Christ’s College Boat Club

Minutes: Steering Committee Meeting, 5th October 2019

**Present:**

Karthik Tadinada Chairman

Simon Martin Alumnus Member

Bill Aldridge Blades Representative

Richard Batley Fellows’ Representative

ShenZhen Newman Captain of Boats & Men's Captain

Elizabeth Guest Women's Captain

Emily Marr Secretary

Sam Drury Junior Treasurer

Kate Hurst Boathouse Manager and Safety Officer

**Apologies:**

Paul Verhaak Senior Treasurer

Sammy Mahdi Webmaster

Holly Beveridge Publicity Officer

Catherine Twilley Development Office Representative

Minutes of the last meeting; Apologies and Actions Arising

Apologies were received from Catherine Twilley who had sent an email to confirm that the Development Office had booked 19th September 2020 for the next Blades Regatta. She suggested discussing the format of the event at the Lent Term meeting.

Apologies were received from Holly Beveridge who was attending another meeting and Sammy Mahdi who was abroad at the time of meeting.

**KH** wondered whether the position of Paul Verhaak on the Steering Committee should be reviewed given his lack of presence at the latest few meetings and the length of time (ca. six months) he takes to reply to emails. **KT** offered to telephone Paul Verhaak.

***Action: KT to phone Paul Verhaak to question his role on the Steering Committee***

**KT** talked about actions arising from the last meeting, namely Bill Aldridge’s interest in determining retention rates across a year in order to identify at which stage in the year the Club loses the most novices. **EM** explained that she is in the process of compiling data from subscription lists, Captains’ spreadsheets and Boat Club Dinner menus from the past five years. She will share her findings as soon as they are complete.

A discussion ensued about investigating the grades obtained by rowers compared with the rest of college but the new “opt-out” system for Class List publication means we no longer have access to everyone’s grades.

Chairman’s Report

**KT** stressed the importance of driving recruitment as much as possible, starting with the Freshers’ BBQ, tubbing and mixed eights. He explained that at this stage in the year, it is a number’s game and the greater the number of novices, the better. Greater numbers introduce competition for seats, thus driving an increase in the quality of the rowing. **KT** confirmed that Featurespace will continue to sponsor the Boat Club (*the sponsorship is further discussed below*).

Plans for the start of term

**KH** explained that the Club plans to use the Downing Rowing Tank this year instead of tubbing as a more efficient way to process novices. The LBCs have booked four evening sessions at the tank to take place over the course of Freshers’ Week. **KH** said that **s**ome tubbing sessions with Alasdair Docwra and mixed eights sessions would take place on the weekend at the end of Freshers’ Week. **SN** stated that there was already great interest (ca. 40 people at the time of the meeting) in the Freshers’ BBQ Facebook event.

Regarding publicising rowing, **EG** confirmed that flyers had been placed in the pigeonholes of all students. **BA** advocated speaking to as many people as possible about the eminence of rowing in Cambridge. **SN** informed us that the new Chaplain, Bob, has rowed for seven years with experience as Captain of another College Boat Club and would be happy to coach on weekends and sub *occasionally*. It was noted that he is very tall. **RB** happily remarked that Bob could row in the Fellows’ Boat.

Sponsorship

**KT** confirmed that the Featurespace sponsorship will continue with a new contact within the company, young alumna Lucy Griffin, who will work with the existing contact, Faye. All who knew her agreed that Lucy Griffin would work with great organisation and dynamism. **KT** explained that Lucy would aim to organise more events than last year to bring the Boat Club and Featurespace closer together and enhance the company’s recruitment and reputation. **KT** suggested that Featurespace could organise a film night or a drinks evening for members of the Boat Club to find out more about the company. He stressed that the most valuable aspect of recruitment is the contact with current or ex-employees of Featurespace, especially if they studied at Christ’s (namely Lucy Griffin and Oisín Faust). This is more valuable than handing out flyers. **KH** pointed out that it would be good to change the Featurespace stickers on the blades because the writing is very small and barely visible.

