

## **Leicester Rowing Club AGM Address 2023**

### **Welcome**

Welcome everyone and thank you for joining this, the Leicester Rowing Club AGM 2023. As a committee we took the decision to run the meeting over Zoom again, as this has work really well for the past couple of years. It is a shame not to see you all in person but at least it is efficient!

### **Meeting Organisation**

- Some points about how the meeting will be conducted:
  - The intention is to keep the meeting as brief and concise as possible. All the reports have been issued in advance and are available on the club website for you all to read. Reports will not be read out in full this evening. Instead, this evening the officers will give a very brief summary of the reports and be able to answer any questions you might have. If you haven't looked at the reports already, please do read them after the meeting.
  - We are not intending to hold any voting during the meeting. All the nominations for the committee are uncontested, so no voting should be required there. All the reports have been issued in advance, and everyone has had the opportunity to read and comment on them, so the intention is to take their acceptance as read. That doesn't stop attendees raising questions or making additional points during the meeting.
  - The meeting is being recorded so that we have a record of the meeting and to assist Anne in generating the minutes. If any of you have an objection to this please let us know.
  - All participants will be muted, except for the person speaking at the time.
  - If you wish to make a point or raise a question, please use the 'chat' or 'raise hand' functions. Hazel has kindly offered to monitor these functions and will make sure you get the opportunity to speak if at all possible.
- All members are encouraged to read the written reports. They all contain a number of thank you messages. For my own part, I really would have preferred to give these thanks in person and publicly, but time doesn't permit me to do so. So please do read the reports as I really don't want my appreciation of you all to be lost in the ether.

### **Review of the Past Year**

- So, 2023 has been another successful year for the club, with Alex picking up the captaincy and, supported by the vice captains and squad leads, has really pushed the club forwards.
- We had an absolutely awesome regatta again, and I'm sure there will be more about this in the other reports, so suffice it for me to say it was an exceptionally good day, with fantastic support from the whole club to make it really successful and enjoyable. Particular thanks to Clare for picking up the entries secretary role, and to Rob who continued to manage the regatta infrastructure. Great job both of you so, thank you very much indeed.
- Over the year we have seen some outstanding performances and achievements across all the squads. I'll leave Alex to cover these in detail but will just take the opportunity to formally congratulate Lauren Henry who continues to excel on the world stage, now as a full member of the senior team. I am sure you are all already aware of the fantastic performance that she put in at the World Rowing Championships in September, where she and her crew in the W4x won the gold medal. It was an absolutely epic race, it had me on

the edge of my seat and screaming at the telly - and I'm sure I wasn't the only one! We are incredibly proud of Lauren and everything that she has achieved so far and we wish her every success for the future. I'm sure we shall see her in Paris next year.

- As you will see from Nicola's report shortly, our financial position continues to be good and our membership levels have increased significantly since last year. You will see that we have made some fairly significant investments in new equipment this year, and I'm sure Alex will cover that in his report later. Football car parks continue to bring in an important proportion of our income, between £8000 and £10000 each year, a very significant sum, so thanks to everyone who has already volunteered to take a turn in running the car park – but if you haven't already done so, please do put your names forward. One important point though is to make sure that the takings are banked as soon as possible after the game. We realise this won't be easy for some of you, but if that is the case, please just pass the takings on to myself or Howard, we can easily pay the money directly into the club account, which will help not only our cash flow, but also make sure Nicola isn't having to chase around at the end of the club FY to keep the accounts straight.
- We have however lost the income from our parking agreement with Riverside. As with many organisations, working practices have changed, so they now have fewer people in the office, so the arrangements to park their staff cars on our grounds were no longer required. However, it would be good to find another organisation that we can work with in a similar way, so if anyone knows of a company or organisation who are short of parking, please do let us know. We can put all the arrangements in place – we just need some contacts.
- You may remember that last year I spoke about the agreement we were putting in place with Castle Mead Academy, which aimed to start getting their scholars out on the water rowing. Well, I'm pleased to report that it has been a great success, with several of the scholars joining as members of the club, and most of them continuing to row with the school again this year. We've also taken on a new cohort so we now have 28 scholars signed up to the programme. The school have been successful in securing further funding from the Henley Royal Regatta Charitable Trust to support the programme for the current academic year, which helps to fund the coaching required. I'm also delighted that Sophie Connolly has agreed to take the lead with the programme this year, supported by Lucy, Erin and Jack (from DMU). It's going really well so far and I understand that the school are planning to enter some relay teams into the BR Indoor Championships in December. We wish them all the very best of luck.
- It's been great to see so many people out on the water, and training on-land over the year. It feels like we have a great atmosphere within the club at the moment, with lots of individuals helping with coaching, so thanks to all our coaches and squad leads for the fantastic work that they do both in organising crews and working with everyone to up their skill levels and fitness. We are very lucky to have so many talented and enthusiastic coaches at the club so many thanks to Alex, Howard, Sophie, Hazel, Peter, Graham, Paul, Angela, Sally, Sophie, Tim and everyone else who has picked up a bike and coached. You all do a great job so thank you all very much.
- Now, there are many people who have contributed to the club over the year. These include all of our hard-working committee – to whom I am very grateful. But there are many others, who do a huge amount to help. Tim Walton, Joe Holohan, Mike Watson, our rec squad and our junior parents, plus many more. We really do appreciate all the volunteer effort that goes into keeping the club up and running. Thank you all.

