

ULSAC Committee meeting – 2nd July 2007

To-Do list from this meeting

Most of the committee – Find and irritate the debtors you've been assigned. Excessive violence reflects badly on the club, so try not to get caught. Submit (and encourage other to submit) articles for the newsletter!

Susie – If you're back in time, look into hiring a pub room for the AGM or a post-AGM social

Fitz – Pester Mike Neville for an answer about proxy voting. Suggest to ULU that their next set of leased vehicles should include an Espace (or similar) we can tow with. Also, look in to hiring towing vehicles from other sources.

Vicki, Dan, Dave – Discuss finance guidelines for the summer trip, to present to committee next meeting

Dave – Update the debtors' list as far as possible.

Nick – Remove Rascal's damaged radio and send to ICOM for assessment. If the weather is suitable, dry out Hippo's keel for patching and reinforcement.

Martin – Look for paper records of DPM trip finances. Forward them to Dave.

All Membership Officers – Check whether your old membership forms can help Dave et al. track down our old debtors.

Richard - investigate lockable storage for kit that isn't in service for open water use. Discard dead tank and its valve then tell Anjali the serial number.

Anjali – Remove the dead tank from our insurance records. Get quotes from insurance companies for proposed changes to our policies.

Al – Continue investigating the insurance claim for damaged engine skegs.

OUR NEXT MEETING IS ON THURSDAY 26TH JULY

Apologies for absence

Rebecca, Dan, Alyn, Alex, Sarah T, Shalini

Review of last week's minutes

Committee calendar

...is done and sending out automatic email reminders.

Insurance invoices:

We've now paid for the last boat, so they're all insured for the next calendar year. The insurance documents and a list of insured items are online.

Richard suggested some alterations to our insurance policies:

- Adding Tango's engine at £1,500
- Adding 3 ICOM radios at £150
- Removing the Simrad radios
- Adding the boat radio (ICOM 401) for £500
- Adding 3 annies at £140 each
- Adding £3,000 of boat kit
- Adding emergency cylinders (committee said don't bother)

Richard also recommended we increase the insurance on a few items to cover the increased replacement costs:

- 3 marinox kits to £500 each (from £462)
- 33 Regs to £300 each (from £280)
- 29 BCDs to £350 each (from £325)
- Add an extra £3000 to the boat insurance policies to cover miscellaneous equipment

Committee decided we should insure Gaby's cylinder.

Anjali will get quotes for the extra insurance premium this would require.

We considered moving some boat equipment to a general insurance policy, but decided the gain doesn't justify the effort and potential complications.

Martin asked about the conditions of insurance, for example the previous problems with boat locks. Anjali had a book of conditions with her, which she gave to Nathan for some bedtime reading. She also suggested checking the Divemaster policies on their website.

We decided not to bother insuring the emergency cylinders. They cost £75 and are replaced every two-three years anyway.

The next AGM

Fitz had to decide a date for the AGM. Easter falls on 23rd of March next year, and the ULU Easter holidays run from 20th March to 20th April. Easter training starts during the first week of that break. As discussed last week the constitution states that our AGM has to be within 4 weeks of Easter training.

We tentatively decided on the first week of May. This should be late enough that all the colleges' new terms have begun so all student members are back from holiday.

To increase attendance, we considered combining the AGM with a social. It'd probably be best on a Thursday – late in the week is always better for socials, but no one will want to spend their Friday night at a meeting. Social Secretary should look into hiring a room in a bar for the AGM social.

Proxy Voting: Fitz has asked Mike Neville whether ULU will allow us to use proxy voting. There's no point in debating whether we want it until we've had a response.

Accounting Guidelines

Haven't been sorted yet due to difficulty contacting Dave and Dan after the initial enthusiastic "yes!". As Dave is away at the moment, Vic and Dan will get together to discuss it. They'll check their ideas with Dave and once the three are all happy, pass recommendations to the committee. These guidelines need to be completed in time for the Summer Trip.

Debtor List

Anjali brought a copy of the list of debtors. Many of the debts are pretty old; entries 1 – 19 are from before when Anjali became treasurer in 2002. In total, the club is owed £1598. In a remarkable display of generosity, one committee member began by offering to pay the debts of Alice Anderson, single-handedly wiping out a whopping 0.1% of the total. The remaining debts are split between 44 people owing between £2 and £180.

Various members of the committee chose people from the debt list to track down and intimidate. The committee's facebooker-in-chief (Michelle) recognised a few names and promised to chase them up. Belly recognised Will Looker from the list, promising that "[He]'ll find him and drag him down".

Anjali will ask current and previous membership secretaries to check old membership forms for debtors' contact details.

