

NATIONAL SQUIB OWNERS ASSOCIATION
Annual General Meeting held on 25 June 2019 at the Royal Club

MINUTES

The Chairman, Nigel Grogan, welcomed some 45 full members of the Association to the meeting as well as a number of associate members and non-member crew.

1. Apologies: Apologies were received from David Hall, Lou Bibby, Paul Young, Dick Batt and David Biddle

2. Declaration of Interest: Nigel Grogan declared that he is Managing Director of Hyde Sails.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7th August 2018 at Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club.

The minutes were approved nem con, being proposed around the room.

4. Chairman's Report

The 2019 season has had a good start with some robust sailing! The Nationals are seeing a final start line of 54 after losing 4 entries at the last minute due to ill health. If you look at headline figures the last 10 year average has been 60 boats and 67 for the previous period. However the apparent decline hides a lot of different factors. 2018 saw a large number of younger sailors taking part and that trend has continued in 2019 and it is even better to see so many of those younger sailors present at the AGM. They are the future of the class. Fleet activity varies and it was great to see the vibrant fleet at Haven Ports where the East Coast Championships were held in May. And of course there has to be mention of Portsmouth – a lively young fleet who have turned out again this year for the Nationals. But we also see fleets decline for a variety of reasons. So there is no complacency, but recognition of the work still to be done.

The Chairman commented on the behind the scenes work done by members of the Committee to ensure the class is run smoothly. He singled out the untiring work of the Secretary. On the Membership front, Andrea Holland has continued to do the job of Membership Secretary despite trying to stand down for two years now. But there is good news on that front. Penny Robinson has agreed to take the role on and she was given a warm welcome. It was agreed nem con that Andrea be made a Life Member. Our long-standing Treasurer, Chris Rickman, has also stood down and the NSOA finances will be run by Richard Sullivan via his accountancy firm.

Malcolm Blackburn, as Chair of the Technical Sub Committee has continued communications with the RYA on the subject of rules changes and also on the whole issue of Measurers. There are only 5 Squib measurers nationwide and the cost is proving a problem. The Committee have had long discussions on the relationship with the RYA and following the May meeting, Nigel met with the RYA to discuss the NSOA's unhappiness with responses. The notes from that meeting are attached and form part of these minutes. Following the meeting, the RYA updated the Class Rules with minor amendments that had been agreed in October 2017 within a week.

The NSOA is trying to improve communications with members, but it has to be noted that members themselves do not always help by not updating their record with new email / phone numbers / address themselves or by letting either the Secretary or Membership Secretary know. If the record is wrong, you won't get mailings – but the NSOA cannot know. This becomes particularly important when ballots are underway. Communications within Championships need to be brought up to date and the use of a Whats App group will be investigated to get messages out quickly.

Facebook, the website and Squibble (where Ricky East wishes to stand down as Editor) are all areas where we need to move forward and some young, tech savvy volunteers would be nice.

On behalf of the NSOA he proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee.

So far as external publicity is concerned, the whole Cowes 2018 experience generated a lot of noise and media interest. We need to keep that up and it was noted that Yachts and Yachting welcome content and readily run reports. We just need to keep writing them and sending them in.

So far as Rule changes are concerned, Nigel Grogan commented that there is a feeling among a considerable part of the fleet that the class could benefit from some carefully thought through, modest modernisation.

The Rondar Boat: Nigel Grogan reported that Paul Young had sent a report to the May Committee Meeting. Noted that the NSOA want Rondar to succeed with the Squib. Regarding the Mandate for acceptance of the Rondar-built boat, he reported that the conclusion of NG and JG buying a boat and campaigning with it at three events is that the boat is not significantly faster or slower. David Lloyd commented that he thought the Rondar boat, the hybrid and the original Squib all feel the same. Robert Coyle and Malcolm Hutchings proposed and seconded that the NSOA agree that the Mandate has been met. Overwhelmingly carried.

5 To receive the accounts for the year ended 30 April 2019

Richard Sullivan reported that he does not have the final account as yet as the records have just arrived. However the bank balance is healthy. The accounts will be run using a new system, managed by staff in the office. Work will be ongoing to modernise systems, including moving to Direct Debits for subscriptions. The accounts for year ending 30 April 2020 will be available on 1st May 2020.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

The Officers and Committee were elected en-bloc with a separate vote to agree the extended time in office of the Secretary (Marian Gibson). Agreed nem con.

