Christ’s College Boat Club

Minutes – Steering Committee Meeting – Saturday 21st January 2017

Present

Simon Martin Alumnus Member

Bex Masters Secretary

Matt le Maitre Webmaster

Paul Verhaak Senior Treasurer

Richard Batley Fellows’ Representative

Andy Clucas Junior Treasurer

Oisín Faust Captain of Boats

Miriam Apsley Women’s Captain

Twm Stone Publicity Officer

Karthik Tadinada Chairman

Kate Hurst Boathouse Manager

Rebecca Pitcaithly Development Office

Apologies

Robin Kerr Boathouse Redevelopment

Bill Aldridge Blades’ Coxswain

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting; Apologies and Actions Arising

Apologies were received prior to the meeting from Robin Kerr (Boathouse Redevelopment) and Bill Aldridge (Blades’ Coxswain).

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**KT** followed up on the actions regarding social events for the novices; **MA** reported that there had been a formal dinner after the Peterborough training day, but not as many events as had been hoped for. **TS** mentioned there was a Cambridge-wide boat club bar crawl which was not well attended by Christ’s. **KT** encouraged captains and LBCs to commit in advance to planning and organising events. **MA** reported that the club’s Social Secretary had left the college, but two enthusiastic students were taking over the role and have plans for Boat Club Cocktails this term.

**Action**: **Captains** to follow up on organisation of social events this term

1. Chairman’s Report

**KT** opened the meeting stating how good it was to see building work underway at the boathouse site. He also reviewed the results of last term before moving on to the main agenda.

1. Financial Review

**AC** reported that the club was still spending within its means. He explained that, as anticipated, the club had less money coming in from equipment hire given the boathouse closure, but was still healthy financially. **PV** commented that with 16 ergos in the new boathouse, revenue from equipment hire may well increase next year.

For the Aiguebelette training camp in January 2017, **AC** reported that students had been charged a smaller amount than previous years (£200 each) to encourage uptake; overall the cost of camp is projected to be cheaper than in the past due to lower student numbers.

**AC** raised the issue of the coaching budget, highlighting that the majority of the annual budget has already been spent. He stated this is largely due to Strength and Conditioning sessions and having Alister Taylor coach M1. **KH**, the Captains and several members of the Committee felt that having Alister coach was worth the cost. **KT** questioned whether this was sustainable; **PV** felt that once revenue from equipment hire returns the situation will improve. He also suggested sitting down to discuss coaching plans and costs at the start of each term. **KT** emphasised the importance of good coaching and felt this was an area it was right to invest in.

**PV** enquired as to whether the coached S&C sessions were good value for money. **MA** commented that attendance at the sessions could be better, however **OF** stressed the importance of having a qualified coach to safely run weights sessions. **KH** raised the possibility of other options, such as taking a course herself to become qualified. The committee discussed ways in which to improve attendance at weights sessions and make them cost-efficient.

**Action**: **Captains** and **AC** to review attendance and cost-efficiency of S&C sessions

**PV** raised whether it was worth considering large purchases such as boats and blades sooner rather than later, given the current European economic situation, especially as most boats are priced in Euros. **KH** stated that the first thing to look at would be a new set of M1 blades. The current plan is to purchase a new Men’s First Boat in early 2018. **AC** confirmed that there is currently enough money in the capital account to cover a boat purchase.

**Action**: **KH** to investigate price of new blades/boat

**AC** mentioned an insurance query, and was directed by **RP** to contact the correct person in college.

**Action**: **AC** to contact college re. public liability insurance

1. Captains’ Reports on Michaelmas Term 2016 and Plans for Lent

**MA** reported on the performance of the women’s club in Michaelmas 2016. She stated that W1 had looked promising at the start of term, but lacked focus on the water. **KT** queried whether this was due to too many early morning sessions. **MA** felt this was not an issue as there were only two early sessions each week. She reported that erg attendance improved once the LBCs gave up some of their novice commitments, as did weights. Overall, she felt that people were doing the training but lacked focus. **MA** was pleased to have organised a W2 IV+ throughout the term, who didn’t manage to enter any races, but nevertheless continued to have regular outings.

In terms of novice crews, **MA** reported that there had been a disappointing turnout with only one novice crew. This made things very difficult for the LBCs with only eight people to draw from. They entered Fairbairns as a time-only crew due to requiring a senior sub. **MA**, however, was impressed with the commitment of the crew, and reported that the majority of them are continuing to row in Lents.

**MA** expects to have a full W1 and W2 this term. W1 are scheduled to have 2 morning outings; 2 weekend outings; two ergs and 2 weights sessions each week. W2 training will be organised according to the crew’s commitment levels; **MA** anticipates this to be around the level of 2-3 water sessions and 1 erg per week.

**KT** suggested ways to improve focus in outings, such as counting the number of strokes between bridges; swapping coaches/coxes and changing the order of the crew from time to time.