Other possibilities for finding debtors included checking the electoral roll and lurking in dark alleyways.

Most of the biggest debtors were accounted for; see Anjali's records to see who was assigned to whom.

Towing Vehicles

Last week we discussed the problem that ULU's MPVs are too heavy to tow the boats without a special license. This week, Michelle reported that almost any seven-seat people carrier is light enough to tow the boat on a standard license. Martin's car, Galaxy and Espace were mentioned as examples.

Fitz mentioned that this raises the danger of people with ordinary licences feeling pressured into towing when they're not comfortable with it. Martin (and a couple of others) said that this was how they'd learned, so providing the driver is happy it'll be safe. One possibility suggested was having a more experienced tower take the boats to a service station outside London. The new tower would then make the relatively easy drive to the site. The difficulty of launching the boats could be avoided, as Belly said that boats are regularly launched by hand rather than hitched to the vehicle.

It seems impractical to pay for the lessons, trailer hire and tests to have towers available for every trip. As a rough idea: trailer hire, lessons and a test would come to roughly £200 per person.

Based on their "54" registration plates, ULU are probably due to replace their leased MPVs this summer. We'll suggest they get a vehicle we (and other clubs) can use to tow. It'll probably have to be a people carrier because they need plenty of seats. Fitz will suggest an Espace.

Steve is due to take the MPV test before the summer trip. We've used our quota of tests for this year and additional tests cost £38. Nick is willing to take the test if needed.

Another option is to hire vehicles from outside companies. Fitz will look into this too.

Shopping List

Nathan bought us:

2 ICOM radios (bringing our total to 3 M31s and 1 fixed radio on rascal)

1 Li-ion battery

2 cigarette lighter chargers

1 AA battery patch

Nick is going to remove scoundrel's damaged onboard radio for assessment by ICOM.

Request for newsletter submissions

A request for submission of newsletter articles. The newsletter will definitely include trip reports and "cheat sheets" this year, but all other articles will be welcomed. [Maybe I'll contribute "ULSAC minutes: a dramatic novelization"]

New Business

Treasurer's report

Dave is still away, so this came via Anjali.

[NB: the following is a slightly edited version of an email from Anjali after the meeting; it's basically the same information but more detailed than my notes from the meeting]

Barclays accounts has £3942.45 (of which £630 has been fundraised)

ULU Safety budget has £1474.50 (for engines, trailers and radios, which will be claimed this week)

Total £5,416.95 in credit.

Bills to be paid are:

- BHG £3,705
- Other boat £200
- Radios £285
- Equipment £175 (was told by Mark and Richard at the meeting)
- BOC £460?? Waiting for bill in July

- Extra insurance premium for insuring more equipment [See Equipment Officer's report]
- Total £4,825

Overall money is now tight – all spending decisions should now come through the committee. The Boat and Equipment teams have overspent their budgets, although in fairness they hadn't been told what these were.

Dave will check all bills with the relevant parties before paying them.

Fitz, Dave and Dan to expect the new budget from ULU at the end of July/August and then committee will be told their individual team budgets.

Dave still working on the credit / debt list and has queried the Poole and Salcombe accounts. It's been a bit difficult to produce a credible credit and debt list since Angeliki didn't pass on much info in her handover.

Martin has looked for the Dive planning and marshalling course accounts and failed to find an electronic version. He will look for a paper version.

Hannah Morgan's bill from the club was discussed briefly. Club records say she owes £200, but Hannah says this should only be £100 because she paid to hire a van. Consensus was that she had been paid back for the van, so the £200 bill stands.

DO's report

We had two eventful trips since the last report.

In future trips, boatie briefings will include all boaties on the trip, not just the ones going out on a specific wave. This is to make sure everyone is informed of plans, and to get as much expert input to and criticism of each briefing as possible.

TO's report

We had a training weekend in the muddy puddle known as Wraysbury quarry. Two novices now only need to take their assessments to become ODS, and Jim passed three drills toward his next qualification! Pool training will continue through the summer.

Membership report

Both membership officers were absent.

EO's report

Nothing else needs to be serviced until November. Richard will discuss the equipment budget with Anjali. A few items have been serviced at Amphibian Sports.

In future, the equipment team will try to spread the cost of servicing all our equipment and avoid servicing equipment we don't need. All open water kit needs to be serviced annually, but kit that's just used for the pool can go two years between services. A batch of kit will be reserved just for use in the pool, effectively halving its servicing costs. Richard will investigate lockable storage for kit that isn't in service for open water use.

