

SUSSEX YACHT CLUB
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAIN COMMITTEE
Held on Monday 16th June 2025

Meeting begun at 19:00

Item	Actioned By	When to do
Versadock proposal	DL	July meeting

	Title	Name and Initials
Present	Flag Officers	Robin Stevenson (RS) – Commodore, Sue Large (SLa) – Vice Commodore, , Neville Blake (NB) – Rear Commodore, Chris Hawkes (CH) – Rear Commodore Aidan Tuckett (Treasurer)
	Directors	Martin O’Sullivan (MO), Terry Kinch (TK), Dave Lee (DL), Yvonne Campbell (YC), Giles Weston (GW), Des Silverson (DS), Gemma Hawkes (GH), Kevin Headon (KH), Kevin Knight (KK), Anne Gisby (AG), Erika Peck (EP), Jon Ellman-Brown (JEB)
	Ex-officio	Paul Fisher (PF) – General Manager, Ruby Alabone (RA) – Minute Secretary
Apologies	Directors	Ian O’Dell (IO) - Ex officio
Absent	Directors	

EP and GH attended the meeting virtually via Teams.

1. Apologies and Absences

Apologies were received from Ian O’Dell.

2. Declarations of Interest

No specific declarations of interest were raised during this section of the meeting. The Commodore reminded members of their ongoing responsibility to declare any potential conflicts that might arise during discussions.

3. Update on Flood Defence Wall

See confidential minutes.

4. Budget 2025/26

AT began the presentation of the draft budget for 2025/26 by focussing on the cashflow forecast. He noted that the upcoming financial year would, if all of the requested CAPEX items were to go ahead, include some of the highest level of capital expenditure in the club’s history. He identified the major expenditure items and provided a total cost estimate which would need funding either from SYC cashflow and/or external sources. He expressed the need for board support in pursuing these options, particularly as they would improve profitability in both the bar and boatyard operations.

SLa clarified that this discussion concerned SYC Ltd. The SYCOPS budget is considered by its own BoD.- She and AT discussed the prices of the SYC boatyard services, identifying that it is currently the most affordable in the South East region. AT confirmed this and stressed the need to continue developing this area of the Club's revenue generation.

The board acknowledged that SYC is, at its core, a sailing club; however, this should be understood as a term encompassing a wide range of watersport-related activities. AT confirmed that fees across the board would increase by approximately 3-5% with additional boatyard services to members also now being included. He noted that the forecasted turnover for the club stands at approximately £900,000, with a small deficit projected. Estimated cash reserves are predicted to fall between £100,000 and £200,000 if all projected capital expenditure were to go ahead. Despite improved profitability, AT indicated that the Club may still lack the financial capacity to deliver all planned capital projects for 2025/26.

CAPEX Budget

AT identified the Southwick Clubhouse and the SYC hoist as the top priorities. He explained that the current hoist is no longer cost-effective and mentioned the possibility of obtaining a fishery-related grant to replace it. This grant would potentially allow the Club to support local commercial fishing vessels in addition to current users. The estimated cost for the hoist project is £320,000.

AT expressed confidence in the efforts being made to secure the most cost-effective solutions, stating he was satisfied with how individuals are striving to get the best value for money. RS then asked the board if there were any questions and acknowledged the significant contributions made by various individuals and club sections to the preparation of the budget.

Board Questions and Discussion

YC asked what contingency plans would be in place should income projections fall short. AT responded by outlining the steps the club could take, including the pursuit of cost cutting on non-essential items, additional grants and financial support. TK enquired about the possibility of working with banks to secure financial backing in advance, rather than making rushed decisions under pressure. PF agreed to contact the bank proactively to prepare for such scenarios.

KH asked whether the club had considered selling land or other high-value assets to raise funds. AT and RS confirmed that while the club does own high-value assets, there are currently no plans to sell any of them as the current financial position does not require it.

SLa identified what she viewed as the most essential capital items for the year—specifically, work on the Southwick Clubhouse and replacement of the hoist. She asked board members for their views on whether these priorities should be reordered. TK recommended prioritising the hoist due to its direct link to yard and slipway income. KH asked for a rough cost estimate for the hoist, which AT confirmed is available. KH also raised the issue of aligning capital expenditure with the club's

development plan and ensuring that planned works deliver long-term strategic benefits. RS that this was the approach that was adopted during the budget preparations.

Regarding the Southwick Clubhouse, RS emphasised that the club is obliged to maintain the building, as it is listed and protected. He stated that basic renovations—such as roof repairs, showers, and toilets—should proceed in the interim while members are consulted on longer-term usage and a business plan is developed accordingly.

Future Income and Club Development

YC asked whether there is a structured plan to increase income and whether any specific targets have been set. AT and RS confirmed that the proposed budget includes increases designed to enhance income over the coming year. YC also queried whether the club plans to expand offerings rather than solely raise prices.. YC referred to ongoing discussions at Stow's about improving the club's visual appeal to help retain members. SLa noted concerns about the accumulation of dinghy boats at the front of the building and explained that this issue had been discussed earlier that day during the Moorings and Maintenance meeting.

