in boat weight
- Rule 15. Manual power relating to auto pilots to be a decision for organising authorities. The subject is complex and there is no decision yet on rating these devices.
- Rule 21.3.6. Whisker poles. Following feedback this year it is proposed to only rate reaching struts/jib sticks used to leeward. CB suggested wording

amendment: strike out 'for boats without a spinnaker' and 'only or to pole out a headsail without a spinnaker onboard'.

- Spinnakers definition corrected to refer to 'mast spar' (rather than 'mast').
- Position of Endorsed stamp on certificates, deleted as unnecessary in the rule.

All accepted.

The Technical Committee is looking at software changes regarding some types of boat with apparently favourable ratings; higher roach headsails; longer term research into how keels are related.

11. Meetings and Submissions

a) IRC Submissions to World Sailing

JETS advised World Sailing meetings are being postponed and are not going ahead until May. There are no IRC Submissions

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

No proposals

c) GBR Report to the IRC Congress – London, UK

As reported in item 6.

12. Area and fleet reports

The following reports had been received:

Andrew Pearce	Poole
Simon Britten	Bristol Channel
Mel Sharp	Cornwall/South West
Richard Babbe	Channel Islands
Nick Jones	Solent/RORC
Stephen Tudor	North Wales
Des Balmforth	Scotland
Barrie Martin /David Murrin	Classic yachts.
Chris Brown	High performance fleet

Discussion re training events:

SB had observed that one of biggest threats locally was not cost but the attitude to crew training; what you put into training crew pays off enormously – it is a fruitful and enjoyable exercise. Regarding any advice on the psychology of crew training JF advised that RYA Yacht and Keelboat racing had produced 10 videos produced last year looking at each section of a boat and the building blocks to work from. These would be going on RYA website soon accessible to RYA members.

Training events at the beginning of the year (like the RORC Easter Challenge but on a local basis) with lots of starts and advice from marine industry experts are highly beneficial and popular. This needs to be locally arranged with local marine industry, riggers, sailmakers etc.

AP agreed that the best thing to do was to get the boat out very early in the year and be out training on the boat every weekend, this also attracts good crew. ST had a sailmaker attend a regatta and give advice, it was very popular. JF suggested that

clubs could empower experienced people to go on a coaching course to build skill, e.g. a raceboat coaching course.

13. Proposed date of 2022 meeting

Committee meetings have traditionally been held on the Thursday before Southampton Boat Show to enable members to combine the trip; however JETS suggested that it could be moved to help with attendance, especially as JP was not available due to setting up and attending the boat show. MS confirmed the Wednesday of the show would be ideal, and in person rather than via Zoom; AP agreed.

JETS will discuss this with JP and ST with a view to changing the location to Southampton, during the boat show. A date and location will be confirmed and circulated.

14. Any other business

JF is leaving the RYA at the beginning of October and going to RS21 Class Association. The Committee thanked JF for his valuable contributions.

NJ added to the subject of enforcing the rule when using it and suggested that there should be more measurement checks during regattas would help with policing and self-policing. This was being discussed at RORC for higher level events. JETS said that policing starts with the Rating Office (i.e. checking application data and declarations) but we can only police what is declared. He pointed out that measurement checks before or during events adds complexity, cost and time to an event.

JF suggested that if classes within IRC would like support then the RYA could possibly help with equipment inspection, on a volunteer basis. E.g. Performance 40, HP 30, Cape 31 classes etc.

JW reminded members of the new IRCRecords initiative, see <https://ircrecords.com>

ST thanked everyone for their contributions and the Rating Office team for their work.

The meeting finished at 1530.