



All-Party Parliamentary Group for Rowing

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

1800, 5 June 2018, Committee Room 11

Meeting commenced 1803

In attendance

Members: Lord Thomas of Gresford (in the Chair)

Honorary Members: Isobel Pollock-Hulf OBE; Annamarie Phelps CBE; Alan Foster

Organisational Associate Members: Andy Parkinson, Kenny Baillie, Brendan Purcell, Paul Lorenzato (British Rowing); Mike Baldwin (London RC); Paul Jackson (North West Region Rowing Association); Jock McKerrell (Vesta RC); Suzanne Rae (RowUK); Lucy Stackpool-Moore (Lea RC); Amanda Hosking (Broxbourne RC); William Darlington (Deal, Walmer and Kingsdown RC)

Individual Associate Members (all, no affiliation): Jonathan Brandt; Ray Cassidy; Richard Packer; Judith Packer; Andy Crawford; Phil Clements; Jon Neale; Trevor Comber; Chris Dodds

Secretariat: Jack Baker (MR Sport)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, and in particular:

New honorary members:

- Annamarie Phelps

New individual associate members:

- Chris Dodds
- Elizabeth Spill
- Richard Packer
- Judith Packer
- Philip Clements

Apologies

Members: Lord Moynihan; Lord Paddick; Jim Fitzpatrick MP; Lord Robathan; Roberta Blackman-Woods MP

Honorary Members: Jess Eddie

Organisational Associate Members: Steve O'Connor (Fulham Reach Boat Club); Dr Pat Marsh (Cambridge University Boat Clubs); Bill Raspin (Moseley Boat Club); Peter Barker, Ian Mackie (Upton Rowing Club); Nick Murray, Ian Henley (Broxbourne Rowing Club); Colin Middlemiss (Watermen and Lightermen); Helena Smith (Barnes Bridge Ladies Rowing Club)

Individual Associate Members (all, no affiliation): Sally Pettipher; Ali Love; Philip Foster; Malcolm Knight; Matthew Gordon; Daniel Walker; Nick Hubble; Camilla Smallbone; Ivan Pratt; Patrick O'Connor

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Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous Group meeting were considered an accurate account.

Matters arising

- The Secretariat was looking to schedule future presentations on: Rowing and the Environment; the AHoy Centre; and Upton Rowing Club.
- The Secretariat would schedule a follow-up meeting with the Canal and River Trust for interested parties.
- The Secretariat was investigating alternative opportunities for a Commons vs Lords boat race, or for Members to get out on the water.

Correspondence

- The Group wrote to outgoing British Rowing Chair, Annamarie Phelps, thanking her for her support for rowing whilst in the role, and offering Honorary Membership of the Group, which was accepted.
- The Group wrote to new British Rowing Chair, Mark Davies, congratulating him on his appointment, and offering any support that the Group could provide.
- A letter was sent to the Canal and River Trust, to explore whether they might be interested in joining the Group. A response was received offering to co-operate on future initiatives.
- A number of items were received in follow-up to the Canal and River Trust meeting from Lea Rowing Club and Broxbourne Rowing Club. **Action: Secretariat to organise a follow-up meeting with the Canal and River Trust to take forward.**
- A note was received from Alban Academy Rowing Club, regarding the work done to deliver indoor and water rowing to state school pupils.
- A number of offers of support were received in relation to rowing opportunities for Members, following the postponement of the Parliamentary Boat Race in its previous format.
- An email was received from Durham ARC via the Honorary President, regarding issues around the removal of gravel from their river, and challenges in ensuring the Environment Agency understand the needs of rowers. The Group understood that this was a problem facing other clubs too. **Action: Secretariat has shared with local MP and Group Member Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, who has been involved previously. Suggest: letter from Group to the Environment Agency, asking that they consider the needs of rowers.**

Group activity report

Parliamentary

At the third reading of the Middle Level Bill, Sir Christopher Chope MP made reference to rowing on the Middle Level river system.

