

Newhaven and Seaford Sailing Club Ltd

2021 Director's Report



This is the Annual Report for members by Directors for the year ending 31st December 2021.

It will be presented at the AGM on Friday 29th April 2022 19.00 at Seaford Clubhouse.

It should be read in conjunction with the 2021 Finance Report which is available from the member's section of the Club web site: <https://sailinginsussex.org/2022-agm/>

Following the AGM proper there will be a short talk by a club member entitled 'our Sailability Journey'., we hope as many members as possible will be able to join us for the AGM and this talk.

A free 'finger buffet' will be available after the talk.



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1. Commodores Report (Terry Jones)

This seems a little strange to be putting together a Commodores report for the 5 weeks of 2021 that I was Commodore. The last AGM having been postponed because of the Pandemic over 2020 and 2021 was only held in November.

The previous Commodore, Bill Wates covered the events of 2020 and most of 2021 in his report to the November AGM. Now that we are hopefully back on an even keel, we will return to our annual cycle of having our AGMs in April to report on the previous year's events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bill Wates, Richard Beal and all of the outgoing directors for the work that they put in to running the club through some of the most turbulent times that the club has faced.

Thank you to Zoe McCaig, Andy Hamilton and Jo West for the work that they did with the cadets and a special congratulation to Zoe who was awarded the Seaford Young Mayor's award for her contribution to youth sport in Seaford.

Following the November AGM, we had a new Board of Directors, and we met the following weekend to discuss where we wanted to take the club in the next few years. I am delighted that all those elected in November have agreed to carry on for another year.

The number one priority identified was to address all the outstanding Health and Safety issues that have built up during the Pandemic and before. We are fortunate to have two of our members who have done a great job in formalising the issues at both of our sites and setting to resolve them where possible. Thank you, Ian Johnson and Graham Hardy, for the work that you have done and continue to do and thank you to the team of volunteers who meet every Tuesday at Seaford to do maintenance work and to Nick Blackburn, Duncan Barrows, Quentin Thorpe and others for all of the work that you do to keep Piddinghoe safe and tidy. Thanks also to the Bosuns teams headed by Paddy Turner at Seaford and Simon Suter at Piddinghoe for the work maintaining our extensive fleet of club dinghies and safety boats.

The second task that the new board want to address is the infrastructure of the club, namely the buildings on both sites. Whilst to the untrained eye the buildings at Seaford and Piddinghoe appear to be in good condition, thanks to those who are constantly maintaining them. However, the buildings have been around for many years and no longer afford the sort of access to disabled users and are far from meeting sustainability targets. The new board have begun to resurrect the plans for a new building at Seaford and have had an initial meeting with the architect, we are also moving forward to consider an option to retain the existing building and to encapsulate it in an expanded building. At Piddinghoe we have plans to re-arrange the existing buildings to provide better storage and changing facilities for our disabled and female members.

Other items identified by the new board include improving communication with our membership, understanding what members want to get from their membership of the club, succession planning, Cohesion – between members using both sites, Training and Progression, Maximising use of sites.

One of the real successes of the last few years has been the introduction of Sailability and we have to thank Jazz, Chris and Carolyn Turner for their work in establishing this and for all the volunteers who support the programme.

The problem in thanking so many people who are working behind the scenes is that I am bound to have forgotten somebody and for that I apologise. I would like to add thanks to Michelle Smith for taking on the Duties administration, Rupert Smith for his work as recorder, Mike Godwin for his work as Berthmaster at Seaford and Duncan Barrows for Berthmaster Piddinghoe. Penny Springall and

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others who are working hard to get the social programme re-established and to all my fellow Directors who are working hard in their various roles.

2. Finance Report from the Honorary Treasurer (Ian Lambert)

2021 was the second year in which the club's operation and income was limited by Government (Covid) regulations but in which we received some help in the form of Covid business support grants and a 'holiday' on some Business Rates.

