

## Leicester Rowing Club AGM Address 2024

### Welcome

Welcome everyone and thank you for joining this, the Leicester Rowing Club AGM 2024. As a committee we took the decision to run the meeting over Zoom again, as this has worked 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!

- 2024 has been another amazing year for the club, with all squads really making progress and pushing the club forwards.
- 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 mention a couple of standout individuals who have delivered some outstanding performances. The first of these is Dave Smith, who once again has dominated his events both at the British and World Masters Championships. His commitment to training and his work ethic are an example to us all, and the wins and performances he has delivered are a just reward for all his efforts.
- Then of course, I want to, once again congratulate Lauren Henry on winning that amazing Olympic gold in Paris at the end of July – I'm still absolutely blown away by what she has achieved. I'm not sure if you are all aware but she and her crew have also been nominated as one of the three finalists for Crew of the Year by World Rowing – an immense accolade! Lauren certainly has made Leicester Rowing Club so very proud and really put us on the map. So, a massive thank you and well done to Lauren and I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her every good luck and every success in the future. I have absolutely no doubt that she will continue to amaze us all!
- 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 continuing to undertake the entries secretary role, and to everyone who helped with the organisation both beforehand and on the day. Great job all of you so, thank you very much indeed.
- As you will see from Nicola's report shortly, our financial position continues to be good and our membership levels have continued to increase. 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 helps to make that happen. Particular thanks to Brian and Alex – who seem to volunteer for nearly every car park – which is fantastic. We do need and expect everyone to take a turn though please, so if you haven't already done so, please do put your names forward.
- Our affiliation with Castle Mead Academy continues to work well and grow year on year. Last year we have 28 Castle Mead scholars on the rowing programme through the club, and I'm pleased to report that. Of these, 25 have asked to continue again this year. That's an impressive retention rate! We are also in the process of recruiting more scholars onto the programme, with the aim being to build the total numbers to about 40 or possibly slightly more this academic year. The school continues to receive generous funding from the Henley Royal Regatta Charitable Trust – which basically makes the programme affordable for the school and helps to fund the coaching required.
- The programme has also been generously supported by Love Rowing, with the school receiving a grant to allow them to purchase warm clothing for the rowers to use over the

winter months. The club also received help from Love Rowing in the form of the Octuple Scull that was donated to us by Maidenhead Rowing Club. This very generous donation came about following our grant application to the fund. The Octo is proving really useful and popular with both the school and with our own members.

- The school have now completed their own affiliation to British Rowing, meaning that they can now compete under their own colours, which is great. We have an ambition to get some of their crews out racing at the East Midland JIRR trials which are coming in February. I'd like to just take the opportunity to thank Sally Horrocks for her input into this BR affiliation process and for her ongoing support in her role as Club Safety Advisor to both LRC and CMA.
- Overall the Castle Mead programme is very rewarding. It wonderful to see all the young people involved all have a great time. Thanks to all those involved in supporting the programme, especially all those involved in coaching. It's great to see a number of our own young members supporting the coaching and hopefully they will enjoy it nearly as much as the pupils involved. If anyone else has an interest in getting involved, we could definitely do with a bit more help so please do let me know. Their sessions are during the daytime so if you have spare time on your hands and want to get involved, either as a volunteer or as a paid coach, please just message me or have a word when you see me next.
- Across the rest of the club, it's been great to see so many people out on the water, and training on-land over the year. Also great to see crews from across all parts of the club competing and sharing the club's success. 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, Hazel, Barney, Graham, Paul, Angela, Sally, 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, 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 our hard-working Treasurer, Nicola Henry. As I said at the dinner, Nicola, who despite not actually rowing herself, does what is undoubtedly the biggest, most onerous job on the committee, Nicola is our club Treasurer, she makes sure all our finances are in order, our bills are paid, that we all pay our subs, and that we have the money in place to maintain our facilities and buy the boats and equipment we need, that everything is insured, and that our accounts are in perfect order. It's a largely unseen job, that goes on the background but is absolutely essential, and there is such a lot to it, and especially so in the run up to the AGM. It's a huge responsibility. She's being doing this job fantastically well since 2018, when she first took over from John Wilson, and she's even agreed to stand again next year. On top of all this, of course she has supported and followed her daughter Lauren around the world, so that's another thing we have to be grateful for - she and her husband Steve have provided our club with its very own Olympic Champion! So, thank you Nicola and thank you once again for agreeing to continue in the role for another year.

- Big thanks also to the rest of the committee, who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to make sure the club runs smoothly and efficiently. Particular thanks to Sally for her work as Water Safety Officer; to Anne, our club secretary and the squad lead for the recreational squad, but who also works hard and done her level best to keep C&RT on their toes, Kim our Welfare Officer, Isaac our Junior Rep, Hazel and Ross our vice Captains and of course Alex, our Captain. Thank you all very much for your input over the past year. Now most of you probably already know that these last three, Hazel, Ross and Alex are all standing down for their roles this evening so I would take this opportunity to formally thank you all for all your hard work. Alex in particular has really pushed the club forwards. During his 2 years a captain he has done just about every job going. The list of what he has done is endless – from bringing new people into the club, running Learn to Row courses, organising crews, cajoling people into doing all sorts of jobs, engaging with the two universities, coaching, trailering, mending boats, and, as I mentioned earlier, along with Brian, running most of the football car parks! You will be a hard act to follow and at the time of writing, we don't yet have anyone to replace him. So, I'm sure you will all join me in thanking Alex for everything that he has done.
- On this note, we are becoming increasingly concerned about how dependent we are on a relatively small number of key individuals, the likes of Sally, Anne, Howard, Clare, Nicola, and Alex, who between them undertake most of the key roles in the club. As such, over the course of the next year we intend to really understand these dependencies, and endeavour to put a succession plan in place. So, if any of you are keen to get involved in the running and organisation of the club, please, don't be shy, just let us know. I know we will be absolutely delighted to get you involved and hopefully share the load.
- 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 hopefully sometime in December. 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. Fingers, toes, legs and arms crossed that we get some decent weather, but whatever the weather, it's always a fun day so please do your best to join us.
- 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. We have a great atmosphere and a wonderful, supportive culture that I'm very proud to be part of. So, thank you all, both for your loyalty to the club and for your friendship and support. Thank you all very much.