

# Grafham Water Sailing Club: Flying Fifteen Fleet

## Annual General Meeting

15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Attendees:** Jonathan & Trish Knight, Pip Noon, Geoff Floyd, Tim O'Brien, Andy & Sue Rhodes, Simon Kneller, Peter Wolstenholme, Mike and Jean Wilczynski, Les Rant, Susie Sontag, Duncan Grindley

**Apologies:** Dave & Jenny Philpott (in Oz)

### Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the AGM of February 16th, 2022 were reviewed. Simon proposed and Jonathan seconded the adoption of the minutes. Unanimously agreed.

### Fleet Captain's Report

Andy Rhodes reported that overall fleet size stayed about the same with a couple of new joiners in the fleet, and a couple of departures. There was a fairly regular turnout of about 5 boats each Sunday and similar for the Wednesday races, though not the peak of nine that we had the previous year. He asked for suggestions for encouraging larger turnouts and the consensus was for a "Shake down" event where help with rigging would be offered and a couple of fun races held. This is proposed for April 1st. Rigging at 11:00am and on the water by 12:00. Andy is to check with the Club to ensure this would not clash with other events. It was proposed to finish with Tea and Cakes and the 2022 Awards. **Action AR**

Andy summarised the rule changes that came in early in the year and thanked Richard for helping us with the lead removal. Tim confirmed there are no major issues on the international scene other than the World Championships starting in Perth in 2 weeks with 13 boats travelling from the UK. He predicts entries will be tight for the next Worlds, scheduled for Weymouth – limited to 27 boats. There have been enquiries about chartering boats for the Weymouth worlds. Andy asked Tim and Simon about the implications for cost and insurance. (A new boat is now in the region of £30K). Tim and Simon said the chartering should be the order of £2K. Andy to circulate the enquiries. **Action AR**

Andy said there was a good turn out early in the year for the Grafham Open / Inland Championships but noted that less people are travelling for Open Meetings. Attendance at all the clubs' open meetings was down on normal and this is the same across most clubs and fleets. In discussions with UKFFA, not many people are travelling to Opens. UKFFA run a Northern and Southern Traveller series which is intended to encourage club sailors to participate in other Opens, with a focus on helping, training and enjoyment. Only two Open entries are required to participate. Grafham Open has joined the Southern Traveller series for this year. The new organiser for UKFFA is keen to promote these events, perhaps by including training sessions. (Next year Grafham Open will be an inland championship and therefore inappropriate for the traveller series). If you are up for visiting one open meeting, please let Andy know so that he can feed that back to the series organiser. **Action ALL**

A discussion of event participation ensued with Tim and Simon encouraging others to travel. Geoff said he had difficulty finding out about the Grafham Open on the club website and had resorted to the UKFFA website for details. Andy said website maintenance was a known issue and several factual inaccuracies have been raised. A general lack of information on club noticeboards was also highlighted by Tim.

Andy then reported that the low water level last year meant that launching took longer than normal. (Some other clubs couldn't sail at all and were even enquiring if they could decamp to Grafham.)

An additional challenge was finding that the new jetty is too heavy for the tractor to move if the tractor doesn't have a solid surface to work on. Once the water level had dropped past the point where the concrete ended, the jetty had to be pulled out of the water to avoid the risk of it getting stranded.

An FF work party took advantage of this to get fendering attached and the club approved the laying of some additional concrete to increase the operating range. We would have liked more, but through a series of unexpected events and the sudden cold snap just before Christmas, the water level had risen before concreting got started. However, we do have agreement from the Council to do more when the water level drops again, and a preliminary booking with the concreter has been made. The jetty will be put back into the water shortly.

There is also Council agreement to replace the left jetty this spring and Andy is working with the contractor now to get plans finalised. Learning from the right jetty, this will be lighter and designed to be ready to fit fendering to, which will be put on before the jetty first goes in the water.

