

SUSSEX YACHT CLUB
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAIN COMMITTEE
Held on Monday 17th November 2025

Meeting begun at 19:00

Item	Actioned By	When to do

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

JEB, KH to attend virtually via teams

Apologies and Absences

Apologies were received from Neville Blake, Des Silverson and Erika Peck.

1. Declarations of Interest

KK dec of interest in the disposal of the ASR that will be mentioned in the meeting. RS thank you for helping us out with this venture

2. Last meeting – Adoption of the minutes

Proposal: Adoption of October Board Minutes

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

3. Matters Arising and Actions from Previous Meeting

Covered in the agenda items.

4. Dinghy Report – Verbal

IO advised that a Dinghy Committee meeting is scheduled for the following day to discuss racing arrangements for the period after Christmas, including the Cooler Series and initial planning for the 2026 season. RS noted that the Cooler Series is based at SYC.

IO commented that there are currently no dinghies stored at the Club that would naturally support wider participation, and that further discussion on enhancing dinghy sailing activity will take place at the upcoming meeting.

DL raised a query regarding access during construction of the flood wall. RS encouraged the Dinghy Section to continue with planning and confirmed that discussions will take place regarding entry management, advance logistics, and how sailing activity can be accommodated safely alongside construction works

5. Keelboat Section Report – Verbal

CH reported on the recent Keelboat Section prize-giving event, which was attended by approximately 110 people, with additional members joining later for drinks. CH praised the Stow's staff, including Heidi and Aimee, for the high standard of service and catering provided. Overall, the event was considered very successful.

CH invited feedback from Board members who attended. SLA expressed that the event was extremely well run, and RS noted that any minor issues were handled effectively on the night.

CH extended thanks to the Keelboat Section team for their voluntary efforts and the significant level of support provided throughout the season.

CH also reported that the Christmas Cracker Series race held on Saturday was successful and enjoyable, with two further races scheduled. An informal prize-giving will take place in the bar on Friday 29 November between approximately 14:00 and 15:30. All members are welcome. Refreshments will be available, and efforts will be made to reintroduce themed dress for the event. Participation has been strong, with improving wind conditions contributing to the success of the series.

CH advised that further promotion of the series will continue. It is anticipated that RER ticket sales for the race and supporters' cruise will go live by the end of November.

6. Events -Verbal

NB was not present to make a report.

PF highlights the xmas parties and celebrations of life's being held this month. Positive feedback on chefs and pf gives thanks to RA on customer service support on handling prize giving. PF highlights communications between members to staff etc. Nye sold out with a waiting list. SLA mentions and encourages attendance on the xmas party to be held on 6th dec.

7. Update on Flood Defence Wall

RS reported that a response on next steps is being actively pursued this week. The objective remains to secure an agreement that is acceptable to both parties while remaining aligned with the approved designs and planning permissions. Commencement in Q1 remains possible; however, progress is currently dependent on actions by ADC. The matter is expected to be resolved within an estimated timeframe of 8–12 weeks.

PF noted that social media coverage has shifted, with responsibility moving away from SYC and increased attention being given to the role of the previous political administration. Members acknowledged the positive change in narrative.

8. New Hoist and Fisheries grant

PF confirmed that the project remains on track. He advised that discussions have taken place with the Italian supplier and reminded the Board of the fisheries grant application, under which 50% of eligible costs can be reclaimed. PF noted that, within three weeks of submission, 50% of the £75,000 deposit is expected to be reimbursed, allowing cashflow to be recovered early and progressively throughout the project.

PF outlined the routine reporting and compliance requirements required by the fisheries authority in order to secure grant payments.

There was brief discussion regarding the colour of the new hoist. PF and BC are considering options, with CH suggesting that potential promotional opportunities be explored. PF confirmed that, following the New Year, a further social media campaign will be undertaken to promote the investment across the South East.

RS enquired whether there had been any interest in the existing hoist. PF confirmed that the current servicing company has expressed interest and would be offered first refusal. RS noted the rarity of the hoist, with PF adding that there is strong demand in the market.

PF confirmed that delivery is scheduled for completion by 31 March, within the current financial year.

PF further advised that, together with Paul Johnson, guidance has been provided to fully support SYC throughout the project and to ensure clarity and avoid any unexpected issues.

9. Update on Stirlands negotiation

RS provided an update on the ongoing negotiations with Stirlands. He noted that previous discussions had highlighted historical disputes; however, a substantial amount of work has since been undertaken by both parties to progress negotiations. RS advised that the matter was previously some distance from adjudication.

As of the current position, both parties have exchanged offers and discussions are progressing. While agreement has not yet been reached, the parties are now closer to an acceptable position. RS described the situation as complex and noted that a counter-offer is expected to be brought forward to further narrow the gap.

RS emphasised that discussions remain sensitive and that no further detail can be shared at this stage. He confirmed, however, that negotiations are moving in a more positive direction. The Board will be updated once further clarity is available.

RS also reminded members that any offer to be considered is likely to be significant.

In response to a question from CH regarding whether any agreement would represent a full and final settlement of all claims, RS confirmed that, subject to agreement on figures, both parties would need to ensure appropriate protections are in place against any future claims.

10. Purchase of new Training Rib Release of funds

PF and KH presented the case for the acquisition of a replacement RIB to support training activities and SYC Coastal Watersports. They referred to a report outlining the condition of the current fleet and the increasing operational and compliance risks. Three vessels had been reviewed, including commercial-spec boats comparable to those supplied to the RYA (including Olympic use), as opposed to leisure-grade RIBs.

