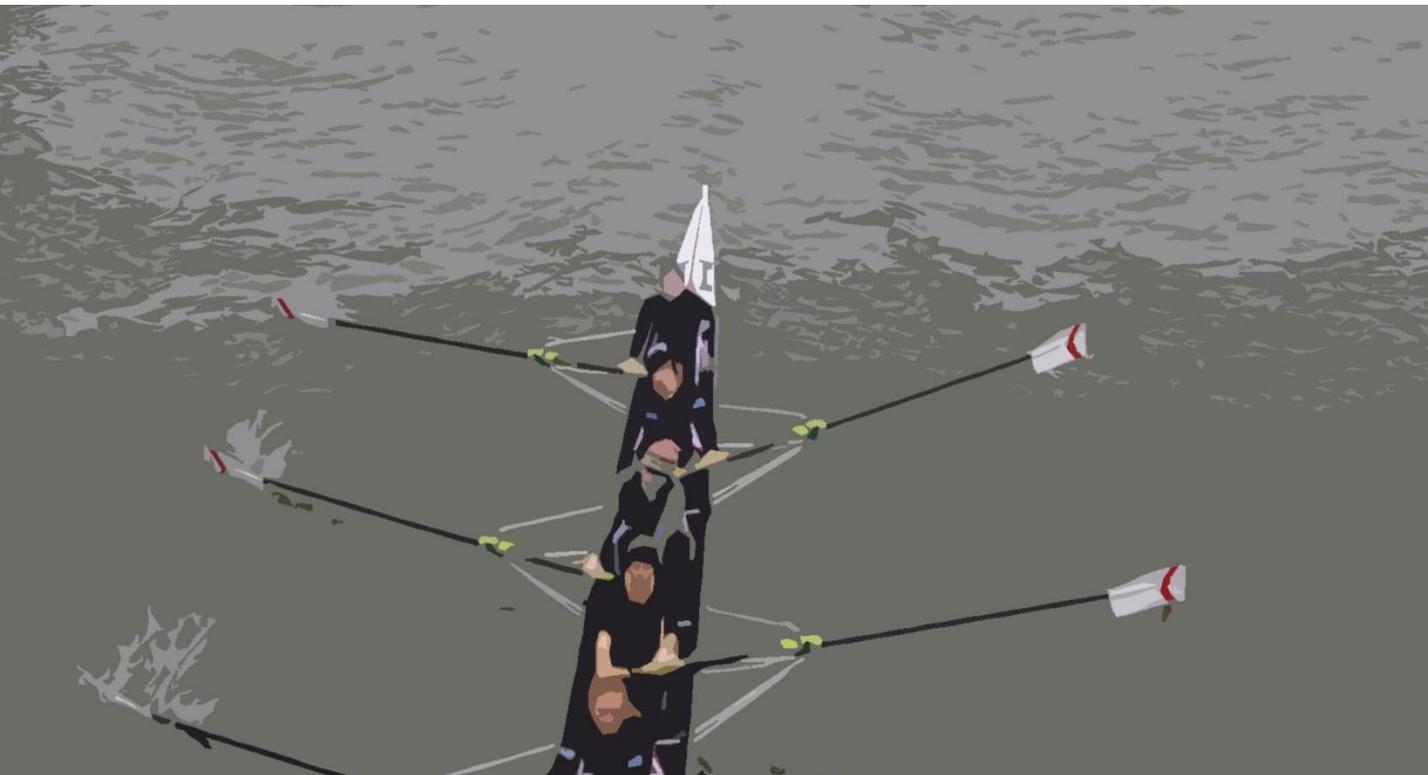


# Oxford University Rowing Clubs

## MT2012 Survey Findings



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# Key Findings

- Captains are happy with our organisation but rowers less so
- We should manage our emails and the website better
- We should provide a more structured job description and set of responsibilities for Ordinary Committee Members
- People would appreciate swapping fines for marshalling slots
- It is worth investigating creating a new flag category
- People rate us badly because they think we run Christ Church regatta

## At a Glance

General	3.41
Committee	3.54
Rules*	3.44
Events	3.62
Services	3.88
Isis Flag	3.54

## Key

Rating	Score
Excellent	4.00–5.00
Good	3.50–3.99
Satisfactory	3.00–3.49
Poor	2.00–2.99
Very poor	1.00–1.99

## Guidance

Answers were collected through two collector channels:

- The Rowing Captains' Mailing List
- The OURCs mailing list

Most questions were graded on a 1–5 scale; the 'at a glance' metric is calculated as the mean of all results.