Largely as a result of the energy and enthusiasm of officers and members and the experience gained during the first year of Covid, we coped with the operational limitations, ran courses with a higher ratio of instructors to students, paid for regular professional cleaning of the toilets, changing rooms and classroom, supported our Galley franchise owners to continue in operation by reducing the rent whilst they were limited to take away service, and succeeded in securing a number of optional grants and donations. Despite all of this disruption we have had an excellent financial year.

The result as you will see from the accompanying detailed Finance Report has been a year where we secured a **record surplus of income over expenditure** of £73,469 on a turnover of £133,866 plus grants and subsidies of £28,116, ie a total turnover of £161,982. The Finance report as usual compares figures against prior year, however 2020 itself was impacted by Covid so perhaps a more interesting comparison is against the last year of full operation before Covid, 2019 when we made surplus of £2,260 against a turnover of £91,262. This comparison emphasises how well the Club has managed as a business in 2021, and indeed as other statistics in this report testify, has continued to thrive in terms of the number and activity of members.

Having a successful commercial year means that the Board were able to pursue the strategy of **replacing some of the club's fleet of training dinghies**, many of which had served us for 27 years, building up the club's **Windsurf fleet** again after many years in the doldrums and **increasing the hire fleet** at both Piddinghoe and Seaford. At the same **time we continue to put funds aside** to enable us plan to enhance building facilities at Piddinghoe and at some point determine what we do with the Seaford building.

Equally important is ensuring that **we replace safety critical equipment before it fails not after**, and as a result we have followed our 5 year replacement policy and invested in a new engine for Orange RIB at the end of 2021. I am also particularly pleased to report that the Board agreed with me to use club funds to purchase a **defibrillator to be located at Piddinghoe Pond**, and I hope that all members, whether first aid qualified or not, understand that these devices (we have another one hung on the back wall at Seaford) are automatic and can be used without training. If used within 3 minutes (yes, it is that short a window of opportunity) can make the difference between survival and death for a heart attack victim.

A major change for the 'finance function' of the club has been a **move from the 'SAGE' book-keeping system and our old book-keepers in Newhaven to the new 'Xero' system and Shoreline book keepers in Seaford**. The work at year end involved both organisations and took longer than expected to achieve reconciliation and handover which is **why the 2021 Finance Report was published to members a few days later than planned, for which we apologise**.

The process for managing NSSC's books of account had been the same for many years, involving documents being hand keyed once a month into a computer and reports then being printed perhaps two months after the month in question. Today we are faced with many hundreds of electronic

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transactions and the arrangement of printing them all out only to pay someone to re-key the details back into a computer was frankly silly. The new system is now running smoothly, provides an immediate online management view of our finances and is capable of ensuring the Board can view the club status as it is today, rather than as it was two months ago.

At this point it is important to thank member **Colin Cryer** for the excellent and almost daily work he has been undertaking for some years, handling payments to suppliers and reimbursement of member's expense claims once they are authorised. Going forward Colin will continue with this valuable contribution to the Club's day to day operation but hopefully with less damage to the world's trees.

Some Specific Notes to explain elements of the Finance Report

Page 7: **'Depreciation Costs'** – the difference between 2020 and 2021 warrants some explanation.

- The 2020 column shows all depreciation for the year under the heading 'Plant and Machinery', this was an error and the total value should have been split across a number of headings. 2021 depreciation is correctly spread across a number of headings:
- 2021 column
 - 'Freehold property' this description covers both buildings and land. We do not depreciate the land, but do depreciate buildings and the £5,570 reflects final depreciation on enhancements carried out at Piddinghoe in 2017
 - 'Dinghie and Cadet Boats' heading also includes sea and pond safety boats and engines., Sailability boats, windsurfers etc.
 - 'Fixtures and Fittings' includes galley equipment at Seaford, mowers, essentially anything that isn't fastened to the ground or floats.

