



COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on Saturday 23 October 2021 at Staunton Harold Sailing Club

The meeting was attended by 19 members.

- 1 **Apologies:** received from Keith Lamdin, Rhiain Bevan, Steve Gregory, Roger Lemmon, Sarah-Jane Critchley and Martin Loud.
- 2 **The matters arising from the minutes of the AGM 2020:** All matters carried out so no further action needed to be taken.

3 **Reports: Chairman – Peter Mountford reported:**

This is my first annual chairman's report to an Annual General Meeting of the Comet Class Association, and I would like to start it by thanking all the members of the Committee for their support in helping me to take up the reins in what has been a most difficult year as we have endeavoured to get Comet sailing back on its feet after the restrictions imposed by the lockdowns. These efforts have required us to hold more Committee meetings than usual, but the use of Zoom has greatly facilitated this need. In this respect, I would like to thank Winsford Flash Sailing Club and Steve Bellamy for the use of their Zoom account, and I would particularly like to thank Liz Hossell for organising these meetings often at short notice and for absorbing the resultant increase in secretarial workload.

Under Chris Robinson's leadership and guidance, the Association participated in the Virtual RYA Dinghy Show at the end of February. A range of electronic documents and short videos about the Comet and the Association were made available on the stand for visitors to enjoy, and I would like to thank those members who helped in their preparation and those who helped support the virtual stand over the weekend. We enjoyed live "chats" with members of the public enquiring about the Comet. Next year's show is to be held under a different name (RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show) and at a larger and more accessible venue – Farnborough - which should increase the attraction of exhibitors to participate and the public to attend.

Although a report from our Events Co-ordinator, Steve Gregory, will be presented later in the meeting, I would just like to make a few remarks about this season's programme:- First of all, Steve is to be congratulated on negotiating new dates with most of the clubs who were scheduled to hold an event before the lockdown restrictions started to ease. I would like to thank Winsford Flash Sailing Club (and in particular Martin Loud) for their superb organisation of this year's Association Championships and for making it such a successful event where we celebrated the 40th birthday of the Comet. Eddie Pope, as the Association Championships winner went on to represent the class at the 2021 Champion of Champions Event for the Endeavour Trophy. Following the unfortunate cancellation by Bala Sailing Club of the National Championships at short notice, I think we are all looking forward to the event being held there next season.

It was especially pleasing to welcome two new clubs into the programme – Nottingham Sailing Club held their first Comet open meeting on the River Trent at the end of July, and Ogston Sailing Club in the Derbyshire Peak District at the beginning of October – an open meeting which will be remembered for its very strong wind. I hope that the high turnout at the Association Championships

and at some of the open meetings show that the class is making a healthy recovery from the lockdown.

One activity which has attracted less attention in recent years is the provision of training. An open training day was held at Staunton Harold Sailing Club attended by Comet sailors from three different clubs. The Association Committee has agreed to provide limited funding to clubs organising a training event on the condition it is opened to Comet sailors from outside the host club. I would like to encourage you all to consider holding such an open training event at your own club, and a little more will be said about this topic later in the meeting.

At the end of last season, we were pleased to welcome Ben Palmer to the Committee as the Results Co-ordinator. At the end of this season, John Sturgeon stands down from the Committee after serving on it for many years including 3 years as the previous Chairman. Also at the end of this season, Eddie Pope and Steve Gregory have agreed to exchange their roles on the Committee – Eddie will take on the role of the Events Co-ordinator and Steve will become the Membership Secretary. I am grateful for them agreeing to this exchange of duties, and my thanks again to each member of the Committee for agreeing to continue with their duties next season.

Secretary - Liz Hossell reported:

I would like to thank everybody for their help and cooperation during this still difficult year, especially to Norah for her help and wisdom to us all and arranging the Trophies for us on a non Committee basis.

We have had probably more committee meetings this year mainly by Zoom which seems to be useful for everyone in time and petrol/diesel. Everybody has been able to attend the meetings even at short notice.

We haven't any motions this year so all must be running OK. I am looking forward to next year being more normal.

Liz then passed onto to Norah Jagers who reported about all things Trophies

The Comet fortieth anniversary snoods appear to have been well received. I asked a local potter to make commemorative plates for the Championship prizes. As the Nationals were cancelled we will emulate the Olympics next year when we present the prizes as they say "Bala 2021". I have used some of the items in stock for the Aphelion and Orbital prizes, and augmented them by buying some waterproof pouches for mobile 'phones. We've made the mementoes, which have meant that they could be personalized. I'm proposing to use the potter again next year. In terms of finance, I've been able to stay within budget.

