

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Devon Yawl Association 2025

Held on Saturday 1 March 2025 - By video conference.

Present:

Committee: Commodore - Michael Roberts (DY141), Vice Commodore - Jay Williamson (DY391), Web and Social Media - Philip Hawker (DY106), Andrew Matthews (DY100A), Second Hand Boat Register - Tim Petitt (DY186), Hon Treasurer and Membership Sec - Ian Scholefield (DY310).

Fleet Reps: Mike Bennett (DY102) (Dart), Steven Board (DY339) (South Coast).

Other members: Peter Bowden (DY380), John Gregory (DY373), Andrew Kennon (DY128), Ed Williams-Hawkes (DY351).

(12 members attending – the meeting was quorate)

The meeting started at 1330.

1 Apologies

Leigh Baxter, Roger Board (DY339) Derek Gouldsworthy, Robin Graham (DY13), Tony Gray (DY355), Ted Timberlake (DYs129 and 252).

2 Minutes of AGM held by video conference on 17 February 2024

There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda for this meeting. The minutes were accepted as a true record of that meeting and were so adopted (proposed: Ian Scholefield seconded: John Gregory).

3 Commodore's Report (see the Commodore's Reflections in The Yawl 58)

Michael Roberts referred to his foreword in The Yawl 58. Michael corrected and supplemented some of the piece he had written about Leigh and Jan Baxter.

4 & 5 Membership Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports

Ian Scholefield read out the following reports:

"Membership Secretary's Report to the 2025 AGM.

When we held the 2024 AGM, membership stood at 179. We anticipated losing a small number of members as a result of increasing the subscription from £15 to £25, so it comes as no surprise that membership today is somewhat lower at 158. Correspondence from those who have left suggests that it is not the level of the subscription that has been significant but rather the fact of all members being encouraged to communicate with their bank. Most of those who have dropped out of

membership were individuals who had long since ceased to sail in the fleet, but who had taken no steps to stop paying a subscription.

The correspondence that has been received has continued to recognise that the Association does provide support to those new to the fleet with requests for help over renovation issues and with providing a means of members contacting fellow owners. There has also been discussion around the calendar with rather more comments suggesting that the number of members who actively use the calendar is in decline. More on that under A.O.B.

I think that is all from me with regard to my Membership Secretary's role other than to note that the time I have spent fielding correspondence this year has been more significant than usual, and it is difficult to separate membership issues from those related to finance, so perhaps we should move on to my role as Treasurer."

"Treasurer's Report to the 2025 AGM

Notwithstanding the increase in the subscription this year, the accounts show a small deficit, £171. The reality is that this is near to breaking even in a year when inflation has been significant, and we fully expect to be able to manage the Association with the current subscription level for some time to come. There were a significant number of members who paid only the old £15 rate at least initially but with ongoing reminders the vast majority have now paid in full all be it that some of the payments fell after our accounting date. On the other side of the coin quite a few members over paid their subs, by accident or design, but almost all declined to take any refund with the result that we received some £195 in donations in the year. I doubt that will be a recurring income.

Our expenditure in the year to 31/10/24 includes a number of items that deserve comment.

The postage to send out the 2023 edition of the Yawl was £390 which is included under the item in the accounts as Newsletter. That is almost as much as the cost of the printing. I'm pleased to say that Andrew has been able to reduce this significantly this year by keeping the weight down to a lower postal band, but of course the production costs will continue to rise with inflation.

Distributing the Calendar was more expensive with £450 spent on postage for the 2024 Calendar.

The accounts also include £580 spent on insurance. We have been paying for Public Liability insurance in recent years. This is a significant sum. We have however had concerns as to whether this is necessary. There is clearly concern that the Officers should not be at risk should claims arise, but it has proved difficult to decide where risks might arise in our activities and to find cover that meets any perceived need. After much discussion and taking advice as best as we have been able, we have come to the conclusion that the risks arising from our activities are very small. Perhaps we are

better organising our affairs so as to keep our risks to an absolute minimum, as opposed to incurring this expense which may not even then cover every possible eventuality. We will keep this under review but have decided not to renew the public liability insurance this year.

The other significant expense in the accounts is the cost of attending the RYA Dinghy show. The amount spent on attending the 2024 event at £1286 looks rather more than in recent years. This is because we bought some display materials that will be used for some years to come.

My overall view of our financial position is that with the new subscription level we are well set to run the Association within our income for some time to come. We may well see a small surplus on the next accounts which runs against our stated aim of keeping our reserves down to about 2 years running costs, but it does provide for some stability with no need to adjust the subscription level again for some time to come. That will make me happy as it has been a very time-consuming exercise making the recent change.

There is then one final issue. It has been suggested that the timing of our AGM and Accounting date might be changed. That is to be discussed under A.O.B. I would simply comment that if we moved to an accounting date at the end of April it would have the advantage of giving a snapshot of our financial position after our expenses are incurred and immediately before subs are collected each year. Accounts to 30/4 may give a better picture of our finances than do the accounts to 31/10 which tend to overstate our reserves, as much of our expenditure arises immediately after our current accounting date.”

Michael Roberts thanked Ian for managing the increase in work involved in the Membership Secretary’s and Treasurer’s roles in a year that had seen an increase in subscriptions.

The Accounts were proposed for acceptance by Ed Williams, seconded by Peter Bowden and approved unanimously.

6 Web and Social Media Update

Philip Hawker raised two current matters.

