



COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Sunday 28 August 2022 at Bala Sailing Club

The meeting was attended by 25 members.

1. **Apologies:** received from Keith Lamdin, Peter Mountford, Steve Gregory, Roger Lemmon, Guy Wilkins, Paul Hinde, Sarah-Jane Critchley,

2. **The matters arising from the minutes of the AGM 2021.** There were no matters arising from last years minutes. Proposed Peter Coop, seconded by Helen Leivers as a true record. All in favour

3. Reports

Chairman – Chris Robinson (standing in for Peter Mountford) read out his report.

“This is my second annual chairman’s report to an Annual General Meeting of the Comet Class Association, and regretfully, I have to start by apologising for the fact that due to circumstances somewhat beyond my control, I am unable to present it in person, and also unable to attend and chair the meeting. I would like to thank Chris Robinson for taking on this role in my absence.

Last year ended with the sad news of the passing of Clive Chapman who was a previous chairman of the Association. As the disruption to all our lives from the pandemic has receded, the Committee has been able to revert to its more usual timetable. Two Committee meetings have been held so far this year, all via Zoom. Changing these meetings from an in-person gathering to an on-line (ie Zoom) event looks as though it could become a lasting consequence of the pandemic simply because of its much greater practical convenience. However, it is anticipated that the meeting usually held at the final Open Meeting of the season will still be held in-person.

Our stand at the RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show held at the end of February at its new venue in Farnborough was judged to be a great success, and my thanks to those members who helped to support the stand over the two days of the show. In my opinion, the new venue was a huge improvement – the car parking was right next to the venue which was easy to find and the entire exhibition was staged in one large hall. The events programme has been maintained at around its usual level, and this season has seen the welcome return of Redditch Sailing Club, and the equally welcome appearance of Silver Wings Sailing Club as a new venue in the programme.

Congratulations are due to Paul Hinde and Nigel Fern on their design and production of the Association’s new website, and to Andy Simmons for producing the 900th Comet dinghy (and more) during the season. Norah Jaggars has indicated that she wishes to relinquish the role of trophy buying, and I would like to thank her for the work this has involved and in particular for her “snood” initiative last year to help celebrate the class’s 40th anniversary.

I would also like to thank the members who gave me considerable help in assembling the more extensive Honours Board which is now on the new website. This was an exercise which I found most instructive in learning about the history of the boat and the Association – the Perihelion back-copies on the website are quite a treasure trove of information.

Mick Parnell has decided to step down from the Committee, and I would like to thank him for his support over the last 12 months. This means that there is a vacancy on the Committee to fill as well as a new trophy buyer to recruit. I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for the hard work they have put in this year to supporting the Association. Their separate roles are vital to maintaining the Association’s various activities and supporting Comet sailing in general, and I would like all of them to realise how much their individual efforts are appreciated”.

Secretary - Liz Hossell - No report

Membership Secretary - Steve Gregory reported:

Our membership numbers have held up well, despite the disruptions of the last couple of years. as of 12th August, here are the vital stats:

- 91 members (by end 2021 there were 92)
- including 4 Honorary members
- 15 carried forward from 2021 (late registered)
- 13 did not renew from 2021.
- 12 new members
- 44 different clubs!
 1. A few observations to note: All but one of the carried forward (14) were new members in 2021 - so will they renew in 2023?
 2. We have overall 14% 'churn' (people not renewing being replaced with new members)
 3. A lot of boats sailing in clubs with large Comet fleets are not members and don't travel to other opens.

The member/entrant ratio so far this season is as follows:

Notts 3/9, Winsford 8/11, Chipstead 4/18, Redesmere 2/10, Cransley 2/10, Baltic 1/10
There are 40 helms in the above list who haven't joined up. (some of these may be occasional helms, using club Comets, of course)

The question we have often asked is ... how can we encourage Comet sailors who don't travel to opens to join the Association? I don't have any bright ideas, but the above stats show a wide variation of interest in the clubs with larger fleets Perhaps a different level of membership for non-travellers, but

- a) this would need to be administered and
- b) could backfire by reducing the overall funds, as a large number of the total membership do not travel

Events Co-ordinator – Eddie Pope reported.

There is a series of 21 opens and 2 championships for 2022. Many thanks are due to previous post holders Steve Gregory and Norah Jagers, who gave me advice and had established contacts at club level.

I ran a successful Comet training day at Redesmere SC in March 2022, helped greatly by Steve Bellamy.

Two new venues at Silver Wing SC and Redditch SC are in the series, but sadly I was unable to organise opens at the regular venues of Frensham SC, Up River YC and Shearwater SC. Bowmoor SC is keen to hold a Comet open, but it was not possible to find a free date this year.

