

STRATFORD UPON AVON BSAC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

Held on Thursday November 10th at Stratford Football Club at 9.30pm

(32 Members plus Committee attended)

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Peter Neal, Russell Thompson, Brett Ashford, Clive Shepherd, Rachel Faulkner, Malcolm West;
- 2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2015 AGM:** Proposed: David Williams;
Seconded: Les Horsley
- 3. Chairman's Report – Hilary Wilson**

Another year is nearly over, the British diving season is finished, and I can't believe where the time has gone! To recap on what has happened this year.

The most important change was the decision to move Portia to Salcombe. This was a suggestion from Russell which the committee decided, after much discussion, would be worth trying. For several years now, Portia has only been used for the Scillies trip so we considered it worth trying to get more use by basing it at Salcombe. The experiment worked well with Russell arranging 2 trips on Portia and Lynne organised 2 more. Russell is very willing to give advice and help which means that other members could have a go at organising a weekend on Portia, knowing they have easy launching and plenty of back up on hand. You don't even need a car to launch.

In general BSAC clubs seem to be shrinking and BSAC HQ are actively trying to deal with this, for instance they suggest that small clubs share pool facilities to keep costs down. I am pleased to say that our club is not suffering in this way, we have over 60 members, most of them renewing each year, and a good steady influx of new members, mainly down to Peter Talbot insisting they pay up each year, and Lynne signing the new members.

Storage of club kit has been improved again this year. Jay has organised the pool kit into an additional cage and letter boxes for the fins.

We had one committee meeting in the summer when Jay produced champagne to celebrate the lighting being completed in the Hobbit Hole. I know he had a huge amount of work to wire it up, drilling through solid concrete blocks and working in a confined space. However, it is well worth it, and now we can see what we are about to bang our heads on!

We also have a shed over in Long Itchington to store all the equipment that goes to the Scilly Isles, jerry cans, barbecue, marquee, tables and chairs etc. It means that we can store it all together and should be able to find everything easily.

On the social side, Angie organised a talk by the Marine Conservation Society and we are now officially members. They organise clean-up days on beaches around Britain which Angie would like to get some of us to help with, so any volunteers, please see her later. We have decided that we would like the Christmas card collection to be split between them and the Rugby Recompression Chamber.

I am also very pleased to say that we have had some extra social events organised by newer members of the club. Richard Talbot arranged his Clay Pigeon shoot again, I think this is now an annual event, and proves very popular. Paul Nash took on an evening out at Aladdin's, again proving very popular.

I would like to add a few comments to this. Your committee has worked hard to try to ensure the club runs smoothly and with plenty of interesting events going on, both social and diving. However, the old cliché that you get out of a club what you put in is very true. We don't have the time or energy to do all the work and we would really like to see some others come forward to arrange dive trips or social events. David Williams' trips to Anglesey and Robert Muntz's trips to the Farne Islands have stopped but both of them would be very willing to help and encourage anyone else who would like to take these on.

Lynne has taken up the baton and hopefully will carry on with her trips to Salcombe, but Geoff, Richard, Prich, Peter Neal and Russell all have a great deal of knowledge and enthusiasm that they would love to pass on to newer members. I know it can be very daunting to take these on, but the older club members will tell you that they can be very rewarding, a great deal of fun, and there is nothing like working together to put up half a dozen tents in the pouring rain to get the club spirit well and truly going.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work and huge amount of effort they have put in over the last year. A special mention also goes to Peter Neal and Jay who have decided to step down from the committee, so thank you both for the work you have done over the years.

I hope you all agree that the club has run smoothly and efficiently and, on a personal note, I have greatly appreciated the support that I have had from all of the committee during the last 2 years. We really couldn't run the club without you.

Keith Bond remarked that the Photographic Competition was a success and worth a mention.

4. Diving Officer's Report – Miles Howarth

The dive club has been fairly active this year with
222 freshwater dives,
249 on the RIBs,
72 Hard Boat dives,
65 UK shore based dives and

305 abroad, totalling
913 dives this year.

