

**MINUTES OF LIGHTNING 368 CLASS ASSOCIATION AGM
HELD AT NORTHAMPTON SAILING CLUB
SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Present:

Caroline Key, John Claridge, Simon Hopkins, Hugh Spencer, Spike Daniels, Gary Tompkins, Nich Cossins, Paul White, Penny Yarwood, Bryan Westley, Gary Buckinshaw, Holly Buckinshaw, Mike Gregory, Jason Gallagher.

Apologies for Absence:

Emma Dodd, Lee Bratley, Rupert Whelan and Robbie Claridge

Minutes of Last Meeting:

Copies of the minutes for the AGM held on 5 September 2015 were circulated. These were accepted as a true account of that meeting. The minutes were proposed by Simon Hopkins and seconded by John Claridge, everyone was in favour and they were duly signed by the Jason Gallagher.

Matters Arising From 2015 Minutes.

John's contribution for the dinghy show had been paid into the Association Account. The yearly subscriptions were duly increased to £18. Emma has closed the deposit account. The larger stand for the 2016 Dinghy Show was arranged and Robbie put together a video. John Claridge has purchased some new scales and all new boats are duly weighed. Simon liaised with Wayne regarding the forum on the website. Simon advised the meeting that the current website and forum are now not compatible. The only way it would work is to set up a new website, which would be costly. Spike raised a comment regarding the log in process to the website, as the things that are currently excluded to non members would make it more of an interest to them. It was decided to remove the login access to all.

Chairman's Report

I'd like to start by thanking everyone for coming to the nationals. Whilst numbers are a little low the spirit of the Lightning Fleet is definitely represented this weekend & I'm sure that will be amply demonstrated in the bar & Chez Simons tonight.

The dinghy show at the start of the year saw a brisk trade in old Giles boats to new members, whilst a few established fleet members were engaged in a mini arms race upgrading to newer Claridge boats. The Larger stand worked very well & I hope next year we can continue to demonstrate the Class's open friendliness, whilst adding a little more business like organization to signing up potential sailors and following up to get them on board a Lightning.

The Year has had its ups and downs. With excellent turnouts for both the Manor Park and up River Weekends, where we saw an old new name, taking off where last year's travellers champion left off – Simon thanks John for not building Robbie a new boat & the owners of some of our oldest boats for not fixing them up.

Unfortunately since then, we have seen a drop off in numbers, with low turnouts for most events since. This hasn't detracted from the sailing, which has seen Bryan doing lumpy water / Caroline exploring the NHS's emergency Services / John still curing his boat on the slipway / while Simon serenely conquered all before him.

We do not believe we are doing anything wrong with respect to numbers, and many classes are suffering similar drops. However we may need to work a little smarter to rebuild Class Membership numbers and encourage those to attend opens.

Simon is already looking at the program schedule, with better event timetabling and slightly reduced number of events. We only need to encourage a few more boats from each area to attend their local events and we would be back in double figures for each open.

We are looking to relaunch Relove you Lightning and want to get as many as possible to the training weekends along with John and his 'mobile work / spares shop'.

Any ideas from the fleet would be greatly received by the committee, but we would ask you to be vocal in your support for the class and anyone looking for a boat to sail should be pointed towards the Lightning and given a chance to sail one.

We have a great little boat we just need to make more noise about it and spread the word.

Secretary's Report

Our annual trip to the Dinghy Show saw the start of our season. This year we were in the main Hall. To cut down on costs, we opted not to hire the stand walls this year. This worked well. John is to be thanked again for providing two boats for the stand, although Simon was keeping a careful eye on 420, his new prized possession. Thanks as always for everyone who manned the stand throughout the weekend.