The proposed vessel is a second-hand commercial-spec RIB, fitted with an engine over one year old, with warranty coverage confirmed in writing through to 2029. The vessel provides seating for four, is appropriately powered, capable of planning with four adults onboard, and suitable for delivering training courses reliably. PF noted that the purchase had not been included in the current budget and apologised for this omission.

KH confirmed discussions with the engine fitter regarding warranty arrangements and advised that written confirmation had been provided to PF. DL raised concerns regarding warranty duration, the absence of a trailer, and overall value

for money. KH confirmed that a trailer is available on a short-term basis and that a broader review of fleet management is planned.

KH outlined that three boats across varying price points had been considered. While new vessels would be preferable, the historic performance of the training programme indicates that income generated can repay the cost of a second-hand vessel, with the option to upgrade to a new boat once training revenue grows further.

KK raised questions regarding budget coverage for fuel and safety costs. KH confirmed that PF would oversee and approve training-related expenditure and that both training and Watersports budgets would be managed centrally by PF going forward.

DL queried whether the vessel would be used primarily for training. It was confirmed that “pay and play” and Coastal Watersports activities fall within the training remit, as they generate income to support the programme.

MOS noted that recovery of the cost of the second-hand RIB would likely take longer than one year once all associated costs are considered. PF explained that, together with KH, a revised training strategy is being developed, including clearer responsibilities, improved compliance, and defined return on investment. PF also noted that PB2 participation is increasing significantly and will form part of a wider strategy. PF is attending an RYA seminar to support a more commercially driven approach.

It was acknowledged that the procurement did not follow the standard three-quote protocol; however, the Board noted this as a short-term measure in support of a longer-term strategy, particularly given that new vessels would cost in the region of £70,000.

CH expressed strong support for training becoming a core function of the Club, improving visibility and access. RS highlighted that the closure of local training schools presents an opportunity for SYC, which has the facilities but currently limited revenue capacity.

TK asked AT to comment on depreciation of an unbudgeted asset. AT advised an estimated useful life of approximately 15 years, noting that condition and maintenance history are key factors. AT further advised that training activity has generated approximately £18,000 profit over the past three years and that future income is dependent on fleet capability. A winter purchase was noted as cost-effective, with potential resale value retained.

DL questioned the urgency of the purchase given that the requirement had been known for some time and reiterated concerns regarding warranty and engine power. KH confirmed that the vessel meets operational requirements. AT confirmed, in his capacity as Treasurer, that the purchase is financially justified.

PF outlined improvements in marketing strategy, noting a more sales-focused approach and scope for regional collaboration with other clubs. CO requested a business plan. PF confirmed that a 4–5 year plan with KPIs would be developed, with the option to cease training activity and dispose of the vessel should the strategy not deliver as expected.

SLA noted that delays in investment risk loss of momentum and reputation. DL added that demand for training remains strong regionally, with long waiting lists elsewhere.

RS and SLA reminded the Board that unbudgeted capital expenditure (e.g. hoist, flood wall, Stirlands) will continue to arise annually. PF noted that, following resolution of the Stirlands matter, capital expenditure can be better planned and prioritised.

RS proposed approval of the release of funds for the purchase of the training RIB, seconded by KH.

Proposal: Purchase of new Training Rib Release of funds

Proposed: Commodore, Seconded KH; In favour majority

Abstentions: DL, DS (In writing)

11. ASR Disposal Update and Directors disclosure

PF confirmed that Stuart Fairbairn cleared the site from 6 November. SYC removed most of the remaining material, including three skip loads from the tent. As of the meeting date, dismantling and cutting of the vessel had commenced and is expected to be completed within 2–3 weeks. PF noted this would bring the matter to a close with a positive overall impact.

RS asked about dismantling methods and safety. KK confirmed that most work is being undertaken manually, with potential use of a JCB for the tent structure if required. Safety procedures are in place, including daily briefings, and KK confirmed satisfaction with safety arrangements.

RS asked about any conflict-of-interest concerns. KK confirmed communications have been clear via Teams and that GW is content with the process.

12. Nominations For Directors

It was noted that four Directors are due for rotation, including CON as a new election. An election will therefore be held. Directors were asked to submit a

short résumé and photograph for inclusion in the December member communication.

13. Commodores Party – RS

RS requested that all directors please provide if they are attending the commodores party by scanning the QR code on the back of the invitation.

14. Any Other Business

- **Directors' Publication on Website:**

- CH proposed a dedicated webpage to promote Directors. RA agreed this can be implemented.

- **Southwick Pontoons:**

TK raised the need for planned cleaning and maintenance. RS and TK to meet to discuss further. PF confirmed this is on the maintenance list.

- **Light up Shoreham (12 December):**

YC noted the opportunity to better connect with the town and general public, including potential RNLI involvement. SLA confirmed this had been discussed at the Events Committee, including dressing the clubhouse.

- **Annual Report Submissions:**

RA reminded Section Leaders to submit A4 reports for the Annual Report by early December.

- **Pontoon A Repairs:**

PF provided an update, noting cracked and failed floats. A proposal has been developed with the Port, with lifting scheduled for the following day and a plan in place

Meeting closed at 20:10 pm

Date of Following Meetings –

Monday 17th November 1900h

Monday 15th December 1900h for Commodore's party.

Approved by: RS, Commodore

Signed: _____