7. Rule Changes

Following the 2018 AGM the Committee have had long discussions on the list of potential rule changes. It was agreed in May that the initial batch would go out to ballot so that the result could be announced at the AGM with the second batch being balloted by the Inlands. In all cases the wording has been a major issue and it was noted that for the initial batch the Committee were in agreement with them and no contrary comments had been received. Marc Moncrieff commented that he felt more discussion or a survey would have been useful and the point was taken. David Lloyd commented that the wording of the motion regarding sail colour is going to be critical. Jill Fleming asked for mock-up pictures to be included. All sailmakers' views will be sought.

The result of the initial ballot was announced:

Proposition A (to allow advertising chosen by the organisers of an event): 95.9% in favour

Proposition B (to change the rule on windows in sails): 93.5% in favour

Proposition C (to allow draft stripes on sails): 75.5% in favour

Proposition D (to change the rule on jib furlers to allow them to be used while racing): 68.9% in favour

There were 123 valid votes.

All four propositions reached the two thirds majority required for a rule change and therefore work on wording of the rule changes will start in conjunction with the RYA.

8. Nationals Format

David Wines and Keith Davies were thanked for all their work to ensure the success of the 2019 Nationals

It has already been agreed by the Committee that a survey on format of the Nationals would be undertaken. This will include all aspects of the event. Roly Wilson commented that the current format of a full week with one race per day isn't very friendly to workers.

Inland Championships: Noted the issues around the dry side of Rutland and feedback / suggestions from members on the social side would be appreciated as soon as possible. It was also noted that the event relies heavily on the efforts of the SCYC team to manage launch and retrieval.

7. Future Championship Venues

2020 Kinsale: 21 – 26 June 2020 and preparations are all in hand. Ferry offers will be forthcoming shortly

2021 SCYC: Dates to be confirmed

2022 Weymouth: Dates to be confirmed

2023: The Championship Committee have agreed that this will go out to tender with an initial list agreed.

8. Any Other Business

a) Marc Moncrieff reported that that Jenny Riley has donated a new trophy for the under 30s.

b) Malcolm Hutchings asked whether concessions for subscriptions / entry fees for young sailors should be considered.

c) **Measurers:** Malcolm Blackburn gave details of how the Measurer system currently works, with people having to do a Sail Measurer course every 4 years, but then never measure a sail as this is now done in house by the manufacturers. Only Sail Measurers can progress to Full Measurers. Typically very few boats are ever going to need to be fully measured but what is needed is Maintenance Measurers. These would need to be fleet based. On a show of hands there were volunteers from around the country prepared to consider the role. MB will take this up with the RYA. The distinction between Olympic classes and classes like the Squib needs to be made in requirements. Malcolm Hutchings commented that there is a considerable time commitment for the training that the RYA require for Measurers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.02pm

Election of Officers: for 2019/20

The following were elected

Hon Chairman	Nigel Grogan
Hon Secretary	Marian Gibson
Hon Membership Secretary	Penny Robinson
Hon Treasurer	
Hon Technical Committee Chairman	Malcolm Blackburn
Hon Technical Adviser	Tony Saltonstall
Hon Championship Co-ordinator	Pete Richards

Election of Committee

The following, were elected for a period of two years

Ian Waite	Waldringfield SC
Mike Probert	Royal Corinthian YC
Simon Vines	Weymouth SC
Gerard Dyson	Royal Yorkshire YC
Colm Dunne	Kinsale

The following, who were elected for a period of two years at the 2018 AGM have indicated that they will continue in office for a further year.

Louise Bibby	Anglesey Fleet
David Wines	Plymouth Fleet
David Biddle	Dartmouth
David Hall	Holyhead
Richard Sullivan	WOBYC
Dick Batt	RVYC
Paul Studart	Medway Fleet

Meeting with RYA at RYA House 4th June 2019

Present Rob Taylor, Nigel Grogan, Niall McLeod.

The background to this meeting was explained in circulations to you all last week and below I detail the substance of our meeting:

1. Do the RYA get anything from the Squib Class? Do the Squib Class continue to benefit from the RYA as their National Authority? Do the Class or the RYA want a divorce with the Class running it's own affairs and the RYA freed from it's responsibility to the Class?