The Carsington SC open was cancelled a week beforehand due to insufficient entries in the joint event with the Supernovas. I provided feedback and comments to Carsington, and we will need to consider whether to return there.

Ogston SC offered to hold the 2023 National Championships over the August Bank Holiday, and this has been gratefully accepted. I hope to arrange the 2023 Association Championships fairly shortly and will then start work on the opens.

Ben Palmer will advise on the number of entrants, but my experience is that attendance at events is holding up quite well. A drop in the number of travellers has been offset by home club helms, and Comet fleets at some clubs seem to be thriving.

Results Coordinator Ben Palmer reported

The 2022 Orbital looks good with a total of 102 event entries so far this year. Last year we had 139 by the end of the season.

11 open events have been held with 9 more to go. The average turnout at an open so far is 9.3 that is up on 7.3 entries per event last year.

The number of qualifiers last year was 7 which is significantly down on previous years. So far 5 have already qualified.

The Northern Area saw a decrease from previous years down to 6 qualifiers last year, there are 18 possible so far. So far there are 31 competitors across 3 events. So far the average turnout is 10.3 up from last year's average turnout of 8.8.

The Eastern Area saw a decrease to 5 qualifiers last year, there are 14 possible qualifiers so far. The average turn out is 14.5 so far this is up on last year of 10 across the series. The Southern area had 7 qualifiers last year and 18 possible so far this year. There have been 37 competitors so far across 3 events. The average turnout so far is 12.3 up on last years 5.8 and close to the pre pandemic average.

The Western Area had a small decrease to 6 qualifiers last year and currently has 11 possible qualifiers. There have been 21 competitors over the 3 events so far. The average entry is 7; this is similar to the previous year of 6.

The largest open so far is Chipstead with 22 entries closely followed by Cransley with 20 and Redditch with 18.

Newsletter & Website Coordinator: Nigel Fern reported

After a lot of research, preparation and nail biting, I eventually summoned up the courage to start the process of renewing the website. Images of our website disappearing into the ether were quickly and surprisingly easily overcome. The 5 P's were overcome! After a few hours it started to come together. I am deeply indebted to Paul Hinde, and no doubt will be at a bar when I next see him, for his many hours of help with the more technical issues.

I believe that we now have a far more modern and user-friendly website, if you disagree, please let me know.

The 'semi regular' newsletters have proven to be a real help covering the gaps between Perihelions, unfortunately not all members read and take note of them, especially with regard to the new password. I received at least half a dozen e-mails asking me to remind members of the new password! On that could I respectfully ask that all members remember that we have both a Membership and an Events 'person' and that respective queries be directed to them.

Regarding Perihelion I am very grateful for the articles and reports that I receive but as I have said in the past, I can never have enough! Therefore, if you and your Comet do anything noteworthy, please put pen to paper / finger to keyboard and let me know. Race reports are still sadly lacking, could I please ask ALL fleet captains to ensure that once their Open is over that they send in a report. One report was ready and waiting the next day so it can be done!

4. **Treasurers Report and Adoption of the Accounts.** The accounts were distributed to the membership with the Agenda beforehand were then adopted with no questions asked. **Proposed Helen Leivers Seconded by Bob Dodds.**
5. **Builders Report - Andy Simmons reported**

I'll keep this brief. I try and do more "up to the minute" reports in the Newsletters.

Since the last AGM, which was less than a year ago, Comet life seems to be busier and more hectic than usual but maybe it's an age thing! Six Comets have been built and when the one I've been sailing this weekend has been delivered to Severn on the way home, six have been sold.

New fleets continue to appear and grow and even some clubs where the Comet fleet seems to have gone quiet get a boost of enthusiasm when a new boat is delivered. Secondhand

Comets continue to be in short supply and are soon snapped up. The new rig continues to sell and to date over 150 have been sold, a sixth of the entire Comet fleet. Bearing in mind the Comets been around for 42 years and the new rig not yet 5 years, that's quite impressive. Despite Brexit, Covid and lockdowns we kept busy but I'm sensing a slowing up with the current forecasts of recession and inflation.

As for next year's Dinghy Show the Class will have their own stand and I tried to book a small Comet Dinghies trade stand on the end of it enabling me to have Comet brochures with price lists in, thus not upsetting the RYA Rules. This has been done before lots of times in the past. However, that was in the days of common sense and before "computer says no" attitudes. Evidently, and I quote we felt it needed to be very clear to visitors that the commercial side and the class are separate". What I was offered was a 2m square stand opposite and across the aisle, which will be fine.

