



# Newport Boat Club - Clwb Cychod Trefdraeth

President: Nica Prichard

Commodore: Tony Williams

## A message from your Commodore

Dear Club Members,

“Nothing is going to be the same”. How many times, in the last month, have I read and heard that sentence?

Since Covid-19 found a way into the human population, its characteristics have made it unstoppable in the early stages of infection. The transmission from person to person has been rapid because we are a social species. It has followed that we have had to adapt. The signs are that we are passing the worst period of infection although further phases may lead to reinstated ‘Social Distancing’. Some of our thoughts are turning to life after lockdown. What does this mean for your Club? Many things need to be resolved but the path is becoming increasingly clearer:

### Facts

#### **Temporary closure of the Club:**

- Sadly, Newport Boat Club closed its doors on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March.
- Immediate steps were taken to close, with only minimal use of services to maintain the building continuing to operate. All maintenance & refurbishment not started, has been halted.
- Our staff have all signed up to the Government Furlough scheme.

#### **Loss of trade:**

- We rely on the summer trade to contribute over £50,000 towards the annual costs of running the Club.
- Normal business finance is unavailable and borrowing money requires interest and repayment, further straining finances.
- The Government has indicated that the hospitality sector may be the last to re-open.

#### **Financial support:**

- We have applied for the Governments Small Business Rate Relief grant (£10,000) and are awaiting a response.
- Our Business Interruption Insurance claim for £6,750 has been declined. We are challenging this.
- The Club has always maintained an emergency cash fund and therefore we have sufficient reserves to weather this year’s loss of trade.
- We do not intend to increase subscriptions in September 2020 because we are aware of the financial hardship that many members may also be experiencing.

### Consequences

As mentioned by Mike, our treasurer, in his report (below), it looks increasingly likely that we may not see any benefit from this summer’s trade. Either from being freed up too late, or because people will be wary of crowded places and will not choose to socialise. While many of our running costs will reduce, it is becoming increasingly clear that we will finish the next financial year (28 February 2021) with a trading loss of around £30,000. This, in itself, is not a problem as we have the emergency cash fund mentioned above.

However, with the possibilities of a second or third wave of this Pandemic bringing renewed restrictions, we may need to take further steps to protect the assets by reducing operating costs. The aim of these steps are to preserve cash to see us through another poor year of trading next year.

How drastic the steps we may need to take will depend on the answers to many questions, including:

- When will we be allowed to open?
- How much Government support will be available after June this year?
- What savings do we need to make between being given permission to open and Easter 2021?

Beneath these three questions are a raft of other considerations. We could be pleasantly surprised by an effective vaccine and/or weaker following waves of infection.

Your Committee are custodians of the assets of Newport Boat Club for you all, the members. Successive committees have endeavoured to preserve and improve these across the 44 years from our humble beginnings in 1976. To remind us of these achievements, a brief history of the Club has been prepared by Ray Jones for inclusion in this newsletter.

With your forbearance we will get through these challenges and emerge stronger and healthier.

With every change of wind-direction there is a decision to be made: either adjust the sails of the boat or steer a new course. Life is full of choices and the path from A to B is seldom a straight line.

Stay safe and well. With my best wishes,

Tony

**Tony Williams, Commodore**

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### **Treasurer's Report**

Whilst we await the formal audited accounts, I can report a draft break-even position for the year to the end of February 2020 at the net profit level which compares with a £6k loss for the same period last year. More importantly our cash reserve has improved by approximately £12k over the prior year to roundly £75k. So, an encouraging result.

As we enter the current year with so much uncertainty, the common theme as with many businesses in the hospitality industry, will be that cash will remain king.

