



## **Minutes from 3rd September 2024 AGM**

### **Present**

The AGM was attended by 23 Club members of which 9 were returning members of the General Committee.

Apologies were received from 2 members of the General Committee.

### **Welcome**

Jonathan Males (JM), chaired the AGM and welcomed those present.

### **Past Minutes**

The 2022 AGM Minutes were accepted.

The 2023 EGM Minutes were accepted.

### **Chair's Report**

JM thanked the members of the General Committee, our other Club volunteers and gave special thanks to our Bank Safety volunteers for their work in the past year. Recognition was given to the contribution of Pam Phillips, "the beating heart of the Club". Thanks were extended to Sunny who was standing down as Welfare Officer.

In reviewing the year past, JM started with the Club Survey and its results, before reflecting on a number of the year's highlights including:

- The take-off of Recreational Paddling;
- Improvement to the Club's boat shed facilities at LV;
- Successful competitions for the Club's organisers and participants;
- The development of Club activities at Rammeys Island;
- The opportunities offered by the new Olympic discipline of Kayak Cross;
- The new negotiated agreement with GLL, Lee Valley White Water Centre.

JM's full report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

A copy of the report is to go out in the Club Newsletter and will be posted on the Club's website.

### **Treasurer**

MB reported that for the financial year to the end of March 2024, income was down (£115k to £103k), with water fees in particular being down £10k on a comparable basis to last year. With rising expenditure, our annual surplus has gone to a net deficit as of March 2024. Our water fees were greater, and we also increased our investment in coaching. The change to a net deficit is why we proposed the participation increase (water fees) this past year, and that was as part of a balanced set of measures that included the proposal for new membership fees that is tabled at this AGM and would be in place for this October's new Membership Year. We still have



reserves, and we need reserves for our continuing long-term viability, but if we carry on as we are, our reserves will become depleted.

It is worth noting that the winter paddling months showed a big difference between 2023 and 2024.

MB answered a question on expenditure for coaching and clarified that there had been income against those costs.

MB was asked if there had been any feedback since the participation fee went up, had the assumptions behind the increase stood up, and are the predictions proving accurate that income will increase and not reduce through members choosing not to paddle. JM replied there had been no immediate sign of a drop-off, but the impact if any was likely to be seasonal.

### **Membership**

PP's report concluded that Club Membership had been stable against the previous year with the Club having 571 registered members on WebCollect.

A question was asked on the link between membership levels (high) and participation levels (not as high as one would expect). JM replied that we don't do any analysis on who paddles and how often, but it could be a factor of many members having a membership of another Club and therefore spreading the paddling time.

In answer to a question on whether we are seeing a move away from whitewater activities to flatwater ones, JM replied that we were certainly growing and expanding flatwater activities, but not at the cost of whitewater. This is part of the Olympic Legacy that we promote and provide - recognising and utilising the world-class whitewater facility but building beyond the whitewater.

Freestyle was raised as an opportunity for youth development given its style and appeal. JM highlighted that one of our vacancies is and has been a Freestyle representative; that we had organised Freestyle coaching which was well attended; and, amongst the Freestyle community there is a current consensus that the two LV water courses lack a good Freestyle feature. After discussion in agreement with JM's points, JM agreed to raise Freestyle features at the next meeting with GLL, and reiterated the plea for a volunteer to become Freestyle rep in the model of our other disciplines by forming a group of a few members in a sub-committee, so it wasn't just down to one member to take initiatives forward.

### **Coaching**

JH thanked all the coaches on the coaching team and praised the wide range of coaching provided on the Legacy and the Olympic. He emphasised that under our agreement with GLL we are now restricted from beginner/introductory coaching on the Lake, but we are moving forward at Rammey Island. He highlighted the great coaching sessions on Freestyle and said



there were more to come. He then welcomed suggestions on other courses that could be considered in the coming year.

### **Welfare**

JM informed the AGM that IM was taking over from SR, and that IM had been Assistant Welfare Officer therefore demonstrating a good succession. JM concluded that the Club was good on policies and procedures but we are looking to make improvements on Member information and knowledge about these. This was reflected in our successful Quality Club assessment this year.

