

Varne Boat Club

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2016

Held at the Varne Boat Club, Coast Drive, Greatstone,

On 27th November 2016

The meeting opened at 10:35 with 22 full members present.

Member Apologies, Keith Burgess, Tony & Carol Comber, Tony Hills

Zalan opened the meeting

1. **Apologies** for absence had been received from Mark Rose, Steve Allen.
2. **The Minutes of the 2015 AGM** had been circulated and Paul Fowler proposed that they were a true and accurate record. Seconded by Colin Greenwood, and carried by the meeting.
3. **Matters Arising** – Chris Matthews (President)
Stated that there were two major events within 2016 for the club, which will be discussed in detail during the meeting;
 - a) Forming of the supporters section
 - b) Completion of the new ramp.

All further matters were dealt with successfully at the 2015 AGM –
Confirmed by Chris Matthews with the members present.

4. **Chairman's Report – Zalan Paksy reported;**

2016 has been a hugely successful year for the club.

First and foremost we have completed the ramp project that started over 2 ½ years ago - we have committed all our manpower and financial resources to deliver this new infrastructure that will have legacy for decades.

We have completed the restructuring of the club by forming a new Supporters Club in order to safeguard our CASC status. To facilitate all this, at the first half of the year there was a lot of work done to consolidate our accounts and implement new processes as a result of rule changes – that cost a fair amount of time and money. The supporters club are already taking a very active role and making a success of organising and working on the various events. This may need further co-ordination, but is compliant with HMRC rules.

It was noted that lots of quality entertainment is being put on throughout the year, including the winter season as well, Zal emphasised the need to communicate this to the wider audience in order to make these events a success.

The club raised an incredible amount of external funds not related to the ramp, this was invested in equipment and training to allow the club to extend our offerings for next year. Thanks to Mark Rose for his fundraising efforts.

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- The club has also responded to members concerns by investing in Compound CCTV / Lighting, which is now complete.
- Maintained spending on launch vehicles, and have 3 fully operational and well maintained.
- Invested in Quality Jet wash hoses that stood the test of time.

Thank you for all the volunteers who assisted with the improvement works carried out (storage cupboard, cellar, compound lighting and CCTV).

Volunteers have also helped out with the bar and cleaning, resulting in our overheads decreasing by £6000/ annum. Fantastic figure, Thank You All...

We continued to raise safety standards: Updating our risk assessments, giving more help and encouragement to follow best practice. (both on and off the beach). Use of the lifeboat ramp has provided some further best practice, which has been adopted by the club.

Planning permission has been secured for a two story rear extension, to mitigate against any future proposals (due to new development in front of the club. This is another 150k project for the future, with funding and further details to be agreed.

Compound extension preparations were parked up for 2016 due to lack of resource, and the ramp project. The planning application work will re-start in 2017.

The Romney Fayre attendance was worthwhile, despite bad weather, and the club will revisit next year with a larger pitch.

50th Celebrations, was a fantastic weekend, and was well publicised by the local press. Joining Shepway Sports Trust, has enabled the club to use their expertise to organise events, and we look forward to establishing a good relationship with SST. Nigel Sutton our 'Strategy and Development officer' – is to research a longer term understanding of where we need to position ourselves for the future.

Next year's priorities:

- We start with a clean slate to rebuild our cash reserves.
- Re assess our spending against our revenues.
- Re assess the changing nature of membership – fewer people go fishing (national trend) but more take part in other activities.
- Further fundraising for 2017.
- More local promotion (Romney Fayre , publicised activities , etc)
- Need to raise further awareness of safe practices on and off the beach through workshops, fisherman evenings, etc
- Further improvement works, including upgrading the water supply. (See House Manager Report)

Finally, Zalan thanked all members, and the committee for their input this year, and especially thanked his family for their support, due to the amount of his time that he dedicates to the club.

5. Treasurer's Report - Paul Fowler reported;

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For the year ended 31st December 2015 -

Another solid year for the club in terms of support from the club users, participation by the watersports members and fundraising enabled by our CASC status.

In brief, (2014)

Bar Takings £82k (81K)

Membership £23k (20k)

Grants £300 (25k)

Overheads £57k (53k) - Good control shown despite increases in wages and PAYE, rent and utilities.

Net Deficit £2k (surplus 17k)

During 2015, we incurred preliminary expenditure connected with the ramp rebuild of £7k and as there was no grant income in 2015, this led to the small financial deficit.

In 2015, Club reserves decreased to £77k (79k) which still put us in a strong position for replacing the ramp and contingent spending connected with that project.