Page 7: **General Administrative Expenses**

- 'Cleaning': reflects cost for cleaning Piddinghoe., cleaning at Seaford (apart from changing rooms) is carried out by the Galley franchise holder as part of their contractual obligation.

Page 7: **Bank Charges**

- This heading includes all financial charges associated with our various methods of collecting fees and income from members and customers (eg Paypal, Go Cardless, SumUp and others. The move to electronic payments, many of these now monthly rather than the traditional annual membership fee of some years ago come with service charges from one or more organisations. We work hard to ensure that we use the most cost effective options.
- The figure also includes the increase that our bankers HSBC decided to start applying in 2021 to all their business accounts for 'non profit making organisations'. These charges include a £5 monthly account fee and charges of 40p per transaction for each cheque and cash receipt. The world of free 'retail' banking is clearly over.

Page 8: **Other Income**

- Rent Receivable £14,031 . This heading represents rent from 'Papachinos' for the Seaford Galley franchise. The income figure is net of following costs which are the responsibility of the club and credited against the rental charges as Papachinos paid them:
 - Refuse and Recycling (partial year) £2,560.50

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- Provision of food at Social events £3,849.60

If these figures are added back., the true rental figure paid by Papachinos in 2021 was £20,441. This is less than the annual contract figure as the club opted to reduce rental charges during the period Covid forced closure.

3.1 Seaford Facilities

As reported by the Commodore we are very lucky in having a strong group of volunteers who do regular maintenance work on facilities at both sites and the Board is committed to identifying and **addressing Health and Safety issues** through funding materials to support this group but also through contracting professional trades to address issues which we don't have the certification to carry out ourselves.

The Tuesday team have generally maintained the facilities and carried out the regular jobs that only get noticed when they stop – cutting the grass, litter picking, painting the metal window shutters etc etc etc. They would always welcome additional help on a Tuesday morning or at Piddinghoe on a Friday morning where they do similar work. To mention these simple jobs grossly under-represents the work the team do which includes welding, quality craftsmanship in both wood and fibreglass and numerous other skills

Although technically a 2022 enhancement, it is worth mentioning the **new tables in the Galley area**. A number of the glass table tops had broken and revealed that they were not safety glass and consequently all had to be replaced. It was decided it would make more sense to replace the elderly tables rather than just replace the glass.

Berths at Seaford have been revisited over the winter with the intention of squeezing-in more boats as we are running out of capacity – a good indication that the club is succeeding in attracting our sailors to the challenge and the joys of sea sailing.

3.2 Piddinghoe facilities and activities

Like at Seaford, Nick and the Friday morning maintenance team have carried out a lot of general work at Piddinghoe to address deterioration in the fabric of the buildings and to **remedy H&S issues**. As usual with a site of this size and facilities constructed largely of softwood, the tasks will be continuous, however its true to say that during 2021 significant improvements were made in the way jobs were identified, documented and resolved., and as a result whilst there is still work outstanding, the list is showing good progress.

The **Training Room** gets regular use, including in the winter and the team have installed a ceiling and other enhancements to improve the insulation and general 'useability' for training.

A large element of keeping Piddinghoe welcoming is the **grass and bramble cutting**. Repeating the Commodore's comments, we are indebted to a small team of people including Quentin Thorpe, Duncan Barrows and others for regular cutting back of the greenery and also maintaining the equipment which is fundamental to staying on top of this task. The Board has agreed to a **proposal to replace the ride on Mower In 2022** to ensure volunteer's time can be spent using rather than repairing it.

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Our plans to introduce '**paddling**' sports to Piddinghoe in partnership with Brighton Watersports developed well in 2021 despite Covid. **BWS now have the necessary 'AALA' (Adventure Activities Licensing Authority) safety certificates** that enable them to offer paddle sports training courses at the Pond. Club members will see more opportunities in 2022 for extending their enjoyment of the water by taking these courses in canoeing, kayaking and paddle-boarding as part of this partnership.