JEB spoke about the difficulty of moving boats within the car park, which can restrict access to the water. DL confirmed that he had been assigned responsibility at a previous Moorings meeting to address and help resolve this matter.

Proposal: Approval of the 2025 - 2026 Budget

Proposed: Commodore. In favour: All. Against: None. Abstained. None.

5. Dinghy Section Report

IO not present to make report.

6. Outrigger Update

JEB reported that registration for the Festival of the Sea opened four days ago and currently has 40 entrants, with a target of reaching 100 participants. Plans for the land-based activities are in place and progressing as scheduled.

-Numbers for the associated activity are currently capped due to limited volunteer capacity and available time to support further expansion. However, there are plans in place for the next year to purchase an additional boat and subsequently increase membership.

The budget request for the outrigger was approved and accepted as submitted.

7. Last meeting – Adoption of the minutes

Proposal: Adoption of May Board Minutes

Proposed: Commodore; In favour: All; Against: None; Abstained; SLa

8. Matters Arising and Actions from Previous Meeting

These were picked up as part of the main agenda.

9. Keelboat Section Report

CH reported on the success of the recent RER Prizegiving, which saw 51 attendees—an increase from the previous year. The event was well-received, with excellent food, a positive atmosphere, and strong overall feedback. CH extended thanks to all those who supported the event and invited any additional comments from attendees.

The event benefited from the loan of PA equipment. Daria C was acknowledged for taking photographs and assisting with merchandise sales. Prizes from Musto and Plain Sailing Chandlery were distributed during the event.

CH noted that sailing activities have generally been progressing well. The next focus is on preparations for the Festival of the Sea, scheduled for the weekend of 28–29 June. This event will be coordinated with other users of the site, including the Outriggers.

CH also informed the board of upcoming planning meetings related to the Sussex Regatta, which will take place in September. Summer sailing activities continue to go well, with successful rallies, cross-channel races, and regular racing.

10. Events Committee Report

NB reported that Friday night activities have been going well, and the recent Father's Day lunch was well attended. The RER Prizegiving was also a success. Looking ahead, a charity function is scheduled for the upcoming weekend, followed by the Festival of the Sea (FOT S). Both events are reported to be well organised and appropriately catered. It was also noted that a wedding is booked during the same weekend.

Due to the expected high attendance, it was agreed that numbers in the bar will be limited for health and safety reasons.

From July onwards, Stow's and the Bar will be closed on Mondays as part of a cost-saving measure. RS confirmed that balcony repair work is scheduled to commence next week. A quiz night is planned for next Wednesday.

Communication will be issued to inform members about which areas of the clubhouse will remain open and which will be closed during this period.

YC suggested that, even when the bar is closed early in the week, seating in the area could remain accessible if shutters are installed to secure the bar itself. This could provide a longer-term benefit in terms of member use and flexibility. RS agreed to revisit and explore this option.

11. Any Other Business

KK informed the board that on 25th June, the local RNLI will be awarded King's Coronation Medals. The presentation will take place from 7:00 PM and will be hosted at SYC. KK requested a formal SYC presence at the event, noting that it presents an excellent opportunity for positive public relations.

DL raised the Versadock proposal. RS confirmed that this item will be brought forward for discussion at the July meeting of MMC.

DS noted that the footer on official documents still lists the previous Secretary's name and requested that it be amended accordingly. PF agreed and ensured changes.

DS also raised the issue of cameras and radios on the beach and offered his support in addressing this. EP suggested that marketing materials be made available at the beach to enhance visibility and engagement.

KH highlighted the need to review and improve safety procedures and confirmed that funding has been requested for this purpose. PF and RS agreed that a meeting is needed to discuss the matter in detail. KH noted he has identified several gaps and would prefer to address these proactively before they pose a risk to club operations.

NB reported that the solar panels have generated 16.4 megawatt hours of electricity, resulting in a cost saving of approximately £600. This equates to a carbon reduction comparable to the planting of 192 trees.

SLa addressed car parking concerns, particularly regarding non-member parking. She proposed a renewed effort to reduce unauthorised use of the car park. It was noted that Saturdays bring multiple user groups to the slipway, and some individuals have begun using cones to reserve space, which is proving to be a hindrance to disabled members.

Feedback from the recent New Members Evening was positive. Many attendees expressed interest in crewing opportunities, and a QR code has been created to assist in connecting new members to boats.

The board discussed broader implementation of QR codes, particularly in relation to promoting WhatsApp groups. A meeting between RS, CH, PF, and RA has been scheduled to improve the structure and visibility of these groups via the club website.

GH provided feedback on the new trophy booklet, which has been well received. She suggested producing similar booklets for all trophies, not just those in the keelboat section. RS supported this idea and noted that it ties into previous discussions with RA regarding the preservation and promotion of club history.

EP is actively working on marketing materials for rally events and will bring these to the board for review once ready.

Meeting closed at 20:31pm

Date of Following Meetings –

Monday 21st July 1900h

Monday 22nd September 1900h

Approved by: R.S, Commodore

Signed: _____