

Newhaven & Seaford Sailing Club

2020 Directors' Reports

This is the annual report to members by the club's directors. This should be read in conjunction with the 2020 Finance Report which is available from the members' section of the club's website.

Commodore's Report (Bill Wates)

2020 was a most difficult year for the country, and the club suffered its own vicissitudes accordingly. We know that some members lost loved-ones to Covid and our sympathies go out to them. The impacts of Covid on the club pale into insignificance in comparison to that felt through those losses.

Covid affected the club in all its activities. Racing at Piddinghoe initially, and then at Seaford, was severely impacted. Even when it was allowed to restart we were operating under tough restrictions, and I'd like to thank all of those who contrived and implemented all the special measures we had to implement. These ranged from "bucketing" on the beach to trying to sail with a face-mask. Miraculously (sorry, I meant "through bloody hard-work") we managed both a Sailing Week and a Cadet Week. The weather was very kind to us for the former, and when you're a cadet you don't care about the weather for the latter anyway. One of the worst outcomes of Covid, was the Virtual Racing that was enthusiastically taken-up by our younger sailors (and some of our older sailors who should know better). Maybe I'll get the hang of it by the time of the next pandemic.

Many social activities were cancelled, and its only through the sterling work of the social committee that we are recovering from that in 2021. Training was stopped for most of the year but bounced-back in the later part of the year and that trend has continued into 2021. The limited activities we were allowed to do were done safely and followed the constantly changing regulatory framework, however hard it was to interpret and implement for our sport. It's only because our organisers invested in all that work that our club has bounced back so strongly in 2021.

We've weathered the financial storm as you'll see from the Treasurer's report below. That was partly due to luck (we'd collected most of our subscriptions before lock-down), partly due to government grants, partly due to careful financial control, and partly due to agile moves to recommence training as soon as we could. We lost a lot of rent from our Galley partners (Papachino's) due to their forced closures, but both parties are in this for the long-term and look forward to better times.

We've even managed a few new initiatives, reflecting our desire to keep the club relevant to modern attitudes. One of these is "sailability" where we are in the early stages of offering sailing experiences for disabled people. You might have noticed that a small platform has been built at Piddinghoe, with a hoist to allow disabled people to get in and out of our special sailability boats. We've also now got a "green team" that has put together policies and action-plans to enhance the environment at our sites and reduce our negative impact. A third initiative, and linked to the first two, is the creation of a fund-raising team who seek out sources of funds and make professional applications for them. Our burgeoning sailability and green teams feed into that, giving us a far greater chance of getting funding from donors that quite rightly demand to see that we're offering our services to a diverse community in an environmentally sound manner.

In 2021, we're now well into the first year of a tie-up with Brighton Watersports. They offer courses at Piddinghoe from which we benefit financially. This has allowed us to put a toe into offering activities such as paddle-boarding courses, without an even greater drain on our volunteer resources. Our volunteers are freed-up to do what they know best, such as the extremely popular Saturday morning windsurfing experiences at Piddinghoe.

On top of all that we still managed to keep maintenance and developments going at both sites, with the unsung volunteers keeping the places fit and welcoming for all members.

Because this is my last report I must refer to a 2021 activity that shouldn't really be in this report until next year. That is the Shearwater nationals that were held at Seaford in the summer. The event was very successful (after much fraught discussion at board level as to its value to our club), returned a profit to the club, and was well-received by the participants.

As you all know, after three years on the board I have not put my name forward as Commodore after the AGM. I would like to thank all of you who have helped me during my years in the position and I wish you, and the club, well. Please do all you can to support Terry Jones as our new Commodore. He has been nominated and is unopposed, so will assume the position from the day of the AGM. I have spent the last few months concentrating on trying to get more members more involved in the running of the club, culminating in the Our Club event a month or so ago. Coming out of that we have the results of a members' survey and a long list of new volunteers. We've also had some new blood being nominated to director positions and I wish them, and those directors carrying-on from before, the best of luck.

Finance Report from the Honorary Treasurer (Ian Lambert)

The year could be summarised as "Significantly disrupted due to Covid", and it is wise to remember that many of the points below will similarly impact 2021 at least until Covid restrictions were finally lifted in July.

