

Minutes
ULSAC COMMITTEE MEETING
Bloomsbury Suite, 23rd October 2007
18:30

Actions:

Richard – recount the O₂ cylinders

Nick – Have you heard from Nick Bedford? Discuss stern lines with boat team.

Fitz and Susie – Collaborate to somehow work the SGM into the Christmas Party.
[Voting and Karaoke in the same event? Hmm, there could be a TV show in that...]

Bugs – Find out when our branch's birthday is.

Dave – find out more about the boat depreciation fund

Present:

Fitz, Vicks, Nathan, Richard, Jer, Sarah C, Dave, Shalini, Sarah T, Nick, Ali G

Apologies for Absence:

Ernst, Steve, Martin, Al, Alex, Suzie, Rebecca

Proud to be absent:

Andy

Items for Attention

O₂ Cylinders

Our O₂ cylinder supplier thinks we have 12 O₂ cylinders, but at the last count we only found 9. We need to check how many cylinders we actually have. Richard volunteered.

Update on Boathouse

Objection letters have been sent to the state department and the local planning officer. We're awaiting Marcus' advice about further action we can take.

ULU's planning application has been received by the council and accepted, but the council hasn't started to assess it. They're still a long way from making any decision.

There was a call for anyone with dodgy contacts in the council, but even Vicks' influence only stretches to the Surry Mafia.

Update on Bad Debts

Thanks to Michelle, Nathan, Shalini and others, we've called in £340 of our debts. More is on the way if we believe claims that "the cheques are in the post", a cry my long-suffering landlord is tired of hearing. We meant to ask Nick J whether he'd heard from Nick Bedford, but Nick J wasn't here at this point and I didn't hear anyone ask him later in the meeting.

Update on Fundraising

Sarah (fundraising) has been very busy since June due to changes in her job and a burgeoning career as a radio celebrity. Ali G (assistant fundraising) offered to switch

roles with Sarah to ease her workload. After Sarah accepted, the committee voted and carried it unanimously. Ali G is now the Fundraising Officer.

Update on SGM (voting by proxy)

Fitz has written amendments to our constitution allowing proxy voting at the next AGM. This must be voted on by our members, so in a classic bait-and-switch manoeuvre the Christmas Party will include an SGM, with people asked to vote at the beginning of the evening. This is ideal timing as it's sufficiently far in the future to provide notice of the vote, and should guarantee we reach quorum. Notification of the vote and details of the new constitution will be sent out a minimum of two weeks before the SGM/Party.

Assuming our members approve the amendments, they will be submitted to the Sports and Societies Committee, who should approve it and pass it still higher until – presumably – it's approved by a medium channelling the ghost of Kafka.

Plans for 50th Anniversary

The 50th anniversary group is Laura, Jim and Andy. Laura is in charge but very busy with her new career, so nothing has been organised so far. More people should be involved to help with the planning.

Ali G had been the Fundraising Officer for nearly 10 minutes by this point and still hadn't brought in a penny, so she was nominated to help with the planning. Despite a valiant attempt to dodge, (“...it's really more of a social thing...”), Ali G is now the “Party Committee Liaison”.

The records of BSAC's first 100 branches were all lost in a warehouse fire, which means no one knows when our birthday actually is. I (Bugs) suggested just picking whichever date would be easiest to schedule and was justly punished by being assigned to find the correct date.

Budget Briefing

We've been allocated a total of £5843, of which £4545 is safety. £95 of this is under “radio”, which will be used to repair Scoundrel's ICOM radio. Dave advised us that this is “a fair amount” short of what we had requested and what we'd expected. More accurate figures will follow.

When asking for info to base the treasurers' estimates on, we were told that we have 33 sets of regs; 34 Tanks; 35 BCDs. Sarah C estimated we'll have about 15 trainees this Easter.

The credit/debt list is up to date so people can check how much they owe or are owed.

The idea of running weekend trips' finances through a personal account was discussed again. Passing club money through personal accounts had previously been dismissed because Anjali said Angela (at ULU) wouldn't like it. However, the new consensus was that we should try it in combination with advance payment. Before each trip each diver pays £100 to the trip organiser, who uses the money to pay for trip expenses. After the trip, whatever money is owed to the club or divers will be sorted out, then a single payment will go to each of ULSAC and ULU to cover equipment and minibus hire respectively.

This system will be trialled on Ali's upcoming trip.

Approval of the Chiswick Checklist

The checklist will be emailed around, and comments or corrections invited.

Nick highlighted a few problems immediately; these will be considered when re-writing the list. Nathan and Nick disagreed on the necessity of having stern lines for mooring the boats. [NB: I've tried to be accurate here but I know very little about boats. If I've misinterpreted their points please tell me.]

Nick argued that we've lost several sets of stern lines already – some at his expense – and that mooring the boats without them hasn't led to harm or inconvenience. Also, in some of the mooring points we regularly use they can't be used anyway. Nathan argued that stern lines often are useful and provide an extra safety measure, preventing potential damage to the boats. Also that not having used stern lines in the past, whether because they're missing or weren't deemed necessary, is not a valid reason to ignore them in the future.

