



# St Helier Boat Owners Association

Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting held at St Helier Yacht Club on 25th November 2021 at 1900 hours.

Present	The Officers, Committee members and approximately 35 members.
In Attendance	Representing Ports of Jersey: Simon Porritt (SP), Michel Le Moine (MLeM).
Introduction	The Chairman, Will Simpson (WS), opened the meeting by welcoming members. The Harbour Master had been invited but was unable to attend due to Covid-19 complications, but he welcomed and SP and MLeM, who would answer questions directed through the chair during the open forum. He thanked the Yacht Club for their generosity in allowing the use the Club for the AGM & committee meetings throughout the year. He also pointed out the clubroom's emergency exits.
1. Apologies	Apologies had been received from Nick Wood, Vic Walker, Mike Capraro, Peter Donne-Davis, Mike Stevens, John Langdon, Matthew Robins, Chris Gladish, Bob de la Mare, Chris Fairbairn, and Anthony Olsen.
2. Minutes	WS noted that it had not been possible to hold an AGM in 2020 due to the Covid restrictions. The minutes of the 30th AGM held on 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 had been available on the website. He proposed they be taken as read and they were unanimously approved on a proposition by P Rose, seconded by K Hennelly.
3. Matters Arising	There were no matters arising.
4. Chairman's Report	The Chairman read his report covering the main issues and activities dealt with during the past two years. His report is attached to & forms part of these minutes. The Chairman's Report was accepted on a proposition by K Hennelly, seconded by G Gaudin.
5. Hon Treasurer/ Membership Secretary's Report	DW thanked the previous Treasurer, Mark Peters, for his earlier work which had been complicated by the change in subscriptions and the fact that some members were still paying at the old rate. Current membership is 263, of which 69 are joint, 121 single and 3 are Life members. However, he had now moved the process to a new on-line system which was beginning to make things a lot easier and he hoped that members found it was working well. On-line payment had been set up, reducing administration and management of the bank account. He invited anyone who had not paid to do so after the meeting, as well as two people who wished to join and who were in attendance. With regard to the accounts, for which summarised copies had been handed out, he explained that the figure of £33.00 for Charitable Subscriptions was the monies still being paid by members who had either retired or who had died. Their subscriptions would be donated to the charities that we support. As regards those still paying at the old rate, he would be writing to them one more time; thereafter their membership would lapse and any funds still received would also be donated to the charities. He noted that one significant change in the accounts from previous years was the reduction in post and printing costs,

	<p>but with a concomitant increase in website costs.</p> <p>There were no Fixed Assets as some equipment was now fully depreciated. There had been no Donations in 2020 due to not being able to hold an AGM for their approval, as required by Clause 5.(c) of the Constitution.</p> <p>The Treasurer's Report and the accounts were approved on a proposal by N Bailhache, seconded by M Richardson.</p>
6. Election of Officers	<p>CG took the chair and noted that there were no nominations for Chairman other than WS. P Mourant observed that it was not necessary to propose and second him, as there were no alternative candidates. WS was therefore re-elected, to applause.</p> <p>WS informed members that Matt Clarke had offered his resignation, his work as crew on the RNLI lifeboat often precluded him from attending meetings, and he thanked him for his valuable contribution to the Committee since 2013, especially latterly in running the Association's Facebook site with NW.</p> <p>He then read the nominations for the remaining officers &amp; committee members as follows:</p> <p>Vice Chairman – Nick Wood  Hon. Secretary – Christine Gill  Hon. Treasurer – David Wood</p> <p>Committee Members:</p> <p>Mike Capraro  Phil Carter  George Gaudin  Kevin Hennelly  Peter Rose  Vic Walker</p> <p>There being no further nominations, WS declared the above-mentioned duly elected, to applause.</p>
7. Election of Independent Examiner.	<p>Penny Hatter was proposed by P Mourant &amp; seconded by J Ellis. WS duly declared her elected.</p>
8. Subscriptions	<p>WS said the Committee's recommendation was that subscriptions for the year commencing 1/12/21 remain unchanged at £10 single, £16 joint and this was agreed by a show of hands.</p>
9. Donations	<p>WS said that because no donations were made last year, the Committee proposed that this year they should double, i.e. £1,120 be given to each of the 3 charities: RNLI, JLA &amp; CIAS. P Hatter asked what had happened with CIAS, as there had been problems with their administration, and P Gueno wanted to know if there was a bank account. P Mourant, a trustee of CIAS, replied that although there is currently no bank account in Jersey, donations can be made via the Guernsey branch. Any monies may be paid to him and he would ensure its onward transmission, or donations can be left at St Helier Yacht Club.</p> <p>The Committee's recommendations for donations were proposed by P Warren and seconded by K Hennelly and approved unanimously with one abstention, P Mourant.</p>

