



Council of Oxford University Rowing

Unconfirmed report of the meeting of the Council on **Tuesday 25th October 2016** at 5pm at the University Club.

Present:

Dr Ben Davis (chair) (OULRC Senior Member)
Jon Roycroft (OU Director of Sport)
Gary Stephens (OU Sports Services Manager)
David White (OU Sports Safety Officer)
Dr Lisa Walker (OUWBC Senior Member)
Paul Azzopardi (OURCs Senior Member)
Dr Fernanda Pirie (OUWLRC Senior Member)
Barbara Wilson (OUBC Club Administrator)
Alba Pelloroque (OUWLRC President)
Will Frost (OURCs Secretary)
Charlie Thurston (OURCs Captains' Representative)
Tom Coles (Rowing Sabbatical Officer)
Rowan Arthur (OULRC President)

Apologies:

Isabell von Loga (OUWBC President)
Michael diSanto (OUBC President)
Sir Jon Bell (OUBC Senior Member)
Jameson Lee (OURCs Captain of Coxes)
Mark Blandford-Baker (BR Divisional Representative)

1. Report of the meeting held on 10th May [Paper 1]

GS pointed out that he attendec the last meeting. TC corrected this in the minutes. [**Action: TC**]

2. Matters arising, not covered elsewhere in the agenda

~ Action arising from the last meeting

a. Freshers' Booklets

TC to chase up what happened to the freshers' booklets as they seem to have disappeared in the handover. [**Action: TC**]

b. Bod Card scanners

TC asked when these were likely to be implemented. JR explained that the University's purchasing process is slow, and that the tender comes back on the 12th of November,

meaning the Bod Card scanners, to aid in signing people in for swim tests, ought to be installed ready for the next academic year. [**Action: JR**]

3. University Squad Reports [Paper 2]

BW gave a report on MDS' behalf. No issues raised.

4. OURCs Reports [Paper 3]

PA reminded OURCs committee that these reports are important and need to be checked over before the meeting.

There was some confusion over the report by Rachel Quarrell (Senior Umpire), which TC understood had gone to PA but not to him and was therefore not on the agenda.

BD requested reports to come in a week before the meeting, which TC agreed to sort. [**Action: TC / Reporters**]

5. Under 18s – DW to speak

DW related a case where a college had requested permission for a 14 year-old sculler to train with them over the summer, and pointed out that the wording on the OURCs website is as follows:

“Separate guidelines apply for under 18s - please email the OURCs committee for special precautions in this situation.”

From separate discussions with the committee DW feels this has fallen through the institutional memory. In particular, if juniors are using college equipment, they need specific coaching and welfare provisions.

BD requested that the website be updated to show the British Rowing RowSafe guidelines; but that if this were to become regular, official guidelines would be needed. DW clarified that this is basically a one-off.

PA said that Oxford University should be careful of taking responsibility.

BD said the priority should be to connect people with the RowSafe guidelines.

GS asked about the impact on swim tests. BW asked if there was any data about numbers. TC said we do not ask age at the swim tests.

PA made clear that there is a difference between a 14 year-old sculler and a 17 year-old coming up to university. Perhaps should encourage colleges to sort out separate swim tests for juniors from the big batch, as running them creates problems for OU. [**Action: TC**]

JR pointed out that instructors for many other sports at the University push this – it is University policy to keep them separate.

FP asked whether this is a particularly big problem. TC clarified that it is when people want to race in OURCs events, which happens on an occasional basis, as we request they pass an OU swim test to do so.

LW asked if OURCs could have a separate think about associate membership. TC and WF agreed to facilitate this. [**Action: OURCs Committee / Captains**]

BD requested that the OURCs website be updated. [**Action: TC**]

6. OURCs Business

– Flag status

JL unfortunately not present to talk further about the stream-based system, but plan remains to collect data and trial it for the academic year with a view to implementing it in 2017-18. [Action: JL]

– Senior Umpire's Report [**Paper 4**]

Not present for the meeting.

7. OU Sports Safety Subcommittee

PA, the Council's representative, explained that there has been a change in the reporting structure, but that the minutes will still go to Sports Strategy and Education. PA also clarified to TC the importance of minuting all our mistakes.