- Those of you who were at the Club Dinner will know that this year I presented the Service Award to John Sephton. John has saved the club a staggering amount of money by using his immense expertise to get both the gate and the lift back in action. Regarding the lift, basically John has completely reverse engineered, the whole lift control system, rectified the various faults, and brought it in line with the very demanding specifications required by the LOLA statutory body, something the 'professional' lift companies we spoke to said was impossible! We are currently awaiting the final LOLA inspection, which is scheduled to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> November. If all goes well the lift will then be back in action – it's an absolutely staggering achievement. The amount of time and effort that John has put in for us is phenomenal and he has literally saved us about £30,000! So many, many thanks John. I for one am in awe of your skill and expertise.
- With regards to our committee, it's fantastic to see that most of the committee have put their names down to serve again. Clearly the committee meetings aren't quite as boring as I thought! Particular thanks to Nicola who does an outstanding job of managing our finances and accounts. We are all absolutely delighted that you have agreed to continue. Thanks to Sally for her work as Water Safety Officer; to Anne, our club secretary and the squad lead for our highly popular recreational squad, but who also works hard and done her level best to keep C&RT on their toes, Kim our Welfare Officer, and of course Alex, our Captain, and Peter and Sophie our vice Captains. Thank you all very much for your input over the past year.
- I am sure that, like me, you are all delighted that Alex has agreed to stand as Captain again this year. Alex has worked tirelessly to run L2R courses, grow our squads, improve our skill levels, get our boats to races, expand our fleet, purchase new ergos, repair boats, managed the room bookings, and done so many other things throughout the year. It's a tough gig, absolutely relentless, but Alex has been incredibly committed and I am sure you will all join me in thanking him for all his efforts. We are all delighted you have agreed to continue.
- Now there are a couple of last year's committee who have decided to stand down this year. These include Riyaa, our junior rep, who has done a great job representing the juniors at the committee and presenting their ideas. I'd also like to thank Riyaa, along with Agi and Jeremy, who's efforts were integral in securing a grant of £3000 from the rowing foundation, which contributed 50% of the funds required to refurbish several of our boats. This was fantastic news for us to receive and I echo the words of Jeremy Dale, one the Foundation trustees, "Please thank Riyaa, Agi and Jeremy for their excellent letters which were integral to the success of the application". Thank you all and well done.
- Also standing down is Peter, our men's vice-captain, who has done a great job of getting the men's squad organised and motivated. It was great to see a Leicester crew taking to the Thames and doing so well at the Eights Head earlier this year. So well done and thank you Peter. You will be missed.
- Before I close, I just want let you all know about is that we are planning to run club races again this year. We haven't quite fixed a date yet but will do so shortly and more details will be available closer to the time. As in previous years we will also use the occasion to host a club social event so please do your best to join us – it's always a fun day.
- So, before we close and move on to the business of the meeting, I just want to say a final thank you to you all for your continued loyalty and your contributions to the club. It's fantastic to see the club going from strength to strength and growing stronger each year. I think you will all agree that we have a great atmosphere and that is driven entirely by you guys – our members and volunteers, so thank you all, both for your loyalty to the club and

for your friendship and support. I think Leicester Rowing Club is a great organisation to be part of. Thank you all very much.