Kick started by Nick's Saturday Windsurfing Club a couple of year's ago., **windsurfing at the pond** has once again become a regular activity for wide number of members, particularly on the windier days. A number have moved on from basic windsurfing to **foiling** and a number to '**wing**' surfing again on foiling boards. This is a sport where the equipment is so portable that NSSC provides the perfect choice of environment with members choosing either Seaford beach or Piddinghoe pond depending on the day's weather conditions., and their confidence with the kit.

Piddinghoe requires a considerable number of safety boats and engines to support all the activities that take place at the pond throughout the year and each of these has until now been professional serviced on an annual basis at a significant cost and consumption of oil etc. After a trial run on one engine through 2021, Paddy the bosun has now fitted engine running hours to all Piddinghoe engines and going forward servicing will be arranged on basis of hours run, delivering both financial and environmental benefits.

The **safety boat hulls** like all the **training, cadet and Hire boat fleets** demand their own extensive repair, servicing and maintenance and thanks must go to Simon Suter and the wide number of volunteers he has organised throughout the year to keep the boats in working condition.

Ecological planting will be started shortly (2022) at Piddinghoe using the funds provide by the Rampion funded grant that Nick's partner Jo succeeded in obtaining in 2021. The Grant Board were so impressed by Jo's submission that they called to check if it was really our first application. It was apparently unheard for them to award a grant at the first application, so well done Jo.

3.3 Newhaven

The Newhaven based safety boat fleet continued in 2021 to reliably support both Sea sailing activities and Training. Thanks must go as usual to Paddy Turner and the Bosun's team for keeping these boats in good condition. With the increasing sophistication of outboard engines we gain better fuel consumption and reduced emissions however they require special tools and skills to maintain and we decided some years ago to replace the larger RIB engines on a five year cycle and to include professional servicing to retain warranty and thereby higher re-sale value. It was Orange RIBs turn to have a new engine at the end of 2021 and she is now back on the sea in 2022 with a **brand new 40hp engine**. In addition she sports a very professional looking enhancement to the **fibre glass console moulding to protect the battery box**. Anyone looking at this would believe it was delivered by a professional boat builder, however it is another example of members donating their skills for free, to the advantage of the club. Thank you Graham Hardy.

Again, we are reaching beyond the end of 2021, however it would be inappropriate to leave members wondering what has happened to '**ARK**' our displacement Race Officer platform / Safety Boat. She was onshore for her spring overhaul and blew over in the recent storms, suffering a number of puncture wounds to the hull and other superficial damage. Its re-assuring to be able to write that she is now watertight, back on the water and awaiting replacement of a small number of components, after which she will be back in service. All costs for these repairs will be borne by the marina yard insurance as they held the responsibility for her safety whilst ashore on their props.

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4. The Club's RYA Training Centre

Despite Covid restrictions meaning once again that many courses had to be run with smaller class sizes and higher instructor to student ratios., the two major activities of Sailing Dinghy instruction and Power Boat training resulted in a sizeable income stream but probably more significant to the Club's ongoing well being., **a good flow of new, active members.** The power boat courses particularly are essential if we are able to provide competent safety crews to support the many on-water activities at both sites.

2021 was particularly noteworthy as for the first time for some years we saw a number of the club's youth sailors obtain their **dinghy and windsurf instructor's qualifications.**, and the re-establishment of a formal Assistant Instructor training cadre.

Should they ever want to look for a career in the Marine leisure industry, they have secured qualifications and experience that will give them a start on this path. If instead they pursue some other career, this early C.V. material will be priceless when applying for those first jobs or University places.

The club runs a number of **first aid courses** each year to ensure that Instructors can maintain their mandatory qualifications and going forward we would hope that the interest shown by members in learning about Defibrillators, now that we have one at each site, will lead more members to undertake the course and gain the general first aid skills that could literally save a friend or relative's life.

