

**MINUTES OF LIGHTNING 368 CLASS ASSOCIATION AGM
HELD AT NORTHAMPTON SAILING CLUB
SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Present:

Caroline Key, Simon Hopkins, John Claridge, Robbie Claridge, M Lang, Clive Evans, Lee Bratley, Emma Dodd, Jason Gallagher, Bryan Westley, Tony Hodson, Paul White, Penny Yarwood, Will Deutsch, Rupert Whelan and Hugh Spencer.

Apologies for Absence:

Wayne Jenner, Andrew Daniels (Spike) and Mark Godden.

Minutes of Last Meeting:

Copies of the minutes for the AGM held on 6 September 2014 were circulated. These were accepted as a true account of that meeting, everyone was in favour and they were duly signed by the Chairman Simon Hopkins.

Matters Arising From 2014 Minutes.

None

Chairman's Report

Firstly may I thank you for all coming to this AGM, I won't keep you for long.

So far it has been an interesting Nationals with **19** boats attending.

Reflecting on the last year I think the Lightning Fleet has seen a few challenges to keep the momentum going during a period of austerity.

The general attendance for all sailing fleets in the UK has been down this year and this is also reflected in the attendances through the summer months in the Lightning Fleet. The advent of the RS Aero, as predicted, caused a major shift in fleet sailing in the UK. Sales of over 200 boats in the first year and 75 boats at their first ever Nationals is impressive growth and has affected more than just the Lightning Fleet. However having said this I do not think we should panic just yet, but continue doing what we have always done. The opening event at Up River this year was a huge success with 10 boats training and 19 competitors on the Sunday. Since then attendance has hovered around the 10 mark. As always in any other business I would open the floor to suggestions on how we improve attendance, if indeed we need to, or are we just waiting for an economic resurgence.

This year we opted for a bigger stand at the Dinghy show which John kindly supplied two new boats for. I thought this was a huge success and remember talking for 2 days solid to prospective members. The results were that all second hand boats available at that time sold within the month. Second Hand boats continue to be rare and much sought after. Sadly some people are still selling Giles boats too cheap. With 253 and 326 both selling this year at over £1500, it depresses me when a good condition LN pops up for £500. Unfortunately this success cannot be said for new boats with only the two 'Works' boats built in 2015.

I have two points I would like to raise in 'Any other business', mainly the continuation of the Gold and Silver Fleet policy (which I support). We are not big enough to support a Bronze fleet but would like to discuss the sharing of prizes through the fleet. I would also like to add additional rule to the membership of the Gold fleet that if you have won the Nationals, you stay on it forever.

And finally I would like to thank the committee for supporting me during my two years as Class Chairman. Mainly Caroline who is the real driving force behind the success that is the Lightning fleet. And good luck to my successor, you really have little to do except keep Caroline and Emma happy.

Secretary's Report

The events following last year's AGM at Bristol Avon, Haversham and West Oxfordshire were also well attended, but the light winds of the previous events continued to create challenging conditions.

2015 started with our annual trip to the Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace. We opted to have a larger stand this year and we were able to show two boats, one rigged with the standard and the other with the small rig. This made it easier to compare the two rigs and created more of a talking point for those who visited the stand. Thanks as always to the committee members who turned up early on Saturday to get the stand ready in time for the grand opening. Thanks also to John for the loan of two new boats.

The first sailing event of the year was a two day trip to Up River Yacht Club. Day one being a training day, thanks go to Paul and Simon for giving out handy hints and tips on how to sail in windy weather. Unfortunately the wind was not to continue for the whole weekend, with day two being very calm and with the wind against tide took some 10 minutes or so just to cross the start line. Our second event of the year the fleet travelled to Manor Park. Another windy occasion. Cries of "I've never been so fast in a lightning" were quoted by many of those who took part. The first new club we visited this year was Ullswater, which turned out to be a true Northern event. The wind gods were upon us again, unfortunately

maybe a tad too strong, with a few breakages over the day. The following weekend saw a few hardy lightning sailors take part in the annual Lord Birkett. (although not all in Lightnings, with John and Robbie sailing the Seafly and Bryan and Lee taking out Emma's 420) Day one proved to be a day of survival with only 172 of the 231 starters finishing the race, with at one point winds of 40 mph plus howling down the lake. The rescue boats had their work cut out rescuing lost equipment, broken boats, etc. Day 2 was much calmer and most people survived. The Southern's at Cookham was our next event, followed by a trip to Snettisham in Norfolk another new venue for our Sea Championships then Oxford. Turnouts over the last few events have been a bit disappointing, not reaching double figures, but this of course could be due to the time of the year, being school holidays. Four events follow the Nationals, Hunts our third new venue of the year, The Noble Marine Inlands at Whitefriars, Broxbourne and our annual season finale at West Oxfordshire.

Although turnouts have been on the low side, the sale of second hand boats, continues to be strong, with boats being sold (may be a little too cheaply) as soon as they appear on the market. So let's hope we will see these new people out and about.

Following a few technical problems with the forum on the website, which should be sorted out soon, social media by way of Face book continues to be a favourite way for the class to communicate for advice from what type of sail to buy to how long should control lines be. With most people having the app on their phone, communication between the fleet tends to be quicker.

John, the technical committee and Banks Sails have looked at altering the sail, by lengthening the luff so that it reaches the boom. It does not alter the performance of the sail, but makes it look more aesthetically pleasing. No doubt there will be more talk about the new sail later in the meeting.

I would also like to thank John for the supply of the polo shirts for this year's Nationals.