***Action: HB to contact Lucy Griffin and Faye about the stickers and the organisation of events***

Treasurer’s Report

**SD** explained that he wrote almost everything to date in the report, although there was an outstanding payment of £1027 from City of Cambridge Rowing Club (CCRC) that was paid between submitting the report and this meeting. There were still some outstanding payments, namely from an X-press pair. **KH** said that it would be useful to include in the report the fees that are expected to be paid. **KH** also expressed surprise at a lack of fines from Easter term as she was sure that the Club had received some during May Bumps. **EM** indicated that the fines from one term are carried forward to the following term’s bill and that the Captains should receive this bill during the Michaelmas CUCBC meeting. **SD** went on to say that that this year, the Boat Club would no longer have its income from CCRC because of their new well-equipped boathouse and would no longer need use of the CCBC ergs.

**SD** told the Committee that he needed to have a meeting with Peter Pride in College to clarify a discrepancy in the Capital Account as the latest balance was £36,026, which differed from the balance in the spreadsheet of accounts kept by the Junior Treasurer.

***Action: SD to meet with Peter Pride and report back on the accounts.  
SD has met with Peter Pride and his report on the meeting can be found at the end of this document.***

**BA** remarked on the low visibility of donations on behalf of the alumni and how they are never accounted for in an income statement. He supposed that the money goes to the College but we do not see the money after that. He speculated that the money may be placed in the Capital Account or in College funds. However, he commented that we have never seen a statement that the regular donations are placed in the Capital Account. **SD** suggested that he could ask Peter Pride to provide the Junior Treasurer with an income statement from donations. **BA** counselled that the donations from alumni should be used for current expenditure, otherwise there is little point to receiving donations; alumni donate money so it can be used to benefit the Boat Club and its members.

On the subject of expenditure, **KT** identified the large expenses. All deemed the Training Camp in France to be a worthwhile expense. **KT** pointed out that the greater the number of students attending the Training Camp, the less it costs.

***Action: SN to disseminate the promotional video made in 2015 by Grace McGregor’s brother to enhance interest in training camp.***

**KT** noted that the greatest coaching expense was for Milosz (for Strength and Conditioning). **KH** confirmed that Milosz is a good coach and a worthwhile expense. **KT** asked if there was a need to increase the budget for coaching. **KH** replied that this could be good but there would probably be no need as the Club would not have more coaches than previously (Oisín Faust for M1, Stephen Matthews for W1, and herself for the novices). **KT** approved the expense on race entries, stating that racing is valuable for gauging one’s standard and identifying areas for improvement during training.

**SD** cautioned the Committee that there is unrest within the student community due to the growing opinion that the Boat Club receives too large a sum of money from the JCR (£13,000). **KH** pointed out that if we did not have our own savings, the money from the JCR would barely allow us to get by. **KT** added that a large sum of money is a valuable safeguard in case of unexpected costs such as the need for flood repair.

**KH** suggested that there should be more money in the current account to manage the Boat Club across the year. She also mentioned a “mystery account” alongside the Capital Account which we still have little understanding of. **SM** speculated that it might be invested by the College.

As a summary, **BA** established that everything in the report seems reasonable; there are no frightening costs, and expenditure and income are in balance. **BA** added that money coming from the Capital Account is not true income as it should be viewed as a reserve; the Boat Club should use money from donations rather than money from the Capital Account for the yearly running costs of the Club. **BA** concluded that **SD** would need to find out what was happening to donations. **KT** concurred, adding that we need to verify whether money from donations is a steady income that is sufficient to keep the Club afloat as we cannot rely on sporadic one-off donations.