Regarding the CASC status of the club this, enabled the club to apply for Sport England Grants of £85k and other finance from The Roger DeHaan Charitable Trust and others to be used in 2016.

Paul also noted the voluntary work, which has helped to reduce the wages bill, and thanked Sue and the other volunteers, for their effort.

5a. Hon Treasurer 's Report.

2015 Accounts and Appointment of Accountants for 2016;

It was proposed by Paul Fowler that the 2015 accounts were approved as presented, and that the club continued to use Stephen Hill Mid Kent as the Accountants for 2016.

Seconded by Zalan. - **Carried unanimously.**

Noted that the accountants are working well on behalf of the club, (PAYE, quarterly returns and pensions), and that they are liaising with HMRC regarding the VAT reclaim for the ramp works.

6. Membership Secretary, Rita Bowbrick reported;

Directors at present time:

Chris Matthews -President/Chair

Colin Greenwood

Zalan Paksy

Welcome back to Ben Widgery.

Ben has and still is making a good recovery healthwise, therefore has once again resumed the role of PWC captain, he says he can't wait to get back out on the water.

We have a new Ramp Officer Steve Church. Steve is a valuable committee member and helps out all round where ever he can. Dave Eveson our Fishing Captain resigned due to his personal work commitments, however Martin Jones has stepped in to take over this role.

There has been some movement between the Supporters and Watersports with members from both sides switching. ie Supporter to Watersport and vice versa.

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Total full boating membership: 140, 18 down from last year

of those, 19 are new members, numbers are rising again thanks to the continuous promotion and tireless input by the section Captains. -

Breakdown of Boat Club section's membership: 2016 (2015 in brackets);

Fishing 86 (104), PWC/Jetski 12 (14), Power/Ski 20 (16), Sailing 33 (31), Windsport 30 (27) NBT 9 (9). As you can see some members do several activities.

Family 51 – SGL 41 – CRW 27 – NBT 9 – CDT 4 – LIFE 7 – HON 1

Social membership 185 - down 6 on last year

of those, 31 are new members.

Rita would like to thank the Committee and members for their support, also to acknowledge the great effort by members of both committees –'Watersport' and 'Supporter', to ensure the club is fully compliant with the HMRC rules.

Sub Committee Reports

7a. Fishing Section.

No Report due to recent resignation of Fishing Captain.

7b. Land yacht Captain. Mark Serejko reported;

The Landyacht section had a year of continuing interest in the sport from local people from the Kent and parts of Sussex and Essex, who came down to try land yachting. Converting these people into members is still a continuing challenge which i am working on.

Highlights of the year were two regattas we hosted, enjoyed by all who took part, including the people who supported us.

The first one was the B series Blokart regatta on the 16th 17th April -

18 competitors turned up for the event, they came from as far as Weston Supermare, Cambridge and local in Kent.

All had a great time apart from the wind let us down, but that is wind sports.

The Varne again gave great support in particular Sue, Lynn and Richard.

The second regatta of the year was on the 14th 15th May.

We had the miniyacht class of Landyacht competing in a national event and competitors came from around the UK from as far away as Yorkshire.

Good conditions although the overall turn out of competitors was low.

Joseph fox (Pauls son) sailed in the competitions and did very well for his first time, and was awarded a medal for his efforts.

Support from the Varne was excellent as usual including the catering and marshals on the beach.

I sailed in the Landyacht Europeans in Bretteville France in September in the Promo Class for the GB Team and achieved a team silver.

For 2017;

We are working on developing the Landyacht classes for new pilots / members.

I have supported this by purchasing a promo sport landyacht, which I hope to develop the promo sport class of yacht with, if I can get this going the French Federation will support us with training and race events in France.

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Mark mentioned that there is potential for the club to hold some events in 2017, and that he has also been contacted by sailors who want to try land-yachting. There is potential to liaise with the French / European clubs to arrange an event.

It was noted that everyone who has attended an event at the club has provided positive feedback.

7c. Sailing/Windsurfing – Mark Rose reported (presented by RB);

Another excellent year considering the beach has been a construction site since mid June till the end of September (our busiest period). We have yet again exceeded our last year's activities and free tasters on the water, last year we had 503 activities on the water this year 576 so far which is great news.

Our dinghy fleet of club boats' has increased with 2 extra Topper Taz's purchased and our dinghies have been out on the water over 130 times this year so far. Zara has been sailing solo for the first time this year, a real achievement.

The sailing section has had a few mini breaks away.

In May, 8 club members went down to the Hamble near Southampton to have a days sailing on a Whitbread 60' ocean yacht, perfect conditions on the day and even Sir Ben Ainslie turned up on his foiling America's Cup catamaran!

