AGM Minutes

3:15pm Sunday 9 November 2025

Committee Members Present

Simon Hinnigan (Commodore), Charlie Samson, Geoff Silcock, Doug Roberts, Nigel Fletcher, Caroline Doran

Apologies: Mike Dyer, Karen Cooke

Members Present

79 members were in attendance. The meeting was declared quorate.

1.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 10 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
Motion carried - All in favour.

1.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2.0 Appointment of Executive Committee

It was proposed and unanimously agreed to re-elect the following officers to the Executive Committee:

Commodore	Simon Hinnigan
Vice Commodore	Mike Dyer
Rear Commodore	Charlie Samson
Treasurer	Geoff Silcock
Membership Secretary	Doug Roberts
Safeguarding Officer	Karen Cooke
Secretary	Caroline Doran

Motion carried – all in favour.

The Committee confirmed the appointment of Lizzie Fewings as Training Principal, succeeding Nigel Fletcher, who was warmly thanked for his outstanding contribution in this wide-ranging role.

3.0 Treasurer's Report – Geoff Silcock

Geoff presented the Treasurer's Report (previously circulated), highlighting the following key points:

- Solar Panels: Installed at a cost of approximately £68,000, with 50% funded by a CDC grant. The panels have already halved the club's electricity costs.
- Insurance and Water Treatment: Both costs have increased this year due to revised management arrangements but are expected to stabilise next year.
- Training Income: Training now generates around 25% of the club's total income; this is balanced by instructor and equipment costs.

Q: Are there plans to use the large financial balance?
A: Yes – the Committee intends to reinvest in the club, as outlined in the Facilities Report.

3.1 Acceptance of Accounts

It was proposed to accept the audited accounts for the year ending June 2025.
Motion carried – all in favour.

3.2 Appointment of Auditor

It was agreed to appoint Terry Nichols of Wheeler Nichols Accountants as the club's auditor.
Motion carried – all in favour.

4.0 Membership Report – Doug Roberts

Doug reported another record year for membership, with 676 members – an increase of 34 on the previous year.
Of these, 574 memberships were renewed in November, keeping the club 29 ahead of the same point last year.

Q: Does the total include all membership types?
A: Yes – the figure includes all categories, including supporters. It is estimated that1,600 to 2,000 individuals make use of the club facilities.

Q: How many active racing sailors does the club have?
A: Approximately 100 active racing sailors and around 400 cruising or occasional racers.

5.0 Training Report – Nigel Fletcher

Nigel presented his final report as Training Principal, noting another successful year:

- RYA Training: 40 adults and 44 youth sailors completed RYA Levels 1 & 2, with 10 advancing to Levels 3 & 4.
- Additional courses included Powerboat Level 2, First Aid, and Marine Radio.
- In partnership with 1st Swindon Sea Scouts, a summer camp awarded 37 RYA certificates across Stages 1–3.
- Under Graham Fletcher's leadership, the new Member Coaching Programme has thrived, with over 70 adults and youth sailors participating regularly across five ability groups.

Plans for next year include continuing Member Coaching and introducing double-handed sailing courses.

Nigel expressed sincere thanks to all instructors and volunteers.

Safety Boat Training

The club has a strong base of Powerboat Level 2 drivers. By 2027, the aim is to raise competency by offering:

- A one-day Safety Boat course, and
- An optional second day (at a reduced fee) to reach full RYA Safety Boat standard.

Q: How can PB2 drivers keep skills current?
A: Speak to Nigel – refresher sessions every six months are being considered.

Additional plans include adding powerboat cover on Saturdays. Adding these to the duty roster will provide opportunities for members to maintain their skills.

Q: Can members learn to drive and operate the Committee Boat?
A: Yes – instruction is available on an informal basis; members are encouraged to ask experienced users for guidance.

6.0 Facilities Report – presented by Mike Otlet (on behalf of Mike Dyer)

Mike reviewed a productive year for club facilities, including completion of:

- Solar panel installation
- Decking repairs
- Upgrades to the training boat park area

Thanks were extended to those who supported the March Working Party.

Future Projects

- Race Hut Replacement: To include a new training room; we plan to appoint an architect appointment July/August 2026, with rebuild in late 2026.
- Changing Rooms: Refurbishment (cubicles, flooring, and hot water system) will take place over the next 3–4 months. Some disruption is anticipated
- Slipway: A new slipway will enable the safer launching of cruising boats.

The following were thanked: Johnny Heathcote, Maria Hinnigan, David Fewings, Mike Otlet, Ed van Thiel, Doug Roberts, John Manterfield, David Nunn, John Banbrook, John Murrell, Andy Sharp, and Mike Dyer for ensuring the club is maintained in a good condition.

Q. What plans are there for the slippery walkway from the front door to the changing rooms. A. This question will be taken to the Facilities Committee to consider.

Q. Can we look at sectioning part of the ladies changing room to provide privacy.

A. Please forward this suggestion to the Facilities Committee to consider.

7.0 Sailing Report – Charlie Samson

The committee have focused on improving the members sailing experience.

