

STRATFORD UPON AVON BSAC
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Held on Wednesday November 11th at 8pm

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Jamie Wolstencroft;

- 2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2019 AGM:** Proposed: Rob James;
Seconded: Kirsty Manning

3. Chairman's Report – Alastair Manning

Alastair looked to provide an update to the 3 Year Plan which focused on 4 key areas;

1. Growing the club
2. Communication
3. Refreshing Assets
4. Sustainability and Safety

1. Growing the club

- Membership and recruitment are the lifeblood of the club. Without a steady stream of new members, we cannot guarantee the future viability of the club.
- We have a target of achieving membership numbers of between 85 and 100. This is based on ensuring sufficient members to fill trips, provide opportunities for all our members and ensuring financial security.
- Currently we have 58 members. 3 down on this time last year. 4 very likely to re-join next year. 17 women and 41 men, broadly in line with last year.
- 9 new members this year balances out the losses. Achieving this many new members is a remarkable achievement in the current climate.
- Alastair offered his sincere thanks to Sophie and Natalie, our recruitment and membership team for managing what has been a very difficult situation with sensitivity and perseverance.

The outlook for 2021

- We will see some of the leavers from this year coming back if the COVID situation improves.
- We are deliberately limiting the number of try dives currently – all applicants are being heavily screened to ensure they understand the commitment. We do not want to be running needless try dives that puts our members and leisure centre staff at risk.
- If we can return to focusing on increasing numbers safely in 2021 we will, but we will prioritise the needs of existing members.
- For more information on what our plans are regarding growing the club, please refer to the 3-year plan published in early 2020.

2. Communication

- One area we have been able to focus on is communication to our members.
- Early on in the year we looked at how information is circulated in the club and made some changes.
- The website remains our principle platform for information, it is regularly updated and accessible 24 hours a day.
- We have tried to limit the number of chat or announce emails we use; email overload is common and important information is often missed.
- The introduction of the newsletter allows for a regular and reliable flow of information that should mirror the website.
- The newsletter is also available via WhatsApp if you know of anyone that needs it delivered this way.

3. Refreshing Assets

- Portia – the mandate to sell Portia was clear and that decision has not changed
- The decision was made in March to delay the sale for 2 reasons.
 - The start of the first lockdown was not viewed as a good time to be selling a boat. I realise that there are some that feel that it could have been done, but I am sceptical that we would have been able to achieve a premium price for it on the basis that it is a dive boat, not a pleasure craft.
 - The future needs are uncertain for our boats. We have new members, we have newly qualified cox'n, we have limits to international travel. I will not rush the sale only to find that we now need to source a second boat.
- Currently we plan to revisit the sale of Portia in late Spring 2021. We will ask for a premium price based on it being exceptionally well maintained. For those that want to keep it, we need clear evidence that it will be used.

4. Safety and Sustainability

- Currently we are in a relatively good position. We have been able to keep membership stable; we have a strong financial position and we remain very grateful to have a pool of instructors we can call on.
- We have introduced the instructor's expenses scheme and training reimbursement scheme. As suspected, this is only lightly used and in fact only one person has ever claimed on it. Our instructors remain committed to providing a high standard of training to all our students
- We introduced pool marshals to the Thursday sessions to ensure we are operating safely in the water
- We introduced a welfare officer position and introduced the safeguards that are required if we are going to allow under 18's in the club. We have not significantly changed the age requirements that we have for membership but by having the policies in place we have been able to be a little more flexible on age and we have been able to attract some very able younger divers to the club as a result.
- We have been able to run some great trips this year despite the significant challenges we have had, including the Farnes trip, the IOS, Lundy, Scapa, Greece twice and some domestic trips to Plymouth, Babbacombe along with numerous trips to the inland dive sites. Overall, the trip calendar is healthy and well attended. I know there are others as well.
- Safety as always remains our top priority and I want to take the opportunity to thank our TO and DO duo, Chris Hastie and Angie for their ongoing work to ensure we have a safe diving environment and that we can maintain our training.

One loss has made this year even more difficult than it should have been. David Williams was such a key member of the club and I know that for many of us this loss is still keenly felt.

David's estate has made an extremely generous donation of £1000 to the club and we are interested to hear any ideas from members on how this should be spent. We have an idea to buy a submersible resus doll for use in the pool. These are expensive so we would consider other options as well. Please let me know.

