



Sabrina Club

President: Charles Wright Captain: Nick Randall Secretary: Rod Spiby Treasurer: Philip Wood

MINUTES OF THE SABRINA CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**held at 16:30 hours on Saturday 14th September 2024
in the RSSBC Bowring Clubroom at the School Boathouse Shrewsbury**

Some 34 people attended the meeting on a sunny Autumnal day.

1.0 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and those who recorded their apologies included:-

John Gilbert, Nigel Jones, Mark Talbot, Stuart Martel, Mark Telfer, Jeremy Sharp, Saun Duncan, Paul Manser, Neil Ratz, James Russell, Lettie Tay.

Charles Wright (CW) then went on to welcome all with a special note for those who have flown over from overseas.

CW then welcomed Jeannie Gladstone and family plus members of the 1955, 1960 and 1961 successful crews coached by PG. Patrick Balfour then spoke about PG's achievements at the School and what an impact PG made. There followed an unveiling of a picture of Peter Gladstone and his faithful dog. The portrait will be hung in a suitable location at the School and Jeannie was given a smaller version as a keepsake.

2.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 30th September 2023 were posted on the Sabrina Club section of the School website, available to be downloaded. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by CW and seconded by Miles Preston (MP) being accepted with no matters arising.

3.0 Current Committee/Retirements/Elections

The names of the current Committee Members were listed on the agenda for the meeting. Under the Constitution, all members of the Committee are elected for a period of three years, whereupon they must retire and apply for re-election should they wish to remain in post.

Accordingly, Charles Wright retires as President, Nick Randall retires as Captain, Philip Wood retires as Treasurer, Rod Spiby retires as Secretary, James Russell retires as Social Secretary, Jonathan Beeston retires as RSSBC Link & Funding, Athol Hundermark (Director of Rowing) and Miles Preston (immediate past president) retires from the Committee. They all wished to remain in their respective posts on the Committee to serve the Club. Patrick Balfour proposed they should all be re-elected and this was seconded by Ben Duncan.

Lizzy Collins retires from the Committee as Communications and is not standing for re-election.

No nominations for the post of Communications were received prior to the meeting. The Committee's choice is Pete Gadsden. This was proposed by Miles Preston, seconded by Phil Woods and Pete Gadsden was duly elected.

4.0 Treasurer's Report

Copies of the latest accounts were tabled at the meeting. Philip Wood (Treasurer) PW reported that it has been another busy year. He advised that the Saturday lunch at Henely Regatta was the most expensive event again, but it is the most popular with the largest attendance and a flagship event for Sabrina.

He advised that sales of regalia continue to make a small profit for the Club and promote the Club. At the end of the financial year the Sabrina Club made a small profit in the latest financial year of £1,085 and money in the bank at the current time amounts to £5,280.

The accounts were accepted.

5.0 Update on RSSBC Scholarship Fund & RSSBC Rowing Fund

Nick Randall (NR) advised that as at 31st July the RSSBC Scholarship Fund stood at £108,725 and the RSSBC Rowing Fund £43,767.

NR reminded those present that for reasons of administrative simplification, the Sabrina Supporters Fund has been renamed the "RSSBC Rowing Fund." This Fund receives small regular donations which are vital to assist with equipment and other funding which is not necessarily covered by the annual school budget for the RSSBC. Additionally, funding for boats, which is essential to ensure RSSBC can participate to the highest level.

NR advised those present that Brian McGillon's widow, who passed away 2 years ago, left a legacy of £140,000 to the boat club via the Foundation. This went towards a new Empacher VIII for the girls delivered in February and the rest is being channelled into the scholarship fund as the initial fund has been exhausted.

6.0 Events/Activity Update

Charles Wright (CW) then began his summary of the year with a warm welcome to all members and guests again, particularly some members of Peter Gladstone's (PG) crews. The dates 1955, 1960 and 1961 are engraved on all hearts, and the spirit of PG certainly inspired the Club for many years subsequently.

1. Events of 2023-2024.

- (i) After the 2023 AGM we were very glad to have drinks with the 1978 crew who had organised a 45 year anniversary at the Boathouse before attending the OS Dinner.
- (ii) We were pleased to host our regular events at the Blue Anchor for the Schools Head in March and at Henley in July. The first was well received by a good number of people, some Sabrina members, some other Salopians and some parents of competitors. Lunches at Henley, mainly for the parents of competitors on the Tuesday and for Sabrina members on Saturday were also well attended, with a good measure of support for RSSBC endeavours.

- (iii) We also held a lunch at the School in May for members who left between 1974 and 1988. We took all the space available being 45 sitting down to lunch. The catering staff at Kingsland House looked after us supremely well and we had the pleasure of going to the Boathouse for tea and to support some RSSBC competitors at Shrewsbury Regatta.

2. Plans for current and future years.

- (i) We are extremely glad to now have Pete Gadsden to mastermind our news and publications. With many Salopians currently involved in top class rowing there has been much to report and we look forward to being able to strengthen and develop our engagement with the younger section of our membership.
- (ii) We shall consider hosting the same events in the coming year at the Blue Anchor and at Henley. We shall plan a gathering for the next tranche of leavers from 1988 until an agreed year similar to this year. CW feels that we are serving our members and the School well in terms of offering events to bring people together and to support the RSSBC.