\*Rules questions are 'negative' statements; the score above has been 'inverted' by subtracting the mean score from 6, in order to bring it in line with other metrics.

Quotes have been left unedited where possible; where any material is closely paraphrased to save space or to reflect a tense change is denoted by square brackets. Extraneous phrases or clauses are omitted to save space where necessary.

## General satisfaction

*Captains are generally satisfied with the system but we are much less well regarded outside of this circle*

		Satisfaction at end of MT					
		SD	D	N	S	SS	
Satisfaction at start of MT	SD	1	1				0
	D	1	2				1
	N		6	8	3		12
	S		2	6	29	1	24
	SS				2	3	5
		0	8	6	23	5	<b>42</b>

Average scores by collector:

RC 3.89

OU 3.22

## Reasons given for these scores:

*"I thought your flood management was very good."*

*"I believe OURCs managed everything admirably in light of the weather/flooding conditions this Michaelmas term."*

*"I certainly can't complain so far!"*

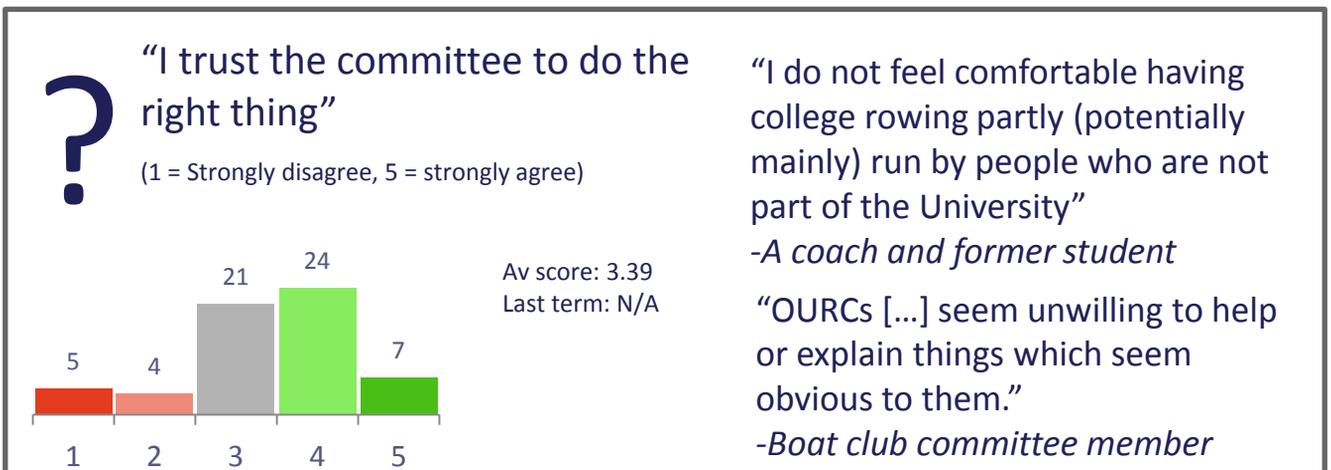
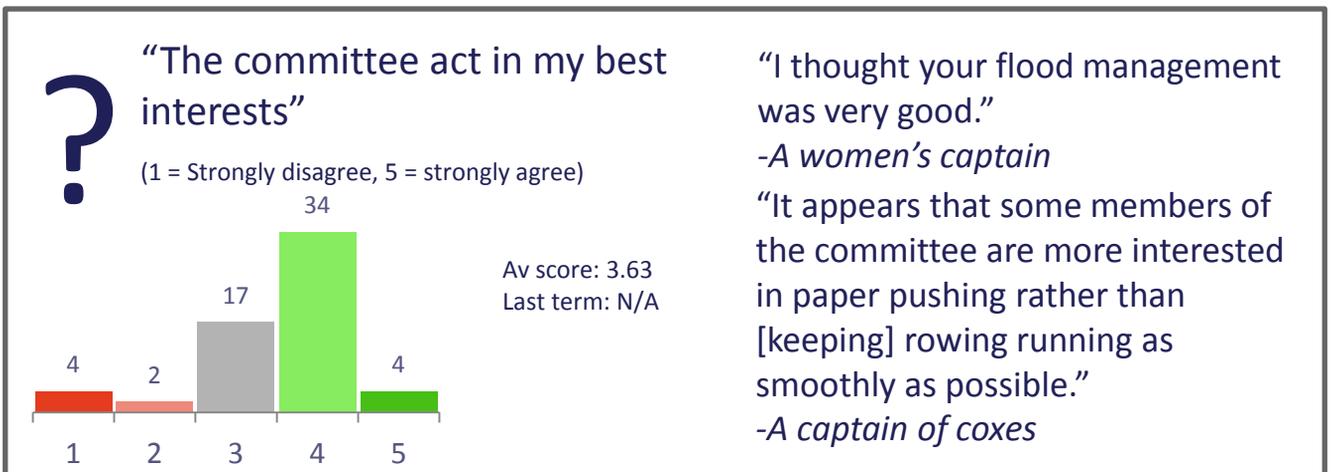
*"I feel the flag status duration was too strict, and could have been refined to [specific types of crew or specific coxes]"*