Currently, there is not a Council plan to re-instate the jetty on slipway 4. While there would be some benefits to doing this, there are other expenses the club needs to make that have a greater overall impact. Tim said he believed a third jetty should be a club priority. The Council currently propose to monitor the jetty usages and the attendance at our Open meetings and revisit in a couple of years.

The alignment of the winter series with the winter membership has continued. (Winter members Jean and Mike were pleased). There has been ongoing discussion about Sunday racing being 3 back-to-back or 2+2. Simon liked the 3 back-to-back format and Andy commented that there is not much support for changing back to 2+2, but the impacts of the loss of the social aspects with 3 back-to-back is recognised. He said Race Committee is looking to make the DofE a 2+2 this year, to be different from regular Sunday racing and this might encourage support for making more 2+2 events.

Andy advised that Race committees are being allocated if not enough people sign up but was pleased to report that the Flying Fifteen fleet is recognised as the gold standard for signing up with groups organising themselves into complete teams – He gave thanks to all. He also said that there have unfortunately been some weekends when others have not turned up for assigned duties and this leads to shorthanded safety and committee boats. There is likely to be a rule brought in that stops racing (and possibly sailing) if the duties aren't filled. Tim noted that this is more of an issue on high wind days but he and Les wondered if the coxswain could be more involved on the water with the office acting as shore co-ordinator.

Finally Andy advised that like last year, fleets that host an open meeting are expected to staff an open meeting, so this year the FF's, along with RS600s and Europes have the Solo inlands on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and asked that people book this weekend and sign up to help. Only one course, so should not be too demanding. Andy and Sue missed the event the FF's supported in 2022 (due to sailing round Britain). In their absence Dave coordinated the FF effort and Andy thanked them.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer (Jonathan Knight) presented the accounts for 2022-23. Tim proposed adoption of the accounts, seconded by Peter and this proposal was accepted unanimously.

## **Fleet Subscriptions**

Jonathan proposed raising the fleet subscriptions for Helm and crew to £10. He said this would cover Fleet cost. There was some discussion about how this was collected. Jonathan explained that he sends an email asking for the fees it has the link for collection via the club and also advises that there is the option to pay him directly. He asked if you do pay via the club that you also email him to say you have done so. A question was raised about which crew was liable to pay the fee if many different people crewed for the same helm. Tim said he looked on the fleet dues as reasonable for what is covered and paid £20 for the boat. Trish said one off crews /nonpayers were not hounded for fees.

The fee rise was accepted unanimously.

## **Scorer's Report.**

Trish presented a proposal to restructure the FF trophies. The reasons for the proposed changes are: The club series are well supported with generous prizes, the fleet has reduced in size and the cost of engraving all our fleet trophies are considerable. The proposal targets the FF awards to day events – The Easter Salver, The Ron Howard, the Grafham Fox and one other with two seasonal mini-series (a defined number of races to secure entry but not all races need to be sailed). with the aim of ensuring there is something to 'go for' every month.

This reduces the number of trophies to a maximum of 17 thus reducing the engraving costs and makes the award more relevant.

*(The proposal was circulated to all fleet members, prior to the meeting)*

Proposed by Trish, accepted unanimously

**Action TK**

## **Election of Fleet Officers**

The current Fleet Officers agreed to stand again and were elected unopposed. Unanimously accepted.

- Fleet Captain (Sue and Andy Rhodes)
- Vice Captain (Dave Philpott)
- Treasurer & Scorer (Jonathan & Trish Knight)
- 'Keeper of the plate' (Susie Sonntag)

## **General Discussion**

A general discussion took place including Promoting the Fleet, Activities and Training. It was agreed that after confirming the 1<sup>st</sup> April 'Shake- Down' event with the club it will be publicised as a training Day, with Races and the 2022 awards and Tea and cakes afterwards.

BBQ's will be organised for one/some of the Trophy Event Days.

FF trips could be organised if there is a club Open Day

Andy expressed thanks to all for participating and showing such enthusiasm for the Flying Fifteen Fleet and closed the meeting.

**Date and Time of next meeting:** online next year, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 TBC