Covid Impact on Income 2020

Income from **Rent for the Seaford Galley** franchise was substantially reduced from the contracted level. This reflects the fact that Papachino's were not able to operate from the Seaford clubhouse for a substantial part of 2020. During this period they provided take-away coffee and cake from the 'kiosk' they erected with our permission on the promenade. We felt it in our interest to support Papachino's through this difficult trading period by reducing the rental.

However on the plus side, as the Galley activity resulted in Seaford being classed as a Retail business we were able to successfully apply for a variety of 'Covid' support grants from Government and Lewes D.C. , totalling £11,334 in 2020.

In addition, Government action meant that our Business Rates for both sites were cancelled for the majority of the year, saving us in the region of £7,500 in the year ended 31/12/20

Our **Training activities** were significantly restricted for much of the year however the various teams made up for this by putting on extra courses once they were able to operate. As a result the overall income at £17,607 was virtually identical to 2019 at £17,542, however the financial surplus of £8,815 was lower than the £10,538 of 2019 reflecting the Covid restriction on number of students who could Newhaven and Seaford Sailing Club: Directors' Report for 2020. Page 2

be in a boat with an instructor. It's important to remember that our Training activity is not just about profit, but is the major source of our new member numbers, many of who we hope to retain for years to come.

Covid restrictions meant that many of our traditional '**Corporate Members**' such as Air Cadets, Sea Cadets, Plumpton College etc were very restricted in their activities and we chose to come to an arrangement with many of them, with the view that we would hope to welcome them back once they were able to operate normally.

Cleaning costs etc were much higher in 2020 (as they will be in 2021) as it was a legal requirement if we were to operate at all, that we could guarantee regular and effective cleaning. We decided to employ professional cleaners at Piddinghoe twice a week. We also spent a significant amount on Cleaning materials to be used by training teams and members.

Bad Debt (TGSL) There was a warning in the 2019 report that some of the costs of closing down TGSL (our attempt to run the Galley ourselves as a Limited Company 'The Galley Seaford Ltd') would not appear until 2020. This entry should now be the final reference to this episode in our accounts.

Property Repairs and Maintenance remain high at £29,527 (2019 £28,903) in relation to our overall turnover, reflecting the age and state of our buildings which continue to need significant maintenance. Whilst not specifically related to the year 2020, members will be pleased to hear that in 2021 we instituted a proactive approach to planning and budgeting expenditure on both capital item replacement and building maintenance, which should move us to a situation where we expend money and effort before, not when we reach a critical situation. This does not replace the need for the club to plan for major expenditure in the future on building replacement.

Bank Charges at £1,239 (2019 £398) appear to be rising substantially and warrant some explanation. The UK banking systems, faced with very low interest rates imposed by the Bank of England are moving towards a world where customers pay for services. In third quarter of 2021 we will start having to pay £5 per month for each bank account (previously free as we are a 'not for profit' organisation) and transaction charges such as 40p for each cheque deposited will apply. Driven by these changes and the need to automate the flow of information into our books of account, like many organisations we started offering members the opportunity to pay for membership, boat hire and other services through electronic payment services like Paypal, Cardwise and others. Each of these recoup their costs through charging a small percentage of the transaction value. The term 'bank charges' now covers all these types of transactional charges.

Going forward in 2021

We have established an effective '**fundraising**' team under Jess Wood that focussed successfully in 2021 on applying for Grants and awards to support expenditure like Environmental improvements (Rampion) , Cadet sails (Rotary) and Sailability equipment (RYA / Sport England). It is our intention in 2022 to review and formalise the Club's approach to supporting members who may temporarily be struggling to afford their membership and training, and to those with exceptional talent who are faced with the costs of competing at National and International level.

Honorary Secretary's Report (Richard Beal)

Although this is the report for 2020, I'm going to cover some areas that have happened in 2021 because I will not be secretary after the AGM and am unlikely to get a chance to report on them next year.