Members of the committee

The committee is very stable this year, and I am grateful for this. Navigating COVID has been challenging and each committee member has been dedicated and supportive during the year. I thank each member of the committee for the work they have put in this year, and also to the whole membership for sticking with us in a year where our diving was severely limited.

This year we do have to say goodbye to one committee member who has given a huge amount of time and energy to the club in different roles. Ellen is standing down as events officer, a role that she has filled flawlessly since moving into the role from recruitment.

Events is a tough role to do, it requires attention to detail, an energy to keep events coming up on the horizon and incredible organisational skills. Ellen had all this and more and so, on behalf of the club...Thank you.

A number of questions were then raised;

Nigel asked with regards to the Portia, "is it use it or lose it"? Yes, that's pretty much the case.

Simon asked, "is the location of the boat proving to be a problem? Alternate locations could be looked at next year, but it still comes down to making use of the RIBs.

Nigel asked about accessibility. Alastair remarked, "there are no restrictions on use providing basic principles are followed, for example towing capabilities, suitable insurance, minimum number of coxes, safety, etc."

Andy suggested everyone should get involved in RIB diving. Alastair encouraged participation with any trips utilising the RIBs.

Are we going to have RIB handling training? Yes, we are planning boat handling courses. Courses this year had to be delayed due to lockdown. It is quite expensive, but we firmly believe there is sufficient interest and having more RYA qualified boat handles will be hugely beneficial to the club.

4. Diving Officer's Report – Angie Deaves

Angie described how lockdown had disrupted diving opportunities. We were just starting to warm up, service the kit and drop in the pool to check out the dry suits when lockdown disrupted diving, and our lives generally. Given the year that we have had I'm happy to report that we have a healthy contingent who have taken the opportunity to dive where permissible, with some carefully timed overseas trips for a few of us to Greece, The Maldives and Thailand. We have had trips to inland sites at Capenwray, Stoney, Dosthill and Cromhall as well as club coastal excursions to the Farnes, Lundy, Plymouth, Babbacombe and Scapa Flow, with one blown out Scillies windy, walking adventure.

The organisation for these trips has been protracted and difficult and I am grateful for the organisers unerring patience and perseverance to get their buddies underwater. Organising these club adventures takes a lot of time and energy and so on behalf of everyone I want to thank the efforts of those involved.

Diving – statistics and a few mentions

- 857 dives during this year. Of these 612 were in the UK.
- No incidents on any of our dives
- Thank you for notifying DO of planned dives and submitting logs. Club members should be aware of the lack of insurance if you don't notify and have signed off your planned trip with the DO.
- I also want to make special mention to those who did their own independent diving, outside of the club trips;
 - Simon and Den for staying in their own bubble whilst bubbling.
 - Steve Delaney for teaming up with friends from other clubs and really diving very frequently.
 - Andy Dale (and Steve) for getting involved with a charity diving.
 - Also, Sophie, Chris, Kirsty and Jack. Apologies if I have omitted anyone.

Activities for next year;

- Please clear dates with Angie
- Book the ribs with Angie and discuss intended dive trips
- Ensure people are adequately trained when organising RiB trips
- Consider running your own trip. Give it a go and speak to Angie to talk about how to go about running a trip. There is lots of help available.
- Provide greater support to people wishing to train as instructors.

Finally

This has been a difficult year for many of us, and when lockdown finally clears, there are quite a few who haven't dived for a while. If you feel you need any assistance with anything in the coming months, please do let me know and please do get in the pool and dust off the kit before doing a giant stride into the open water. I am here to support you. I am also here for you to discuss concerns whether personal or otherwise.

Thank you to the instructors: Peter, Nigel, Jack, Miles, Chris and Simon and the Safety Committee: Brett, Peter and Miles, which thankfully there was no need to convene a meeting.

I want to make a special mention to Alastair, not for the amazing feat of patience and planning with Scapa, but for his measured guidance and calming leadership as Chairman, through some very challenging times. Many of the committee have dedicated considerable time and effort to achieve what we have this season – thank you.

I am so encouraged by how we have managed to pull together through this, whether it be the swimmers trawling the lanes relentlessly, just socialising via media or in the distanced pub, or joining the trips, wherever they were, and I hope and look forward to a better season next year for us all.

5. Treasurer's Report- Simon Steed

(See separate attachment for full 2020 Accounts)

I report on the accounts today for the period to 30th September 2020. As you will all accept this year has been very different and the level of diving activities has been significantly below normal levels. This has resulted in lower expenditure and income. Overall, the club remained in positive territory returning a "profit" for the year.