8. Any Other Business

– next chair

The chair of COUR is renewed every calendar year, to ensure continuity. According to the Terms of Reference, FP is the new chair – TT15 minutes (in which it was expected to be SJB) need correcting to reflect this. [Action: TC]

– booking swim tests

JR explained that historically, the process of booking the pool is sent out to all four university clubs.. This created confusion when OUWLRC attempted to book the pool earlier in term for a capsized drill as bookings now need to be done much more in advance.

TC is to check bookings for MT on behalf of all four clubs as their last action in the role, and handover documents are to be updated to reflect this. BD asked the RowSab to communicate and administrate this. [Action: TC]

Terms of Reference

BW reminded the Council that the Terms of Reference are to be reviewed at the beginning of every calendar year, so will need checking at the next meeting. TC to find Terms of Reference and attach them to the agenda for the next meeting for discussion. [Action: TC]

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at **5pm on Wednesday 1st February.**

Council of Oxford University Rowing

Unconfirmed report of the meeting held on **Tuesday 10th May 2016** at 5pm in Lecture Room A, Magdalen College.

Present:

Chair: Ben Davis (OULRC Senior Member)
Mark Blandford Baker (BR Divisional Representative)
Jon Roycroft (OU Director of Sport)
Gary Stephens (OU Sports Services Manager)
David White (OU Sports Safety Officer)
Barbara Wilson (OUBC Administrator)
Paul Azzopardi (OURCs Senior Member)
Fernanda Pirie (OUWLRC Senior Member)
Joe Hitchen (OURCs Captain of Coxes)
Tom Coles (OURCs Sabbatical Officer-elect)
Jonathan Williams (OURCs Secretary)
Jess Dunham (OURCs Captains' Representative)

Apologies:

Not received, but squad captains were not present.
- Discussions were held to ensure their future appearances.

1. Minutes of meeting held on 2nd February 2016 [Paper 1]

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising, not covered elsewhere in the agenda

PA apologised for not contacting Christchurch regarding safety issues at Christchurch regatta, will work with the OURCs Secretary and Sabbatical Officer to get this done.
YW believed to have corrected the TT15 and MT 15 minutes (unable to be definitively confirmed due to her absence) and made considerable progress with the freshers' booklet.
Clubs had been warned about tideway safety issues ahead of the heads of the river.

All other action points addressed.

4. OURCs Reports [Paper 3]

Some discussion was had over the new measures for cyclists implemented by OURCs for Summer Eights 2016. PA clarified the process of how they were arrived at and the reasoning behind them. The council will observe the result of these measures with interest.

5. British Rowing Divisional Representative's Report

6. BW and MBB noted that UKAD had stepped up their efforts, following an incident where two athletes from Brookes were found guilty of a doping violation. It was noted that of the athletes in question, one was found with a stimulant that he was taking for academic, rather than performance, reasons in his system, and the other was found with metabolites of cocaine in his system. It was noted that there may well be students taking stimulants for academic reasons that are legal for general use, but banned in sport. The

council found it extremely unlikely that UKAD would turn up at Summer VIII's, but they have been appearing more often at BR events. Colleges should be encouraged to make sure their athletes are aware what is and is not allowed within rowing. It was suggested to share the GlobalDRO search tool with the colleges to allow athletes to check their medication for prohibited substances. *(JW has since found that he sent this around in November, when BR made the original press release)*

BW suggested that an anti-doping representative could come to present to the colleges at some point. No formal move was suggested with regard to this.

BW told the council about a new tier of courses available for coaches, intended to provide very basic knowledge, and suggested that this might be useful for new coaches, particularly in MT. MBB and JH pointed out that the 4 day (two weekend) time frame would be prohibitive for students, particularly senior rowers who were just helping out with novices. It was suggested that a shorter course or seminar could perhaps be arranged, possibly run by the blues squad coaches. It was noted that Sean Bowden and Andy Nelder had run such events in the past. It was decided that OURCs would investigate this possibility.

6. OU Sports Safety Subcommittee

No comment on the committee itself. Brief discussion of the forthcoming implementation of bod card scanners for swim tests.

