

Leicester Rowing Club AGM Address 2022

Welcome

Welcome everyone and thank you for joining this, the Leicester Rowing Club AGM 2022. 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! We have discussed the possibility of holding a less formal, in person meeting for everyone, maybe towards the end of the year, where we have less formal business to get through, and so give all members the opportunity to come together, exchange views and raise any issues or concerns with the committee. If I can leave you all to think about that whilst the meeting goes on, and then, maybe before we close the meeting this evening, we can take a straw poll to see if you think this would be useful and welcomed.

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, 2022 has been another successful year for the club and it definitely feels like we are getting back to normal after the issues of the past couple of years. It was particularly good to be able to run the regatta again this year, the first since 2019. 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. So, thank you all very much indeed.

- 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, event organisation, and just generally supporting each other. From my perspective, it feels like whenever a call goes out for help, whether it be for a taster session or a riverside clean-up, or whatever, there are always lots of hands going up, and everyone just seems to muck in. So, thank you all, your help and enthusiasm are very much appreciated.
- Over the year we have seen some outstanding performances and achievements across all the squads. I'll leave Ben to cover these in detail but will just take the opportunity to formally congratulate Lauren Henry on performances at the World and European U23 Championships, where she finished 4th and 3rd respectively. Also, on her performance at the GB open trials two weeks ago, where she won the U23 trials, and finished 2nd overall, just a fraction of a second behind Helen Glover. Well done Lauren, absolutely outstanding!
- I also want to congratulate Dave Smith on his amazing 4 wins at the World Master's regatta in France in September. Absolutely outstanding David, well done!
- Also, good to see the skill levels across all the squads continuing to improve, and great to see some of our newer members getting out to race for the first time. We all owe a debt of gratitude to all our coaches who have made this happen. It's fantastic to see so many people offering to help with coaching, so thank you to Ben, Alex, Howard, Hazel, Peter, Graham Clark, Mike Watson, John Sephton, Paul Shaw, Angela, Sally, Sophie, Tim and most recently Teddy and Stan. I hope I haven't missed anyone, my apologies if I have! You all do a great job so thank you all very much.
- As you will see from Nicola's report shortly, our financial position continues to be good and our membership levels are stable if not increasing. Football car parks are back up and running, bringing in a very welcome revenue stream. 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. The football car parks have the potential to bring between £8,000 and £10,000 a year – a very significant sum, so please do your bit and put your name forward. If you need any more information, or want to know what you need to do, please just speak to one of the 'old hands'; we are all more than happy to help.
- Those of you who were at the AGM last year may remember that I mentioned that we had recently opened discussions with the Castle Mead Academy, the new school that's on the other side of West Bridge, on the site of the former Kirby and West dairy. Well, I'm pleased to say those discussions have progressed significantly. We have run a number of indoor taster sessions with them, as well as two on the water taster sessions, which were all really successful and enjoyed by all involved. In February this year we submitted a joint (CAM & LRC) funding application to the Henley Royal Regatta Charitable Trust for funding to help establish the Castle Mead Academy Rowing Club, to be affiliated to, and hosted by Leicester RC. In March we were all delighted when we found out that our application had been successful. So, in essence, the Trust are funding half of the costs of the coaching time, and coach education for two of our ex-junior members, Teddy Sherman and Stan Alexander, to provide coaching support to the school. The school have now purchased a number of rowing machines and are currently giving all the Year 8 scholars the opportunity to undertake a coached ergo taster session. They will then select a number of these scholars to become the first school rowing club cohort, and we will start to get them out on the water. It's really very exciting. I harbour an ambition to get them racing at Leicester Regatta – that would be quite an achievement and definitely something to look forward to!