- Calendar: The calendar has been revised to include fewer open meetings on Saturdays.
- Committee Boat: The committee boat is now used more frequently. There are plans for further renovation and a new trailer to facilitate maintenance.
- Training Park: The training park has been improved to provide extra space and flexibility and to reduce the amount of damage to the boats.
- Weed Control: Doubling the dye dosage has meant that for the first time sailing has not been adversely affected by weed issues. It is estimated that bulk sourcing of dye and not requiring a weed cut will save approx. £8000 annually.
- Racing Starts: Until Christmas new race start groupings are being trialled with the aim of balancing fleet sizes; members feedback is welcomed.
- RS Fevas: New training sails have been purchased (instead of new boats). It is hoped that the Youth double handling training will increase the use of the Fevas.
- Offsite boat use: Training boats can be taken to offsite events but there is a hire fee, and the boat will have to be insured.

Q. Are there any training plans for younger children, pre RYA Level 1&2

A. We would like to reinstate Otter training if members are available to do this.

The questioner volunteered and will liaise with to CS.

Dedicated Swimming Area Trial

Swimmers now make up approximately 20% of the club's membership, and many sailing members also enjoy using the lake for open-water swimming. At present, swimmers may use the entire lake before 9:30 a.m., after which the rules governing where and when swimming is permitted become complex and restrictive.

To improve access, ensure safety, and simplify the rules, the Sailing Committee proposed a trial scheme for selected, monitored Saturdays and Sundays in spring.

The proposal would designate a swimming area in the northwestern part of the lake, within clear line of sight from the clubhouse, available for use throughout the day. The area would incorporate two courses – a 250-metre straight and a 600-metre loop – and is designed so as not to interfere with racing activities, moorings, and allows for a 15-metre gap to round buoys.

During the trial, all powered and sailing vessels would be excluded from the area, except safety boats, paddleboards, and kayaks. For insurance reasons, it remains necessary to maintain clear separation between swimmers and boats, both in time and distance.

A wide-ranging discussion followed, with questions and practical concerns about implementation, safety, and lake management.

Clarifications provided during the meeting included:

- Early-morning access: Unrestricted swimming across the whole lake before 9:30 a.m. will remain unchanged.
- Open meeting days: The designated area will still be available to swimmers during open meetings, except in poor weather or when conditions present a safety risk.
- Scouts - Location and visibility: Concern was expressed that the proposed layout extended too far into the Scout end of the boat park. It was explained that the angle of the proposed zone was chosen to ensure maximum visibility from the clubhouse, and that the lakebed in that section drops away sharply.
- Paddleboards & Kayaks: Paddleboards and kayaks will continue to be allowed in the swimming area to enable adult supervision of swimmers under-16 years.
  Current paddleboard rules will still apply over the rest of the lake— users must remain within reach of their boards.
- Lane demarcation: A suggestion was made to install a 20-metre roped swimming lane. The committee's preference was for more buoys as ropes pose a tangle hazard. Lanes were considered less suitable for mixed swimming abilities.
- Monitoring and safety equipment: Concerns were raised about enforcing the rules and ensuring swimmers wear appropriate safety gear. The Committee noted that simplified rules regarding where and when swimming is permitted will make monitoring and rule enforcement easier. Additionally, as part of the club's SSSI management plan, the reinstatement of marginal reedbeds will help deter non-members from entering the lake.
- Access to the shoreline: Questions were raised about how swimmers would exit the water if reedbeds are restored. It was agreed that this will need to be considered as part of the trial design.
- Impact on other water users: Members were reassured that the arrangement would still allow sufficient room (15m) for larger cruising boats to round buoys and for new sailors to train at the western end for the lake.
- Swimmer safety: Swimming members must be able to swim at least 400 metres.
- Demand: It was noted that swimmers use the lake daily throughout the year.

- **Involvement:** Swimming members were invited to participate in organising and monitoring the trial in collaboration with the Sailing Committee.

Next Steps

The trial of a designated swimming area will proceed on a limited, monitored basis in spring, after which there will be a consultation with all members. Feedback will be reviewed, recommendations made, and the final proposal will be brought to an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) for a member vote.

8.0 Commodore's Report – Simon Hinnigan

Simon thanked all members and volunteers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year, with mention to David Nunn for his high-quality maintenance work, Graham Fletcher for Member Coaching, and Mike Read Who has involved the club in Lions fundraising events which raised £4,500 last year.

8.1 Articles of Association

PROPOSED: To amend the Articles of Association.

An appeal against membership exclusion will be heard by two former Executive Committee members and one lay member (who has been a member of the club for at least a year) rather than at an EGM.
Motion carried – no objections.

8.2 Forthcoming Events & Notices

- **Club 50th Anniversary:** 25 June 2026 – celebrations are planned for 27–28 June weekend. Volunteers to help with arrangements please speak to Simon or Tash.
- **Commodore Succession:** Simon's three-year term ends at the 2026 AGM. Members are encouraged to consider potential successors.

9.0 Any Other Business

- **BBQ Safety:** Concerns raised following two recent fires. Suggestions included an information board, a hot coal container, a summer ban on charcoal/wood BBQs, and provision of a fire pit.
- **Lakes by Yoo:** Relations are currently working pretty well. Communication lines are kept simple (all through Simon) and are fact based.
- **Planning Matters:** Due to a land covenant, the club cannot comment formally on Lakes by Yoo applications; members may do so personally. Simon is discussing points of concern directly with John Hiscock. Members are encouraged to report safety/traffic near misses.

Thanks were expressed to Hacketts for their service to the club.

Meeting closed at 5:10 p.m.

Bowmoor Supporters Club AGM

The Bowmoor Supporters Club AGM was not quorate and has been postponed for four weeks.