



Eastern Region Annual General Meeting  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome – Meeting opened at 7.32 pm**

Attendees:

David Porter (Chair), Andrew Blit (Secretary), Stephen Wyborn (Treasurer), Teresa Aslett, Paul Ashmore, Jeni Barnacle, Mark Bavington, Malcolm Hingle, Sam King, Hugh Maltby, Helen Middleton, Will Schofield, Marcus Walker, Seb Walker.

**2. Minutes of 2023 AGM**

The Meeting approved the Minutes of the previous Meeting

**3. Annual Accounts**

**David Porter** invited comment on the accounts for the previous year. The Meeting approved the Accounts.

**4. Appointment of Hon Auditor**

**Stephen Wyborn** proposes Robin de Vere Green. The Meeting approved the appointment.

**5. Election of Regional Representatives**

David Porter is one of the Regional Representative, Helen is prepared to fulfil a further term as Regional Representative.

Will Schofield has been nominated and introduced himself to the Meeting. The Meeting elected both Helen Middleton and Will Schofield to the position of Regional Representative.

**6. Election of Officers of the Council for 2024**

**Andrew Blit** detailed officer roles, their mode of appointment and the people standing as follows:

- Chair (elected) David Porter
- Honorary Secretary (elected) Andrew Blit
- Honorary Treasurer (elected) Stephen Wyborn
- Water Safety (co-opted) Teresa Aslett
- Coach Education and Training (for approval) Marcus Walker
- Umpires Committee (for approval) Jay Milne
- Events Committee (elected) Lydia Swift
- Junior Rowing (elected) Mark Bavington
- Masters (elected) Amada Hosking
- Recreational (elected) Malcolm Hingle
- Coastal (elected) vacant – no candidate

The Meeting elected or approved the above en bloc

Helen Middleton agreed to represent coastal rowing on the council for the time being

## 7. Chair's Report

The highlights for **David Porter** are two new clubs in the region, Peregrine RC and Cambridge and Hornets BC out towards Ely

There are two further clubs on the horizon, both coastal.

Huntingdon Regatta was relaunched after many decades. Eastern Region Junior Trials will take place at Peterborough again, with a more formal agreement in place.

Head of the East is being relaunched, West Norfolk are full of enthusiasm, energy and organisation.

## 8. Regional Officer Reports

**Teresa Aslett:** safety audits have been done, all but two clubs have had theirs approved so thank you to all Safety Officers involved. The clubs who are in breach will have been informed.

Thank you to all clubs and rowers who have been completing incident reports.

Please can all occasions of anti-social behaviour be reported.

Please can all defibs be registered and the codes be circulated to all club members.

Please can all events remember to submit their documentation 4 weeks in advance of the event.

Please can all clubs report all incidents on water AND on land.

**Malcolm Hingle:** sometimes a struggle to contact the right person within clubs

**Mark Bavington:** we have refreshed our regional mailing list with a good response from clubs. Mark is working with Ollie Frazer to deliver ER JIRR. Would like to bring back Sharing Back Practice workshops.

**Marcus Walker:** Aspiration to create a central register of coaches in the region. Suggestion to set up a mentoring scheme. Want to build the capacity for coaching in the region. Mark Bavington spoke in support of this. There was discussion of previous efforts to develop a coach mentor programme.

## 9. **British Rowing developments – Seb Walker** – copy available for download [here](#)

This item was taken after item 4 as Seb Walker needed to leave the Meeting by 8.30.

The views expressed are Seb's rather than BR's.

GB Rowing Team is successful both on the water and in terms of culture. BR has been successful in getting a funding level above other sports, but LA is more expensive than Paris

Better delivery for the domestic sport – BRJ&SCC, Coach development, regional academies, coastal sculling academies, website improvements

In the pipeline: slicker safeguarding, better support for grievances, better connectivity with regions, clubs and competitions.

A pie chart for where membership and affiliation fees go (£1.6 million)

We are mid-sized sport with little headroom to invest – challenges – climate change, technology, HQ from a previous era, poor connectivity between HQ and the wider rowing world.

Improvements have been made in connectivity between Hammersmith and the clubs against the period prior to the pandemic. BR has reserves and may be open to ideas for investment provided that there is a return.

Current structure chart presented, illustrating the complexity of the relationships between clubs, regions and the Board, and the role of Sport Committee. The challenges are around lack of responsiveness of the organisation to new ideas.

Proposal is to move decision making away from national committees and to regions. National for a would still exist for e.g. Masters, Juniors, but they would not be decision making.

**Hugh Maltby:** climate change is the greatest threat. Can BR help educate insurers, the EA, to work with local clubs? SW – there is awareness of the issues through Peter Milhoffer of the Board, there are things ahead of it in the workstream.

**Andrew Blit:** what was the segment in the pie on Events, Competitions and Marketing? Staff costs (James Lee), some marketing, and balancing items

**David Porter:** The 'Festival of Rowing' still looks like a 2,000m race whatever age or size you are. Are there plans to make it more fun e.g. skills test, pageant? Last year was a first try, yes there are plans to make it more diverse.

**Mark Bavington:** HQ is on a very expensive piece of real estate and not very practical. Could it be realised to make more efficient building and release value? Yes, most likely it will not be sold but there are other options.

Could the date of British Championships be moved to avoid conflict with Henley Royal Regatta? Henley Royal will move to gender parity which will change the dynamic for male athletes. Championships is currently for 'cub' crews.

10. **Lowestoft Sculling Academy – Helen Middleton & Jeni Barnacle** – copy available for download [here](#)

Taken after Item 7.

We now have two coastal academies, at Lowestoft and West Mersea. BR provided seed boats and racking. The Sally Lawrence bequest was used to buy lifejackets, especially for juniors.

3 taster days have been run attracting 36 rowers. The Last Light Regatta was held in October – the first club beach sprint event run in the UK. Boats loaned by Swift, well supported by regional umpires.

Next steps – squad development. 2 seniors and 2 juniors aiming for national selection, with a development group underneath them. Training sessions at Oulton Broad.

There will be an event in Lowestoft on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Hope is that EAYR students will be in a position to participate. J15s and upwards eligible, maybe suiting then ones who are not the tallest.

Lowestoft RC have decided that we have outgrown them, but the intention is to be part of another BR affiliated club very shortly.

## 11. Regional Awards

### Bursaries:

Sophie Brown - Sudbury - HIRR  
Jess Kerbiriou - Lea - Coupe  
Beatrice Hughes - Lea - Coupe  
Ellie Sillar - BMS - Coupe  
Madoc Gundry - Lea - Home Int Beach Sprints

### Coaching Awards/bursaries:

Northampton - Nick Woodward  
Northampton - Mark Rigby  
Isle of Ely - Izzy Boutwood  
Yare - Shelagh Pitt  
Cantabs - Harry Michalakakis  
Lea - Claire Burley

### BR Volunteer of the Year Award Nominations:

Tracy McKensie - Northampton - WINNER  
Astrid Rusman - WNRC  
Will Schofield - CoCRC  
David Wells - PCRC  
Mike Baker Bedford RC  
Darren Tripptick - Fairlop

### BR Young Volunteer of the Year Award Nominations:

Declan Coxall - Anglia Ruskin UBC - WINNER

## 12. AOB

**Hugh Maltby** – BRC is in the process of putting together a 5 year strategy – is there a forum for discussing this? Andrew Blit: a possible topic on a Sharing Good Practice day.

Meeting declared closed at 9.28