Men’s Captain’s Report

**SN** reported that the men experienced a dissatisfactory Easter Term, although the replacement of one member of the crew with Goldie’s Tom Strudwick brought renewed confidence within the crew. **SN** reported on the sorry result of -3 for M1 in May Bumps and -4 for M2. Although the result of M2 was surprising given that year’s streak of success, **SN** explained that the stress of exam term and the unreliability of the cox later in the term made it difficult to fit in many training sessions. M2 were therefore underprepared for Bumps. **KH** pinned it down to a lack of fitness as M2 burned out quickly after fast starts. **KT** added that water training is far more valuable than indoor training and the crew should have been aiming to maximise water training. **SN** continued to say that on the other hand, M3 demonstrated great fitness with eight row-overs (they were sandwich boat)! **KH** and **SM** emphasised that M3 *would* have bumped the crew ahead of them on the last day, had there not been a pile-up during the race which resulted in the division being scratched. **KH** placed the success of M3 down to the good chemistry within the crew and with their coach, Jack Wilson.

**SN** explained that there is currently a river closure at the level of the Railway Bridge until 28th October due to construction works. **KH** pointed out that this would only be during the daytime on weekdays. She advised carrying the boat along the towpath at the level of the Railway Bridge if the rowers wished to have an outing during construction times. **SN** was optimistic about having two afternoon outings per week and abolishing morning outings. **SN** pronounced enthusiasm to compete in the Indoor Rowing Championships, entering a team of four, including himself, Alex Tocher, Mark Hobbs and Sammy Mahdi (Emily has inside knowledge that Sammy has no intention of erging). **SN** asked if the Club would be happy to finance their entry. **BA** and **KT** said yes.

Regarding crews, **SN** said that a lot of people only want to sub and so he just about has eight people for one men’s VIII. He spoke of some rowers who would not row this term but could come back for Mays. **KT** advised Shen to think carefully about picking up a rower who hasn’t rowed for a year or two. He advised that it may be better to choose a rower who has been doing the training all year.

**BA** and **KT** proposed that it sounded like there are a lot of less committed people who could be willing to only row once or twice on the weekend – these would be good people to maintain and keep in the club so as to have higher quality subs. **SD** added that a sub boat training less intensely would be far more appealing than M2 which has four outings per week.

On the subject of coxes, **SN** reported that the two senior coxes in the club wanted to cox a first crew. **SN** considered trialling them against each other for a place in M1. **EG** pointed out thatthe women would need a cox and although both coxes had only ever coxed on the men’s side, it was generally agreed that one of them should cox W1.

**KT** asked the captains if they had thought of entering Uni IVs. **SN** replied that they could not train in IVs with so few coxes.

Women’s Captain’s Report

**EG** described the squad system that operated in Easter term 2019, which involved one outing for the Bumps W1 crew (including three University rowers), two outings with a mixture of W1/W2 women and one outing with the Bumps W2 crew. This was due to varied commitment levels. Fitzwilliam was a good crew which was just too difficult to catch. **EG** went on to talk about W2, which consisted of a large number of Masters students and was completed with two Wolfson girls who didn’t make it into Wolfson W1. They were the keenest members of W2. **EG** explained that W2 improved a lot over the term but ended with spoons in Bumps. **KH** added that in the context, they were a success because we weren’t sure we would be able to get a W2 on the river, let alone have a place in the Bumps chart.

This term, **EG** pronounced her confidence in getting a IV on the river, although it was as yet unclear who would form the IV. **KT** advised her to speak to a former Women’s Captain, Becky Jarvis, who took over the women’s club in a similar sort of situation. **KT** commended Becky’s incredible work on turning the women’s side around and boosting numbers. He suggested that she may be able to share the secret with Liz.

**BA** advocated that the priority this year should be on getting two boats out in Lent and May Bumps and therefore, there should be less focus on Fairbairns. He thus suggested sacrificing the senior women this term and having some VIII outings that combine novice and senior women. **BA** predicted that this should result in a rapid progression in the standard of the novices. **EG** agreed, saying that she was the only rower who continued after novicing in 2017 and this could have been thanks to rowing in W1 after her first term of rowing. **BA** also suggested putting a novice cox in a senior boat for rapid improvement. **KH** pointed out that the novice cox could not race in Senior Fairbairns.