Public

Group Co-Chair Lord Thomas of Gresford met with representatives of Concept2.

The Secretariat met with British Rowing to discuss opportunities to host an event in the Palace of Westminster.

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The Group sent out press releases on:

- the last meeting with the Canal and River Trust;
- welcoming efforts by British Rowing to improve inclusivity and diversity in rowing, with the launch of the Inclusive Club Guide;
- announcing Professor Isobel Pollock Hulf's support for the Group;
- on the postponement of the Parliamentary Charity Regatta in its previous format; and
- on British Rowing's renewal of support for the Group.

At the time of the meeting, the Group had 400 followers on Twitter. The Group's twitter name: @ParliamentRow.

The Chair encouraged those in attendance to raise issues with the Group where appropriate. There was a discussion around the operation and effectiveness of CASC legislation, and on data protection.

AOB

There being no other business, the Chair brought the main business of the meeting to a close.

Main business concluded at 1815

Presentation: GB Rowing Team, Andy Parkinson and Brendan Purcell

The Chair noted that rowing was a very successful sport in the UK at elite level, and also raised challenges around the sport's reliance on National Lottery funding. It was stated that the duty of the Group was to lobby government to ensure that funding remained at its usual levels.

The Chair welcomed and introduced British Rowing Chief Executive Andy Parkinson and Director of Performance Brendan Purcell.

Parkinson opened by thanking the Group for all their support. There was a discussion of medal success at previous Olympics and Paralympics, and of the reasons for this success: vision and lottery funding.

The ability of success at Olympic and Paralympic Games to inspire people to take part in various forms of rowing was raised, as were challenges around maintaining the expectations of the rowing and sport communities at Tokyo 2020.

Purcell introduced himself and outlined his background in elite sport, noting that he had only started in his role as Director of Performance four days previously.

The START programme was discussed, including the important link maintained between athletes and their clubs. Juniors and under-23s were highlighted as a very important part of the programme. The GB Rowing Team base at Caversham was raised, and noted as the envy of many other sports. The timeline to the Tokyo games was outlined.

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Parkinson noted that British Rowing had received £32million from UK Sport over a four-year cycle, and had consistently delivered at Olympic and Paralympic Games. He noted that the sport was indebted to National Lottery funding, thought questions remained over what would happen in the next cycle, and British Rowing was working closely with UK Sport.

Parkinson highlighted the important role that the Group could play to support and ensure that funding would be maintained for the future.

Opening to questions, 76% of British Rowing's annual spend was public investment, with the rest made up of commercial and membership fees. On success, Parkinson noted that sustained success had resulted in a consistently high level of funding from UK Sport.

Broadcasting was discussed, and the new short course format was highlighted as an opportunity to try new things in terms of production.

Challenges around being one of the most successful Olympic and Paralympic sports were discussed. Purcell noted that his job was to keep innovating to move forward, and that technological innovations were shared across UK Sport.

Purcell noted that gold medals were brought about through DNA, belief, environment and opportunities. The importance of engaging communities was raised as vital in ensuring that all had the opportunity to access rowing.

There was discussion of how programmes were tailored for athletes, putting athletes in the centre of the sphere, no matter their age or ability.

Lightweight rowing was discussed, as a way of making rowing more achievable and attainable.

The competition framework was raised and it was noted that events were not owned by British Rowing, but that the structure would be changed to ensure that boats at a similar standard would race against each other more often.

Beyond the 2020 games, challenging lack of diversity in the sport was highlighted as a key area. The importance of being open to change and creative, to ensure that rowing is relevant in an increasingly difficult commercial environment was raised.

Opportunities around different formats of the sport, and to engage different countries were highlighted.

Parkinson and Purcell closed by noting that in terms of the overall system of athletes and coaches, the team was on track to deliver medal targets at Tokyo 2020.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Parkinson and Purcell for their presentation.

Meeting closed at 1927

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