Manor Park was the first event of the year. A two day event. Training on Saturday, courtesy of Robbie and the open on the Sunday. As always, a delightful place to sail with excellent hospitality. Next was Up River, another two day event with hints and tips from Simon and Paul this time on day one and a very interesting sail right up the river to the left of the clubhouse. Jane Drummond loved the experience so much that a few weeks later she purchased 337. The Sea Champs was held at the first of our new venues this year, Thorpe Bay Yatch Club, Paul White's old stomping ground. They provided excellent facilities, with free camping on their doorstep, or for some car camping!! In walking distance of Southend for that all important game of Crazy Golf. Also not that far from A&E where one us ended up!! Thanks again go to Paul's mum and dad who looked after me. We next visited our second new venue Jason's home club for our Northern Championships. A disappointing turnout of 6 boats, but for those who turned out enjoyed tackling the challenging wind conditions. Also a good night out was had by all who went for a night out in Saltaire. Thanks again Ian for the lift. Our next trip was to Cookham. Only three visitors to this event this year and a lower attendance of club members making 14 in total taking part. With more wind than usual and 30 degree wind shifts on the narrow stretch of the water, conditions were challenging to say the least. Our Southern's this year formed part of the two day Lymington Regatta. Another low turnout of 6 boats attending. Our final event before the Nationals was the Inlands at Oxford Sailing Club. Yet again another poor turnout of only 6 boats. At least everyone got a prize this year and also plenty of wind, something we have not seen at Farmoor for a few years now.

It is disappointing to see the low turnout at opens this year, many of which have been two day events. I know many people have had other commitments. Simon will cover this subject later on in the meeting under any other business. Second hand boats continue to sell quickly. I believe at the time of writing this report, John has only built one lightning this year, but I am sure is eager to build more.

Face book continues to be the most favoured way of contacting fleet members, with the occasional email blast sent from Emma.

Thanks again to John for the supply of the polo shirts for this year's Nationals.

Treasurer's Report

As detailed above in apologies for absence, Emma was unable to attend the meeting but had provided for the meeting copies of the 2015/16 accounts, which were duly circulated to the members of the meeting.

Donations are particularly healthy this year as John's donation towards both the dinghy show for 2015 and 2016 are in this year's accounts. We therefore, would usually be showing a deficit again this year.

Postage and stationary costs are low this year, largely because Rupert and I have not been good at reclaiming all of these costs. However, postage and stationary costs have steadily decreased over the past few years with the increased focus on communicating through email, Face book and the website. Only subscription reminders and the yearbooks and membership cards are posted to members. In 2017 subscription reminders could be sent by email - does the AGM have any thoughts on this?

We have had money in both a current and savings account. As agreed at the AGM I have closed the savings accounts and everything is now in the current account. We have £3834.41 in total as of 1 August 2016 and it costs us about £2000 to run the association each year.

I was looking into a more moderns bank account that would allow BACS transfers and also allow me to see the account activity at any time online, rather than waiting for paper bank statements. At this time I have not managed to change the account as it is proving time consuming to find a free, online club/association account.

Membership

Subscriptions are down this year (numbers accurate to 11 August 2016) but with the increase in fees from £16 to £18 that our income from subscriptions has not been that low.

2016 - 69 members

2015 - 82 members

2014 - 81 members

2013 - 92 members

2012 - 90 members

How can we increase membership?

Can we encourage all clubs to charge more for non-members, which would encourage some sailors to join and also increase our Open donations.

Should we ensure that access to the members-only part of the website is removed when sailors do not re-join the association?

I am happy to continue as treasurer/membership secretary next year.

Jason will speak to Emma regarding accounts at Santander, as his club is also looking into this option. Hugh questioned why we charge an extra fee for non members at open meetings. Simon explained the reason for this and also it is a small income generator for the association. Simon himself is not in favour of charging this additional fee for non members and after some discussion he proposed that this fee was stopped which was seconded by John Claridge. All were in favour.

The accounts were agreed by the meeting, proposed by Bryan Westley and seconded by Paul White.

Action. Jason to liaise with Emma regarding possibility of Santander

Election of Chairman:

Jason Gallager is happy to stay on for a second year as Class Chairman. All in favour.

Election of Officers and Committee Members:

Vice Chairman – Paul White – Happy to continue. 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, happy to continue. All in favour

Technical Officer – Previously this was a role held by Clive Evans, but in view of the fact that he is no longer sailing Caroline proposed Simon Hopkins to take over this role, which was seconded by Jason Gallagher.

