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Commodore's report

Happy New Year to all members, I hope you had a lovely Christmas and are all raring to go.

The Snowball Series is now underway, weather permitting of course, hopefully some of you will brave the cold to take part.

We will be running a Working Party on Sunday February 28 to get the club ready for the year and we will include some Officer of the Day training for those of you who are unfamiliar with what to do when listed for duty, so please do come along and we will gladly give you some starting tips and pointers.

For those not at the recent AGM, I must let you know that Yorkshire Water has increased our rent after what has been a stable period for some time. Due to this we have decided to increase the membership fees this year, but don't panic it is only a small increase – you can see the altered fees on the 2016 membership form in this edition of Telltales.

We would like to get the social committee running again, anyone interested or with any ideas of social events for club members to get involved in please give me a ring, text or email – my details are in the Club's Yearbook. Anyone and everyone in the club is welcome to get involved.

I look forward to seeing you all up at the club this year.

Sophie Yates
Commodore

SWSC Working Party – Sunday February 28 – 10am

Dig out your old clothes and help us get the Club and grounds ready for the new season. There are a few jobs that need doing around the Club and all hands make light work. Please bring warm and waterproof clothes, a spade or two and there will be lunch provided for helpers at 1pm.

Sailing Captain's report

It's a new year at Scammonden and we already have some trophy winners – the traditional Freezer Open took place on December 27 with 13 boats taking part, including visitors from West Lancashire, Dovestones and Glossop, producing a great afternoon of racing. Congratulations to our very own Ben Ratcliffe who won the event, with Kay Elcyyt from West Lancs finishing second.

The Frostbite Series was won by Derrick Jackson.

The Snowball Series got underway on January 3rd and we welcome club members and guests for 2 races starting at 1pm running every Sunday. It is £2 entry and we ask for volunteers to assist with OD and Rescue Duties throughout the race series.

An updated Sailing Calendar will be issued with the new Yearbooks, which you'll get once you renew membership, but the full list of duties for the next 12 months has now been issued. After a few issues last year we've published all the duty dates so you can pick and choose when you can or can't do duties.

Following an open discussion at the recent AGM, it has been agreed to try something new due to racing participation being low on Saturdays and to reduce the number of duties on members.

Saturday racing will resume in March, but once the Training Centre activities get underway in April all members are invited to take part in coaching sessions at 2.30pm followed by a race at 3.30pm. Members can also sail for leisure at this time. It means the former OD duty on a Saturday will be replaced by a new Saturday Duty Officer who will work alongside the instructors.

Three Opens have been announced for 2016, with the Lasers, Supernova and Streaker fleets returning. Representatives of each fleet will manage the duties for each open. We hope to have the Yorkshire and Humber Youth circuit return to give our young members a chance to compete in an Open.

This year we have members planning to sail at fleet Opens, the Birkett in Ullswater, at Abersoch Dinghy Week and take part in the Southport 24 hour race. We'd like to take two teams to Southport with newer members welcome to join us. Let me know if you're interested as there will be training in the summer ahead of the 24 hour race in September.

Ian Turrell
Sailing Captain

Club survey

Last year we asked members to take part in an anonymous online survey to let us know what you think of the club. Thank you to all who have taken part, we've already made some changes based on your feedback. We've looked at your comments and responded to the most common.

“To many OOD rescue duties. Long days if you are on duty.”

At the AGM we discussed the duty issue at length and members have different ideas of what may/may not work. We have agreed to try a new system to reduce duties - once the Training Centre activities get underway in April Saturday racing will change. There will be a focus on coaching by our Instructors at 2:30pm then a set club race at 3:30pm. This means we only need an OD for the day as the rescue duty will be covered by the Instructors.

“Clubhouse and boat park need a revamp.”

Many of you raised the condition of the Clubhouse as something you didn't like. In 2015 we had a full condition survey and we know what needs fixing and how much it will cost – but we need a substantial amount of money to do it. We can only obtain large grants from bodies like Sports England if the project leads to an increase in participation in sport. We're discussing our options with the RYA and will be writing a grant application – fingers crossed! Sadly Yorkshire Water are unable to give us any money towards improvements.

“Racing rules not being adhered to. Slow boats expecting a finish.”