One of the secretary's roles is to ensure the club keep to its obligations under the law, and under regulations imposed on it. During 2020 I was kept very busy trying to ensure that Covid regulations were followed. These were complex and difficult to apply to a sailing sports club. They changed frequently and applied differently at Piddinghoe and Seaford. We had to create Covid Risk Assessments for our activities, document them, implement them and monitor their adherence. This was a major activity and I'd like to thank everyone who helped with their creation, helped with the implementation (cleaning stations, racing "buckets" etc) and then complied with them. Without them, we'd never have managed the sailing we did, and would never have been in a position to bounce back in 2021.

Administering the AGM is another role of the secretary, and the one in 2020 was forced to be on-line rather than face-to-face. Emergency government legislation permitted this despite what our Articles of Association say. It was a challenge (especially organising voting through Zoom) but went off successfully. For reasons outside the board's control, the AGM has moved back in the year over the past couple of years. It really should be in April, and not in October and I hope the new board will reposition it in 2022.

One responsibility I have (although not strictly belonging to the secretary) is looking after the club's website. This was completely redesigned and rewritten in 2021 providing a more modern interface, geared more towards the potential new member, but still satisfying the informational needs of our membership. This was done in conjunction with the extensive, and professional, contribution of web design and web technical implementation from a couple of our members for which I'm very grateful. It's surprising the skills that exist out there amongst our members.

The secretarial role also involves much of the club communications (for some reason that escapes me). The use of e-mail bulletins has increased vastly, while "Mainsheet" (our club magazine) has been neglected for a while now, which is a shame. I used to edit it but just haven't had the time. This needs rebalancing. During the commemorations for Prince Phillip, I did manage to get the club's name mentioned on the BBC local news when they showed a photo of the Duke at Piddinghoe back in the sixties.

I've represented the club in court once in 2020 to recover a debt (successfully).

As alluded to above, after three years on the board I decided not to put my name forward for re-election as Honorary Secretary at the AGM. Please give my replacement (Judd Brammah, who has been returned unopposed) your support. I'd like to thank my fellow directors for their help over the past three years, and to thank all the members who have volunteered and helped the club in general. The job never ceases to surprise me in terms of what is thrown-up. In 2018 and 2019 I seemed to spend all of my time trying to shutdown TGSL (the company the club created to run the Galley from 2017 to 2018). On a personal note I would make a plea that the club never again starts a venture to run non-sailing ventures itself. TGSL cost the club tens of thousands of pounds and virtually exhausted all management effort during its existence. Court cases and employee-issues lasted through to 2020. I'd also make a plea for the club not to try to do too much. At heart we're a sailing club.

Rear Commodores' Reports (Seaford: Penelope Duncan & Piddinghoe: Nick Blackburn)

At Piddinghoe, work continued in 2020 to create a new shed (for the mower and outboards) to free-up space in the main building. The Topper and Oppie racks were replaced. Many small and medium repair jobs were done by an enthusiastic regular weekly work party.

The Tuesday Group formed in 2019 has continued to maintain the upkeep of the Seaford site. Much has been achieved to include the following:

- Raised and rebuilt cadet hut walls
- Repaired floor in cadet hut
- Weatherboard in Bosun's shed
- Replaced and refurbished 6 x 4 road trailer
- Repaired and replaced fence from entrance north and west section
- Fitted new external sliding door to Bosun's shed
- Fitted new non-slip edging to external steps
- Fitted new enclosed raised decking to avoid falls
- Gates on ramp and relevant signage to prevent use by members of the public
- Repainted all external buildings
- Cleared and cleaned ground floor of building in preparation for professional redecorating
- Maintained constant upkeep to site including grass cutting and gardening
- Regular litter clearance
- Clearance of all rubbish
- Repainting of large metal shutters to terrace

Recorder's Report (Rupert Smith)

Racing at Piddinghoe was hit by three successive weekends of storm force winds in February, which caused racing to be cancelled on all three occasions. Three weeks of racing in March were also strong winds, but a hard core of sailors went out racing.

Mid-March saw the first Covid lockdown, with no further racing until July.

Racing at Seaford re-commenced with a re-scheduled programme and an upper wind limit of Force 4, which prevented a further two weeks of competition. However, 19 boats competed in the Commodore's Cup and the first Wednesday evening race, showing that enthusiasm hadn't diminished over the previous months of abstinence.