The RYA best practice guidelines describe stern lines as “optional”. The debate wasn't resolved, but passed to the boats committee to discuss then pass a joint recommendation to the main committee.

Equipment Officer

As discussed in previous meetings, servicing requirements for regs used in open water are stricter than for those used in the pool. To save money not all of our regs will be kept in OW service, leaving some to go out of test for use exclusively in the pool. The equipment team will decide how many sets to service based on the number of people attending ET.

Some cylinders are out getting tested now. We're getting invoiced and it's fine to pay by cheque. The cylinders cost somewhere from £30-35 each to service, including our bulk discount.

We need to keep the serviced regs strictly segregated from the non-serviced. They'll bear different colour coding: serviced regs will have a small tag with this season's colour [which *Cosmopolitan* assures me is “autumn mist”], while the regs for pool use only will be clearly marked with thick red or black tape.

To correct previous problems with disappearing or improperly returned kit, only a limited group of people will be given the codes to open the sliding door area. These will be: the Equipment Officer and assistants, Diving Officer, Training Officer and assistants.

When people want to hire kit, they must ask the equipment officer a week in advance. The EO will then move the required kit from the store to the cage where it can be collected. Kit must be returned directly to the EO or an assistant at an agreed time; cylinders must be returned full. Finally, when hiring kit we'll be asked to complete a short form to list any problems we had with it.

The price of hiring kit will be increased to £2/item/day (increase of 50p) up to £5/day for a whole aqualung (increase of £1). This is to reflect the increased price of kit servicing. Club equipment must not be disassembled – e.g. reconfiguring regs to make twinsets – without the express permission of both Equipment and Diving Officers.

Due to limited storage space, personal kit may only be stored in the cage or store for short periods, e.g. up to 1 week either side of a trip. The exceptions are for personal cylinders, weightbelts (at Chiswick) and pool kit. Everything else currently stored there must be removed by November 1st.

DIN inserts should always be left in the valves of suitable tanks, as they provide structural strength and it's easier for a DIN user to remove and insert than for an A-clamp user to spend half an hour trying to find one.

Diving Officer:

The last diving trip "was good and everything went well". [Bonus marks for concise report!]

Training Officer

"We're training sh*tloads of people now. It's all good!"

More assistants will be needed soon, both to help teach and to act as unconscious-but-otherwise-totally-healthy bodies in the pool.

The next Instructor Foundation Course in London is on the weekend 24th-25th of November; several people are planning to attend.

Advanced diver lessons start on Monday 29th October.

Membership

31 paid-up members and an additional 7 trainees who're attending pool lessons but haven't paid up yet.

Boat Officer

Rascal is "Screwed". The engines are quite old – about 5 years – which is a typical age for these engine types to start showing problems. A few attempts have been made to fix them, but it looks like they'll need professional care or replacement.

Scoundrel's engines need a bit of TLC from the boat team, but they work. Scoundrel's on-board radio will finally be removed and serviced using the £95 marked "radio" in the safety budget.

Hippo's keel is damaged. Sometime soon the boat team will try their best to fix it, but can't make any promises. A new keel will cost approx £1000, not much less than just buying a new boat.

Tango is running perfectly because it has barely been used.

Both squidgee engines are absolutely fine. Although they're similar to the engines on the RIBS, they're set up differently (mainly the steering configuration) so it wouldn't be possible to replace Scoundrel's engines with those from the squidgees.

Skeg repairs: BHG have quoted £350 + VAT (=£411) per skeg. The insurance is expected to cover this. However, the insurers only trust specific workshops, so we'll probably have to use BHG instead of Vicks' friend.

The boats will be sent to BHG separately to avoid the confusion between them, which happened last time. They'll then be winterised: dried properly, fuel drained, batteries set to trickle charge etc.

Nick suggested organising another boat handling course in January. He also suggested a VHF radio course, which would include use of the GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System) which we already have on each RIB and pay a subscription for, but don't have the training to use. Nick is qualified to teach us this.

The engine damage is likely to be partly due to water, excess oil and other stuff getting into the engines when the oil reservoirs are filled each trip. An outboard engine maintenance course would be a good idea. We wouldn't necessarily need to use our engines for the course as dummies can be used.

The £500 allocated for trailers is fine, but £500 allocated for engine maintenance is laughable. Our 50th anniversary is an ideal time to raise funds for new engines. One possible source is the “Boat depreciation fund”, which accumulates money each year from ULU to buy expensive boat parts. It’s generally agreed to be a slush fund – there’s no guarantee that ULU will actually be able to produce the money. Dave was asked to research the fund.

AOB:

Nick called for better record keeping within the club. This applies to all documents, but especially things like membership forms, invoices etc. We do already have a filing cabinet, which will be moved to the cage for this purpose.