**OF** then reported on the men’s side of the club. He stated that in Michaelmas M1 settled into a regular programme of 4 outings, 2 ergs and 1 weights session each week. Although this was less than originally planned, **OF** felt that this was more suitable and productive for the crew. He noted there had been a split in land-training attendance between bow four and stern four; the lack of competition from any lower boats meant people were able to get away with not displaying full commitment.

Overall, M1 had a very successful term, resulting in Christ’s highest ever result in Fairbairns. **KT** queried what had made the success possible. **OF** raised several factors, including Alister’s coaching; a good social bond within the crew, and reduced queuing due to the location of the temporary shed.

**OF** anticipated that he would be able to field three men’s boats this term. The committee discussed the importance of instilling a culture whereby people want to be in the first boat, to encourage competition and growth in the club.

1. Boathouse Manager’s Report – Water Safety and Boathouse Safety

From a safety perspective, the only issue **KH** raised was the slippery decking outside the temporary boatshed. Although non-stick surfaces had been investigated, **KH** reported that these were deemed too expensive and that crews would need to take extra care. Otherwise, **KH** said there were no other issues and that the club had been very lucky with the temporary facilities.

1. Blades, Fellows and Crustaceans

**BA**, Blades’ Coxswain, was absent, but had sent a report which was reviewed at the meeting.

**BA’s** report raised the question of when to hold an official opening of the new boathouse. **RP** commented that with new donors still coming forward, it would be important to arrange a time when significant donors could attend. Fairbairns 2018 was suggested, given that it would be the first event where student and alumni crews raced out of the new boathouse. **RP** confirmed that the Commemoration of Benefactors’ Dinner would happen on the same day as Fairbairns, potentially making this difficult. She felt a formal opening around Easter 2018 would be more suitable from a weather and attendance perspective.

**BA’s** report stated that Head of the Cam would be the next large event for the Crustaceans. This falls on 22nd April which is outside of undergraduate term, so there may be fewer student crews than normal. **SM** is hoping to recruit younger alumni crews to enter.

**Action: SM** and **BA** to organise crews for HoC

**RB** reported on the activity of the Fellows’ boat. He was pleased that they would be entering Winter League, and had settled into a regular schedule of two outings a week with a range of subs. **KH** repeated her willingness to coach if ever required!

1. Boathouse Renewal

In the absence of **RK**, **KH** briefed the committee on the works so far which are progressing well. **KH** reported that the architects were impressed by the contractors, and despite a 5.5 week setback in November, the timescale had been adjusted and the project is currently 2 weeks behind. **KH** confirmed that it is still scheduled to be completed in October 2017. She summarised the stages of work so far, and informed the committee that the next stage will be the steel frames for the eights bay.

**RP** reported that support for the project is still high and donations are continuing to come in. **RP** emphasised the extreme importance of communication with the Blades and donors from the student club, in order to keep momentum and interest. She particularly stressed the need for regular race reports and utilising the ‘friends’ mailing list, especially around Bumps.

**Action: Captains, TS** and **MlM** to collaborate and ensure regular communication with alumni

1. Sponsorship, Publicity and Website

**MlM** confirmed that regular reports on the building work are being uploaded to the website. He has also worked on developing a mobile-friendly ergo booker, which should be usable in the near future.

**Action: MlM** update ergo booker

**TS** reported that he is in the process of compiling a review of the club’s recent activities, including the Crustaceans, which will be distributed soon.

**Action: TS** complete and circulate report

**KT** enquired as to the communication between the club and TwoTwoFive. **TS** confirmed he is in regular contact with Stefan Dixon, and both parties remain happy with the current two year sponsorship agreement.

1. Auction of CCBC rudders

**OF** reported that he had been contacted by an auction house, who were auctioning two rudders from when Christ’s won the Thames Cup at Henley in 1906 and 1907. He wondered if the club was interested in trying to purchase the rudders. **OF** had no guide prices at the meeting; the committee felt that depending on price the club may well be interested. **KT** and **RP** were interested to find out further information.

**Action: OF** to send **RP** and **KT** further information

1. AOB

**KH** raised the issue of non-boat club members using CCBC gym equipment, particularly the free weights. She highlighted several issues, including safety, insurance, fairness, consistency and cost. Each year different captains have handled the situation differently, and **KH** feels there needs to be a formal policy in place. This is a particular issue currently given that the free weights are housed in college.

The committee discussed at length ways in which to develop a fair policy. The key points to be addressed were: clarification of the insurance policy; developing an induction session; compiling a register of rowers and non-rowers able to use the weights; informing people of the rules; having a consistent charging system and ensuring all users are contactable.

**Action: KH** and **Captains** to formulate and initiate policy for weights use

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for **Saturday 29th April 2017** (*due to Head of the Cam being held out of term-time on 22nd, we are unable to combine the two events as in previous years).*