Whilst predicting the future remains a very difficult exercise, it is highly likely that we cannot rely upon our very important seasonal revenue during the summer months. As a result, we will lose a considerable amount of budgeted gross margin resulting in a likely trading loss for the 2021 trading year. We have therefore prepared revised budgetary forecasts assuming this and cancelled all capital expenditure unless started before the lockdown and will continue to review all discretionary expenditure on an on-going basis. We have applied for all government grants and we hope that the hospitality sector will continue to be supported beyond June. Given our current cash resources we can remain a going concern into 2021, but we count on the continuing support of our membership during this difficult period and will keep you updated as the year progresses.

**Mike Prager, Treasurer**

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### **Notices**

**Communications with the Club:** If you wish to contact the Club regarding any urgent matters, please email [manager@newportboatclub.co.uk](mailto:manager@newportboatclub.co.uk) and we will endeavour to reply as soon as possible.

**Notice of AGM:** This year's AGM is scheduled for Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020 however due to COVID-19 it is highly likely we will be unable to assemble at the Club for the meeting. Draft minutes of last year's meeting and the Club accounts will be emailed to Club members. Further details will follow.



### **Around the Parrog: A short history of Newport Boat Club:**

During the heyday of Newport's marine trading, several quays were built on the Parrog, as were five storehouses, the last in 1796. As trade declined the storehouses fell into disuse but the last storehouse survived, being used as a store for fishing gear. In 1942 it was sold to William Collings of Newport and in 1963 converted into flats. Collings died in 1974 and the property passed to his wife, who died intestate in 1975. The property was then put up for auction.



A meeting was held at the Llwyngwair Arms on April 28, 1975 and it was agreed to try and buy the building for use as a boat club. A committee was formed to make the arrangements. They attended the auction and got the storehouse for £14,300.

It remains unclear exactly how this purchase was funded, but it is known grants were sought from various bodies including the Sports Council and the County and District Councils. A loan of £1,000 was received from the National Playing Fields Association and a 'Boathouse Foundation Appeal' launched.

When the Club formally opened on April 17, 1976 five Founder Honorary Life Members were created. There were 87 further Life Members and 363 Annual Members. The annual subscription was £5 and boat parking fees were 50p per annum. Many Members donated equipment including boats and at that time the Club owned seven boats and two canoes. Boats could be hired at £5 per tide and the canoes were free to use.

Over the years, our historic building has undergone substantial changes. In 1981 an old kitchen and small cloak room were converted to one room. The building was re-roofed in 1985 and 1987 saw the upper room being made usable with a new staircase installed.

A bank overdraft of £10,000 was agreed to facilitate these and other works including the west balcony and refurbishment of the Commodore's Lounge. In 1993 the eastern extension was built with extra facilities and a fire escape, being financed by grants and Members' loans and in 2004 the Traeth Hogan slipway was added. More recently the west balcony was restored, and a boatshed with extra storage added. The Commodore's Lounge has been refurbished and the kitchen extended. There has also been improvement to the outside seating area.

These substantial changes have been financed by the Club itself via subscriptions, bar and other income, grants, loans and donations. A limited number of Life Memberships have also been created. No mention has been made of the essential and continuing maintenance and refurbishment of our historic building. This has always been done to a high standard. It is the intention of your Committee to continue in this vein while keeping to our very reasonable subscription rates.

**Ray Jones, Committee Member**

#### ***NBC Committee:***

***Commodore Tony Williams ~ Rear-Commodore Doug Williams ~ Membership Secretary Charles Searle  
Treasurer Mike Prager ~ Club Secretary Roger Howell ~ Sailing & Boating Secretary Andrew Kenyon***

***Committee Members: Amanda Elmes, Liz Docwra, Ray Jones, Niki South, Gaynor Martin, Laura Rees, Matthew Lewis***

***Sailing & Boating Committee Members: Doug Williams, Andrew Kenyon, Peter Fletcher, Robert Mercer, Johnny Bingham, Richard Barlow, Mike Hann***

Club Administration Manager: Ema Commons – Email: [manager@newportboatclub.co.uk](mailto:manager@newportboatclub.co.uk)

Club Bar Manager: Ewan Rees

Website: [www.newportboatclub.co.uk](http://www.newportboatclub.co.uk)