<p>10. Changes to Constitution and Rules</p>	<p>WS said that the Committee was recommending some changes to the Constitution, explaining the reasons (attached to these minutes): Size of Committee – increase from a maximum of 10 to 12; format of Meetings – to enable meetings via electronic means, if required by circumstances; Notice Periods for nomination of officers, 7 days to 14 days.</p> <p>P Mourant said that St HYC had been through a similar process for virtual meetings and proposed that the wording should be that it was “not possible” to hold a meeting in-person rather than for “no particular reason”.</p> <p>The changes, with the above restriction included, were proposed by P. Carter and seconded by K. Hennelly and were approved by the membership.</p>
<p>11. Open Meeting</p>	<p>WS invited SP and MLeM to come forward to answer questions. <i>(responses in italics)</i>.</p> <p>P Mourant took the opportunity to thank the Marina Staff for their continued hard work and efforts to assist leisure boaters. He wished to record our thanks, to a round of applause.</p> <p>WS asked if the Storm Gate at Elizabeth Marina was back in place. <i>SP said it was in place and ready to be in use by the end of this week. The tidal gate was still up, and ready for testing.</i> KH asked if anything was in place to prevent the problem from arising again. <i>SP said yes, and he has the information which he can supply to anyone interested.</i></p> <p>June Ellis asked is the schedule for work in the Town Marina was on target. <i>Yes, the date for the Boat Show has been set with the schedule in mind and they are confident that it is going to plan. What is the situation with regard to the old posts which were causing difficulty? There were 3 methods being tried for their removal. The first two had not worked but the third was proving successful and 2 or 3 posts were now being removed each day.</i></p> <p>D Wood wanted to know about the repeater lights in Elizabeth Marina and whether there could be anything on-line to assist in being able to see the Stop-Go lights? <i>After the storm gate project is complete there will be other refurbishments including the operation of the lights. However, PoJ was not confident that an on-line system could be operated safely.</i></p> <p>P Gueno asked if the St Helier Marina drying pad would be available for use next season. <i>SP noted that there was pressure from the Environment Dept to encourage best-practice when cleaning down boats, but thought the pad would be available after the Boat Show. WS observed that using the pad in a satisfactory way is up to boat-owners, ensuring that washings of anti-foul do not go straight into the water, as observed in one photo that had been taken of a particular yacht on the pad that had caused some alarm. Putting down tarpaulins or similar would help.</i></p> <p>C Gill asked if there was any further progress on managing delapidated and unused dinghies and offered to assist Marina staff with locating them and having them taken away. <i>SP said this was a task they could do in the winter and accepted her offer of help. He would be in touch.</i></p> <p>M Richardson mentioned problems with the holding pontoons and the lack of space. Assistance from Marina staff would help on some occasions when space was taken up by badly rafted RIBS and smaller boats. <i>SP said they were aware of the problem and that</i></p>

*education was key - Rafting Guidance was being offered to new boaters. If Marina staff were in the vicinity they would certainly be happy to help.*

KH wondered if the holding pontoon that used to be at the end of NNQ could be reintroduced, one of the problems in the past had been security issues on the working quay but that this had now been addressed and NNQ was locked off from the land side.

*SP said that gradual change of use of the harbour with a reduction in commercial activities would help, creating more space for leisure boaters. One Charter company had now moved to the new berths on the Albert Quay and there were various ideas, some of them for the longer term. He said that as users, please make suggestions to PoJ.*

Penny Gueno wondered if an extra tap could be installed on No. 5 holding pontoon. *SP said that there is an extra long hose in the storage box, which could be used as a last resort.*

A question had been received from John Langdon, regarding a build-up of mud in Row A of the Old Harbour near the cradles, wondering if it could be cleaned up as the legs of some boats were sinking into it. *MLeM said that he was unaware of it, but he would take a look and see if anything could be done.*

There being no further questions, WS thanked both SP and MLeM for their contribution, to a round of applause.

Termination

WS thanked everyone for attending & invited all to partake of the buffet and a glass of wine. The formal meeting closed at 2015.