7. Rowing Safety

JH outlined a proposed system for setting the flag based off hydrographic data, rather than the opening of the lock as is currently used. This was being developed in conjunction with Anu Dudhia and Jameson Lee, who will be succeeding JH as captain of coxes next academic year. The algorithm is currently incomplete, as it does not yet take the Cherwell into account, but that was being worked on. The council was generally impressed by the algorithm and noted its advantage of a faster response time (due to the current system's requirement that the lock be checked manually; the new system works from data published online by the EA). JH also noted that the system could be used to provide information about flow conditions on other stretches, such as Godstowe, Radley, Abingdon and Wallingford, which BW said would be useful for the squads. It was agreed that this system would be run in parallel with the current flag system over the following winter and a comparison made, probably in TT17.

9. AOB

TC welcomed to the council ahead of 2016-17 season.

10. Date of next meeting

Decided as 25th October at 5pm.

Squad Reports – Paper 2

OUBC – Michael DiSanto

Trialing started on September 5th. Good squad with plenty of depth. Sent two boats to the British Championships, top boat won and other boat placed third. Four's Head is in a little over two weeks, will be a good indication of where we stack up against Cambridge.

OUWBC – Isabell von Loga

The squad has had a promising start to the season so far; we have had a good turnout, with a total team count of currently over 30, including six returners from last year's Osiris and one Blue Boat returner. As usual during this part of the year, we have been training in a variety of different combinations, including some sculling boats. Earlier this month, seven athletes raced in single sculls at the Wallingford Long Distance Sculls; we had some very encouraging times posted, with the top results being 2nd place in both the Elite and IM1 1x as well as a win in the Senior Category and the Elite 2x. We have just finished the British Championships in Nottingham, where we had 2 8+s entered in the Elite and the University event. The elite 8 ended up overall 4th, with the second 8 winning their C final, after just having missed out on the B final. This early in the year, it is all about finding each other and getting used to side-by-side racing as well as the experience of having three 2k races in the span of six hours. Additionally, this was used as an opportunity for some of our athletes to trial for the GB team this season. Our next goal will be Four's Head in mid-November on the Tideway, shortly thereafter followed by Trial VIIIs at the end of November, before we then pack our bags after Christmas to go on training camp.

OULRC – Rowan Arthur

OULRC began training on September 12th under the stewardship of our new head coach Samuel Wells. In total we have seen thirty two athletes, and have settled on a squad of twenty rowers and three coxes for the season going forwards. The squad is a roughly even split between graduates and undergraduates, and is similarly divided between rowers who began at Oxford and those who rowed elsewhere before arriving. The early signs suggest the potential for a strong season. The squad contains a solid core of experienced rowers, and physiological testing suggests an improved level of fitness at this point compared to previous years. The Squad entered a number of boats, for Wallingford Long distance sculls, with the top crew narrowly missing out on being the fastest double of the day, whilst a 'top' eight put in a reasonable performance at the National Championships in Nottingham this weekend, finishing in the middle of the C Final and soundly beating the top Cambridge Lightweight Crew. There is a lot of work to be done to attain our primary goals of winning our first boat race in four years, and winning the Lwt VIII at BUCS, but I think that both of these goals are currently achievable if the squad continues to work hard. As ever, finances remain an issue this year, with subs payments being set at £1400 for the season.

OUWLRC – Alba Pelleroque

In July, the LW4x representing GB Universities placed third at the European Universities Games in Zagreb, Croatia.

The start of the 2016-2017 kicked off with 2 pre-season camps: a 'live-out' sculling camp at Wallingford, and a pre-season camp in Sarnen, Switzerland. The 4-day sculling camp was opened to all who have registered an interest in trialling for the club this year and intended to offer new joiners the opportunity to gain experience in smaller boats. The Sarnen pre-season camp was dedicated to returning athletes and a selection of the Development Squad (12 in total). This was a new incentive, intended to accelerate the initial technical standard of the (anticipated) upper tier of the squad. Both camps were a success - encouraging squad bonding and helping to achieve a high technical standard early in the season.