- So, it's been a year with some great highs, but sadly a few lows as well. We received some very sad news in June this year, when we learnt of the passing of former club Captain and Trustee, Nigel Ramsden. Although Nigel moved away from Leicester many years ago, he remained a committed and active member. Nigel was part of the club for well over 50 years. He was Captain, a long-serving committee member and an absolutely visionary club trustee. Without Nigel I can honestly say that our club would be nothing like it is today. Nigel, as well as being Club Captain, was absolutely pivotal in persuading Leicester City Council to sell us the freehold to the land that the club now occupies. That security of tenure later proved to be crucial when we applied for the grants and funding that we needed to build our fantastic boathouse. He contributed hugely to the club and those of us who knew him, remember him with great fondness. We give his wife Barbara our sincere condolences. It was very sad news indeed.
- 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, our junior parents who have continued to run the bank and provide additional supervision of our on the water training, Joe Holohan who has serviced the trailers, Tim Walton who has ensured the building and facilities are maintained and compliant with relevant legislation, Sally who has made sure we are safe on the water, Nicola who has managed our finances and accounts, Anne who has not only run our highly popular recreational squad, but has also kept C&RT, Leicester City Council and the EA on their toes, and of course many, many others. Thank you all very much for your input.
- Now there are a couple of last year's committee who have decided to stand down this year. These include Emma, our junior rep, who has done a great job, not only representing the juniors at the committee and presenting their ideas, but also as a role model, with her outstanding training ethic and attitude. Thank you Emma, for all your hard work both on and off the water.
- Also, Hazel, who, very quietly and without any fuss or drama, is always one of the first people to volunteer whenever a job needs doing. Over the past few years she has undertaken the role of vice-captain, and, working alongside Ben, has been absolutely instrumental in running the L2R courses. She also took on the job of organising this year's Club Dinner, which was such a wonderful evening. So, thank you Hazel, for everything you have done, we will miss you on the committee but something tells me you will still be putting your hand up when you know there's a job to be done. And we love you for it!
- Next up is Tim Walton, who has worked tirelessly to keep our building and facilities safe, legally compliant and above all, in good order. Over the years he has, amongst other things, organised the reroofing of the building, overseen the connection of the club sewers to the pumping station next door, so that (thankfully) we no longer have to worry about how full the cess pit is! He has organised the fitting on ongoing maintenance of the electric gate (something which has given him some significant angst)! He ensures our plumbing, electrics and fire safety systems are properly maintained and efficient. And most recently he has been looking at options to get the disabled access lift back in action. Alongside this he has tried to keep us on the straight and narrow legally, sorting out formal licence agreements for the room hire, with West End Runners, LUBC and DMU. All this alongside his duties as one of the region's most active umpires, and a Club Trustee. Individually these are all significant tasks in themselves, so to take them all on is just mind blowing! We are absolutely indebted to you Tim. I would also like to say a personal thank you to Tim for all the support and sage advice that he has given to me over the years. Your wise counsel has always been appreciated and absolutely invaluable. Tim, you have made a massive contribution to the

club over the years. I know you will still stay involved and active, but I just want to say a very sincere thank you, for everything.

- Of course, there is one person that I haven't thanked fully yet, and that is Ben, our tireless and hard-working club captain. Ben took on the role of Club Captain at the AGM in 2019, and I'm sure it's fair to say there is no way he could have known exactly what he was taking on! He's had so much to deal with but he's done an absolutely outstanding job, despite all the challenges that the club has faced. He, supported by Sally and Tim, worked hard to make sure that all our Covid protocols were in line with HMG and British Rowing guidance, whilst also being pragmatic and workable for the members. As I mentioned earlier, he and Hazel, supported by Alex and others, have organised and run our L2R courses, he's fitted new racking for some additional private boats, and taken on many other jobs as well. As I mentioned at the club dinner a few weeks ago, Ben has decided to step down from the role, but I would like to place on record my sincere thanks for all your efforts and for everything that you have done to make this club the place it is today, so, on behalf of all our members, Ben, thank you very much indeed.
- Before I close, I just wanted to remind you all of a couple of things. First is that we are running a Christmas Charity collection for a local food bank. We will have some donation boxes in the committee room and a list of items they are trying to collect, so please do see what you can do to support this very worthy cause.
- The other thing I wanted to let you all know about is that we are planning to run club races again this year. We have fixed a date of Saturday 17th December 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 keep the date free – it's always a fun day.
- As I mentioned earlier, Ben is standing down, but we are very fortunate indeed that Alex has agreed to stand as Captain for the coming year. I know Alex will do an outstanding job and I look forward to working with him to help him develop the club as we move forward. I know I can count on you all to give him your support.
- 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 to the club. Seeing the club going from strength to strength is really quite inspiring. It feels like we have developed into a truly supportive and caring community, as well as building a club that is a fun and exciting to be part of. So, thank you all and please do keep up the excellent work. Thank you all very much.