POG ANNUAL REPORT TO CSSA 2020-2021

This has probably been one of the most challenging years in the club’s history. To date we have been obliged through Covid-19 Regulations to close the Weevil Lane site three times, and as I write this – it is still currently closed. Fortunately, we do have a small number of local members who are able to check the site and the moorings. Many thanks to these members.

In February last year there were some particularly violent storms in the Solent area. During and shortly after these storms a few of our local members checked the moorings and where necessary contacted members where there was some concern over the security of their vessel.

Owing to the Covid-19 lockdown it was not possible to hold the 2020 AGM in the clubhouse. With this in mind we gave some thought as to how we could hold an AGM, which by the rules of our Constitution should be completed by the end of June. We proposed and obtained overwhelming support from our members to hold a condensed online AGM, thus allowing us to comply with our governance and legal obligations.

In essence, the condensed AGM came down to requesting our members to vote online on the agenda items that we had previously posted on the POG website. For the small number of members without internet access, we posted the agenda to them and offered them the opportunity to vote by proxy. In the event, this was very successful as we had an AGM “attendance” of 164 members – significantly more than we could accommodate in the clubhouse.

The introduction of electronic Newsletters discussed by members at the 2019 AGM has been successful and has saved us £2,185 to date. Currently about 37% of members have opted to have their copy by email.

All the plans that we had for races, rallies and other social get-togethers had to be put on hold for 2020. Before we were hit with the severest restrictions on movement, a few members managed to get in some day sails.

Despite the access constraints imposed by Covid-19 legislation we managed to carry out a winter lift of 47 boats in October and November using a small number of volunteers.

I had hoped by this time to say that there has been some real progress on the development of a new land lease, unfortunately this is not the case. Despite pressure from ourselves and recognising the impact of Covid, CSSC engagement continues at a snail’s pace.

Though the progress of developing and agreeing a new land lease with CSSC is extremely slow, what we have achieved on this to date is agreement from CSSA and CSSC to a lease between CSSC and ourselves rather than the unwieldy Head lease/sub-lease arrangement that we currently have. This significantly simplifies the leasing arrangement and also has the additional benefit of saving on legal costs and Stamp Duty Land Tax. In addition, we have agreement that the new land lease should run concurrently with the extant water lease.

A significant success during these strange times was a webinar we held in February this year on “Cruising Post Brexit” presented by two speakers from the RYA. This was obviously of much interest to many as we had an online attendance of over 170 POG members and guests from Gosport Cruising Club, Hardway Sailing Club and the Royal Naval Sailing Association. We have found that online meetings, whether they are Zoom sessions for a small number (as we have used successfully for our management meetings), or webinars for larger groups, are an effective way for us to meet when we cannot do so in person.

We can at last see light at the end of the tunnel on the Covid front, as the rules will now allow us to open the Weevil Lane site. Initially this will be from the end of March for those that live locally or can complete a visit in a day, as overnight stays away from home are not permitted. We will be able to extend our opening further in mid-April as overnight stays will then be allowed.

We have all faced a challenging time as Covid-19 has struck fundamentally at our way of life. Though of much lower significance in the grand scheme of things; when it comes to our boating activities, these will now slowly start up and (assuming no further spikes in the virus) should allow us to resume our calendar of events in the summer.

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