*"OURCs (with the exception of RQ who is without exception always massively helpful) seem unwilling to help or explain things which seem obvious to them."*

*"Acting beyond granted authority" (referring to closing boathouse island)*

# OURCs Committee

*Many people doubt us to do the right thing*



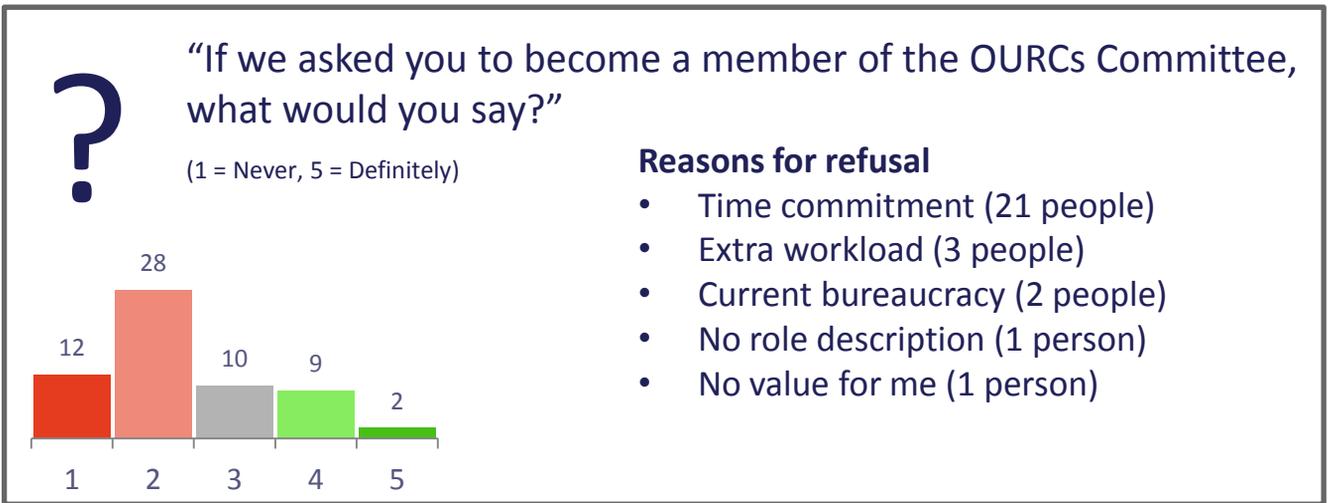
# Committee recruitment

## *People are put off by the possible time commitment*

It is in both OURCs' and its member clubs' interest to have a large number of people on the OURCs committee. Benefits include:

- A stable leadership team from year to year
- More people to help out at racedesk to resolve appeals faster
- More people to run our extra services such as Twitter and video commentary
- Greater contribution towards new ideas (such as this survey)

Past committees have been very worried about the size of its committee and have been making large efforts to try and reduce the burden on the individuals who do stay on board for more than one year.