One of our tanks can't be tested because the thread used to screw on the valve is a non-standard size. We considered having it re-cut to fit the filling equipment, but decided that the risk of the weakened tank going pop and shredding one of our divers was a little too high. The tank (and its valve, despite Richard's "blond moment") will be discarded. Richard will send Anjali the dead tank's serial number so it can be removed from our insurance policy.

Finally, Richard reminded everyone to be careful when removing the DIN inserts from cylinder valves. The insert adds a lot of structural strength, so a valve with the DIN insert removed is much more vulnerable to being dented or squashed out of shape.

BO's report

Hippo is useless until the keel can be removed and repaired. If it's sent to Chas-Newens [probably misspelled, sorry] they'll just send it to BHG, who'll send it to a third party and so on until the music stops. This is expected to cost £300-£500. Instead, the next time we have a dry weekend [forecast for mid-July 2011], Nick will dry it out, then patch and reinforce the keel himself.

Tango is fine with either engine. There is a small hole in one of the tubes, but it'll take a whole weekend for enough air to escape to make a noticeable difference.

Fuel calculations can't be made accurately because we have hulls and engines from different manufacturers. However, we know that each engine drinks 5 litres in 5 minutes when running at full throttle. Different throttle levels make no discernable difference to the engine's efficiency. The big problem on the Poole trip was that the boat couldn't start planing, so a lot of engine thrust (and therefore fuel) was being wasted.

In future, if a trip is over 5 nautical miles each RIB should carry two emergency fuel tanks.

Fuel is being stolen from our RIB engines while they're parked by the boathouse. Andy has seen two guys siphoning the fuel out, costing us around £100 each time. The man who lives at the boathouse says it isn't his responsibility and that we should inform ULU. No lockable fuel caps are available. There were a few overlapping conversations after this, but I definitely heard Belly say something about volunteering to sleep in the RIBs as a nightwatchman...

BHC has invoiced us for grinding the damaged skegs, but we don't have an estimate for repair yet. Money will come from the insurance company. Al is looking into it; no information has been passed to Anjali or Dave.

Both GPS, both echoes, both trailer jockey wheels and all rollers are now working. The only problem is Scoundrel's onboard radio. Nick will send this to ICOM for assessment.

Social Secretary's report

Our Social Secretary is busy re-training for the post of ULSAC Ambassador to India.

Any other business

Go Diving! DVDs

Nathan remembers these free DVDs being requested, so two copies should've been sent to us. One was addressed to Chairman, the other to Diving Officer. Michelle has one, but she got it from Marcus. Vicky may have them, but she's not sure.

Diver recall

After problems on a recent trip, we need to improve our diver recall protocol.

Most simply, be sure to brief divers that the boatie giving three tugs on the SMB means that the diver should immediately begin ascent. As an alternative, use a carabina to clip notes to a deployed SMB, letting them slide down the line to a diver. The laminated note will say something like “begin ascent now” [or “remember to grab some mussels for dinner”]. Fitz reminded us that the karabiners would need to be metal so they actually sink. Jer volunteered to get the karabiners, then print and laminate the notes.

Several methods were discussed for when divers don’t have an SMB deployed. One common method is to fire a starter pistol into the water, but this requires a license and – presumably – bulletproof divers. A committee member who’ll probably prefer to stay anonymous commented that “there are too many unstable people in the club” to be waving firearms around anyway.

Another popular method is dropping flash-bangs into the water. A set pattern of bangs (e.g. three bangs separated by 5 seconds) would be effective and audible for long distances. However, there may be problems with getting hold of them due to problems sending explosives in the post. This problem – along with cost and shelf life – will be looked at by Richard. If we do use thunderflashes, we’ll need to have plenty of spares for training and as backups.

Boat engines could be revved in a specific pattern, but this might be impractical because the boat engines are being revved up and down constantly while the boat manoeuvres on the surface. Underwater horns and rattles were also considered, but both of these are too quiet to be audible over useful distances. As a long-term strategy, Steve suggested we should learn to speak Whale. I volunteered to contact Pixar for language tips.

We could bang on the engine skegs with something [rocky outcrops?], or hold another metal object (bell, scaffolding pole etc) in the water and whack it with a spare weight to make a noise. A couple of people (I think one was Richard but I’m not certain) said they might be able to get hold of some lengths of metal tubing.

The proposed protocol was tentatively agreed as:

1. Audible signal of thunderflashes or banging a pole just underneath the water surface
2. When Divers hear this, SMBs go up
3. Boaties tug on SMB to give recall signal and/or send down a recall note attached to the SMB line by karabiner

Next meeting

Fitz will be away for most of August but we have too many things going on to skip a month. **We’ll meet on Thursday 26th July.**