This is slightly less than the total of 1330 for 2015, and the 1197 we did in 2014.

As a Diving Officer it is always a pleasure to be able to say that there have been no reportable diving incidents this year, which leads me to believe that the training that we do is up to a high standard.

I would like to add to the comments regarding RIB trips made by Hilary. I have been aware that it can be difficult for new trainees to be able to get experience on club RIB trips. These trips are fundamental to the future of our club. We need members to be pro-active and I would encourage you all to come forward and help organise some qualifying dive trips as well as fun weekends. There are plenty of experienced divers who are willing and keen to help you.

It would be very nice to see next year's dive calendar filled up quickly.

5. Treasurer's Report- Geoff Russell

Many thanks to Chris Prichard in assisting and auditing the accounts.

SUMMARY

In Summary the Club finances for this year are very similar to the previous year 2014 – 2015
A precis of notable issues is:-

Income

Subscriptions down due to a reduction in current members by 7 to 60 at end of September. The issue appears to be retention of new members, which I suggest the new committee addresses.

Pool -Last year's figures were adversely affected by the pool refurbishment and knock on effect. However we have got back to norm, plus a little. Net profit on pool increasing by circa £800 due to a significant increase in try dives. Many thanks to Lynne for her sterling efforts in this regard. This year pool receipts virtually covered pool hire whereas in previous years Try Dives have had to make up deficient receipts.

Training Materials – The costs cover a reduction in stock figure. In practice we purchased training packs through our BSAC deposit account (representing balance of last Sport England Grant) to the value of some £1100. The corresponding income was only £270 and even adding in some £250 which was accounted for in September/ October 2015 which may have overlapped with last year's stock take, our stock take on materials indicates a considerable unaccounted amount of some £300. Some of this is due to not charging members full cost of Training Packs. I will be asking next year's committee to improve management and payment and processing for training resources.

Equipment Hire down by circa £600 due to less new members in training. This year we have had 6 new members in training, last year we had 12.

Events –A healthy doubling of profit from Dinner Dance.

Donations – Maintained at over £200 supported by the Raft Race donation and Richard Talbots now annual Clay Pigeon shoot profits. Note: Thank God Prich's accounting skills are better than his shotgun proficiency.

Expenditure

Pool kit servicing increase of 50%. Some of this is due to problems we are experiencing with Buddy stab jackets ripping on inside face of outer bags. New committee asked to look further into the reasons for this failure and warranties.

Boats and trailers decrease in costs due to previous year the club compressor had a full service costing £1000 and RIBS have had no major issues and servicing costs of Portia now being paid for by Russell Thompson.

Balance Sheet - Current Assets: Bond & Deposit £30,943; Current Account £14,504; Total £45,447. No erosion of capital and again returning a surplus of over £1000.

Assets - Assets purchased this year were minimal: 2 second hand cylinders, 1 second hand regulator, 1 new stab jacket, 2 manikin models.

Sales include sale of surplus 15 litre cylinder.

With donations our stock of certain equipment is in surplus – so it is intended to hold a club sale in the New Year.

Treasurers Overview

Overall surplus of £1200, an increase of £200 on last year which is stable compared with previous years of £502 in 2014 and negative in 2013 of - £1396 and negative in 2012 of - £1709

Our credit account with BSAC HQ is now only c £60 so all future purchase on training materials will now be accounted under expenditure and have a detrimental effect on surplus.

My view as last year is that the club needs to target a surplus of approximately £2000 per annum in order to fund replacement of equipment without erosion of capital funds. There are a number of ways this could be achieved, which could be addressed by the members, e.g.

- Profitable social events such as BBQ, Clay Pigeon shoots etc.
- River salvage donations.
- Club wear. (This year Club wear was sold at cost to ensure affordability to members)
- Successful grant applications.
- Sponsorship.

I also believe we need to examine the real cost of training ocean/sports divers, and ensure we a) do not subsidise their training with members money, and b) ensure our efforts are directed to member retention which will support and maintain the club's existence.

