Vice Commodores (Facilities) Report for 2021

As we near the end of 2021 and we look back at the year, it is amazing what we (as a club) have achieved even with the impact of COVID, the lockdowns and restrictions we have endured.

Before I start recalling the achievements, I would like to thank the members of my committee who have supported me throughout the year. Chris Hobbs, Johnny Heathcote, Ed Van Thiel, Doug Roberts, Mike Otlet, Matt Banbrook and newly appointed boat park manager Andy Sharpe.

We started the year finalising the requirements for the new automated barrier and the installation started in early spring.

The powerboat shed and the lake side of the club house received a much needed makeover. Chris Hobbs completed the work with the shed doors being repaired, trimmed, re-hung and having storm seals fitted to keep out as much rain as we can along with many render repairs and a good coat of paint all around. The buildings looked refreshed and ready to provide many more years service.

The installation of the barrier was completed by the supplier (Cotswold Gate Co) and the electrics installed from the powerboat shed to the gate by Jonny Heathcote. We could not however bring the gate into service until we had distributed the fobs. With the help of many members who volunteered to help hand out fobs at the end of May/beginning of June, we issued 434 fobs to 56% of the membership over three weekends. Doug was then left with the task of posting the remaining fobs to the members who were unable to collect their own. The gate went into service at the end of June and I believe this has had a very positive impact on the authorised use of the club and its facilities and added additional security as well, although we do still need to remember to lock the metal gate if we are the last to leave the site.

June also saw the construction of the gazebo. This proved an immediate success and was in use for training the first weekend it was completed. The gazebo sees continuous use for training and shelter for spectators.

In July, (delayed as many things were by COVID), a second club owned pod arrived, shortly after the last two bases were filled by members pods, completing the initial 15 pods on the eastern side of the entrance gate. Both of the club pods saw good use by club members and visiting competitors for open sailing events, with bookings continuing into October. Planning permission is granted for another 15 pods on the western side of the gate and bases will be installed as and when the requirement arrives.

More recently, Doug has overseen the extension of the beach to the western end of our grounds. This included the removal of the slippery slipways and the old concrete pontoon base, the removal of reeds, regrading of the banks and laying gravel/shingle along the complete length of the beach.

The same supplier also installed a number of land drains to the far end of the boat park to hopefully allow its use throughout the year without the need for boots through the winter.

Through the last few months, our new boat park manager, Andy Sharpe has been making good progress in getting the boat park in order. Over recent years the boat park has grown in size, as has the number of un-sailable and abandoned boats that it holds. We were getting to the stage where we could not offer boat park space to members, so action needed to be taken. Many boats have been removed, some were sold, some were burnt and some crushed at a waste disposal site.

Everyone can help with this task by keeping your bay trimmed and clear of weeds, ensuring your membership sticker is stuck on your boat and is visible and that you notify Andy when you buy or sell a boat. Please do not just take a boat park space without checking with Andy first.

So what does the year ahead of us look like?
To start with, the facilities team will not be led by myself as I feel that I am not the right person to lead the team and I find my time is conflicted between work & sailing club duties. My replacement is yet to be identified but I will be around to provide a handover once appointed. I am keen to continue to play a part in the facilities committee, but not to be at its helm.

Improvements in the boat park will be continued; through identifying dead boats, maybe moving some boats if necessary to allow us to make better use of our space available and by building a canoe/kayak rack.

We are also looking to improve on the orange flag swimming /not swimming notification and repairs or replacement to the powerboat pontoon.

The big ticket item will be making progress on improvements to the clubhouse, inside the main club room and through re-fitting or extending the changing rooms to allow the installation of changing cubicles.

David Fewings