At the Working Party we will run a session on racing rules – including how to protest. It will hopefully give sailors the confidence to protest rule-breakers (if they wish). ODs have the discretion to finish slower boats a lap earlier, as the rules permit.

“Have fewer races.”

This was discussed at the AGM and there are mixed views. We are currently the only sailing club in Huddersfield that has set races on both days of the weekend all year round. We hope our changes to Saturdays will be a compromise and you'll still get to race on a Saturday and do fewer duties.

“The course layout including the starting line, which way round the buoys and countdown to race could be explained better. For those with 2 man dinghies a crew wanted site could be added.”

We'll aim to explain the course layout to new members when joining and do a refresher at the Working Party. Members can make use of the club's Facebook site to ask for interest in crews, plus anyone can pin a poster up on the noticeboard in the Clubhouse or ask via Telltales (email joanne_douglas0@hotmail.com to be included in the next edition). If anyone has any more ideas then please share them with us.

“Difficult launching when water level low.”

We'd love for the water level to remain at its fullest – Yorkshire Water do not notify us if they are using us as a primary source. If members are struggling then please ask others for help and lend a hand to others.

“When insufficient people turn up for a session to run.”

This has been an ongoing issue for a number of years – and other sailing clubs seem to have the same problems. After a number of complaints last year about duty allocations we thought it may be useful to explain further. We may have more than 100 registered members, but that includes 33 junior members and they cannot be expected to run a race or be in charge of the ribs. There are 42 eligible adult members who are able to do duties. Duties will be published sooner in the year but you can still change them via Dutyman which can be accessed via the Club’s website.

For a race we need three boats on the water – it was discussed at the AGM if that should be reduced to two boats – but we need four people (at least) to handle the safety ribs so it was ruled out.

“Steep slopes and lack of disabled access.”

There is little we can do at the moment about either matter, we would need a large grant to resolve the access issue but we have made initial contact with the RYA about this and improving access is part of our long term plan.

Other comments:

We asked what would make you get more involved and some of you said “being asked”. The Committee is always keen to get more members involved in the day to day running of the club, please speak to anyone on the Committee to show your interest.

Another person said “some kind of reward” would make them get more involved. We’d like your ideas for incentives, so let us know.

“Have a Junior Committee or Junior Committee member” was another idea – we like this idea so if you are a Junior and interested in this please speak to a Committee member to register your interest.

“Buy some Club Lasers” – we’re hoping to add a Pico or two to our Training Centre soon.

“Get more schools/youth groups involved”. We’d love to, but the pressure will be on current instructors in the training centre and it is nearing capacity already. But we will explore a few options to improve our links to the community.

Members can still add their comments to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HGYQKJW>

Can you help?

Saturday Club:

We need volunteers to spend a few hours on a Saturday helping our students rig boats, launch and support the on-the-water activity. You don’t have to be an instructor to help. Volunteers are needed on Saturday afternoons – and you don’t have to commit to every week. Speak to Ben for more info.

Training Centre Principal:

SWSC is looking for a new principal of our Training Centre. The role is admin-based and you don’t need to be an instructor. To continue our training activities we need a named principal. If you are interested Steve Yates will assist in the change over. Speak to Steve or our Commodore Sophie for more info.

Training Centre: Safety Boat courses...

We are an accredited Powerboat Training Centre to Level 2 and Safety Boat level.

Our intention as a Club has been to provide the resource to enable all of our members to become more competent whilst using a powerboat and to gain a recognised RYA certificate.

Over the past two years many members have been trained to Powerboat Level 2 competency and during the 2016 season we wish to facilitate as many as possible gaining the RYA Safety Boat qualification, which will enhance members' skills required when acting as an escort craft, safety boat or coach boat for racing or training activities.

The courses will run on April 9-10, April 23-24 and May 7-8. There is also the option for a further Powerboat Level 2 course for remaining club members without it to get this accreditation.

As it is a fundamental requirement for the Club to provide rescue cover whilst we are using the water we would ask every member to take the opportunity to benefit from these courses so that we are better able to safely operate and manage the rescue boats.

Speak to Steve Yates to register your interest or email: yates-s3@sky.com

The RYA is running a 'win a safety boat' competition – please can members nominate us to win. It's easy to enter, just visit the following link:

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/dinghy-show/Pages/2016-safety-boat-competition.aspx>