Attendance this year is slightly lower as it has been the previous years, with only 18 rowers and 2 coxes. Of these 18 athletes, two are returners from last year's blue boat and three are from Tethys. An Open-Day is being organised, planned for next Saturday 29th Oct, in order to promote our club within Oxford Colleges and recruit few more rowers and coxes.

We are currently training in a number of different combinations. After some very strong fixtures at Dorney against LEH, we decided to compete at the British Championships in Nottingham where we entered a lwt2x and an 8+. Our lwt2x came 3rd in the Final D and, with a strong opposition from Britain open-weight crews, our 8+ place 6th in the Final E. In the coming weeks two of our athletes will be taking part in the first GB trials assessment.

OURCs Reports – Paper 3

Rowing Sabbatical Officer – Tom Coles

Since taking over from Yosiane at the start of September, I have tried to familiarise myself with all of the relevant parties, including yourselves, as I settle into the role.

We ran the usual big-block swim tests at the start of Michaelmas, testing 1,298 students. A number of captains have suggested that there has been a smaller than usual uptake of novices this year, possibly linked to the closure of Christ Church Meadow at the beginning of the month. 153 of these tests were failures. A handful of people came back and failed repeatedly – we are planning to run the swimming lessons again next Monday, following Yosiane's program last year. But we also had some novices come back and succeed at the second attempt, which was heartening.

The final swim test of this term will run on the 6th of November, and I already have interest in that.

One college has been severely chastened as administrative confusion led to many novice men not being swim tested – we will be enforcing the five outings rule.

British Rowing Safety Audits were sent out at the start of the month, later than last year due to problems on the British Rowing end. The deadline to me is the 5th of November and the deadline to send to British Rowing is the end of that month. I have already had many of them in and reminded the captains yesterday so do not anticipate any problems.

I am currently working on the event plans for Torpids and hope to speak to Barbara soon about the “Dorney Torpids” contingency.

Captain of Coxes – Jameson Lee

I was not involved in handling most of the incidents during Eights as Joe Hitchen was still CoC, apart from the Oriel W1 incident and the Keble M1 entanglement. In the weeks following eights, and during the long vac, I was not aware of any major coxing incidents. The handover between Joe and myself went smoothly, and we have just over 200 coxes registering at this term's coxing registration meeting. Myself and David Locke are now “qualified” to assess coxes from novice to experienced. There have been no coxing related incidents on the river, except for a minor collision between Queens and St. John's which was resolved quickly between the two clubs with no one getting seriously injured.

Secretary – Will Frost

OURCs committee 2016-2017

William Frost (Secretary)

Tom Coles (Sabbatical Officer)

Harriet Bull (Treasurer)

Jameson Lee (Captain of Coxes)

Sabina Manzini (Sponsorship Officer)

Nick Palmius (Webmaster)

Paul Azzopardi (Senior Member)

David Locke (Senior Treasurer)

Michael DiSanto (Chair)

Seven OCMs (Matt Rigby, Pete Bond, Henrik Hannemann, Joe Hitchen, Bernard Tao, Alissa Bray, Cameron McGarry)

Dates for this year's competitions

On the website.

Autumn Fours

Eighteen crews entered and sixteen races were completed. Corpus won the men's event and Hertford won the women's event. It was very quiet at race desk, although there was one appeal which was quickly resolved by a race committee after the taking of oral evidence from both interested parties and a member of the OURCs committee. Small issues that had no impact on the day but may perhaps have had major implications at bumps races were flagged up, and relevant changes will be made starting from IWL A.

Relevant changes to be made starting from IWL A

- Excess committee overseeing marshals on the job to aid in their development.
- A whiteboard being kept at race desk tracking who is holding each radio.
- A sign-out sign-in sheet for all marshalling equipment.
- A review of the marshalling briefings, including an OURCs committee get-together to practice reading over the scripts.
- Better organisation of papers on race desk e.g. through files taped to the desk.

IWL A

No more than a dozen crews (mostly eights) entered so far, but we expect a big rush before close of entries close tomorrow (Wednesday 26th) at 1800. A draw will be made available later that evening.

