

**MINUTES OF LIGHTNING 368 CLASS ASSOCIATION AGM
HELD AT NORTHAMPTON SAILING CLUB
SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2017**

Present:

Caroline Hollier, Emma Dodd, Graham Lazell, Simon Hopkins, Bryan Westley, Spike Daniels, Paul White, Robbie Claridge, John Claridge, Gary Burkinshaw, Gary Tompkins, Jason Gallagher, Penny Yarwood, Hugh Spencer and Ben Twist.

Apologies for Absence:

Peter McKerchar Ln 414, West Wittering Sailing Club, Anne and Mark Giles who wish to thank the committee for all their hard work over the last 12 months, Andrew Young, Cotswold Sailing Club. Steve Hodgson, Denholm Sailing Club and Lee Bratley, Manor Park Sailing Club.

Minutes of Last Meeting:

Copies of the minutes for the meeting held in 2016 were circulated to all members present. These were accepted as a true account of that meeting and duly signed by the Chairman Jason Gallagher.

Matters Arising From 2016 Minutes.

Emma did you have any success is setting up online banking? Jason was going to talk to you about accounts at Santander. No

Caroline has emailed Rupert to see if happy to do year book for 2018. Rupert is happy to put together for another year, but requested new contributions to be received by the end of January 2018. Simon suggested an article on the new layout of the Lightning.

Simon liaised with Wayne and the website is now open to all - no members only login pages. Did we get any additional users set up via the admin page? Still looking into this matter. **Action Simon to chat with Wayne.**

Following suggestion about keeping a list of interested people wishing to try a lightning after the dinghy show, Caroline made contact with a few offering them to come along to a try sailing day at WOSC. One person reported back that they had subsequently purchased a boat, no response from anybody else. Did anyone else have any success stories? Jason had no follow ups from the leads he obtained.

Chairman's Report

Thank you for coming to this year's Nationals and AGM. It has been an interesting 12months for the Lightning Fleet and next year promises to be even more interesting.

However, we have still seen the numbers of boats attending opens lower than we would like and membership of the association, whilst consistent should ideally be healthier than it is currently and are both areas we need to address moving into 2018.

On a good point we have had 3 new boats built this year and an order for a further 1. We would hope this will increase next year as John Claridge has been working on the latest modifications to the LN's layout, with a view to bringing the boat up to date, whilst at the same time maintaining the Class ethos of one design whilst maintaining the competitiveness of the Giles boats.

We have all seen the prototype out on the water today and will be racing against it tomorrow. I'm sure you'll agree it looks great and the space created by the revised layout will certainly be appreciated by the knees and toes of the fleet. I'm sure it will be a success and I for one look forward to having a blast in the breeze tomorrow. – along with Simon & Penny who if you hadn't heard, had an accident and are currently top of the list for new boats.

In addition to the new layout, next year is also the 40th Anniversary of the Lightning. This gives us a great opportunity to use the year to start to rebuild the active fleet and attract both new and past LN sailors to start racing again.

As an association we need to improve our communications between each other and make use of the tools available, e-mail, Face Book, Web Site to encourage the fleet to turn out, raise the profile of the Boat and Association and Promote ourselves as the class where people will actually enjoy themselves.

The committee will work hard to achieve this, but we are nothing without our members and will be looking for any ideas and help to build on the opportunity of the 40th Anniversary and New Boat Layout to put us back on an upward curve.

Thanks for your support and let's make 2018 a great LN year.

Secretary's Report

The start of the Lightning 368 calendar saw us being represented at the Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace. We were back in the West Hall this year and had a prime position opposite the main entrance. After opening a bottle of bucks fizz each morning before opening and plenty of wedding cake, to celebrate myself getting married the previous weekend, those of us on the stand were suitably fortified for a busy weekend. John should be thanked for supplying the boats, although he would not tell us who the new owner of 421 was. He was keeping it a secret to himself, although later we found out Hugh would be the proud new owner of 421. Thanks go to all who manned the stand this year, it was certainly the best show we've had for a long time, but could this be due to our positioning?