6. Motions

1)

Comet Measurement Rule: 16 (c) ix

Side Deck jammers – Camcleat for centre mainsheet fitted on side deck at forward end of non-slip area. Inside edge of cleat to be in line with inside edge of non-slip area. Rear end of cleat to be next to forward edge of non-slip area

Proposed: Peter Coop, Seconded Carl Ellis.

After a trial taken up by 5 Comet sailors discussions took place amongst members present. Andy explained that this will be an added extra fitted by himself. Votes were **For : 15, Against: 3, Motion passed.**

Liz to notify sailors who took part in the trial who were not at the AGM.

2)

Comet Measurement Rule: 16 (c) x

Centre mainsheet swivel jammer- Centre mainsheet swivel jammer fitted at aft end of Daggerboard slot and/or to of Bulkhead B

Proposed: Andy Simmons, Seconded Peter Coop

After discussions Andy answered questions on the swivel jammer. It is to appear on the Comet option list. Votes were **For :12, Against : 2, Abstentions : 4. Motion passed**

Proposal for an addition to the Comet Class Constitution – August 2022. Proposer:- Nigel Fern Seconder: - Liz Hossell

5. (MANAGEMENT)

d. i (CHAIRMAN): - *If unable to discharge any of the duties and responsibilities, for instance due to reasons of ill health, the Chairman will appoint, in consultation with the Committee Secretary, another member of the Committee to act as Chairman in their absence.*

All Members present were In favour of the motion and therefore passed.

7. Election of Officers and Committee

This makes the Committee for 2022/23 as follows:

Chairman – Peter Mountford, Secretary - Liz Hossell, Treasurer – Rhiain Bevan, Membership Secretary – Steve Gregory, Events Coordinator - Eddie Pope, Website and Newsletter Coordinator – Nigel Fern, Results Coordinator – Ben Palmer, Dinghy show Coordinator – Chris Robinson, Steve Bellamy,

It was **proposed** by John Sturgeon, **seconded** Rachel Vaughan Johns. All were in favour to elect the Committee en- bloc.

After the meeting Steve Bellamy agreed to take on the Trophy buying, and Helen Leivers was added as a new member of the Committee.

8. Appointment of Auditor/ Independent Advisor – Mark Govier agreed to stay on as Auditor/Independent Advisor. **Proposed:** John Sturgeon, **Seconded:** Steve Bellamy. All in favour.

9. Any Other Business

- Nick Baber has approached the committee for dispensation to put the Prostate Cancer Logo on his sail of his new boat. His email was read out to the AGM by Nigel Fern:

“Unfortunately, I have some bad news. Shortly after the Association Championship I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. The good news is I have had it removed and the surgeon is confident he has got it but await the results. Fingers crossed. After looking at the Prostate Cancer UK website risk assessment tool it appears that I was high risk and should have approach the GP before symptoms showed. I got lucky.

I want to raise the awareness of Prostate Cancer UK website by putting their branding on the sail of my boat. I have ordered a new boat to be called ‘Whip out the walnut’ for obvious reasons.

I have been talking to Andy a company called Oceanart and the Prostate Cancer UK and have developed the attached designs for the standard and white extra sails. All have agreed the design is acceptable but after talking to Andy I need special dispensation from the association rules to brand the sails with the Charities Logo’s.

Could you please put this forward as AOB at the AGM and get agreement for sail charity branding only. Other association members may wish to brand their sails with other Charities logo’s.

The new dinghy and sails, if dispensation is approved, will be available for the Dinghy Show. The boat could be displayed with the branded sails potentially generating more interest on the association and the Comet dinghy stand. If the boat was displayed with the branded sails, I would attend to answer any relevant Prostate Cancer questions and would ask Prostate Cancer UK to provide some supporting literature.

Is this something the association would consider? Would the RYA allow it and do you think the RYA would allocate more space or better location for free given the potential increased interest and the charity connection?”

This was discussed and a few questions were raised.

- Whether it was allowed by the RYA for use at the Dinghy Show as this boat might be displayed there.
- Direction to be taken in the future for further requests on having this with different charities.

A straw poll was taken on the members present to provide guidance to the Committee as we couldn’t vote on the item as it is in AOB. The wording of the poll was:

“Does the AGM support Nick Baber's request for a dispensation to put the proposed graphics on his sail?”

The poll showed 8 For, 7 Against, and 6 Abstentions. This will need further consultation and will be brought up at the Zoom Committee meeting in October.

- The Border Series in the Northwest had provided very popular producing some new members.

Vote of thanks was extended to the Committee from Norah Jagers Proposed John Sturgeon, seconded Roger Harrison.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6.30.

Liz Hossell
Class Secretary