Entries website

The current OURCs entries system is now over 10 years old and a number of functional and security issues have been found over recent years. Unfortunately the out-dated nature of the underlying technology makes it difficult to fix these bugs without a major reworking of the current system so this summer I began development on a modern replacement. The new system will handle the athlete, swim test, capsizing drill, coxing, event/entry and club committee records but is not intended to be a replacement for the main website. If development goes well, marshalling and bankriding information will also be incorporated. A demo was shown to the committee in early September and met with their general approval. Since then development has continued and I aim to release another demo in the next couple of weeks which will have most of the features for athlete and club record management in place. A period of beta testing is planned for shortly after IWL B and the intention is for the system to go live ready for Hilary term. The changes will not affect the squads significantly, but I am designing the system such that the squads can use it to easily check the swim test status of college athletes joining them, and so that squad swim tests can be readily incorporated into the main swim test records.

Paper 4 – Senior Umpires' Report (Rachel Quarrell)

Introduction

This year's Senior Umpires were David Locke, Lynch Mason, Laura Dance, Pat Lockley and Rachel Quarrell. Pat Lockley (former British Rowing Regional Development Officer, BR qualified umpire and former college coach) had been trained with great success during 2015 Eights week. RQ also recruited and trained Ian Macconnachie (former RowSab and ChCh Regatta organiser/SU) and Tom Baker (former Captain of Coxes) as Isis Winter League SUs during the winter. Both work locally so can help with these minor events. Tom cannot spare enough weekday time to train as a full SU but Ian has a more flexible schedule and so during Summer Eights 2016 we trained him as a full bumps SU to replace David Pallot, who is not expected to return to the role imminently.

DL, LD and RQ have valid firearms licences and we are now in the process of acquiring one for IM. The bumps cannons continued to be stored at the Iffley Road Armoury and our thanks to all the members of staff who helped us take them in and out smoothly each race day.

The committee functioned competently as a whole, building on the tactic of giving multiple members experience as Race Secretary (the overall event management role) in different races. RowSab Yosiane White did well to overcome her relatively limited experience of the sport, and Secretary Jonathan Williams did a particularly good job starting the bumps year as Torpids race secretary. We are indebted to Secretary-elect Will Frost for stepping up to the race management role early during Eights before his tenure formally began (this will aid ongoing continuity).

Safety

The principal change in safety culture was (post-Torpids) to spend more time making the coaches and bankriders of colleges aware of their legal requirement to take care on the towpath. All bankriders for Eights 2016 were required to attend a briefing beforehand or at the river, and a database of attendance was kept so that we can check which new bankriders need to attend one next academic year. New signs were made to help ensure that cyclists and pedestrians entering the towpath were aware of racing and of each other, although we do not intend to over-use these outside Eights, in case cyclists think we are crying wolf at times when the towpath is not busy.

The 2015-16 policy change in lifejacket issuing (that we will not lend lifejackets to those who forget them for racing) continued to pay dividends, with very few missing lifejackets during regattas. Heavy penalties were given to those missing lifejackets during training, which will also have helped instil a proper culture during racing. However, there are already signs that this is a point we must emphasise anew every single year.

Autumn Fours and Winter League races

Autumn Fours was held as the first event of the season, moved to later in Michaelmas than previously, with great success. Despite high wind, the Isis was beautifully sheltered and we were even able to race mixed doubles of varying experience as an exhibition.

The Winter League events continue to be absolutely invaluable for training committee, marshals, crews, coxes and bankriders to their racing roles. With an early Torpids only four IWLs were scheduled and three of those were able to run, the last being cancelled due to high stream. IM, TB and RQ together experienced a wide range of conditions and gained great confidence in what

inexperienced crews can do when properly marshalled and with big enough spinning areas, even in strong wind.

This year the committee are reserving the option to hold an 'Isis Summer League' event in Trinity 2017 if lots of the winter events have to be cancelled. The date will be cleared with local clubs, of course.