In July all 7 of the club's stand up paddle boards were taken to Bewl Reservoir to take part in a Guinness World Record attempt for the most SUPs EVER in one place racing around a course, needless to say the record was broken.

Zane also came a creditable second in his age group in three SUP races organised by Red Paddle at the event.

Unfortunately the RYAs Push The Boat Out weekend had to be cancelled due to high winds and rain, a shame after all the hard work had been done preparing for it. To try and compensate we had a BBQ for the RNLI crews of Dungeness and Littlestone lifeboat stations at the club to give them the opportunity to try our varied free water sports.

We have had some very good evenings on the water which have also turned into very pleasant evenings off the water, it's called SUP and SIP if anyone is interested?!

Waitrose again supplied a nice top up to our sailing funds with £191 from their Community Matters Scheme.

As a Shepway Sports Trust partner, the club attended the Trusts awards which was a great event. Being a club partner also makes us eligible for funding from The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust which helped with an extra £20,000 for the ramp replacement.

Magnox have continued to support the club for a third time and donated a further £2,385 for more equipment and £1100 towards training club members' in safety boat courses, instructor courses first aid etc.

Sailing members also manned our stand at the New Romney Fayre this summer, raising the club's profile and trying to increase the club's numbers.

In September the usual suspects (all the instructors) went for some well earned refresher training / holiday in Greece at Vassiliki, in fact one instructor needed so much extra training he actually went three times during the year!

I am sorry I could not be at the AGM this year, but long term holiday commitments sometimes have to take priority.

A big thank you goes to all the instructors, volunteers, helpers, the tea makers and Graham's two boys, who I hope he does not mind me mentioning Hayden and Lewis who after all the sailing and SUPing is finished, always willingly help to wash all the kit down. If we want the club to be here in another 50 years, it's the youngsters who we need to look after to be the next generation of members. Best wishes for 2017 - Mark.

7d Bo 'sun – John Graves reported;

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John continues with his work for the club, of which there is always plenty, and Zalan noted that this is much appreciated.

7e Safety Officer. – Dave Bevan reported;

A successful year – with no incidents to report. Dave has made numerous safety improvements throughout the year, which was noted by Zalan.

7f. PWC/Jetski. - Ben Widgery reported;

Ben explained that he has now rejoined following an illness, and that as PWC captain, he will be organising events in 2017, and will hopefully introduce new members to the club. He has a positive outlook for 2017.

7g. Powerboat. – Section Captain Chris Waldman

No Report

7h. Compound. – Steve Allen

No Report

7i. Ramp. – Steve Church reported;

Plenty has already been said about the new ramp and how the project progressed. So there isn't a lot more to add, except to thank everyone for all their hard work to get the ramp project completed. In particular, Zalan and Mark for all their efforts, navigating through the minefield of legislation and endless meetings to obtain the approval, and complete the build. Finally, hoping that it provides many years of safe enjoyment for the club members.

7j. House Manager. – Colin Greenwood reported;

Colin has been restricted in what he could do this year due to other larger projects within the club. It was noted that fortunately, the club building is in a good state of repair and that it needed minimal maintenance. Some of the improvements which have been made are; Cellar work, New TV and the balcony work. It was noted that funding for these came from events and not from the clubs capital.

Colin expressed his thanks to Bob and Richard for all their voluntary work.

7k Strategy and Development Officer - Nigel Sutton reported;

The compound improvements are part of wider ongoing work, which needs to reflect the changes in membership – Dingy sailor memberships are increasing, and that room is required in the compound for storage.

Nigel noted that there were 576 events on the water this year, with numerous taster sessions, but this was not reflected in the amount of new members joining. Shepway Sports trust are vital to the club, and we need to use them to ensure that youngsters get involved in the club activities. More volunteers are required to run the activities; for safety boat and watersport instruction.

Nigel suggested that the club obtain some independent feedback regarding the quality and content of the clubs website. This could be achieved by involving a local school , which would also promote the club at the same time.

Nigel emphasised the need to develop the clubs external partnership links with local businesses, particularly by using website links.

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71. Social Club/Bar - Sue Lockyer reported;

Sue noted that the bar was quieter than normal this year. Prices have also increased recently, but this is the first price increase in a long time.

Sue thanked all the voluntary workers, which is saving approximately £125 per week, in bar staff and cleaning wages alone. It was noted that Sue is also performing some voluntary work for the club.

Special thanks to Clive and Bob for their excellent work in the cellar.