Our first sailing event with a training session on the Saturday was a return to Manor Park. I am sure many tactics were discussed in the pub on Saturday for the main event on Sunday. Next we were off to Denholm for the Northerns. This brought fluky winds and some very close racing, coming down to the wire between Penny and Caroline in the final race. If you've never been to Denholm before, it is worth it just for the scenery and the excellent home cooked food provided by the team in the galley. We then took to our first of two sea events this year for our Sea Championships at Thorpe Bay. After arriving in a thunderstorm, Saturday was very windy, seeing a few retirements. But the weekend weather got better. A stroll to the poppy wave Saturday night after tea, was a good way to relax and Sunday was a lot calmer. To the river next at Cookham. Usually a very high turnout of boats here, but only 3 visitors joined 7 of the home boats. Another day of very light winds. Our final event before the summer break and Nationals was our second trip to the salty stuff at Lymington. Unfortunately our numbers were reduced by two, following Simon and Penny being involved in a RTA a short distance from home. Both are ok, but the boats have definitely seen better days, very sad to lose boats. Following the Nationals there will be a further four more events, Broxbourne, Up River (including a training session on the Saturday), the Inlands at Hunts and our annual finale at West Oxfordshire for the Rum and Mince Pie.

Turnouts to the events has been a bit up and down, even with the incentive of being entered into a raffle for a new sail at the end of the season. But there have been a few new faces. Second hand boats are still selling fast and John has built 3 new ones this year, with 3 more on order. This is a vast improvement on last year.

Face book has been even more busier this year, with many new members tapping into this source for tips on what boats are out there for sale and as sounding board for anyone with any technical issues.

Simon commented that the request for new boats has been the best for a long time, but attendances were not any better. Hugh asked the meeting where they all are. We know where most boats are. John suggested this matter be continued in AOB.

Treasurer's Report

Emma circulated a copy of the year end accounts to the meeting. Although the subs were increased from £16 to £18 this year, fewer members 51 have joined compared to 75 in 2016. This has given us a drop in income £892 compared with £1218 in 2016 and the expenses have increased, although the cost of prizes for this year's nationals have not been included in this year's figures yet. Because the running expenses have been higher this year, it has been decided to not have the larger stand at the Dinghy Show next year to reduce some costs. Also to reduce postage next year, Emma will send out email reminders, when renewals fall due. Bryan suggested an increase in the membership fee, but the overall feeling of the meeting was that we should not. Spike enquired as to who we email, Emma only emails current members. Jason suggested that we set up an email chain for previous members and try and entice them back with a reduced membership fee for the first 12 months. As it is the Class's 40th anniversary in 2018 send out an email blast to old members with a reduced fee of say £10.

The accounts were approved by John Claridge and seconded by Bryan Westley.

Election of Chairman:

Jason Gallager is happy to stay on for a third 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 Hollier, happy to continue, all in favour

Sailing Co-Ordinator – Simon Hopkins, happy to continue. All in favour

Technical Officer – Simon Hopkins happy to continue this role, ably assisted by John Claridge and Paul White.

Publicity - Lee Bratley is happy to put things in Y&Y, but as he is not a regular attendee to open meetings, the host club to do the reports, or defaults to 3rd place at open. **Action: Home club or whoever comes 3 writes up the report for the event.**

Yearbook - Rupert Whelan as mentioned earlier in the minutes he is happy to continue this

Dinghy Show / Advertising / Website

As mentioned under the Treasurer's report it has been decided not to have an extra large stand this year and have opted for the standard size. Although in previous years this was a 4x4.5m pitch, they now calculate the area required on the size of the boat, so for 2018 we have a 6.5 x 3m stand.

Although we are in the smaller West Hall, we unfortunately have not got the prime position of this year, sitting more central.

It is also the class's 40th anniversary, as mentioned earlier. We need to push this home and get in touch with all the clubs who have large fleets, i.e. Dovestone, Coombs, to get them to come along and support the Nationals next year and make it one to remember. Possibly provide 40th anniversary t-shirts. John also mentioned that Yachts and Yachting have been in touch as they are keen to publicise large events, it would give a good excuse to do a report on the older design and the launch of the new boat. John said that it would not be cheap, but sign up for the adverts. The dinghy show would also be a good time to launch the new deck layout of the boat, although there may already be a few on the water by then. He also intends to take the new concept boat to Southampton Boat Show. **Action: John Claridge to contact Y&Y**

Class Rules / Technical Issues Clarification:

