



Council of Oxford University Rowing

Minutes from the meeting of the Council on **Tuesday 12th May 2015 at 8pm at Magdalen College.**

Present: Trigger, Saul, Chitty, Green, Stephens, Louloudis, Pirie, Wilson, Clarke, Roycroft, Stewardson, White, Hitchen, White, Azzopardi, Davis, Walter

1. Report of the meeting held in HT 2015

No particular comments on anything not discussed later in the meeting.

2. Matters arising, not covered elsewhere in the agenda

Shrubs on the Isis were cleared along the Greenbank. Sports safety sub-committee issues from HT all satisfied. The Senior Members list remains incomplete; PA is continuing to work hard to complete this.

3. Squad reports

See filed reports – no matters arising from discussions.

4. Rowing Sabbatical Officer report

See filed report – one of the more concerning aspects was the perceived unpredictability of Salters steamers during the summer months with their increased schedule. It was resolved that ongoing discussion between the RowSab, Captain of Coxes facilitated perhaps by the Senior Umpire and MBB with John Salters should be pursued to put plans in place for Summer 2016.

5. OURCs Secretary report

Further to matters arising it was resolved that the OURCs Sec should complete the compilation of a list of all current senior members; the current list is out of date and some colleges don't have senior member (e.g. Mansfield SJC for > year). The secretary has requested all clubs to submit the name of their senior member and their role in college.

6. OURCs Captain of Coxes report

See filed report. It was agreed that MTMs do not need to be a standing item for COUR since they relate to enforcement rather than policy; should matters arise with implications for safety policy, these will be brought to COUR.

7. OU Sports Safety Sub Committee

A matter had arisen with the university regarding an insurance claim from a member of the public (see Section 9) that had been managed through direct discussion. This had

highlighted the potential for communication through existing channels e.g. Chair of COUR and the council agreed that they would be very pleased to act in this role.

8. Terms of Reference of COUR

A discussion paper was tabled by the Chair of COUR following consultation with the council and Senior Members (SMs) of the clubs. The ensuing discussion highlighted the following key general conclusions:

Background: COUR is primarily an advisory committee to the university and plays a key role in advising on rowing safety. It serves a vital link between the squads, OURCs, British Rowing, the Director of Sport, Safety Office and the proctors on this central matter.

The following discussion points were put to the meeting for views:

Q: 'Does the process of COUR needs fundamental alteration?' A: rejected unanimously

Q: 'Could SM representation be reconsidered?' A: It was agreed that clubs work differently with varying specifications of the role and that a senior employee of the squads could adequately act as the representative of the SM, noting any potential conflicts of interest. It is taken as read that any such representative of the SM would be in direct, effective communication with the SM concerned. It was noted that SM roles might be split between more than one member of Congregation. After discussion, it was suggested that each SM should notify the Proctors of any such arrangement for clarity if they were unable to attend in person on a regular basis.

Q: 'Should the additional composition of COUR be reconsidered?' A: It was agreed that the status quo composition should be confirmed as appropriate: SMs, OURCs secretariat, University Sports Director, University Safety Officer, Squad Presidents, British Rowing representative.

Q: 'Should the college clubs be more widely included?' A: It was agreed that the presence of the Presidents of the 4 'Head' crew colleges was unnecessary. The Captains' meeting should provide a forum for communication between COUR and the meeting. Colleges' rowers are, in effect, represented through OURCs. The timing of those meetings with respect to COUR might need to be considered appropriately.

What are the practical benefits of representation of the squads through their presidents? Is it ambitious that safety concerns are communicated through presidents? Safety is the main priority, and nothing should be put before it.

Q: 'Should COUR be during working hours?' A: It was agreed that a strong tension existed in trying to accommodate the preferred times of all. It was agreed that a compulsory timing in working hours would not be feasible with the current membership. The council acknowledged the issues that this might create and agreed to explore supportive arrangements with the university.

Q: 'To ensure greater continuity should the term of Chair be extended' A: It was agreed that 6 terms of Chair, coincident with the calendar year would provide longevity of memory and proper staggered tenure with other posts. The current tenure is held by OULRC's SM and so would last until MT 2016; OUBC's SM will take up tenure in HT2017.

Q: 'Do special issues exist for 'off-Isis' crews that are not being dealt with?' A: It was agreed that risks at all locations are covered in annual risk assessments of the college and squad clubs. No special issues not raised in those assessments were perceived but should they arise then the council agreed that OURCs should come to COUR to address them, as now.

9. Rowing Safety

MTMs as tabled.

Torpids incident: On Friday of Torpids, a member of the public was walking downstream, and OURCs cyclists were following the race. Due to a collision between two umpires and the member of the public, the member of the public ended up in the river. A settlement was reached for the replacement of damaged items. OURCs has a clear stance on cyclists: no cyclists are allowed on Saturday of Summer Eights. Safety procedures are to be reexamined to prevent recurrence of such an incident. More warning signs will be used, especially along the towpath. The tannoy will be used to make safety announcements preceding each division. Although the person concerned was constantly in the care of OURCs, it was agreed that a designated incident coordinator will be identified by OURCs prior to racing in the future to allow prompt reporting. DW will liaise further with OURCs on this. The Marshal script has since been revised. Umpire scripts have also been updated. New signs have also been ordered.

Ouwbc Tideway incident: One week before the boat race, one of two 8s was swamped in tricky conditions (wind + against tide). The other 8 rowed home. RNLI were passing and attended the incident. No one was hurt. Although OUW did report the incident to BR, and met with the BR officer the next morning, no paper report was submitted in time. All acknowledged that safety is the primary concern and therefore such a report should be submitted immediately. It was noted that such negligence could create long lasting consequences. DW met with OUW to discuss reporting of incidents and it was subsequently acknowledged in writing by OUWBC's SM that this matter was unfortunate and that new procedures were in place within the club to avoid any such recurrence.

10. British Rowing Representative's Report

It was noted that if colleges fail to pay their affiliation fees they will be disaffiliated and so will not be covered by insurance and hence will not be allowed to row in OURCs events.

It was noted that a reminder should be issued to all clubs that even small incidents should be reported. Safety is about risk, probability and assessment; such reports emphasize that all incidents are taken seriously. To aid colleges in this regard MBB generously offered to assist with the Captains' training day and that these requirements are discussed at the beginning of the MT meeting each year. A 'compliance meeting' could be run by the RowSab.

It was agreed that BR deadlines and requirements should be re-emphasized/re-posted on the OURCs website.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday of 3rd Week MT 2015.