Safety Officer’s Report

**KH** reported that she had met with the LBCs to brief them on coaching and safety checks. She stated that the LBCs would bring an erg to the Christ’s Freshers’ Fair and hand out prizes to the fastest ergers. Instead of tubbing, **KH** would run sessions at the Downing Rowing Tank and confirmed that she and the LBCs had been inducted. Upon hearing that the cost of hiring the tank is £40 per hour, **KT** and **BA** approved that this was good value. **KH** reported that the boat, Bill Wyndham, has returned from refurbishment and the treasurer paid the fee very promptly. She said she was investigating getting more clubs such as Chesterton to hire the ergs as CCRC no longer need to hire them. **KH** commented that the signboards have arrived but have come inaccuracies, which must be addressed.

Blades Report

**BA** reported that the Crustaceans 78 crew has been hit with injuries. He said that he expected to enter three men’s boats in Fairbairns but was unsure about a women’s crew as it would be a scratch IV which would be unpleasant to row in.

Alumni Report

**RB** reported that the alumni boat raced in Town Bumps. They faced tough competition from other crews, which had young, fit people who actually trained. Nonetheless, they almost made it into the Gut on one of the days!

Other Actions Arising

**KT** asked the Committee if they agreed it was time to find someone to replace him as Chairman. **BA** suggested Peter Hobson as a suitable replacement but also commented that it would be advisable to choose someone of the younger generation who is more in touch with the mentality of current students and how things work nowadays. **KT** responded to this with the suggestion of Lucy Griffin. All agreed that she has youth, experience, is dynamic, organised and is local.

***Action: KT to speak to Lucy Griffin about being Chairwoman***

**KT** ended on the motivational note that he felt positive about this year’s Captains and added insightfully that being Captain is the experience of a lifetime and you get out of it what you put in.

Notes from Treasurer’s Meeting with College Accounts Office

* The £63,349.05 held in the Barclays Capital Account and the £36,026.09 held on our behalf by college are very linked – the accounts office transfer between accounts when necessary. Donations are put into both accounts, depending on which channel the money came through.
* There is no interest on either account.
  + The Boat Club current account is with HSBC, and they offer an instant access Community Savings Account, with a max interest rate of 0.2% (If £50,000 was invested for a year, the returns would be £100).
  + Alternatively, the Boat Club could invest money into the College Contingency fund (spread across various investments made by College) – caution should be taken here, as investments can go up as well as down, and a post-Brexit UK is unknown.
* A summary of donations over the past three years, including Gift Aid (July – June):
  + 2018/19 - £13,000
  + 2017/18 - £36,000 (including large one-off donations of £17,000 and £7,000, giving a ‘regular’ donation amount of £12,000)
  + 2016/17 - £62,000 (including £50,000 raised for boat purchase(s) etc.)
* The above figures show a regular income of around £12-13,000 from donations, including blades donations, and the Accounts office assures me we can have this transferred to our current account. I will report on donations-to-date in the termly Steering Committee report.

Notes for the future

* It was noted by the Accounts office that the Boat Club subscription fees (£25 for seniors, £10 for novices) have been the same for many years. We could discuss at the next meeting whether these should be increased to account for inflation.
* Our income from non-college boat clubs for equipment hire (and maybe racking fees) are subject to VAT. I’m not sure what will happen here – I should know more for the next meeting. What may happen is that the portion of the Boat Club income subject to VAT (£4065 excluding racking fees for 2018-19) will be dealt with by College and the VAT will come out of the Capital account.
* The Boat Club has a lot of money – we could also discuss at the next meeting if and how we should spend money.

I hope these notes make sense. If anyone has any further comments/questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sam Drury

CCBC Treasurer 2019-20

spd38@cam.ac.uk