The bar has been relatively busy in November, and Sue is looking forward to Christmas and the New Year festivities.

Sue suggested that someone should have a dedicated role to market and promote the activities at the club with the local community.

Finally – Sue thanked everyone involved for their efforts.

8. Chris Matthews (President)

Chris re-iterated the success of the 50th celebrations in September, and also the completion of the ramp project, which has secured the future of the club. Chris thanked all committee members for their hard work over the last 2 years.

Chris also noted the sad loss of two long term club members, who were great friends and died within a short space of time of each other, one killed in a tragic road accident, we have a memorial bench dedicated to both which was unveiled at our 50th Celebrations.

Chris stated that there would be no increase in fees this year, as part the Clubs 50th year Celebrations.

9. Proposals/Nominations/Resignations

Chris Matthews explained the process for nominations.

9a Chris Matthews then took over the floor to re-elect Zalan Paksy as Commodore. –
Carried Unanimously.

Nominations.

9b. Chris Matthews proposed that the new Committee be voted in, en bloc, which they were, unanimously - Elected officers were as follows:

President	Chris Matthews
Commodore	Zalan Paksy
Hon Treasurer	Paul Fowler
Membership Secretary	Rita Bowbrick
Landyacht Captain	Mark Serejko
Fishing Captain	Martin Jones
Powerboat Captain	Chris Waldman
Personal Water Craft Captain	Ben Widgery
Launching Ramp Officer	Steve Church

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Compound Manager	Steve Allen
Bo'sun	John Graves
Safety Officer	Dave Bevan
Launch Vehicle	Vacant
House Manager	Colin Greenwood
Maintenance Manager	Bob Bright
Sailing Captain	Mark Rose
Support Chair	Sue Lockyer
Strategy/Development Officer	Nigel Sutton
Supporter Representative Officer	Vacant (TBD at Supporters AGM)

10. Election of General Committee:

Proposed Zalan Paksy, seconded by Dave Bevan.

Carried Unanimously.

11. Any Other Business:

Proposed Name change.

Zalan explained the proposal to change the clubs name in order to better reflect the varied activities which take place at the club. It was noted that this would be controversial, and that people have strong feelings on the subject.

Nigel Sutton believes the name change should also emphasise the supporters of the club, and that times are changing with the introduction of new watersports, which should be reflected in the clubs name.

Numerous variations for the club name were discussed, which included the words 'Boat', 'Watersports' and 'Supporters' (and various combinations of) in the title.

Colin Greenwood further explained that the Ltd Company name 'The Varne Boat Club' would remain unchanged, and would still be quoted on all formal documents. The proposed name change is for advertising and promotional purposes only, with the express intention of communicating that we are not just a 'Boat Club'.

Paul Fowler explained the CASC status implications of the name change, and also the requirement to get the club to the forefront of google search results and social media, when potential members are searching for watersport activities or locations.

Ben W suggested that perhaps a change from 'club' to 'centre' would attract more members. After some discussion, this was discounted, as 'centre' may infer that the facilities could be used on a one –off basis, or on a 'just turn up' basis, and this could not be supported, with the current set-up.

Some further discussion from the floor, with Doug, Terry, Bob and honorary members contributing with valued suggestions.

Colin Greenwood and others proposing a ballot. - Rita then explained that all members received the AGM agenda prior to the meeting, and that the name change proposals were communicated allowing plenty of time for any objections to be raised. None were received. Zalan explained that the AGM is the correct event to discuss and agree such changes.

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Dave Bevan explained that he was representing some members who did not approve of the name change, who were not present at the meeting, and that a name change in the clubs 50th year was seen by some as not appropriate.

Chris Matthews explained that if enough people were against the name change, then an EGM could be organised.

After further discussions, a vote was held on numerous permutations. Eventually, the following wording was adopted from the floor.

proposed Doug M. seconded Terry A. - Carried Unanimously

‘ The Varne Watersports Club ’

(inc. supporters club)

Questions – Comments from the floor

Martin Jones queried the use of dumpers, during certain hours, which Zalan explained, and stated that reasonable times are expected, and responsible use (no revving, continued idling etc). The situation could be improved by using the East Gate only, but this would require modifications, and is a future possibility.

Martin Jones questioned if the club were aware of the building application for the public car park, and its impact upon the compound extension. ZP explained that the club was aware, and that the compound extension application would be further progressed next year with the relevant authorities.

The President Chris Matthews thanked everyone for their valued work and ongoing support of the Club. Chris thanked the members who had turned out, and offered a free drink at the bar for all attendees of the meeting. There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 12.30.

Signed:.....

Signed:..... Date:.....