

Notes from SGP Open Forum on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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Subjects discussed:

### **Membership Fees:**

Clubs are concerned about membership fees and some ideas were shared on possible ways to ensure fees are fair, and reflective of the loss of rowing time. Suggestions such as:

Reducing membership fees by offering a 2 month free period at the start of the membership year.

Opportunity to have reduced membership or to donate full year for those wanting and able to support the club and who recognise that cashflow is needed to build club back up.

Annual membership to be credited in one club and monthly direct debits paused but it was recognised that not all clubs could afford to do that.

Clubs who offered 'fee holidays' found that many were happy to continue paying.

Also noted that members in general had not been asking for refunds this year.

### **Indoor gyms and other areas inside, including cleaning:**

Clubs are starting to plan ahead, but it was recognised that there was a balance between the time and effort required to put in place regular, strict cleansing routines by volunteers, and the benefit to a potential small number of people.

University facilities in one region were ready to open, but had large gym areas and paid staff which made it possible to comply with social distancing and hygiene.

Some clubs don't seem to be rushing to open indoor areas as have concerns around returning members sticking to the rules and the volume of volunteer work involved.

It was anticipated that there would be some frustration from members who see different rules between clubs and activities allowed. It was recognised that good communication was the key to managing this.

Generally, it was felt that cleaning was the responsibility of the individual, but that deep cleans were also very important. One club was paying a young member a small amount to cleaning twice a week.

Concerns were raised over potential liability for clubs whose members are relied upon to maintain a clean and safe environment for others. Clubs would need to demonstrate what has been done to reduce risk, in case of any repercussions after a positive Covid case.

### **Support for Coaches:**

Some coaches are returning but a recent poll found that 40% clubs said that they had not spoken to their coaches.

One club had continued to pay their coach for a quarter of the usual time, which was used for online S&C sessions.

There were several examples of volunteer coaches pitching in and helping to develop novices in stable boats and less experienced scullers in the absence of competitive rowing which had been beneficial to both sides. For example 1:1 sessions with novices, or 1:2 or more 'buddying up' with others.

Some sweep rowers were wanting to learn to scull, which has kept them interested and engaged. Some clubs holding sculling schools within government guidelines of up to 6.

Generally, clubs have found coaches and club volunteers to have done an amazing job at sharing roles, and adapting by working in small groups on technical sessions for example, which is keeping many rowers active. Some have kept a wide range of abilities on the water and in some cases, possibly more than usual!

Experienced rowers coaching novice rowers was seen as a good practice to continue in the future, in light of the benefits seen.

One University is creating a 'Covid Training Pack' for coaches to support them as they return, as they are likely to feel under a lot of pressure with additional responsibilities and workload. This will be shared with the ERRRC when complete for other clubs to use.

It was recognised that during the current phase, that the main focus continued to be on rowing for wellbeing and exercise.

### **Club Constitutional matters:**

Concerns raised around forthcoming AGM's and whether it would be constitutionally possible to keep this year's Officers in post for a further year and delaying the AGM.

Voting via online poll was suggested, but any changes would need to be checked with own club constitution.

It was recognised that an AGM was important for the opportunity to report on the work done by officers, and to thank them.

### **Crew boats:**

Recent BR guidance discussed and clubs are keen to plan ahead to be ready for such a time when crew boats are allowed.

### **General:**

Could coxes be encouraged back by running circuits for example?

Can clubs work together in partnership more in the future, for example opportunities to share facilities and LTR sessions?

There may be a lost stream of juniors this year. One County Sports Partnership (CSP) has funding available to support activities for junior sports.