## **Chairman's Report.**

**Good Evening everybody, it is my pleasure to Welcome all Members who are here tonight to the 31st Annual General Meeting of the St Helier Boat Owners Association.**

I would like to extend a special welcome to our guests this evening from Ports of Jersey, namely **the PoJ Head of Marine Leisure, Simon Porritt and Marinas Manager Michel le Moine**. They will answer questions directed through the chair during the open forum at the end of the meeting. (We had also invited the harbourmaster Bill Sadler but he cannot attend due to family covid complications and sends his apologies).

I would also like to record our thanks to St Helier Yacht Club for allowing us to use its facilities this evening to host this meeting. Of course, we have no premises of our own and the Club has always been generous and very accommodating towards us, not only for the AGM, but also for our Committee meetings throughout the year.

### **Events around The Harbour**

I very much doubt that it will come as news to any of you that this has been a busy year in the harbour, and quite an interesting one at that. The new pontoons on the Albert Pier have significantly increased berthing capacity in St Helier, especially for some of the more unwieldy vessels that have previously been squeezed into our marinas. This has, in turn, facilitated the game of marine musical chairs that occurred during the autumn to clear out St Helier Marina in preparation for its refurbishment. This project is scheduled to be completed during May 2022, and as Ports of Jersey has now announced the dates in June for the 2022 Jersey Boat Show, there is some material pressure on the contractors to deliver on time!

Meanwhile there have been serious engineering challenges afoot in and around Elizabeth Marina with the removal & repair of the damaged storm gate, and its replacement just a few days ago. Anyone who watched these proceedings will only have been impressed by the surprising size and bulk of the storm gate – it is frankly enormous – but perhaps not terribly surprising given the force of the sea when it is powered by a Spring tide and a suitable Southerly gale.

Equally impressive was the giant Lego-like crane that was used to extract the gate & move it to the New North Quay in the Spring, and then take it back again to reinstall last week. By any standards, these were major engineering projects and rather good spectator sport at the same time!

I will not further dwell on these events, as you will have the opportunity to quiz Simon & Michel in the open session at the end of meeting. However, I would like to make one further observation, namely that each of these activities represents a major investment by the Harbour authorities in the Marine Leisure sector, and I think it is fair to say that under current management, the Ports of Jersey are paying more attention to us, recreational Boat owners, than has historically been the case. It is very easy for us to focus on the inconvenience caused in the harbour by the temporary shortage of berthing and waiting pontoons, or the occasional lack of access caused by storm gate manoeuvres, or the lack of berthing accommodation generally, but at least we can see some light at the end of the tunnel from these capital projects, which will ultimately benefit us all. In short, it does feel like our sector of the market is getting rather more attention than we have previously been used to

### **COVID & BREXIT**

Unfortunately, I cannot avoid saying something about the dreaded Covid pandemic, nor about the effects of Brexit, which have so radically changed life for the boating community. (Covid was of course the reason why we could not hold a 2020 AGM). Between them, these two new horsemen of the apocalypse have disproportionately affected Channel Islanders, as compared with other sailors in the British Isles.

Most of us are now familiar with the rather cumbersome procedures that accompany any plans to sail to France, but we are in a uniquely inconvenienced position. We are probably the only British sailors who routinely like to visit France for a day or two, or even possibly just for a nice lunch! Of course, visitors to France from the UK mainland have to endure the same procedures, but as their cross-channel trips tend to be for a week or more, the ratio of pain to gain is much more acceptable. By contrast, here in the Jersey we have lost our previously easy access to our most attractive sailing areas, and the spontaneous, spur-of-the-moment expedition to Brittany or Normandy is largely a thing of the past.

We recognise that the current somewhat fraught political environment between Jersey & France does not lend itself to any early resolution of these problems, but we believe that in the medium to longer term the implications could be quite adverse. Jersey has lost its easy access to the delights of the French coast, and consequently some of its own attractiveness as a destination. We are already hearing from local boat owners who were keen & regular visitors to France and who are now considering giving up boating. The number of summer visitors to our harbour will also decline. None of this would be good news for PoJ, for local Marine traders, for local boaters, and indeed for the Jersey economy at large. We would urge business and political leadership (both here and in adjacent France) to consider how to work around the impediments created by Brexit.

Another, not quite so obvious, development has been the arrival onto the scene of what we have come to refer to as the “Covid Boater”. This mythical creature has never before owned a boat and historically has spent his spare money on lavish holidays for the family– until the world suddenly changed early in 2020.

