

## **Minutes for COUR**

**8.00pm, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

*Present:*

Tom Cadoux-Hadson (OUBC), Rachel Quarrell (for Tim Jenkinson), Andrew Hadcroft (University safety officer), Emily Baldock (OURCs), Hugh Richardson (OURCs), James Gillies (OULRC), Sam McLennan (OUBC), Claire Weldon (OUWLRC), Steve Royale (Director of Rowing), Niki Fawcett (OUWBC)

Apologies: Jon Roycroft, Charlie Humphreys, Martin McNally

### **1) Minutes of the last meeting**

These were accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings.

### **2) Matters arising**

#### **a) ARA divisional rep**

It was noted that the relevant alterations to the COUR constitution still needed to be made – the constitution was currently with the proctors' office.

RQ noted that we need a new clause for the ARA div rep. It was agreed that the rep should rotate between men's and women's blues rowers, though it would not change every year.

It was suggested that everyone should have access to copies of all the relevant constitutions. OURCs would gather a copy of all the constitutions and forward to the proctors. SR would send round copies of the COUR constitution to everyone.

NF noted that she currently had a copy of each college BC's constitution.

#### **b) Single scullers**

It was noted that Rules Committee did not object to making an exemption for the 'no outings in the morning' rule for single scullers, but the committee was concerned about safety for people out alone at that time. COUR had been asked to consider what safety implications should be taken into account.

EB noted that, as a postgrad who often went out at that time, it felt a lot safer to scull in the morning when no large boats were around, but a few other small boats and the boatmen were available to assist if necessary.

AH noted that since postgrads could go out at that time, it was not an additional hazard to extend the exemption to those from combined colleges, nor was it any less safe in the morning than in the afternoon when outings were allowed.

TCH argued that it was much safer to separate small boats from the large boats which go out pre-8.30am.

#### **c) Towpath**

It was noted that MMc had been compiling the relevant information on this, but was unfortunately not present. There were otherwise no further developments to report.

It was noted that the towpath would be closed to all cyclists on the Saturday of Eights.

#### **d) OURCs Sabbatical**

AH and JR have sketched a job description which would be on the 'clerical 3' grade. The cost would be £14,344 (with a salary of around £13,500).

Administration costs would be around £2,000 pa which the sports dept could provide. This would require colleges to provide £12,344 pa, or around £66 per Eights crew.

HR asked if the job would work part-time?

RQ noted that the job description drawn up included all the OURCs posts other than the captain of coxes. These other positions should be kept in order to maintain some diversity on the OURCs committee, and therefore the secretary's job could be part time.

AH agreed that there was no objection in principle to making it a part time position.

SR noted that the University Chest would be the employer. He argued that we should be pushing the university to provide around one third of the salary since some aspects of the job, such as acting as secretary to COUR, were performed for the university's benefit.

EB agreed to suggest a cost of £33 per crew to the captains.

RQ suggested that next year the sports dept provide admin support and some limited funding for the person undertaking the position, and that it become a full sabbatical position in 2005.

### **3) Squad reports**

#### **a) OUBC**

It was noted that Isis had won, but the blue boat had lost the boat race. A report had been sent about the umpiring of the blues race. The squad was planning to take crews to Henley Royal, and a pair was currently training for the World Champs. There would be three or four returning blues for next year.

#### **b) OUWBC**

Both Osiris and the blue boat won their races. The squad had also won junior and championship eights at BUSA. The current plans were to compete at Women's Henley and the Nat Champs. Next year the squad would have three returning blues, a few returning from Osiris and 2 new internationals.

The club was cutting costs by 'optimizing' its racking. There had not been the expected sponsorship from Bailie Gifford so more sponsorship was being sought elsewhere. It would help if the races could be shown on television. The club was discussing formally writing to ITV to suggest this.

#### **c) OULRC**

Both Nephthys and the blue boat had won their races. JG was unsure how many returnees there would be, but 50 people had turned up showing interest in summer squad so there should be a large number of triallists next year.

