

## **INTERNATIONAL GP14 CLASS ASSOCIATION**

### **70<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020 via Zoom**

#### **THE SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Association's year started with high hopes at the National Championships held in Abersoch in August 2019. Little did we realise then the extent to which our activities were to be curtailed in 2020 due to the unforeseen arrival of Covid 19. The pandemic has also caused difficulties outside sailing for many of our number and I am particularly sorry to have to report that Les Burns has now tendered his resignation as Association Secretary following a tough period, in which I have been acting for him.

Notwithstanding this rather gloomy opening, I am pleased to give the following summary of our activities over the past 12 months:

#### Administration

Julie Courtney and her team at Type-IT Services continue to look after our administration needs in exemplary fashion and at very competitive rates. As an enthusiastic GP14 sailor, Julie does much more than merely providing office back-up and for this I, in particular, am most grateful.

General Committee has met as usual on three occasions over the year and the Finance and General Purposes Committee has met (using Skype or Zoom) every month. The April meeting of General Committee had to be held via Zoom but it was pleasing to discover how well this platform answered our needs. It is highly likely that we shall continue to make use of this facility for at least one of the General Committee meetings post Covid 19 and this will help greatly to reduce our running costs.

Financial control has been overseen by our treasurer, Paul Bowmer, and Paul's report is before you. We shall consider this under its own heading on the agenda but suffice to say here that our financial condition remains sound. This has been Paul's final year as our treasurer and we owe Paul a big debt of thanks for his careful work on our behalf.

Maintaining membership numbers continues to be a matter of great concern, not least because of the effects of the Covid 19 'lock-down' and on-going restrictions. At the time of writing (early July), our total membership stands at 762 as compared with 769 at the same time last year so it is great to see that so many of you have remained loyal to the Association. By last year it was clear that the steep declines of the past had been halted but we are now in new territory and will need to work hard to make sure that membership retention remains solid. In normal times membership numbers do routinely fluctuate, with a surge during each 'worlds year' and a reduction in the intervening years. So with the postponing until 2021 of the World Championships at Skerries we shall be working to maximize the potential for an associated bounce in new memberships.

Covid 19 has clearly impacted new boat sales with just 8 registrations this year. We do need to think of ways of supporting our builders and sail-makers and this will be a matter for the new General Committee.

As I reported above, we are now in need of a new Secretary. I am happy to act for the time-being but the search for a replacement is now on and if you feel that you might like to give it a go please do contact either myself or Curly and we shall gladly provide a job description.

### Championship Sailing

Vanessa Devereux has been your Championship Committee leader for the past year and we owe her a great debt of thanks for all her hard work in bringing the 2019 programme to a very satisfactory conclusion and for planning an exciting and imaginative 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme for 2020. It has been a huge shame that very little of this is now likely to be realised. As you know, the 2020 Worlds are now scheduled to take place at Skerries YC next year and the Sri Lanka Worlds will therefore be similarly moved forward. Undaunted, Vanessa has organised a virtual championship series with the support of Craftinsure, for which we are most grateful, and has attracted much support during the 'lock-down' and helped the racing fraternity survive the isolation. In the meantime we are very much hoping that it will be possible to hold one 'real' championship event in 2020, perhaps the End of Seasons at Windemere, and if we can, we shall try to make something truly special!

### Cruising and Vintage

Oliver Shaw has been looking after the cruising side of life and after considerable success last season he has, like all of us, had to put everything on hold until social distancing rules are lifted and communal cruising can restart. Unfortunately this seems unlikely to happen before the summer weather is lost to us.

Oliver and I have been looking after the classic boat brigade and the one (and only) high spot of 2020 was the RYA Dinghy Show where boat number 2 was displayed in her newly restored glory on the GP14 stand. The boat is currently safely stored in my lock-up but it does need a permanent home (ideally a sailing museum), if anybody can help us with this we would love to hear from you.

### International issues

The GP14 continues to be a fully recognised international class by World Sailing and providing we continue to attract the usual number of overseas entries to our world championships I see no reason to doubt the safety of our position. That said, some of our more distant branches continue to struggle to maintain their membership, particularly in the face of the current pandemic. Fleets remain active but efforts to improve communications, which frequently prove somewhat challenging, must be redoubled once the world returns to normal.

Sri Lanka was to have been our destination for the World Championships in 2022 and I am pleased to report that our hosts have agreed to the postponing of the event to 2023.

### Training

Gill Beddow agreed to take over the organisation and oversight of training after the 2019 AGM, having already developed successful programmes in this area with Mark Collingwood over the previous year. As with all our other events, an ambitious and exciting 2020 programme has had to be cancelled but suffice to say, Gill's enthusiasm is no less stunted and we are hoping that something will be possible before the year end. In the meantime we

are grateful to Ann Penny and colleagues for setting up a number of Zoom based tutorials during 'lock-down'.

### Grass roots

Our Area Representatives have been working hard with their Fleet Captains to encourage GP14 sailing at club level and it is pleasing to note that the Travellers' Series of 2019 was one of the best supported in recent times. Our Area Representatives are going to be particularly crucial in re-establishing the connections to our fleet captains post pandemic and they will need all the support that you can offer. In this regard we have a vacancy for a Southern Area Representative and would greatly welcome a volunteer to take on this role; job description available on request!

### Technical and Rules

The T&R Committee of David Rowlands, Jon Close, Jimmy McKee and I have met as and when required. Tasks have mostly been routine over the past 12 months. The trial of built-in spinnaker storage compartments at the aft end of the foredeck was concluded in 2019 and the change was formally adopted at the January meeting of General Committee.

### Promoting the Class

We were once again represented at the RYA Dinghy Show and this year the stand was themed to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with boat no 2 taking centre stage. Changes in the organization of the event meant that we were no longer able to have a two-boat stand but thanks the hard work and inspiration of Vanessa Devereux, Leanne Pilkington and Ann Penny we produced what the RYA 's overseer described as "just about the best stand in the Show"! It was gratifying to see the extent to which boat no 2 attracted and wowed the visitors.

Mainsail continues to be very much part of our 'shop-window' and Julie Courtney does an excellent job in her role as editor. Julie is always on the lookout for articles so please do not hide your talents, write a piece today and send it in! Mainsail will only ever be as good as its content so it really is down to us as contributors and if the Covid restrictions go on much longer the Autumn edition is going to need some inspirational efforts!

E-news is now well established as one of our best means of communication and again, Julie continues to do a brilliant job in assembling it on a regular monthly basis.

Chris Hearn remains the overseer of our web-site and he does an invaluable job in keeping it up to date and posting the material that we all send him with great speed and efficiency.

A UK class calendar was produced for 2020, I think you will all agree that it is well up to the high standard set in 2019 and for me at least it serves as a wistful reminder of what I really want to be doing as soon as the pandemic days are over. We are extremely grateful to the production team of Leanne Pilkington, Justin Smith and Julie Courtney.

Steve Parry

Assistant Secretary