August treated us well with the first Sailing Week for several years not to have any racing cancelled due to the weather. The biggest fleet was 27 starters in the PM series and a very healthy fleet of 9 boats entering the Miller Cup cadet series. A total of 48 different sailors entered at least one race during the week.

Cadet Week followed on immediately, with up to 27 boats racing at any one time on the pond, with a large number of more novice cadets joining in the morning training and games. Fleet racing included Optimists, Toppers and new for this year, a combined Laser Radial and 4.7 fleet. This despite having to restrict numbers due to the social distancing requirements at Piddinghoe.

September racing was attended even better than previous months with 28 boats and 37 sailors competing regularly

October was affected by the Covid wind limit, with only two weekends being sailed

The winter series finished the year as it had begun, with strong winds and Covid restrictions limiting racing to only 3 races, with only the hardy taking part.

As you would expect, overall races held were down over the previous year, but the size of the racing fleet when we were able to sail has increased significantly on previous years.

| Date | No of Boats | No of Sailors | Cadets | Female | Male |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Jan | 96 | 103 | 29 | 14 | 89 |
| Feb | 9 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| Mar | 47 | 53 | 17 | 6 | 47 |
| April | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| May | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| June | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| July | 62 | 75 | 12 | 12 | 63 |
| Aug | 608 | 678 | 329 | 194 | 484 |
| Sep | 171 | 226 | 52 | 43 | 183 |
| Oct | 43 | 51 | 10 | 7 | 44 |
| Nov | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Dec | 24 | 26 | 2 | 3 | 23 |
| Yearly Total | 1064 | 1225 | 457 | 279 | 946 |

Races Sailed and Entries 2020

Breakdown of races 2020

| | Total | Seaford | Pidd | River | Federation |
|---------------|-------|---------|------|-------|------------|
| Planned Races | 157 | 106 | 51 | 0 | 0 |
| Cancelled | 62 | 47 | 15 | | |
| Moved to Pidd | | 0 | | | |
| Races Run | 95 | 59 | 36 | 0 | 0 |

Races sailed and entries 2019

| | No of Boats | No of Sailors | Cadets | Female | Male |
|------------|-------------|---------------|--------|--------|------|
| Seaford | 1003 | 1275 | 295 | 251 | 1024 |
| Piddinghoe | 935 | 983 | 432 | 222 | 761 |
| River | 17 | 17 | 6 | 5 | 12 |
| Fed Cup | 118 | 160 | 48 | 33 | 127 |

| | | Seaford | Pidd | River | Fed |
|---------------|-----|---------|------|-------|-----|
| Planned Races | 177 | 114 | 57 | 3 | 3 |
| Cancelled | 20 | 20 | | | |
| Moved to Pidd | | | 11 | | |

It is very encouraging to see that over one third of the race entries over the year were Cadets, with many of the 'senior' trophies being won by Cadets. This is without doubt mainly due to the Monday night Cadet sessions at the Pond over the years. We now need to capitalise on this success by continuing to support and encourage the senior cadets that are now sailing at Seaford on a regular basis. It should be noted that many of these senior cadets that race at Seaford also are very keen windsurfers, who need very little excuse to get afloat at any opportunity.

Membership Report (Terry Jones)

As of 31st December 2020 Memberships stood as listed below

| | Number of Units 2019 | Number of Individuals 2019 | Number of Units 2020 | Number of Individuals 2020 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Family Sailing With Duties | 89 | 360 | 111 | 392 |
| Family Sailing Non Duty | 32 | 132 | 38 | 143 |
| Individual Sailing with Duties | 65 | 65 | 74 | 74 |
| Individual Sailing Non Duty | 10 | 10 | 16 | 16 |
| Student | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Senior Cadet | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Junior Cadet | 14 | 14 | 6 | 6 |
| Life Member | 22 | 22 | 21 | 21 |
| Family Social with Duties | 22 | 60 | 16 | 47 |
| Family Social Non Duty | 16 | 83 | 16 | 46 |
| Individual Social with Duties | 24 | 24 | 18 | 18 |
| Individual Social Non Duty | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 312 | 788 | 334 | 781 |
| | | | | |

Memberships for 2020 have shown a good increase in the sailing sections but several of the social memberships did not renew because of the pandemic and the Galley being closed and the cessation of social events.