Treasurer's Report

Emma circulated accounts showing comparisons over the last three years. Although there is still money in the bank, they show an overall loss of £487.77, which is mainly due to the more expensive costs of the dinghy show this year. Due to problems with the web site, Wayne has yet to charge for the web hosting which will be a further £150. The deposit account which the Class hold has only earned £2.13 in interest over the last three years. In fact Lloyds Bank still have this account registered under Anne Giles' name and it is proposed to get this account closed. Also Emma has tried on many occasions to get internet banking set up on the account, but has been unsuccessful. It is proposed that a new online banking account is sourced. John Claridge did comment that he had not made a contribution yet to 2015 dinghy show and this had been an oversight and he will sort this out.

Action: John Claridge to pay association contribution towards 2015 Dinghy Show.

Clive suggested that the subs be increased as a way of combating our year end losses. Paul asked when the last increase was made which was three years ago. After a further discussion Clive Evans proposed that our annual subs are increased by £2 to £18 per year, this was seconded by Jason Gallagher and all at the meeting were in favour.

Action: Emma to arrange increase in subscriptions for 2016.

Election of Chairman:

As Simon is standing down as Chairman this year he has nominated that Jason Gallagher the current Vice Chairman be proposed at the new Chairman. This was seconded by Caroline Key. All in favour.

Election of Officers and Committee Members:

Vice Chairman – Paul White – proposed by Simon Hopkins, seconded by Jason Gallagher, all in favour.

Treasurer – Emma Dodd, happy to continue, all in favour

Secretary – Caroline Key, happy to continue, all in favour

Sailing Co-Ordinator – Simon Hopkins – proposed by Caroline Key, seconded by Lee Bratley, all in favour

Technical Officer – Clive Evans, happy to continue, all in favour

Decided to not have the area representatives, who were previously Simon Styles for the SW, Penny Yarwood for the SE and Jason Gallagher for the North.

Dinghy Show / Advertising / Website

Simon mentioned that over the last couple of years we have hired walls to go around the stand. The first year, we did get a contribution from the stand next door as they made use of them, this year we received no contribution from other stands, although they were clearly using them for their own benefit. Why should we pay out for walls, for others to use. It was decided not to hire walls next year and leave the stand open. The larger stand worked well, so we will go with that again for 2016.

Hugh asked could we not put up a scaffolding tower to display a class banner, but Simon mentioned that due to health and safety, this would not be allowed.

John suggested we play video footage of the Lightnings over the previous season. In order to do this we would require the appropriate licence to be purchased, especially if music is being used.

It was also suggested that we approach Banks Sails to see if they could produce a large Lightning Class Flag as a backdrop to our stand.

Action: Caroline to book the larger stand space, with no walls this year, with the appropriate licence to play video footage. John Claridge to approach Banks Sails to see if a large Class Flag could be supplied. All to record their sailing and forward to Robbie Claridge to put together and edit a video for next year.

Emma mentioned that the Class has done really well without any additional advertising. She has also spoken to Wayne about the website and the problems with the forum not working. Apparently the website and the forum are run by two different companies and there is no communication between the two. Wayne could approach a new company to resolve the issue of the forum, or stick with the current one and remove the forum. Simon suggested that we leave the website as it is for the moment in time until the forum issues can be resolved. Jason questioned whether Face Book items could be transferred to the website. Rupert also mentioned that if a class forum was dead, it could look like the class is dead, although face book is an alternative way of contacting each other, but not possible new members. Wayne would propose to change the web site, if that is what the Class wish. Simon also said that over the last six months, he had been posting the updates onto the website and would be happy to let others do the same, by giving them the privileged to do so.

Action: Simon proposes to discuss the issues of the website further with Wayne outside of the meeting.

Class Rules / Technical Issues Clarification:

The new style sail has been formally agreed by the Technical Committee and will now be standard for both Mylar and Dacron sails.

Clive asked if there would be an appetite for the checking of equipment. Obviously new boats should all be the same weight and all components the same, but the older ones could differ slightly. Could stickers be applied to say that they conform. Simon suggested that if anything looked out of place, he or John Claridge would notice the difference immediately. It was also suggested by Penny to have a weigh in at the Nationals, to ensure all boats are at least the minimum weight of 54 KG. Hugh said the boats should be measured once when built and then at open meetings to ensure they still comply. John does have a hoist to weigh new boats, but this would not be very practical to take to other sites.

Action: Clive to look at the cost of mobile scales and approach the committee with the details.

2016 Nationals and Open Meeting Venues

Paul advised that meetings scheduled for 2016 was still in progress. It is proposed to come back to Northampton again for the Nationals. Simon along with another Lightning sailor, Paul Bevan, took part in the Thorpe Bay Regatta this year. The club house, car park, camping and access to sailing are all in one area. Simon did approach their current Commodore, who advised would be delighted if the Lightning fleet visited in the future. Simon proposes to look at further.

John said the class would be very welcome to join in with the Lymington Regatta. Ullswater as possible Northern events for next time? possibly not, but Jason is to look at his home club of Denholm as a possible venue for next year. Paul suggested that a two day training/open event works really well at the start of the season, but a venue is yet to have been found, possibly Manor Park.

Caroline suggested that we put our trust in Simon and Paul to put together the programme of events for 2016.

Any Other Business

Simon Hopkins proposed that anyone who wins the Nationals is in the Gold Fleet for life. Everyone was in favour of this.

John Claridge wished to congratulate Caroline's achievement at this year's Lord Birkett. He also wished to thank the committee for all their hard work over the last 12 months.

Simon thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 19.35.