Confronted almost overnight by an unexpected and embarrassing accumulation of cash in his bank account, Covid Boater very quickly realised that what he now really needed for a complete life was a RIB, or a slick looking motor boat. This, in spite of his almost perfect ignorance of all things Maritime.

Who can blame him, for boating in Jersey is one of the best things we have to offer. Now, this is great news for the St Helier marine trade & you would think it would also be great news for the rest of us, but actually it has been accompanied by some less desirable side effects.

We are privileged to enjoy a rather unregulated activity, in that anyone can go out and purchase a boat without needing to demonstrate much prior experience (except perhaps to insurers) or to pass obligatory competency tests. In many ways such freedom is a rarity in today’s world & is to be applauded. Of course, the other side of this coin is that any idiot can go out & buy a powerful mean marine machine and disappear into the offing at 25 knots. What could possibly go wrong??

So, this is not necessarily the best idea in our local waters, which have rightly been described as some of the most difficult anywhere on the planet. You only have to see the large numbers of new RIBS & motor boats queuing up to land at the Minquiers sandbank on an August low spring tide to realise that half of them have no real concept of the serious dangers they are meddling with. I have heard quite a few people commenting that it is an accident waiting to happen, so it’s probably no bad thing that we have the benefit of two lifeboats.

Lack of boating experience is probably also the cause of an apparent decline in standards of courtesy and compliance. We are hearing plenty of tales, no doubt some of them apocryphal, of traffic jams around marina entrances, of marina traffic lights being overlooked, of speeding boats passing other vessels far too close, and so on. The trouble is that there is not a lot we can do about any of this in the short term, apart from giving a helping hand to the inexperienced when the need arises, and raising our own awareness that those around us on the water may not do what we expect, and so give them a wider berth and a greater margin for error.

## COMMITTEE CHANGES

There have been a number of changes to your Committee since the last AGM. Peter Donne Davies retired in 2020 after a very long tenure as Hon. Secretary, to be replaced by Christine Gill, Mark Peters stood down shortly afterwards from his role as Hon. Treasurer and has been replaced by David Wood. At much the same time, we co-opted Mike Capraro as a new committee member.

More recently, Matt Clarke has decided to retire from the committee after several years in our ranks, mainly because of his commitment as a member of the RNLi lifeboat crew. If you have to lose a committee member, this seems to be the right sort of reason!

These new joiners to the committee were co-opted into the role, and will now be included in the “Election of Committee” item on the agenda for the first time, so I will take the opportunity to say a few words about each of them

Christine Gill was, as many of you will remember, our treasurer for a number of years before she had the good sense to retire from the front line. More recently, she has re-joined the committee and taken on the role of Hon. Secretary, a role for which she is well suited as she is so familiar with the way the Association works.

David Wood, our new treasurer, wasted no time upon being co-opted in bringing the Association's financial and membership systems up to date using 'off the shelf' software designed for running small clubs. Fortunately for us, he has previous form in this area, having already done the same thing for at least one other club, so the experience was surprisingly seamless, at least from where I sit. I am not going to steal his thunder by going into great detail about what he has achieved, as he is the next person on the agenda to talk to you, but as far as most of you are concerned the main difference is this..... You can now pay your subs online from our website, either by standing order or by credit card, and you can manage your own records by updating your profile on the Association's website. More importantly, perhaps, it means that the modern boat owner – perhaps even including our new friend Covid Boater - can join the Association effortlessly and immediately from the comfort of their smart phones.

Mike Capraro has been a very pro-active new member of the committee from the outset, and has been focussing on activities and initiatives to increase the profile of the association. This is no easy thing in the current Covid environment and, for example, we are planning a Marine Jumble Sale in the first part of next year which was originally intended - but ultimately failed - to happen this last summer. I can only applaud his enthusiasm and tenacity.

#### CHANGES TO ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

The committee has decided that there some aspects of our constitution which should be brought up to date, and you will be asked to vote on these later in the meeting. The principle matters are

1. We want to increase the permitted committee size from 10 to 12 people
2. We want to allow for virtual reality meetings including AGM by zoom or whatever, to allow for future pandemics and the like.
3. We want to increase some of the notice periods, eg for nominations for office, from 7 to 14 days

We circulated some more detailed explanation of these changes with the Agenda

That concludes what I have to say, and unless anyone has any immediate questions, I will now hand over to the Hon. Secretary, Christine, who will ask you to formally accept – or, I guess, even reject – the Chairman's report to the meeting!

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