## The rules and fine system

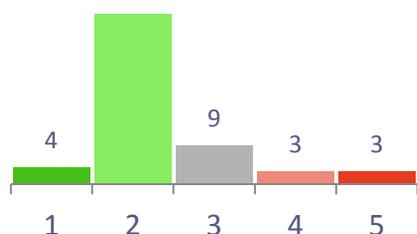
*People understand and accept the system, but feel there are always ways to improve the system*



“I think the rules I am bound by are unreasonable”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

40



Av score: 2.34  
Last term: N/A

“I am concerned between the disparity in ‘acceptable’ outing conditions as defined by flag status and that for crews off the Isis/Godstow.”

*-A men’s captain*

“From my experience there is enough common sense going round that there are rarely issues and everything is dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner.”

*-A Trinity rower*

“No-one likes fines, but I generally don't think you are unreasonable.”

*-A women’s captain*

“[I] understand the reasoning behind rules but I would like a further flag and crew category.”

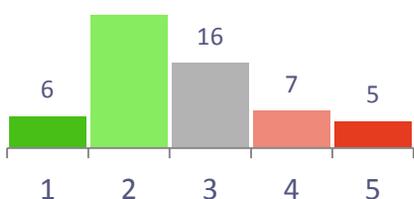
*-A Wolfson rower*



“I think the committee apply the rules too stringently”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

25



Av score: 2.66  
Last term: N/A

“Each and every rule has its time and place to be enforced rigidly (for instance when the Isis is very busy) - however on a quiet river some rules are generally believed to be upheld [despite any ill-effects from breaking them]”

*-A Pembroke rower*

“The fines are alright; what gets to me is more the sense that it's a lottery whether you'll get caught or not, which creates that "but THEY never get fined" feeling. To be fair, this has improved massively this year, even if Godstow remains largely a lawless zone.”

*-A member of St Hugh’s Boat Club*

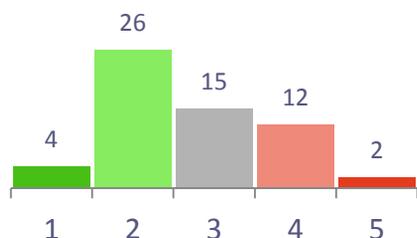
## The rules and fine system

*Opinions differ, but fines don't consider club size or give enough feedback about what they did wrong*



"I think the rules hinder my club's potential"

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 2.69  
Last term: N/A

"Would love to see the 'one boat per College' rule changed to something proportional to club size."

*-A captain of coxes*

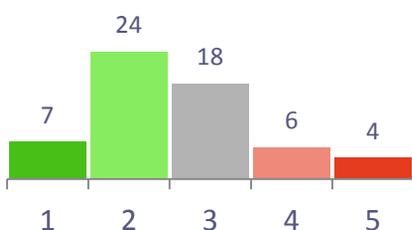
"I think that the special rules applies to rowing are unfair. Other sports with high participation are not required to train within time constraints and other "dangerous" water sports such as kayaking are able to follow national guidelines for safety rather than a more conservative university rule. These differences mean that being part of the university system places college clubs at a competitive disadvantage compared to independent clubs."

*-A boat club committee member*



"I think the fine system is draconian"

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 2.54  
Last term: N/A

"Would there be a possibility of potentially 'fining' clubs marshalling slots?"

*-A Worcester captain concerned about how rich and poor clubs bear the burden of fines*

"There is no communication between the person applying the rule and the offending crew, at least at the time of the event. Quite frankly [...] this is rude and insults those of us training. A discussion at least [...] gives the crew a chance to learn from the mistake."

*-A captain of coxes*

"Fines are anything but draconian..."