5. Membership Report (Terry Jones)

Mem type	Units 2020	Individuals 2020	Units 2021	Individuals 2021	% change
FSWD	111	392	146	513	+31%
FSND	38	143	51	180	+26%
ISWD	74	74	73	73	-1%
ISND	16	16	21	21	+31%
FsocWD	16	47	18	49	+4%
FsocND	16	46	16	46	0%
IsocWD	18	18	15	15	-17%
IsocND	6	6	8	8	+33%
Jun cadet	6	6	3	3	-50%
Sen Cadet	6	6	5	5	-17%
Student	6	6	3	3	-50%
Life mem	21	21	22	22	+5%
		781		938	+20%

During 2021 we saw a positive increase in our family sailing memberships, a lot of new families joining so that they could have access to Piddinghoe for their children to enjoy the facilities. Social memberships were fairly static.

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7. Other items of note

Hire Fleet enhancements

The Club has for many years had a small fleet of 'cadet' boats available for families to rent at Piddinghoe. A few years ago we started to offer a wider range of 'adult' boats for short term rental but these were typically donated boats in poor condition. In 2020 the club made the decision to invest in refreshing the Training fleet and also in upgrading the quality of the Hire boats over a five year cycle. In 2021 we pursued this strategy by **buying a number of higher quality second hand boats, covers, new sails etc. for the hire fleets at both sites** The online payment facility for these hire boats will shortly be enhanced so that you can **book a specific boat on a specific day/time** and thus be re-assured that it will be available when you come to use it.

Egrets Way and NSSC's Piddinghoe track

Throughout the year, members of the board were in discussions with representatives from The South Downs National Park (SDNP) and Sustrans (the sustainable transport charity) in relation to the Egrets Way project. As many of you will know, this is a project which is seeking to establish a walking and cycling path between Lewes and Newhaven. The planned route where possible, follows the route of the river Ouse.

The discussions between SDNP, Sustrans and NSSC were to agree the route of the new path and a set of terms, including financial compensation to NSSC. From those, a draft lease was to have been drawn up which the NSSC board would discuss and then vote upon.

At that time the route being discussed was to have been around the Northern and Eastern banks of Piddinghoe Pond, on the land between the lake and the river. Initial work on constructing the path at Newhaven did start during 2021, however, at the end of the year NSSC was informed that the route proposed was no longer viable as The Environment Agency would not accept the liability for a new ramp to be built on the river embankment on our neighbour's land. SDNP and Sustrans now wanted an agreement with NSSC to enable the Egrets Way path to use the old farm track at Piddinghoe which runs from the NSSC carpark gate towards the river. With the exception of the very Eastern end, NSSC is the landowner of this track.

The NSSC track at Piddinghoe is also the subject of a separate Public Right of Way application that has not yet been resolved. During 2017, an application was made on behalf of the Ramblers Association to have the NSSC-owned track designated as a Restricted Byway, this is a public right of way for people and horse-drawn vehicles, but not for motorised traffic. NSSC fought this application and although East Sussex County Council (ESCC) rejected the application in 2019, an appeal by the applicant to the Planning Inspectorate resulted in the appeal being upheld and ESCC being instructed to start the process of designating the track as a Restricted Byway.

ESCC raised the DMMO (Definitive Map Modification Order) in December 2021 and NSSC members may have noticed the Order posted by ESCC at the entrance to the track where it joins the road through Piddinghoe village. Following discussion, the Board of NSSC decided it was in NSSC's best interest to write and object to the order. The case is now back in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate and it is not yet known when the matter will be progressed by them.

It is worth stating the obvious here, that should the Public Right of Way be granted, Egrets Way would not need NSSC permission to include the track at Piddinghoe within their route. For this reason NSSC is keen to engage with the Egrets Way team, to try and ensure the best possible outcome for NSSC.