6. Training Officer's Report- Peter Neal (absent- his Report read out by Sally Richards)

Since last November we have produced nine Ocean Divers and three (so far) have progressed to become Sports Divers. Well done everyone.

A special well done to our younger members, Anthony Stoodly and Ben Steed, both have the makings of very good divers. Jamie Wolstoncroft should be mentioned. He's a little older but I think I can still class him as one of the younger members. Jamie has just completed a Buoyancy and Trim workshop and attained GOLD standard and is working towards sports diver. Well done Jamie.

Four of our Assistant Instructors have been on the O.W.I. Course and I am now hoping that they will take the O.W.I. Exams and become fully qualified.

Many thanks again to Prich for running the Life Saving course with 8 trainees participating. I would also like to thank the helpers, Becky, Angie, Jon Hardman and Peter Talbot.

As I mentioned earlier, last weekend six divers went to Dosthill Quarry to improve their buoyancy and trim. I'm very pleased to say that they all acquitted themselves as I would have expected and gained three Gold standard, and three people getting the top Black standard. Well done all of you.

At the moment we have six new members in the pool, and by spring when the water is a little warmer they will complete the Ocean Diver course.

Thank you to all the trainees, and their Instructors, who gave up their time to make everything happen. Special thanks to Robert Muntz and David Williams who have done the bulk of the open water training at Stoney Cove.

We need more O.W.I.s who are willing to take pupils to Stoney and the sea if the club is to progress.

7. Election of Committee Members for the forthcoming year-

The following nominations were submitted:

Chairman-	Peter Talbot
Diving Officer-	Miles Howarth
Treasurer-	Geoff Russell
Secretary-	Sally Richards
Training Officer-	Hilary Wilson
Equipment Officer-	Peter Scarpellino
Recruitment Officer-	Paul Nash
Membership Secretary-	Lynne Bunker
Events Officer-	Angie Deaves

As all the nominees were standing unopposed they were automatically elected.

At this point retiring Committee Members stepped down from the Table and were replaced by the new ones.

Peter Talbot, new Chairman, addressed the Meeting. He thanked last year's Committee and retiring Committee members Jay Scott and Peter Neal in particular. He welcomed Paul Nash and Peter Scarpellino who haven't served before, onto the Committee.

Peter T pointed out that the Club belongs to all members and urged everyone to be proactive in making it successful.

8. Any Other Business- Peter invited members' comments and questions.

Geoff Russell announced the death of former member and Medical Officer Dr George Sykes who was 93.

Keith Bond called for us all to Thank Les for collecting the Pool Money each week.

David Williams spoke to raise our awareness of The BSAC Dive Conference, always held on the first day of the Dive Show in Birmingham. He thinks that members would benefit from attending in future and outlined the topics discussed at the recent Conference. As well as the BSAC AGM, there were lectures including British Marine Life and Managing Decompression Stress. The Incident Report was presented which highlighted the dangers of diving in threes and older diver issues. Break-out Sessions covered many topics including our BSAC 3rd Party Insurance and what it actually covers; Workshop for newly qualified OWIs. The talks are given by National Instructors so the standard is high. This year an Early Bird Ticket cost £20 which gave admittance to the Conference and The Dive Show. We should try and get more members to attend.

Summer BBQ July 1st- Mark Jeffrey said that he and others would like to reincarnate the BBQ this year. Held at the Boat Club on the Saturday evening of The River Festival, it has declined in recent years but they wish to restore it and include a Disco and Bar as before. He will be looking for people to come and help organise. Peter T said that the possibility of improving the Summer BBQ had been considered at Committee Meetings and is up for discussion. Jay established that the Boat Club will be available that night.

Christmas Party December 10th- Angie Deaves, the organiser, said that the deadline for paying the hotel is approaching, so she needs to know tonight of any more people who want to attend. Friends and family welcome. She called for the donation of Raffle prizes.

Social Events- Angie said that she had e-mailed the membership on several occasions asking for ideas on Club Social Events, but with very little response. She is asking again.