Membership Secretary Eddie Pope reported:

There are 91 full members in 2021, up from 80 in 2020. There are approaching 30 lady helms and 2 juniors within this total. The reduced subscription and publicity both appear to have helped maintain membership numbers. At Winsford's Association Championships several helms paid the temporary membership fee, and these are not included within this total.

Eddie then reported on Events in Steve Gregory's absence:

Due to government restrictions the season finally got started in June, but - even with a few cancellations and reschedules - managed a very successful season with 19 opens, 1 championship and a 'Not-the-2021 Nationals' Sailing Weekend in Wales (more on this below!).

Attendance has been variable at opens, ranging from 3 to 21 boats, but we are hugely grateful to our host clubs for their flexibility and determination to lay on events for our fleet in this Recovery Year. For our first 2021 open at Carsington SC the wind failed to show up and they rescheduled for July at

short notice which probably explains the low turnout of three travelers'. Our established venue Cransley and newcomer Nottingham Sailing Club both had 20 helms, only topped by the final event at Staunton Harold with 21.

The 40th Anniversary Association at Winsford Flash SC was a huge success with 30 helms and a great celebration of the enduring attraction of the Comet Class, even though the wind was a bit of a party pooper.

The Nationals at Bala almost fell apart, when there was a Covid outbreak amongst the support team, the week before and despite frantic attempts by the organizers, the combined club regatta and our official event were cancelled. As 60+ boats were booked to come to this small club, this was completely understandable. However some heroic efforts allowed for informal handicap racing Saturday and Sunday enjoyed by 12 Comets and a few other exotic local craft. Bala have already enthusiastically offered us a full Nationals in 2022 and we all hope it will be 'third time lucky' at this spectacular and friendly venue next August.

For my part, I am stepping down from Events Coordinator this year, but hope to be re-elected as Membership Secretary - in effect swapping with Eddie, who is standing for the Coordinator role.

Results Coordinator Ben Palmer reported

The 2021 Orbital is a quiet year with a total of 139 event entries, down from 313 in 2018 but much better than last year. 19 Open events were held. The average turnout at an open was 7.3 entries per event. The number of qualifiers however is 7 which is down significantly down on previous years.

The Northern Area saw a decrease from previous years down to 6 qualifiers. There were 53 competitors across 6 events. The average turnout was 8.8 down from the previous level of 13.7.

The Eastern Area saw a decrease to 5 qualifiers. 60 competitors competed across the 6 events. The average turnout was 10 this is a slight increase on the previous 9.7.

The Southern area had a small increase to 7 qualifiers on pre pandemic levels. 29 competitors completed across 5 events. The average turnout was 5.8 previously down from the 12.4 recorded pre pandemic.

The Western Area has a small decrease to 6 qualifiers. There were 24 competitors over the 4 events. The average entry was 6, this is similar to previous years.

Staunton Harold had the largest turn out to an open. This was closely followed by Cransley and Nottingham.

Newsletter & Website Coordinator : Nigel Fern reported

In my opinion, over the past 18 months, communications between the Association Committee and membership have undergone a big change for the better. By moving to completely non paper versions of Perihelion we have cut our costs considerably whilst still providing a, hopefully, quality publication. Several members requested that Perihelion be available in the 'standard' A5 booklet form so that they could print it off at home. This request was heeded, complied with and 'back dated' so that all the new copies of Perihelion are available in a dual format. Additionally thanks to Keith Lamdin I hope to fill in the gaps in the Perihelion archive. We have also attempted a non regular email update; this seems to have worked well, especially with regard to Open advertising! I would ask that for next and future seasons that such requests for 'advertising' are planned in advance, rather than waiting until the last minute, as has happened earlier this year – I do have a life outside of the CCA, although Lesley would disagree! Trying to put out an update whilst in the Highlands of Scotland on holiday with limited internet speed and access is not conducive to marital bliss!!

Immediate communication using Facebook has been used to tempt non members to use the website and possibly join the Association.