*-A St John's rower*

## OURCs events

*Race committees need an event to practice their skills, allowing them to run good events for the rest of the year*



### How did we perform during Autumn Fours?

Criteria	Avg. score	“Don’t know”
You had enough notice about when the event was happening	3.43	31%
The race secretary told you everything you needed to know and do beforehand	3.29	48%
The race secretary responded quickly to queries	3.46	56%
The event was run well on the day	3.38	56%



### How did we perform during IWL A?

Criteria	Avg. score	“Don’t know”
You had enough notice about when the event was happening	3.95	31%
The race secretary told you everything you needed to know and do beforehand	3.71	43%
The race secretary responded quickly to queries	3.76	54%
The event was run well on the day	3.59	50%



### How did we perform during IWL B?

Criteria	Avg. score	“Don’t know”
You had enough notice about when the event was happening	3.94	32%
The race secretary told you everything you needed to know and do beforehand	3.61	43%
The race secretary responded quickly to queries	3.69	52%
The event was run well on the day	<i>event was cancelled</i>	

## Feedback from events

“ There was no efficient system for spinning at the head of the river after IWL A, and there were significant issues with the number of crews/boats in a very small space of river.

*-A men's captain*

“[OURCs events] will inevitably (and already has) gnawed into valuable weekend training time, with the river being too high to row. this is likely to happen [...] in HT. Weekend training time is much more important than Head races while the river is rowable [...], if nothing else to get novices/XS coxes more practice [for Torpids]”