Publicity - Lee Bratley to continue

Yearbook - Rupert Whelan to be contacted to see if he is able to continue this

Action: Rupert to be contacted regarding the editing and printing of the annual yearbook.

Dinghy Show / Advertising / Website

Caroline advised the meeting that in 2017 our stand will be back in the West Hall, with quite a prime position, as we are right on the entrance from the main corridor when people enter the West Hall. John said that Robbie would be happy to add to the video clips of 2016, so if people have any go-pro action, please forward it to him. To show off the video in more details, Simon has offered to bring in a larger TV screen and stand.

As mentioned earlier in the minutes, the Committee is to check with Lee and Rupert to confirm that they are still happy to do reports to Y&Y and Year Book.

Simon is to make further contact with Wayne regarding opening up contacts to all and remove the forum. Jason suggested we also expand who can access the admin side of the website. Simon is also to talk further with Wayne regarding this with a view to training up Paul Whit and Jason Gallagher and provide them the privileges.

Action:- Simon Hopkins to liaise with Wayne Jenner regarding opening up the website to all, removing login for members, removal of the forum and adding admin users.

Class Rules / Technical Issues Clarification:

No changes this year.

2017 Nationals and Open Meeting Venues

Simon advised the meeting that 2016 started out really well with attendances. Although several events have seen very low turnouts of only 6 boats this year. He proposes to drop to 10 events in 2017 from 12, trying to make them at 3 weekly intervals. Certain events, dates cannot be changed as they are the same weekend each year. Hugh suggested that we should have meetings where the best turnouts are, but even this year where previously there have been high turnouts, numbers have been down. Hugh also stated that we should tag onto Regatta events, where we necessarily do not have to have a large fleet, as they are open regattas. Simon has also spent about 6 weeks trying to find a venue in the West Country as clubs such as Shirehampton, Bristol Avon and Bristol Corinthian all who have large fleets, Simon will continue to gain an event in that area. Simon is proposing to go back to Thorpe Bay for the Sea Championships (this was also free entry in 2016 and free camping) and join in with the Lymington Regatta. John mentioned that in 2016 the Lightning Class had the largest fleet out.

Several clubs are "set in blood" each year, Rum ad Mince Piet at WOSC, Manor Park. We propose to go back to Denholme for the Northerns, Up River in October and go back to Cookham. Rupert Whelan has also suggested that the class go back to Whitefriars. Simon is aiming to avoid the month of August for any events and as mentioned above have them at 3 weekly intervals. A suggestion was made about having the Nationals at a sea event, but Spike mentioned if it was your first time of attending the Nationals, sailing on the sea could be quite daunting. Another suggestion from Mike Gregory was Staunton Harold Club which is also a large body of water. Although we have been coming to Northampton now for the last 8 years, the proposal was to come back again in 2017, as it

is fairly central for most people. Apart from the regular hardcore travellers, if events go too far away from the Oxfordshire/M40 area, new people do not tend to travel.

To encourage people to attend more opens, John suggested a raffle for say a new sail. The more events people attend, the more chances you have of winning. If you win the open, you get two raffle tickets. This suggestion was welcomed by the meeting. Spike also suggested that the cost of the Nationals could also be reduced, but unfortunately the cost of this event is set by the event holder.

Jason thanked Simon for putting together his analysis and Caroline suggested that we leave the organisation of the 2017 events in Simon's capable hands.

Action: John and committee members to put in a plan of action regarding a raffle for 2017.

Any Other Business

Gary Burkinshaw asked do we have trial sessions. We have had nothing specific in place at the current time, but do ask those that are interested to pop along to an open meeting. Jason suggested keeping a list of names, telephone numbers/email addresses of all those that are keen at the Dinghy Show, then get in touch with them and organise some trial sail days. We will promote this more at the 2017 Dinghy Show.

John Claridge proposed a vote of thanks to the committee and Lee's reports in Y&Y.

The meeting closed at 7.21pm