#### **d) OUWLRC**

Won their race. Were currently looking to take a quad to Taiwan, all expenses paid. There was also a dev squad boat being entered for Women's Henley, and the summer squad had proved very competitive which boded well for next year.

#### **e) OURCs**

Torpids had been very successful, running to a full four days for the first time since 1997. Eights was due to begin the following day, and everything was going to plan.

It was noted that the development office was looking into the possibility of getting sponsorship for Eights. SR noted that any money could help pay for the sabbatical salary. HR noted that it was important to ensure that Eights, other races and the sabbatical were fully paid for before money was given to the squads next year. RQ noted that the amount given to squads tended to be surplus funds gathered from fines. It was agreed that there should be a separate account kept for the costs associated with a sabbatical – the sports dept would be able to keep it in a ring-fenced account.

#### **4) ARA Divisional rep**

CH sent his apologies – he wished to get Council’s feeling on the proposed competition review. EB agreed to ask all the captains for feedback by the beginning of June.

#### **5) Rowing lake**

A paper had been sent round with the agenda.

It was noted that this was intended to be a position paper examining the reasons why we might need a lake. Safety and capacity were the major issues. The paper attempts to set the parameters of what might be required – the aim was for a training facility rather than a competition venue.

HR argued that we need to have a sense of excitement about the possibility, but also be realistic. However, without exploring the possibility, it would never happen.

The squad presidents agreed that they would use the facility during seat racing etc, but only if it weren’t too crowded – it would need to prove more convenient and cheaper than going to Dorney lake. However, since the races were held in stream, a lot of the training would still need to be done on the river. RQ suggested leaving some boats there and some at Radley/Wallingford.

AH noted that there would be huge college use so long as it was within cycling distance.

SR noted that times for usage could be booked to allow the squads more space.

TCH noted that it could be lit to allow rowing in the late afternoon/early evening in winter.

HR noted that the real problem was whether or not there was an available plot – if COUR agreed that this was a good way forward then HR, JR and SR should look into possible sites with the University land agent.

TCH noted that this was a major step forward for safety.

AH asked if there was a minimum length required.

JG noted that the squads had still used Dorney when it was only 1,000m so even that would be useful.

However, it was agreed that a lake of 2.3km would be the priority – a rethink would take place if no appropriate plot could be found.

It was noted that the University would not pay running costs, however extraction would help with the development costs.

It was agreed to put the paper to the Sports Dept Strategy Committee.

#### **6) College Rowing**

A paper prepared by AH was attached.

AH noted that last term Ian Shore (OUWBC/OUWLRC head coach) had flagged up safety concerns with crews training at Radley. Flooding has caused crews to drift into unregulated stretches of the river.

OURCs is in a grey area – it is a dangerous statement to say that they ‘ensure’ that colleges maintain a safe approach to rowing. There should be some guidance from Council as to what each college’s duty of care is, and thereafter it is for each college to implement.

SR noted that the rules were fine, the problem was with the policing of them. OURCs cannot do this.

AH noted that all boat clubs are affiliated to the ARA and bound by the water safety code. A safety strategy document had been produced a couple of years ago but now appeared to have ‘disappeared’. It was intended to demonstrate how the WSC applied to college boat clubs. This document should be available on the website, and included in the training day for new boat club officers.

HR argued that we need some guidance from the Proctors and AH as to what should be in the OURCs constitution. OURCs monitors the Isis and Godstow stretches, but cannot be a permanent presence. OURCs does monitor river conditions which is a valuable service to colleges. It was noted that the perception of colleges is that OURCs enforces all the rules – the onus needs to be on self-enforcement. AH argued that the fining policy was reasonable, but that OURCs could not police the river. RQ noted that the fining policy was reasonably effective at ensuring compliance with the rules. HR argued that OURCs should be ensuring awareness of safety issues rather than enforcing them. He asked that the legal department be asked to assist in drafting something suitable. AH agreed to come back to COUR next term with a qualified statement for the OURCs constitution.

RQ noted that we need to involve college senior members – COUR should write explaining that we can’t be responsible for college rowers (especially when not training on the Isis or Godstow stretches).

## **7) AOB**

None