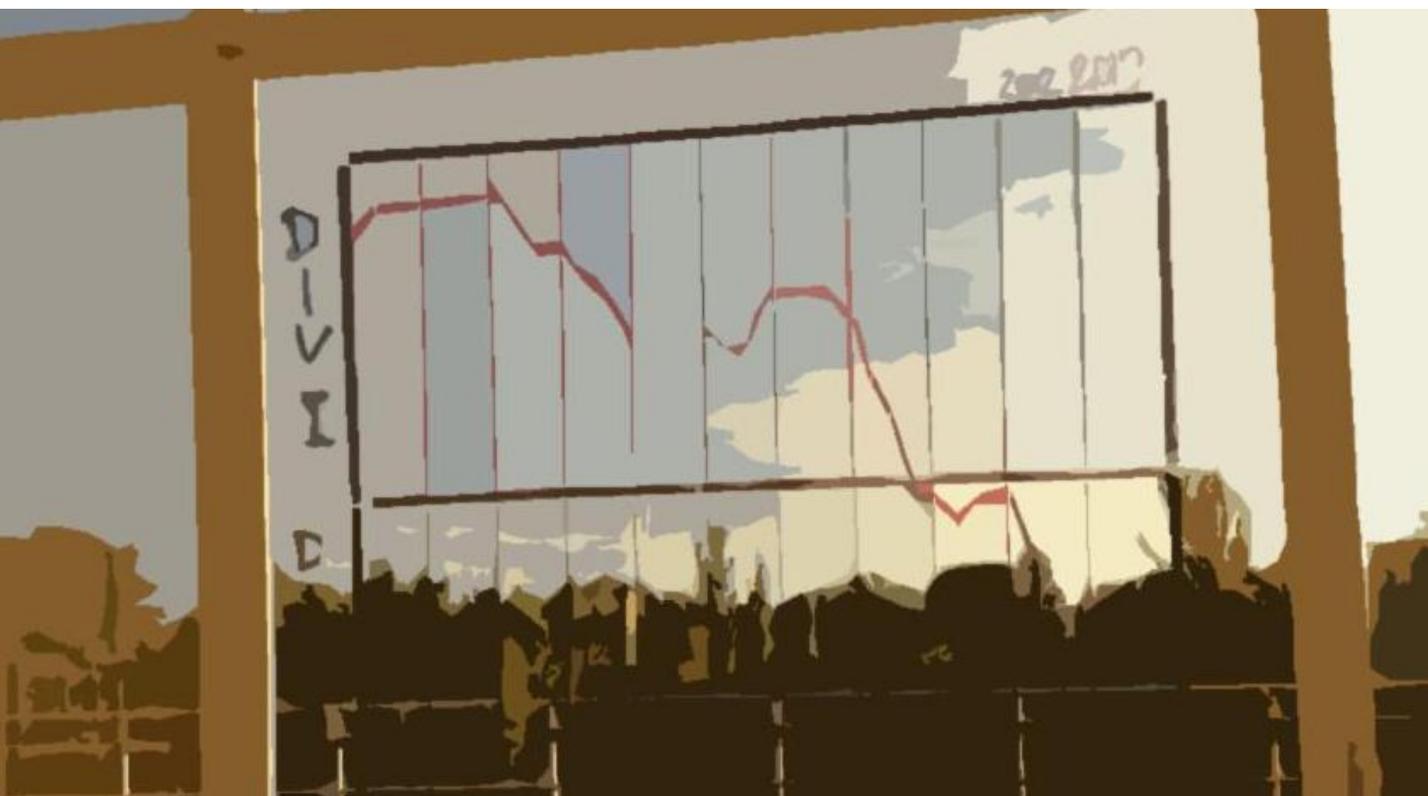
*-A female rower*

“I have no idea why Autumn fours was restricted to S status coxes. Why can X status coxes not cope with a marshalled event with experienced crews on a slightly faster than normal river.”

*-A captain of coxes*

“Unclear what the coxing restrictions will be and how to prepare for them.”

*-A rower*



## Swim Tests and Captains' Meetings

*There is tension over the amount of time allocated for swim tests*



### How did we run swim tests?

Criteria	Avg. score	"Don't know"
You had enough notice about when the event was happening	4.02	21%
The committee told you everything you needed to know and do beforehand	4.18	25%
The committee responded quickly to queries	3.94	36%
The event was run well on the day	4.13	40%



### How did we run Captains' Meetings?

Criteria	Avg. score	"Don't know"
You had enough notice about when the event was happening	3.62	30%
The race secretary told you everything you needed to know and do beforehand	3.86	34%
The race secretary responded quickly to queries	3.81	51%
The event was run well on the day	3.53	36%



"The website no longer shows the captains emails so anyone not on the mailing list could not find out when something was on"

*-A captain of coxes*

"One swim test later in the term would have been nice, for people who decided to join after first week"

*-Another captain of coxes*

"The OU captains often show up (very) late, and waiting for them is annoying. I would say you just start the meeting after 5 minutes if they don't show up."

*-A women's captain*

"I think it would be useful to put a vague time limit on discussion of certain items to avoid things going on too long, but I can imagine this would be very tricky to enforce..."

*-A St John's captain*

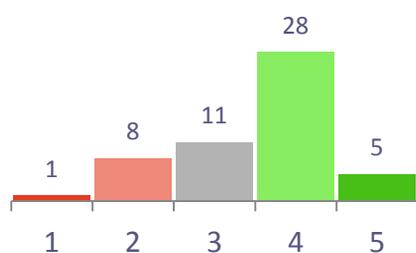
## The Isis flag

*It was a tough time to manage the flag, but people thought we were too cautious with it*



“We increased the flag level when it was reasonable to do so”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 3.53  
Last term: N/A

“I'm fully aware of the flak that OURCs takes about the flag levels but I understand that they are constitutionally tied to the level of bucks at Iffley lock and as soon as these change the flag changes.”

*-A Pembroke rower*

“Twitchy flag management ”

*-LMH committee member*

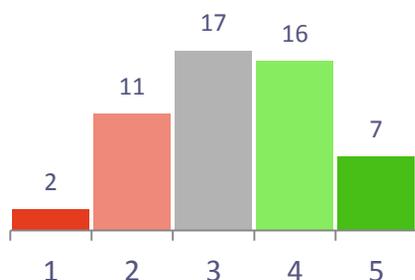
“I felt on occasion there were times where the river was safe for experienced rowers, and safe for X coxes, but not novices (or worse large numbers of novices), and consequently the committee was forced to put the river straight to amber to prevent any novices going out. “

*-A Jesus rower*



“We decreased the flag level in a timely fashion”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 3.28  
Last term: N/A

“There was at least one time when it was kept at blue when the conditions seemed green, perhaps to prevent the onslaught of novice coxes? [What about] green flag with no MT12 beginner coxes? It would have made life much easier!”

*-A boat club committee member*

“Sensible flag reductions please!”