### **Safety**

MC thanked the team that had supported the safety portfolio, and reported that although inevitably in a club of our size we have had some incidents, no structural issues or shortcomings have arisen, but in a similar theme to Welfare, there is scope for improving communication of safety information within the Club. Mark concluded by offering a huge thank you to our bank safety volunteers. JM thanked MC for the great job in consolidating and updating the Club's previous risk assessments.

### **Slalom**

CLE described the headline as balancing sustainability with the growth of new members. He congratulated RK and the team on another successful flagship national event at the start of the season and went on to describe: 3 training groups consistently engaged; a review on building a longer-term Club community and integration of slalom; and, getting young people hooked on paddling, through our slalom activities, and providing them with paddling pathways. In the past year there has been a big focus on the robustness of financial planning and forecasting for the slalom programme and so far everything is going to plan.

Looking forward, the team is looking at what we would want to achieve beyond the current PPC contract. In the immediate future, we have the British Open in October which LVPC is now involved in running. We will also be running selection races at Lee Valley next year. Other plans being worked on include holiday courses and kayak cross opportunities - especially making it more accessible to our paddlers beyond slalom focussed.

JM asked members to note that the slalom groups pay additional fees beyond standard membership fees and participation fees to pay their way within a subscription model. CLE added that there were also ongoing activities to generate more income.

CU commented that it had been great to have had the opportunities to engage in slalom and kayak cross activities this past year and a great opportunity for further development.

JM thanked Jake (JB), for the positive impact he had made in his first year and this was reiterated by CLE, not just for working with approximately 40 paddlers on the water, but for offering other development activities and for fulfilling the role of Club Representative on Club Nights.



JM concluded that he was very keen to make sure we don't end up with separate clubs within a club, so he was determined to keep everything transparent and to provide as many cross-discipline paddling opportunities as possible.

### **Rafting**

JM informed the meeting that the main issue to note from the year with regard to Rafting, was that the new agreement with GLL protects their business interest in leisure rafting, while giving us the remit of raft racing and raft racing training but not anything that can be classified as leisure rafting. We also need to note that our raft racing activities must be for Members, not non-members. NC noted our raft racers had a successful World Championship in Bosnia with two teams from LV.

NC asked if LVWWC could point out to leisure rafting customers that rafting was also a competitive sport and available at LVPC! JM said he would raise at the next GLL meeting. PK added a further perspective on this and informed the meeting that he was also developing raft race training on flatwater.

### **Recreational**

PN reported on the activities to get regular paddle trips going and the successes so far. He highlighted that he was looking to organise a Christmas paddle again this year following its success last year. Members reflected on the trips they had enjoyed and put forward suggestions for future trips including the Thames and other whitewater centres such as Cardiff. PN said he would look at the possibility of getting other suggestions through a SPOND survey, and concluded with thanks to JH for organising Leaders training.

AS noted that if the Club continues to develop its programme of trips and activities, it is a good way of providing extra value to members within increased membership fees, but decent advance notice of the programme's dates helps uptake.

### **Sprint and Marathon**

MD reported that the Flatwater activities have had quite a good turnout in overall numbers, although not necessarily consistent on who. He reported on Club Members taking part in competitions, including 5 at the Chelmsford Sprint Regatta with 3 finishing on the Podium. He thanked those who had been supporting the coaching, and that he was looking to some of the former COPS coaches returning to coaching once they are signed-off to do so.

He was also looking at shorter distance competitive events, alongside an aim to get regular training sessions and a full scoring team out for events such as the Hasler. The ambition is to get a broad range of Club members engaged in the winter series, not just those who consider themselves sprint/marathon specialists. He also spoke on the developments at Rammey Island and access to the water. RP and JM added comments to encourage the wider Club membership to get involved in the fun regattas available over the autumn and winter months. They and MD



also raised points on the navigability issues downstream not yet resolved, and the need for ongoing dialogue with CRT.

### **Incoming Chairperson**

Jonathan Males was proposed by Martin Smyth, and was duly elected Chair for the coming year.