3. We acclaim many successes by recent Sabrina Members as outlined below.

4. **CW wanted to put on record heartfelt thanks** to the committee and team that has made all this possible; James Russell as Social Secretary, Rod as Secretary, Phil as Treasurer have been essential; but we have also had great support from the Salopian Club, particularly the Director, Holly Fitzgerald, in terms of both financial backing, but also publicising events and splendid work in the office without which our operations could not prosper.

NR then outlined the acclaim referred to above, in summary:-

World Under 19 Championships 2023

Nataliia Toms (EDH) Coxed the Men's JU19 Eight to win Gold

Alice Colclough (G 2018-23) rowed in the Women's Eight to win Gold

Katie Hale competed in the Welsh Team for the Home International Regatta to win Silver

Already mentioned in the 2023 AGM Minutes were three Henley wins by Sabrina Members

Henley Royal Regatta 2024

Louis Nares Stoked Oxford Brookes to win the Grand Challenge Cup

Louis Nares Stoked Oxford Brookes to win the Stewards Challenge Cup

Grace Richards Stoked Oxford Brookes to win the Remenham Challenge Cup (this is for Open Eights equivalent to the Men's Grand Challenge Cup. The Race commentator stated that Oxford Brookes were striking at 47 at the start of the final.

The Head of the River Race London

Matt Rowe Stoked Leander to win

Louis Nares Stoked Oxford Brookes to finish second

Oxford and Cambridge Boat Races

Lewis Gray stoked Cambridge to win the Lightweight Race

Adam Pattenden rowed in the Oxford Lightweight V111

Women's Reserve Race

Jerry Russell rowed in the Osiris V111 (Oxford) which won.

Sabrina Rowing

No crews this year although:

Jonathan Beeston won an event with Ross on Wye BC

Miles Preston rowed in the Vogolonga , Venice, and the Masters National Championships.

7.0 Any Other Business

John Richards (JR) advised he spoke to the Headmaster (HM) about the condition of the School bank leading down to the boathouse. He was assured matters are in hand to try to sort this, but it is Shrewsbury Council's responsibility not the School and they are being pressed. It is a constant battle to get any action.

Secondly JR advised that Shrewsbury rowing does not appear to be at the level it used to be. NR has done wonders with the Scholarship fund but it has been 16 years since the School won the PE Cup at HRR in 2007. He proposed a committee should be set up to work on stopping the slide. He advised he was not a lone voice in these thoughts.

The view from many in the room was that perhaps more scholarships are needed. The School needs to come in line to support full scholarships rather than say 50% due to means testing. Sabrina Club are doing their bit to support scholarships and MP advised that it must be the scholarships as the School equipment and coaching is excellent. It is a vicious circle, do well at rowing and attract better candidates, otherwise they chase the money.

Athol (AH) pointed out that after going co-ed there are less boys in the School for selection. Eton have twice as many boys and St Edwards had 5 scholarship students in their 1st VII this year so we have stiff external influences and competition in order to be at the top of the table again. When Athol was at Abingdon and won 3 years in a row, he had many more boys eights to choose from.

AH advised that forces are in play to tackle the situation and he is coaching the J16's so we have home grown talent to draw upon which is preferred.

He advised that 2 girls won World Championships having learned to row at Shrewsbury and some 210 pupils are now rowing in the summer which is over a quarter of the School.

Of the last 10 boys offered a scholarship, only 2 accepted. It is very competitive to find good candidates and some schools are offering over 100% scholarship to secure good candidates.

Of the co-ed boarding schools Shrewsbury is the top school.

In addition, the PE Cup at HRR is now an open club event not just schools so the competition is harder as a result. Clubs can now also go to National Schools Regatta.

The atmosphere in the boat club is excellent and AH is keen to keep it this way with as much home-grown talent as possible and a reasonable chance of success in whatever events the School enters.

Two scholarships/apprenticeships a year would be ideal. Of course, the strong level of all sport at Shrewsbury mean's the pool to select from is also reduced.

The aim is to overhaul the system of awards with equal funding available for boys and girls rowing.

Peter Moore Dutton acknowledged this and felt that a system needs to be in place to capture suitable candidates.

John Richards thanked all for debating the position and looked forward to progress.

NR then advised he was sad to hear that Hugh Peach is ill. He was a master at the School for 31 years and a boat club coach. He coached boys and girls and encouraged many to take up or keep rowing. Joanathan Beeston advised that he had inspired him to become captain of boats with a moving speech.

NR advised that the grandson of the cox of the 1924 Ladies Plate winning first eight has been in touch and he will be lending his grandfather's rudder for display and a miniature each was given at the time of the Ladies Plate vase, to mark 100 years. Stephen Shaw's uncle Tim was in the 1924 1st V111. The grandson emailed some cine footage of the final race.

8.0 Date and time of next meeting

It was advised that the next AGM will take place again on the date of the Old Salopian Day next year, still to be confirmed, at the same agreed time of 4.30 pm. At this point the meeting was formally closed.