Simon said that John has made a few improvements to the deck layout of the lightning to bring it into the 21st century, making it more "sexier", but would not change the performance between the old and new styles. The hull, mast position, centreboard position would all remain the same, the changes increase the size of the cockpit, thus reducing the buoyancy, with the intention of making it easier to right and get into after a capsize. With opening up the front of the cockpit, it will also make it easier to stow away the mast, boom and sail on the floor. John has gone to some expense to make up the mock up, which he hopes the class will appreciate. Spike enquired if making the new boats would be any quicker, John replied they would take approximately the same time, but with the joints at the bottom of the transom, it would all look a lot neater, as the old moulds needed a lot of making good and over time they would become easier to make. Those that had had a sail in it earlier in the day, Jason, Simon, Paul, all said that it was very roomy and nice to sail and would be interesting to sail in a stronger wind. With the deck of the concept boat currently made of wood, Caroline asked how this effected the buoyancy, to which John replied that the buoyancy would be better in the final product. When it finally goes into production the front deck and mast post would be a separate piece, a little like the streaker layout. There was also a question with so much room, should the thwart go back in, but the general consensus of the meeting was a definite no to putting back in the thwart. Having just purchased a new boat, Ben was asked his feelings about the deck layout change. His response was that he was happy with the layout of his boat, a wider cockpit would make it more difficult for him to sail, possibly being less comfortable for him. Upon trying the boat in very light airs this morning, Simon thought that the decks should not be quite so narrow. John said widening the decks would change the overall ascetics of the boat and suggested sailing it in a stronger wind to see how it is.

Simon asked the meeting how they all felt about the changes John considers. The original moulds would be destroyed, so in future it would be just the new layout, no choice between old and new. If the old deck was to continue, John said he would need to make a new mould anyway, so it was a good time to make the changes. Nobody raised any objections, so the plan is for John to build new moulds and put the new design out there. **Action: John to build new plug for deck mould and put into production.**

2018 Nationals and Open Meeting Venues

Upon speaking to Elaine, the galley lady at Pitsford, she has advised us that she is not retiring until next year, so would be happy to provide meals on the Friday night, following the mix up in communications this year. Paul suggested that we stick with Northampton as it is fairly central for all, free camping, food provided and a bar. Jason said that maybe we should explore other venues for 2019.

Simon advised that the Rum and Mince Pie would again be the season finale and as Emma mentioned that Manor Park would like a year off next year, Up River could be the first event/training session. For the last 2 years we have been to Thorpe Bay for the Sea Champs, after chatting Friday evening we could possibly go to Plymouth next year as part of their regatta. There are many members over the in Bristol area and at Dinghy Show, Torbay in Brixham have also approached us. It was suggested that if we do not get large numbers, then promoting the class though larger regattas, could be the way to go. Simon will work with Hugh to sort out dates in Plymouth next year. Simon is also liaising with the RS300 with a possible joint event at Bristol Corinthian, hopefully this would then encourage all the boats in that area to attend.

Cookham has been confirmed for a weekend in June and it was talked about putting the Lord Birkett in the calendar as several lightning sailors like to attend this event. Simon will also have a chat with Rupert to see if Whitefriars could be a possibility. John suggested that joining in with organised regattas, would be a good way to go, as if we had low numbers, it would not matter so much. Also Shirehampton is not off the radar yet either. For the last 2 years, the Northerns have been held at Denholm. Although a funny lake to sail on, it is very picturesque and you would never go hungry!!

Gary suggested a double header with Ulley . Sailing at Denholm on the Saturday, moving down to Ulley for the evening, were they could offer "indoor camping" and sailing there on the Sunday.

It was suggested that Simon be left to sort out the calendar as there are still lots of possibilities up in the air. **Action: Simon to put together the programme for next year.**

Any Other Business

Penny suggested that as it was our 40th anniversary of the class next year, do we want to have a dinner, inviting the likes of the original builders Mark and Anne Giles, longstanding members Mal Hartland, etc. **Action: Caroline to look into the possibility of a two day event at WOSC and have a dinner at the club on the Saturday evening, hiring in caterers and joining in with club racing on the Sunday.**

John would like to thank the committee for all their hard work over the last 12 months.

Finally Jason went on to address the meeting that we lost a valuable staunch member of the Association last year, Tony Hodson, due to ill health. In his honour it was decided to have a new "spirit of the class award" trophy this year. This is to be awarded to a member who has taken the class to heart. A rebuilder of second hand Giles boats, especially those that have been damaged by cars and also come up with an interesting thread this year on face book, when he thought it would be a good idea to remove the transom from the lightning. The award this year goes to Gary Burkinshaw.

The meeting finally closed at 6.35pm.