Torpids 2016

Stream had been very fast prior to Torpids, but (possibly due to a change in the EA's tolerance for river heights) the lock shut in rapidly during 5th week, permitting Rowing On to be run with great success. Due to low training time, coxes who had registered as novice in January 2016 were not permitted to race-cox in Torpids, which otherwise ran with a full programme on initially blue and later green flag. To make it easier for colleges with few coxes, eligibility requirements were suspended for the remaining registered and swim-tested coxes.

The restriction of Torpids to 13-boat divisions was justified. 10 women's and 17 men's crews failed to row on, some of which were of a very low ability. Once full racing began the low water experience began to show, with crews initially having trouble manoeuvring which led to circulation issues and late division starts, but this was the biggest problem encountered, and improved as the week went on.

All the liveboard boats moored in the bunglines area kindly moved in time for racing, although there was a misunderstanding by the Environment Agency which led to the bottom bungline by the lock being blocked by a moved boat. Fortunately the SUs had already decided not to use that point since at the start of the race week, though the river flow was still noticeable.

Appeals went as smoothly (or not) as they ever do, but the committee were better at departing in time to be properly rested before the next day. All SU appeals were straightforward. There was one notable incident involving safety, when a father and 9-year-old daughter cycling down from Donnington Bridge during the last race of the week had a near-collision with a coach bankriding a crew. The daughter did not in fact fall off her bike nor was she hurt since the coach managed to stop in time and to steady her, but she was understandably shaken and upset. The incident was reported to the OU Sports Safety Officer and to COUR, and changes in safety procedure were made in consultation with them. These were principally an increase in alerting towpath users during Eights 2016, and new ways of informing and managing our own traffic (bankriders, committee and marshals/umpires). We note that we cannot close the towpath during racing since it is a public right of way.

Alternative event

The alternative 'Dorpids' was booked and well planned by the committee, particularly Yosi, but was not needed. Our thanks to Dorney Lake for permitting the provisional booking.

Summer Eights 2016

Eights ran as usual with 14-boat divisions. As a result of this only 1 women's crew and 4 men's crews did not qualify during Rowing-On [the 2015 numbers were 8 and 6 respectively, the 2014 numbers 7 and 1]. The SUs note that this gives little competition for places and no significant test of ability/safety of crews. If the numbers continue to deteriorate then a return to 13-boat divisions (which would be a loss of only 7 men's and 6 women's places) should be considered. There was a regrettable error when a crew was initially declared 'friendly' (ie non-eligible but racing anyway) which caused confusion and a tie-break in qualifying. RQ will remind the 2017 committee that 'friendly' ineligible entries cannot be permitted in Rowing-On.

Racing was basically successful, with an encouragingly low number of klaxoned races for the second year running (5 in 4 days), although the SUs have noted that marshal responses to klaxons need to be explained even more clearly in briefing. River marshalling standards again varied: we will continue our efforts to persuade colleges that marshalling is a job for their most, rather than their least experienced, members. We are concerned that over-lengthy race-desk briefings may be leading to those attending becoming bored and not listening.

In racing, a bigger emphasis on coxes not getting boxed in during the pre-race talk seemed to work and race coxing was of a good standard. Circulation was poorly adhered to below the Gut but fortunately public river traffic was initially low, giving crews time to improve in subsequent days, and we had particularly good cooperation from Salters and the local non-student clubs this year, for which much thanks.

In addition to signage and briefings, extra "towpath" marshals were used to ensure that bankriders and public towpath users understood each others' needs, and we are confident that safety was improved as a result. Pre-recorded hand megaphones were used to ensure that the message was concise, clear and consistent. We have a good feel for how to use these extra marshals now and can encourage colleges to send their newer and less experienced members to do this job. In summary, *as a result of all the measures put in place between Torpids 2016 and Eights 2016, there were no incidents or near-misses involving bicycles during the latter.*

SU appeals were of normal frequency and mostly about predictable interpretation issues we encounter every year. Epione Medical Services dealt extremely competently with first aid problems. One in-race incident worth noting involved a rower being ejected with his footplate: he was unharmed and the college concerned was fined for unsafe equipment. The committee is looking at a possible boat inspection on the day before racing begins, although this may not be practical. Other options would include threatening to remove crews permanently from the regatta if their equipment has been found to be unsafe.

RQ for the Senior Umpires