Nigel Maris asked Peter T what he hopes will have been achieved in 12 months' time. Are there any goals?

Peter said that we need to consolidate what we have already. Sometimes we look too far into the distance. We are not retaining the younger people who join us and need to investigate the reasons. We need more organic growth from within the Club, i.e. we are more successful at retaining people when they are family or friends of existing members e.g. Claire and Dan brought in by Peter Virgo; **Also, we have a shortage of OWIs.** We need more members to become OWIs and more of those that already are OWIs need to

volunteer to instruct trainees, so that we have a larger pool of Instructors to call on. Currently David Williams and Robert Muntz do a lot of this work.

Xmas Card Collection- Hilary Wilson asked for a volunteer to take this over from her. Ellen Noakes volunteered. This involves members donating money instead of giving other members Xmas Cards. An e-mail Greeting is sent to all, showing the participants names. The money is sent to an elected charity and this year will be split between the MCS and the Rugby Recompression Chamber. Usually @£200 is raised. **Chris Hastie enquired as to the nature of the charitable work carried out at Rugby Chamber.** Discussion ensued. We concluded that whilst the Chamber receives funding from the NHS they do need donations to help run the centre and provide “comfort facilities” for patients.

Richard Wells said that he had suggested to Geoff that we could run a “Short Course” for people who were about to go on holiday and approach us wanting to learn to dive. This could take the form of 2 Pool Sessions and 1 Lecture for e.g. £50. (No Open Water training). **Peter T** said that we had discussed this briefly in Committee and thought it had possibilities. Currently such a person would not have the time before their holiday to complete the Ocean Diver Course and other than perhaps a Try Dive we end up not being able to offer them anything and lose them. A Short Course and exposure to the Club might well entice them to actually join us and do the normal BSAC Course after their holiday.

Becky asked if this conflicted with the non-commercial ethos of BSAC and the BSAC way of training. Discussion ensued. It was felt that it didn't conflict on either count as we already make money out of Try Dives and no Diving Qualification was being offered or achieved; we were just trying to satisfy a need that exists. We get several enquiries from people wanting to learn to dive before an imminent holiday not realising that the BSAC OD Course takes a few months and because of this we lose them. The Short Course isn't something that we would openly advertise but could be offered in the above circumstances. **Prich** observed that we need to understand why we would be doing this. Is it to raise money or the possibility of gaining a new member? It was thought the latter. **Nigel** said that he often does Try Dives and would be happy to do a Short Course, adding that as well as the diving experience it would give the participant confidence in using kit and checking the safety of the kit that they are given at their holiday resort. **Jeannie** asked if there were any Health & Safety liabilities that need to be considered regarding their only doing a little bit of training with us rather than joining and doing a whole course. It was thought not, other than the normal Try Dive Disclaimer, as they are not gaining a formal qualification. **Chris H** pointed out that PADI offer similar option: - 1 Pool Session and 1 Theory Lecture.

Mark Jeffrey suggested a new scheme of Membership Subscriptions for people joining the Club to learn to dive- he suggested we have a 2-tier system. New Members could either pay 3 years subscription up front when they join, on the condition that after three years their annual Sub would be reduced, but if they left within the 3 years no money would be returned, OR, they could join initially for one year but pay a higher than normal Sub. Both these tiers effectively mean that people are paying for their training and the first one has

the possibility that a member will be more likely to stay. He feels this scheme could address the disappointment that some members feel when people just join to learn then leave immediately having taken the time and energy of club members to train them.

Keith Bond asked about the possibility of having a Social Membership Subscription. He said that some ex members who no longer dive would still like to feel part of the Club but find themselves reluctant to join in club activities as they feel some members would question their being there. **Sally** said that she could understand that feeling if we owned our own Club House, but the fact that we meet at the Football Club means in reality anyone can come and socialise. It was also observed that we encourage friends and family to attend events.

There being no more AOB, Peter thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 10.35 PM

Sally Richards, Secretary.