The RYA are firmly of the view that they do not want a divorce from the Squib Class. They see the Class benefits from the RYA particularly where the rules and rules enforcement are concerned. They can be the "bad cop" and also feel that the Class is a much better position compared to a few years ago on rules observance and clarity of rules. They feel the Class is in safer hands with the RYA than in an unpredictable future with unknown Class governance.

Basically this set the tone for the rest of the meeting which I would describe as: "ok then, if that's how you feel - fine. But can you make it easier to work with you than currently where communication is appalling, technical issues take forever to address and measurement problems are causing considerable anguish? We understand the benefits of the RYA - but can we have timely responses?"

The response to this (and some examples of long delays in email communication) prompted an apology from Rob Taylor, who conceded that dealing with some of the communication was not his strong point and committing to responding within a maximum of two weeks on anything - including technical questions. My impression was that divorce would send a message that would be considered to reflect badly on the RYA.

2. Measurement issues. These were discussed at length. With the tightening of rules and rules observance, the demand for measurers is quite high (Rob Taylor stated that he has himself fully measured 4 Squibs this year) But since the loss of revenue on sail measuring because of IHC, measuring boats is not seen as very worthwhile financially. Additionally the requirement for 4 yearly renewal of licences including a whole day of re-training is seen as a disincentive to becoming/continuing as a measurer. On top of that there have been some "falling's out" with a couple of measurers over "conflict of interests"

The agreed way forward is;

a. *Whilst accepting that the connection with World Sailing and the good work that is done between them and the RYA , such as on ERS and cheating, the Squib is not an Olympic Class and needs a lighter touch than under Bas Edmonds regime. We share the goal of ensuring that Squibs race within the rules and that the rules need to be clear, up to date and enforced. So;*

b. *The RYA commit to running a Measurers course at a minimum of one Squib Nationals in four, so enabling existing or prospective Squib measurers to achieve or re-new their licences at a venue they are quite likely to be attending anyway, Ideally the "Squib Specific" nature of the course would be run by someone from the Squib class with the appropriate technical expertise ie Malcolm or Tony.*

c. *The goal would be to create reasonable geographic coverage of the Squib fleet by volunteers from the Class with the requisite technical knowledge and interest and train them to RYA standards. It is for the NSOA to put forward/encourage some interest from prospective measurers and maybe we have to find a way of incentivising them. The RYA agreed they would "build bridges" with the disgruntled ex-measurers. I sincerely hope this happens....*

d. *The RYA will aim to provide on the water scrutineering at Nationals as was done successfully at Cowes last year and support where requested, in scrutineering. We agreed that this method of rule enforcement is a powerful deterrent to cheating and is very effective.*

3. Rules issues; The NSOA have had disagreements with the RYA in the past over interpretation of rules(eg front bulkheads) and the RYA and their Technical Committee have used

their position as the Class Rules Authority to override the NSOA view. The suggestion was that this frustrates the class and the technical experts within the class- who know a lot more about the Squib than the members of the RYA albeit the RYA have an independence that preserves and protects the broad interest of all Squib owners. The current rules are always capable of improvement but are felt to be "fit for purpose" generally. We agreed;

- a. *That the RYA would generally accept the NSOA view on rules and interpretation.*
- b. *Rob Taylor agreed to up date the the current rules" by the end of the week" with the carifications/minor changes Malcolm has been persuing for months.*
- c. *We should simply "go ahead" with "minor changes" as the Squib Technical Committee determine.*
- d. *The RYA will support the NSOA votes on the proposed raft of rule changes due to take place between now and the Inlands.*
- e. *Rob Taylor will arrange to measure some rudders and provide definitive guidance on the missing "rudder plan" from the rules.*
- f. *There will shortly be a vacancy on the RYA Tech Committee and we are invited to submit a prospective member (Malcolm, Tony, Simon Vines- anyone else? One meeting a year - rest of business done by email/phone)*

I believe this is an accurate summary of what we discussed over two hours. I felt the RYA were sincere in wishing to demonstrate that they want to support *and help* the Squib class and that we are important rather than a *nuisance* to them. I think we are right to insist on a better level of service from them and they definitely recognise that. Therefore it seems to make a lot of sense to hold them to account and ensure they follow up on their promises.

I believe we made progress.

Please let me have any follow-up comments/views you may have and I will ensure they are answered. Also let me know if you would like to be considered as our nominee to the RYA Tech Com.

Kind regards

Nigel
NSOA Chairman