Going back to Perihelion, I, as all previous News Editors, am indebted to the contributors of news, information and reports etc. without which Perihelion would die. However I can never have enough! Now being electronic, Perihelion costs nothing to produce whereas the 40+ page Perihelion of old had the £ sign appearing on my shoulder. Open reports are the bane of my life and I suggest that OODs / Comet fleet captains for our Opens feel the same when reminded that we would like a report on the day's sailing. Some take to it like a duck to water, others shy away until they feel that they can forget about it. This year the number of Opens without reports has been quite large. Therefore if you enter any event PLEASE spend a few minutes putting down your thoughts in some digital format – most phones have a 'speech to text' or voice recording App in-built so the ability to type is not paramount anymore! Today's Open report will be a compilation of comments by SHSC Cometeers stitched together to make one article. Such personal comments bring life to what could be a very short and somewhat dull piece. The addition of a map of the water, wind direction and race courses is a boon. The website continues to grow and develop. Over this winter I hope to completely revamp it. I would like some help with this and would like to form a group of people who are prepared to assist in the changeover and future development. Certain areas of the website have lain idle and need reassessing / developing. If you have any ideas on future developments for the website and or Perihelion please let me know.

4 **Treasurers Report and Adoption of the Accounts. The accounts were circulated and Liz read out Rhiain's report in her absence :**

2020 was the strangest of years and therefore the accounts do not reflect the same level of income and expenditure as previous years. In a year where we were unable to hold any events, income was almost all down to membership fees, so thank you to all those that joined and continued to support us despite the uncertainty. However, with all events cancelled, we were left with the fixed costs of running the Association of RYA Affiliation and Website costs. The costs of engraving prizes are related to 2019. This left us with a surplus of £688 for the year, however it is anticipated that this will fund a potential shortfall in 2021 due to the half price membership option. The Association continues to maintain good levels of reserves.

Accounts were then adopted. Proposed by the Committee Seconded by Paul Hinde

5 **Builders Report - Andy Simmons reported**

Its good to see a good turnout here at Staunton with some new faces to the class. Life might never get back to how it was two years ago, but this season has shown that Comet life carries on!

Commercially speaking 3 Comets have been built this year, 2 have been sold so one in stock, a lovely Deep Turquoise with waterline. I always try to have a new Comet in stock so if that one is sold, I'll build another one for the Dinghy Show in February. This year we've had old Comet clubs grow stronger with newfound enthusiasm and some new clubs where although they might have had one or two in the past have suddenly developed keen growing fleets.

As ever secondhand Comets are in demand and this year seem to be snapped-up by women some of them changing to the new rig. Who knows what next year will bring, let's hope the new Dinghy and Watersports Show will kick the season off in style.

6 **Election of Officers and Committee**

Steve Gregory has resigned as Events Co-ordinator and taken on Membership Secretary post.

Eddie Pope has resigned as Membership Secretary and taken on the post of Events Coordinator.

One new nomination to the Committee was received from Mick Parnell Proposed Ben Palmer Seconded Chris Robinson. All present in favour of the nomination.

This makes the Committee for 2021/2022 as follows:

Chairman - Peter Mountford, **Secretary** - Liz Hossell, **Treasurer** – Rhian Bevan, **Membership Secretary** – Steve Gregory, **Events Coordinator** - Eddie Pope, **Website and Newsletter Coordinator** – Nigel Fern, **Results Coordinator** – Ben Palmer, **Dinghy show Coordinator** – Chris Robinson, Steve Bellamy and Mick Parnell.

Trophies – Norah Jagers (non Committee member)

It was proposed by J Sturgeon seconded by Paul Hinde to elect the Committee en- bloc. All in favour.

7 **Appointment of Auditor/ Independent Advisor** – Helen Leivers has resigned as Independent Advisor. Thanks we're expressed to her for her work over the years and a presentation made to her. Rhian proposed the appointment of Mark Govier, seconded by Chris Robinson to conduct future annual audit of accounts. All in favour.

8 **Any Other Business**

- Peter Coop mentioned to the members of the possibility of having centre main sheet jamming cleats on the side decks on the Comet. Discussion took place between the Boat Builder Andy Simmons and the rest of members on advantages and disadvantages. Peter Coop to write an article for members in the Perihelion to gain more views and Andy to look into the proposition also. To be put on the Agenda for the February Committee meeting.
- Eddie brought up the subject of a £1 donation made by Clubs to the Association for boats taking part in Open Meetings. This was discussed and finalized that it is on a voluntary basis.
- Roger Harrison mentioned whether it was viable to have greater presence via Utube. To be put on the Agenda for the February Committee meeting.
- Discussion took place on whether to have the AGM as a Zoom meeting to enable more people to take part. Referred to the February Committee Meeting

Liz Hossell.
Honorary Secretary
October 2021