First, there is a new piece of online safety legislation that affects the DYA’s website because of the way the Forum is operated. The Forum is not much used at the moment, the last post having been on 3 December 2024. One option, therefore, is to remove the Forum from the site. Despite the lack of use of the Forum, Philip is not keen to go down that route for the moment. Rather, Philip will see what needs to be done to comply with the legislation and then re-evaluate the position. Ian Scholefield thought this might trigger a review of the current membership application form.

Second, Philip was pursuing a project to put copies of all the past issues of “The Yawl” on the members only section of the website. This would include an index of, in particular, technical articles. The index would include clickable links through to the

article in question. It is anticipated that this would provide a ready answer to most technical questions currently being fielded individually by Committee Members. There was a discussion about the need to redact personal information such as contact details. However, in the last ten or so years no such information has been included in "The Yawl". Any older editions are likely to contain out of date information. In addition, viewing is restricted to members who historically had access to "The Yawl" in any event.

Michael Roberts mentioned that the Devon Yawl Facebook page is still active with some 295 members.

Andrew Matthews thanked Philip for his "tech" input to the DYA, observing that this had been a problem area for the DYA for many years prior to Philip's arrival on the scene.

7 Election of Committee

Nominations had been received as follows:

Commodore - Jay Williamson (proposed by Michael Roberts, seconded by Andrew Matthews)

Vice Commodore - Vacancy

Membership Secretary and Hon Treasurer - Ian Scholefield (proposed by Andrew Matthews, seconded by Michael Roberts)

Members:

James Gough-Allen – Builder

Robin Graham

Philip Hawker - Web and Social Media

Andrew Matthews

Steve Northmore

Tim Petitt - Second Hand Boat Register

Michael Roberts

(all proposed by Jay Williamson, seconded by Ian Scholefield)

It was proposed by Steven Board, seconded by Mike Bennett, that the nominees be elected en bloc. That proposal was approved unanimously.

As someone who had known Michael Roberts for many years, Andrew Matthews thanked Michael for his many years of service to the DYA. Michael's knowledge of the Devon Yawl and boats and the boating industry had been invaluable to the DYA. Michael had an enviable ability to get on with anyone and had always been a keen but gentlemanly competitor on the sailing racecourse. We were pleased that Michael had

agreed to remain on the Committee. In turn, Michael thanked the Committee for all the support he had received over the years.

8 Membership Fees

It was noted that these would not change this year.

9 2024 Nationals and 2025 Venue

The 2025 event is scheduled for 21-22 June at the YYC with launching on Friday 20.

Jay Williamson and Steven Board were in discussion about a possible Chichester Harbour venue for 2026. Jay mentioned that Hayling Island Sailing Club have intimated that in 2028 we might be able to have a cruising week and Nationals at Hayling (in conjunction with the Wayfarers).

10 Any other business

The following subjects were discussed:

Financial year and AGM

Jay Williamson and Ian Scholefield feel that there are benefits to be had in changing the accounting year to end on 30 April with the AGM in late October. This would give a more immediate picture of income and expenditure following the major spends on the RYA Dinghy Show, the newsletter etc. An AGM in October would avoid the busy RYA Dinghy Show period and set the scene for the next sailing year earlier than a March AGM allows. Those present were supportive of this. Ian Scholefield confirmed accounts could be produced for the period 1 November 2024 - 30 April 2025.

The Constitution

Jay Williamson explained that he had been working with Andrew Matthews and Ian Scholefield on updating the DYA Constitution and anticipated bringing a draft forward for approval at a future AGM.

Dart Fleet

Mike Bennett will revise the website pages for the Dart Fleet.

Handicap

Steven Board raised several issues about the handicap for a Devon Yawl. First, could the advisory handicap in the Class Rules be removed because it was no longer valid. Second, Steven's understanding of conversations with the RYA was that they had enough race data to publish a handicap for the Devon Yawl but needed more clubs to make returns. Andrew Matthews said that he would see what he could do to encourage the RWYC and YYC to make returns.

Bosham Masters

Steven Board mentioned that BSC is holding its 2025 Masters on 16-18 May and is making it an Open Event for Devon Yawls. This had been included in The Yawl 58 and a reminder would be sent to the membership.

RYA Dinghy Show & Watersports Show

Jay Williamson has taken over the DYA attendance at the show from Michael Roberts. This year the show ran from 22-23 February. Jay took his own boat along. There had been a good level of interest and around 15 requests for a trial sail.

Circulation of a Membership List

Jay Williamson asked about this on behalf of a member.

In the past, an updated membership list was circulated annually to members. When the current data protection legislation was introduced, the Committee considered it would be a breach of that legislation to continue to circulate the list. In addition, the list had been misused in the past.

The position has not changed.

Frank Chesworth

The Committee had been informed that past Commodore Frank Chesworth had died on 1 January 2025. Frank was a steady helm and we are sorry to hear the news.

Calendar

The Committee had felt that the calendar had probably run its course and had asked for feedback at this meeting. The consensus was that the calendar was valued and should continue.

Ian Scholefield accepted Michael Roberts's offer to take over production of the calendar going forward. Ed Williams commented that it would be nice to see some of Michael's line drawings in the calendar.

The Current Market for Devon Yawls

Tim Petitt reported that there were four or five boats on the register. They turn over steadily but do not achieve the prices typical of the immediate post Covid period. Around £4,000 is the benchmark for a second-hand boat in fair condition complete with trailer.

Old Build and New Build

John Gregory asked if there had been any noticeable difference between the performance of the new builds and the old builds on the water. Jay Williamson and Andrew Matthews expressed the view that none was apparent to date.

The members were thanked for attending.

The meeting ended at 1450.