



## **Eastern Regional Rowing Council**

### **Annual General Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

#### **Chair's Report**

This report reviews the year past and reports on the work done by the National Governing Body and the Region over the year since last November in these challenging times.

#### **Remembrance**

Before we move on to these matters we must remember those who have been lost to the sport regionally and nationally in the last year. I ask that the Meeting observes a silence to reflect on the lives and contribution of all those gone ahead and in particular:

Roger Bidgood – Milton Keynes RC  
Bob Bridges – Peterborough City RC  
Simon Crosse – Norwich RC  
Les Fitton – Lea RC  
Jean Genchi (nee Guppy) – Stuart Ladies RC and Lea RC

Each of these, and many others, made a unique contribution to the enjoyment of rowing in their own setting and leave many happy memories. These were people whose personalities, as much as their work, leave their mark on the world.

#### **National Picture**

The early part of the last year was, once again, dominated by the effect of the pandemic and the measures in place to control the spread of infection.

British Rowing, the National Governing Body, continued to provide timely, wide-ranging advice and guidance in print and in response to direct enquiries from clubs and members. The framework developed through the evolution of the main document served the sport well and, I believe, enabled and encouraged what were generally very high levels of compliance ("common sense") throughout the rowing community. Rowing in this country owes a huge debt to those who worked so hard to put the guidance together, and to those who supported its implementation.

As Spring came and the country emerged, slowly, from the tightest restrictions, the same group responsible for the original guidance provided a framework for a stepped transition back into competition. Clubs and events have, quite understandably, had differing appetites for a return to normality but it was very noticeable that those competing or spectating enjoyed the 'specialness' of the wider rowing community in this of all years.

Of perhaps more specialised interest I can report that ClubHub has received a significant upgrade to responsiveness and is now, for my limited purposes anyway, quite useable.

We will all be aware of the turnover of senior staff both on the International Programme and within the Executive of British Rowing. I hope that all clubs and those with views have considered the drafts

of the new strategy pieces that have been published, and that you are giving (constructive) feedback where you have it.

I believe that this is a moment of opportunity for the domestic sport to strengthen ties with the NGB and to influence the direction of rowing within the country. I very much look forward to hearing from Simon Reeves during the Meeting and to the lively discussion that I am sure will follow.

### **The Region's work**

The Region continued to support the rollout of the Covid Guidance and, with the reintroduction of competition our Safety Adviser was busy with many enquiries. The Region has also offered support to clubs who have encountered internal turbulence.

As a reflection of the gradual return to competition and of the growth in club numbers we are also seeing an uptick in rowers joining or renewing their membership of British Rowing – herewith some snapshots –

Date	Race	Row	Total
08/09/2021	2,953	199	3,152
21/09/2021	2,989	205	3,194
19/10/2021	3,202	211	3,413
02/11/2021	3,205	216	3,421
28/11/2021	3,303	223	3,526

Thanks go to all the Officers of the Rowing Council who have facilitated the return to the water, and are supporting clubs to grow the sport back to where we all want it to be.

On which note, while we were unable to continue with our development of Regional events last year, for obvious reasons, I am delighted to say that we are planning both a trials event for our Junior Interregional team on February 27<sup>th</sup> at Peterborough (for full selection procedure and policy details see the webpage [here](#)) and the next issue of The Head of the East to be held at St.Neots on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Clearly, given the latest news, these will be dependent on the situation at the time.

Clubs within the Region are working hard to embed themselves within their local communities – Lea RC have launched a project called #IBelong to increase diversity in the club – details on their website [here](#). Yare BC are seeking to grow their club by targeting new members aged 18-25 from hard-to-reach communities in their setting. Finally, the Region is very excited to support and be the home for East Anglia Youth Rowing. This initiative aims to reach out and bring rowing to young people who would not otherwise participate. We hope that, together, we can make the sport a more diverse and inclusive community.



### **Regional Chair and Representation**

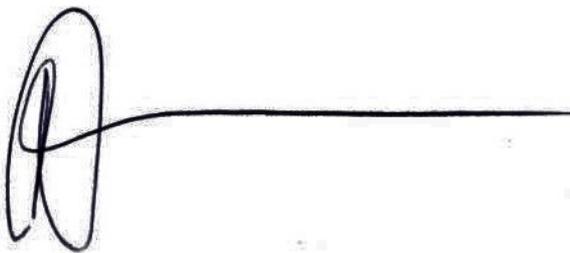
Amidst the difficulties of 2020 we very sadly lost our Honorary Secretary, Sally Lawrence. One of the consequences was that we lost track of the cycle of terms of myself as Chair. My second term of three years expired last December. In the period following that I have been acting as Chair of the Region but without the appropriate mandate from a General Meeting of the Region. Should this Meeting decide to re-elect me as Chair then this will be my last possible term under our Constitution and will run for two years from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022.

The other election we must hold is for the Regional Representative position currently held by Helen Middleton. This is the end of her second term and if the Meeting re-elects her then she will serve as Representative for a further three years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

### **British Rowing Awards 2020 and 2021**

The Region is proud of its volunteers and its competitors. It is unfortunate that ceremonies to recognise the work and achievements of clubs and their members have been cancelled for the last two years.

It is regrettable that we are unable to publish a full list of nominees for all Awards this year but for this Meeting I have prepared list of all Award winners from last year and Regional nominees for this year together with the citations for those who have won either Regional or National titles. These documents are presented separately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'A' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Blit  
November 2021

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