*-An anonymous rower*

“Flag status at Godstow doesn't appear to be checked very regularly/thoroughly ”

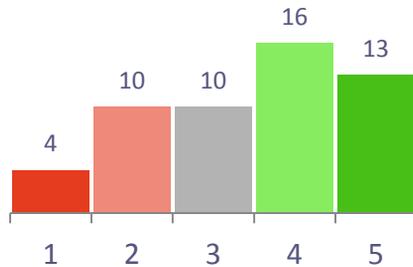
*-A Worcester rower*

# The Isis flag



“We kept you adequately informed of when the flag might decrease”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 3.45  
Last term: N/A

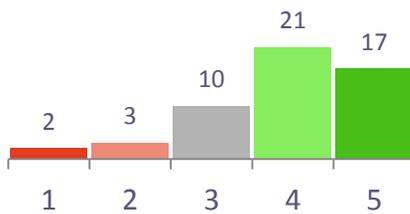
“You're never sure whether the flag [in the morning] hasn't changed or just not been updated yet. Something like 'confirmed at' would be helpful, or fixed times when to expect a flag change. For the first two points: I wouldn't know, I have to trust your judgement anyway (and I do).”

-A women's captain



“You are easily able to check the flag through a mobile device”

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Av score: 3.91  
Last term: N/A

“Most others needed to check the flag via the OURCs website which they say was frequently inaccessible. This slightly let down an otherwise good system. I liked the disaster flag.”

-A trinity rower

## A new flag colour?

Respondents have suggested two possible new flag categories:

- Green flag, but no 'very novice' coxes (“turquoise” flag, MT only)
- Senior crews and bankrider required, but with X coxes (“blue-amber”)

## Clarifications

### *Points that we cannot currently address*

“ Flag levels leading up to Christchurch and on the day bordered too often on dangerous. It appeared **the committee were too indecisive on the day** and should really have cancelled the event on the morning, at the latest, to avoid problems.

*-Anonymous response*

“ Communication this term has been a shambles. [...] The Christ Church coxing meeting email was a prime example. This was sent out only to the captains email address a couple of days before the event and then 2 minutes before the event was due to start to the coxing email list.

*-Anonymous response*

**The OURCs Committee are completely separate from the committee that runs Christ Church Regatta.** Unless we wish to cancel their event because we feel it does not live up to its safety plan, we have no direct input. However, the OURCs Sabbatical (in this case a former Christ Church Regatta Captain) is always in regular contact with the Regatta Captain to provide advice and support. The regatta captain this year had full access to the mailing lists and so unsatisfactory communication should be directed to them.

“ I do not think that the flag level at Godstow is checked regularly enough - the conditions often did not reflect the flag, and it took considerably longer for it to drop than possibly was necessary.

*-Comment from Worcester*

The Godstow flag is almost solely maintained by Phil Colborne, the SES boatman. The only exceptions are where the flag is changed remotely based on yellow/red boards on the EA website. The committee rarely take trips up to Godstow to check the flag as they are training/coaching on the Isis themselves.

## Clarifications

### *Points that we cannot currently address*

“ I had to deal with all the swim tests. As you knew, none of us could run our taster sessions as we wanted, yet we were unable to move the swim tests to a time when people had actually experienced rowing. Perhaps you could have allowed us to rearrange under the circumstances? Also, we were told to get in contact with [B]rookes' pool for extra tests, but they were impossible to get in contact with! Only by emailing the OURCS committee were we given another contact to try, who was not otherwise discoverable.  
*-A novice boats' captain*

“ A swim test booked for later on in term would have been appreciated.  
*-A men's captain*

Swim test requirements and pool time has been a sore point for the committee over the past few years. Having recently (Summer 2011) negotiated new swim test guidelines that are amenable to both COUR and OURCs, we do not wish to risk our current position by arguing again. OURCs regularly struggles to get more Iffley Road pool time in which to test students, with its requests often being flatly refused. We regularly challenge this position to try and give you more flexibility as we know that it is inconvenient and undesirable. We go above and beyond our requirements to provide you with an alternative swim test location (Brookes). We cannot prepare for every eventuality (because otherwise our emails would be far, far too long). We do ask that if anyone has trouble, getting in touch with people, please email us as this is the kind of little thing we can help with!

“ I don't know whose responsibility it is, but perhaps the OURCs could do something about maintaining the rafts outside boathouses. (Some of them are not particularly buoyant)  
*-A men's captain*

The boathouse rafts are not our property and therefore we cannot maintain them. Speak to your boatman or your bursar, who can help you with this more.