The headlines overall for the last 12 months are:

- Above inflationary rises in boat insurance
- No significant capital purchases or investments
- Equally no capital sales
- Greater use of cashless operations at small cost to the club
- (NatWest closed at weekends – Worcester or Redditch!)
- No proposed increases in subs for 2021
- External 3rd party professional audit of this year's accounts

Looking at our income for last year:

Main Income

Subscriptions	£6,440	55%
Donations/Fundraising	£2,040	17%
Pool Takings	£1,511	13%
Try Dives	£760	7%
Bank Interest	£349	
Other	£603	

David Williams estate donated his diving equipment to the club, which was sold to the members, along with a generous donation from his will. The club also directly purchased some equipment for training in the pool.

Main Expenditure

Boat & Trailer	£2,480	33%
Pool Hire	£2,270	30%
Insurance	£679	9%
Storage & Launch	£525	7%
Pool Kit Maintenance	£512	
Accountancy Costs	£500	
Other	£633	

Main expenditure remained the boats and the pool hire. The cost of service & repair was below our budgeted value for reasons already stated. This year pool hire was offset by pool dues and try dive income showing a breakeven point.

“Other costs” included compressor maintenance, Lifeboat fund, bank charges, boat storage.

Comparing our position to the budget, we were under in most areas, lower pool hire, pool kit maintenance and replacement and lower operating costs. We were down on try dive income, boat levy and social events which generate significant profits in the summer months.

In summary and in respect of the balance sheet for year to end of September 2020:

- Income was £14,856
- Expenditure was £11,069
- Minimal depreciation of £68
- Giving an operating profit of £3,719 for the year and Club Book value of £53,390

This year the committee appointed an external Chartered Accountant and Auditor to review the books. This being Thomas & Young Chartered Accountants. These have been certified as a true record for the year in accordance with the ICAEW.

A question was raised “How much was the Chartered Accountancy cost and why did we choose to perform it?”

Alastair advised we haven’t had the final invoice but likely upwards of £500. It’s a one-off external audit event this year as it was specifically requested during last year’s AGM by no less than two members.

6. Training Officer’s Report- Chris Hastie

Chris described that it had been a disrupted year;

- Lots started, but not much finished
- Lockdown had a major impact on practical training
- Unable to use the pool for several months
- Ongoing problems with open water training
- IFCs, OWICs and PIEs cancelled
- Other impacts on training, e.g.
 - Rescue breaths very difficult
 - ‘Rule of Six’ prevents big training events
 - Instructors just want to dive!

Dive leader: adapting to the new order;

- Piloted delivering theory classes online, using the Drysuit SDC as a trial
- Dive Leader and O₂ Administration delivered online
- 9 members attended DL theory classes and 5 attended O₂ Administration
- Challenges remain, particularly with the practical sessions and decontamination of manakins

Ocean and Sports Diver;

- Two cohorts of Ocean Diver trainees have run this year, with seven students altogether
- Second cohort is running at present and will now switch to online theory during lockdown 2.0
- One Sports Diver cohort of six completed all theory training before lockdown
- Progress with practical training has been slow because of the COVID challenges

Congratulations were given to;

- New Ocean Divers
 - Holly Bacon
 - Paul Orris
- New Sports Divers
 - Andy Dale
 - Steve Delaney
 - Tom Smith
 - Anthony Stoodley
- Dry suit divers
 - Abi Taylor
 - Johnny Taylor

Outside the club

- Members have taken advantage of many training opportunities outside the club
- Online theory courses offered by BSAC nationally, and by other clubs, including
 - Advanced Diver theory (Jack, Chris H, Rob James)
 - Diving for All (Steve)
 - AED Awareness (Steve)
 - Many 'Skills Bytes'
- Practical training with other clubs and regional teams, including Boat Handling, Side Mount (Jack) and Twin-set (Steve)

7. Election of Committee Members for the forthcoming year

Following Ellen's tenure as Events officer she has stepped down. Kirsty Manning has volunteered her services in this capacity and Alastair would like to show his appreciation for her stepping forward to take on this role.

8. Any Other Business-

A question was raised regarding awards for 2020, "are we doing them this year?" Typically, these are provided at the Christmas party but due to lockdown this won't be happening. The committee will therefore be looking at how awards can be distributed in a Covid safe way. In light of the challenges this year we may also choose to give out a shortened list of awards.

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

Meeting closed at 9.13pm.