

## 1. Summary of 2018

Due to not having a candidate to stand as a full time Commodore for 2018 over the course of the year the position has been covered by other members of the Committee, each agreeing to take turns to fill the post on a monthly basis. As the AGM falls on one of my watches in the post, it is my (task) honour and privilege to give the Commodore's report for this AGM.

In common with most sailing clubs in the UK, and probably the majority of amateur sports clubs in general, levels of membership and active participation still pose a significant challenge to us. So, I am delighted to be able to report that numbers participating in racing, social sailing and other social events appears to have risen over the course of the year. This is doubtless the result of the ongoing enthusiasm and commitment of all those members who continue to volunteer to help to promote, organise, run and manage these activities. We would like to whole-heartedly thank all those concerned (you know who you are).

### **Membership**

I am pleased to be able to report that we have managed to achieve another modest growth of our membership and their participation in club activities during 2018. I credit this, amongst other things, to our ongoing commitment to promoting our activities through website, social media and signage which, whilst much improved, would still doubtless benefit from further improvement - so if anyone feels that they can contribute to these activities please make yourselves known to the Committee.

Unfortunately, our Membership Secretary, Anja, could not be with us for the meeting today but she has prepared a brief report that John Thompson will present in her absence.

### **Racing**

I am delighted that we managed to maintain a full programme of racing and social sailing over the course of the year despite some challenging conditions, including the threat of blue-green

algae during the very warm extended summer which I understand caused the closure of Alton Water for a good part of last year. Despite a few cold snaps over the winter, we haven't lost any weekends to frozen water this year so maybe there are some benefits to global warming after all.

I was also delighted to see some new names appearing amongst the old familiar ones on the trophies this year, although obviously I will be doing my utmost to personally reverse that trend this year if possible.

### **Social Events**

Despite continuing difficulty getting members to commit to participation in advance, I am pleased that we have managed to organise and run some very enjoyable and well attended social events throughout the year. I would like to thank all those involved in organising and running these and all those who attended.

I have also been delighted to see the galley open again over the Winter and Frostbite series providing a range of hot drinks and food. (I can certainly recommend the bacon and egg rolls).

It would be great if we can keep this going through the next year, but recognise it is a significant commitment for the people concerned. I know that they would be delighted to have some more volunteers to help share the task, so please do not hesitate to put yourself forward if you can spare some time to help to keep this valuable club feature up and running.

### **Financial**

Thanks to an improving membership our financial position for this year appears to have strengthened, although I will leave it to Richard Biggs to outline this further in his Financial report.

To assist with reducing our overhead costs we are continuing our policy of disposing of club assets no longer being used by the club, so several unused club boats have been sold and where

possible these have been offered first to club members. We also continue monitoring the cost of our services to ensure that we remain on the most economical contracts.

We have not been able to apply for any additional grants for improvements to club facilities this year, due to an ongoing issue with our lease renewal with the Water Authority. We are hoping that this will be resolved soon and would like to thank Jonathan Reubin for his continued efforts on our behalf.

### **Infrastructure**

Over the year, I am pleased to report that we have been able to make improvements to the sides of the main club slipway while water levels were low. I can certainly confirm that this simplifies launch and recovery of dinghies in cross-shore winds and access to the foreshore when water levels are low.

The sharper eyed amongst you may also notice that we have managed to persuade the Water Authority to trim back the willow trees on the edge of the far shore, so that we now have a better vision of our full sailing area from the start hut. We are still hoping that we might persuade them to trim the high conifers that now cause a huge wind shadow around the mark 6 area, but this is now a significant undertaking so may prove to be wishful thinking.

We have also been able to affect a good repair to the roof of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rescue boat container which was starting to leak quite badly, so now we are turning our attention to repair of the floor which has suffered badly from this water damage.

I regret to report that the galley door, replaced last year after being damaged during a break-in, proved to be unfit for external use and so this will soon be replaced by a new UPVC door and frame that should remedy the situation.

Due to reported thefts of valuables from the changing room we are introducing combination locks on the changing room entrance doors. You will probably have noticed that this is already in place on the male changing room and should be going live when we update combination

codes at the start of the new sailing season - so please keep an eye out for announcements regarding those codes.

We have undertaken a review of whether we can improve club efficiency with renewed IT. Whilst we decided it was not appropriate to re-establish club internet facilities at this time, it was agreed to purchase a new club laptop for improved processing and display of our racing results with plans to display results electronically on our display screens rather than print-outs on paper.

We have also invested in an iZettle card reader that should allow us to take payments via credit/debit card where appropriate at club events.

### **Social Sailing and Training**

Jamie Gledhill and his team managed to organise another very successful series of formal social sailing events over the course of the summer, but regrettably a new job has meant that Jamie has now moved away from the area. We do plan to run a similar series of social sailing events for 2019. So, if anyone fancies taking up the mantle that Jamie has had to relinquish in helping to organise these, then please come forward and speak with a member of the Committee so that we can get you involved.

We also managed to run another successful training course over the summer holidays and will be delighted to see if we can organise a similar event, or two, for 2019 if there is sufficient continued interest- so please keep an eye out for notices on email, website and social media inviting applications for such events and book early to avoid disappointment.

### **The Committee**

Most of you will be aware of the news of the tragic death of John King in an unfortunate accident at the end of last year and it was an honour for the club to be asked to host his wake, which we were pleased to be able to do.

I know that John will be missed both on the water and on the Committee, but I am pleased to see that his Grandson is now sailing John's boat and have no doubt that this enthusiasm would make John proud.

## **2. Plans for 2019**

### **The Committee**

After several years without candidates to fill the formal role of Commodore, I am delighted to announce that Tony Tye has put his name forward for 2019 and to support him Mark Savill has put his name forward for Vice Commodore.

They have both been acting members of the Committee for much of the year, so I am confident that they will do a great job in filling these roles and hope that they will receive your support.

I believe that the rest of the Committee (less of course John King and Jamie Gledhill) have agreed to stay in post, so we should now have most roles covered with the exception of Bosun and Social Sailing Secretary. But we always welcome any volunteers who can bring their skills to bear for the benefit of the club, so please don't be shy if you feel you can assist in any way at all.

### **Planning (Improvements, The Galley, Social Events, Racing)**

We will continue to focus on ensuring that Ardleigh maintains its place as the best Inland Sailing Club in North East Essex. This appears to have been noticed by several class associations already, as the National 12 class have selected us to host their 12 Fest event weekend for 2019 and the Streaker class have asked to share an open meeting with the Solos this year.

We are planning another full years racing with Sunday morning and Wednesday evening series running throughout the spring, summer and autumn, similar to last year. The Spring, Easter and

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Summer Plate racing formats will be slightly different again this year to try to encourage higher participation, so please check the Sailing Calendar carefully to see when these are.

We have identified that the clubhouse is starting to look a little tired in places and we are actively looking to see how best to update it if we can secure grants to help with costs, or at the very least smarten it up a bit if we cannot.

### **Social Sailing, Training and Canoes**

Whilst the plan is to run similar social sailing afternoons on the first Sunday of each month through the summer, we would be delighted if these prove to be so popular that we need to increase this provision. So please support these as much as you can and let us know if you have any ideas to improve them?

If anyone would like to have any informal training for sailing, racing, race management or rescue boat during these events, I would like to think that we could arrange this as well (given enough notice of course).

### **Membership drive**

We need to continue to grow our active membership and the increasing resident population around the Colchester area should certainly provide us with an opportunity to do this, if we continue to actively market all that we have to offer. If you can help, or indeed have any useful ideas on this, then please speak to or email a member of the Committee.