### **Election of Committee Members**

The following were elected to the General Committee:

Assistant Welfare & Youth Officer:	Karen da Silva
Equipment Officer:	Marc Diggins
Funding Coordinator:	James Bradley
Youth Rep:	Sophie Chandon

The following Members were re-elected to the General Committee:

Marie Bauerova (Treasurer); Pam Phillips (Membership Secretary); Jon Halden (Coach Development Officer); Irina Medunyak (Welfare Officer); Mark Corti (Health & Safety Coordinator); Ciaran Edwards (Slalom); Catherine Pulis (Rafting); Peter Nash (Recreational Paddling); Martin Davies (Flatwater: Sprint & Marathon); Martin Smyth (Secretary)

Thanks were recorded for Sunny Rhodes on her tenure as Welfare Officer.

The roles of Communication Officer and Freestyle Lead remained vacant after the elections.

### **Club Constitution**

No constitution changes were proposed.

### **Membership Fees for 2024/25**

The following proposals were agreed:

Whitewater LVPC Annual Membership:

- a. Adult membership from £40 to £60
- b. Family membership from £90 to £130
- c. Junior membership from £40 to £60
- d. Student membership from £10 to £15

The Standard LVPC Membership fees established at the last EGM for flatwater-only participation remain as set in December.



The committee will review membership fees annually.

Clarification was requested on the category of Student Membership and JM explained the rationale was that so we didn't lose members who were away studying and only around to paddle at LVPC on a limited number of occasions in the year.

### **Appointment of Hon. Auditor**

It was agreed that an Hon. Auditor was not required at the current time.

### **AOB**

The meeting discussed some thoughtful ideas submitted by PB to improve the participation and cost effectiveness of winter Olympic paddling sessions. This included moving the two one-hour sessions to 1900 and 2000, as many members were struggling with journeys for a 1830 start; and, alternatively, if it was intended to reduce the number of sessions, then to reduce to a 90 minute session not one hour. JM invited discussion to help inform a future decision.

Points raised included:

- Consensus on 1900 being better for those leaving work and travelling to the Centre;
- Acknowledgement that it may be less convenient for younger paddlers or parents with younger paddlers;
- Booking levels tend to show the earlier session of the two is less well supported;
- Some members would not get value out of a 90 minute session - it would be too much for them;
- Preference for 90 minutes as an optimum duration was expressed;
- Members would not attend at all if only one session was on offer, and some expressed the same view whether one hour or 90 minutes;
- Issues on arranging bank safety rotas were raised, and particularly if the Legacy and Olympic had separate start/finish times;
- Concern was also raised about participant management if the Legacy started at 1830 and the Olympic at 1900 given the temptation for Olympic paddlers to warm-up on the Legacy;
- Importance of timely pump activation so sessions started on time was agreed (JM to discuss with GLL);
- Bank safety provision was discussed with a proposal to pay a premium for bank safety rather than have members having to commit to volunteer for it;
- Points were raised on getting new paddlers into the Club through introductory activities. JM re-emphasised that was not possible at LVWWC, only off-site.

DA offered to speak with JM about Freestyle.

JM brought the AGM to a close.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Chair's End of Year Report**

Let me start by saying thank you to our club committee and our members who have volunteered for bank safety over the past twelve months. Without your contributions the club would cease to function. A special thank you to Pam Phillips, who continues to be the beating heart of the club. Thanks also to Sunny Rhodes who steps down as Welfare Officer, with Irina Medunyak taking over this important role.

We carried out a member survey in January 2024 and this has guided the committee in decisions and planning. As reminder, here's what you said:

1. 55% asked for **more trips and peer paddling** outside of Lee Valley.
2. 19% requested **additional club sessions**, specifically on weekends.
3. **More coaching**. There's a thirst for more progressive coaching, especially post-legacy assessment and on the Olympic course.
4. Club Environment and Communication. Several requests came under this heading, including **more social engagement**, more activities off the water and having a **group chat** or messenger board to help organize trips and get to know other paddlers.
5. **Volunteering and bank safety** attracted contrasting views – several people wanted a fairer system to spread the load evenly, while one or two people would clearly prefer not to do bank safety at all, to the extent of paying to opt out of bank safety duties.
6. **Lighting system** in the equipment shed needs improvement. Yes, and the main limitation is that we have been unable to secure a mains power supply, but we are continuing to discuss this with British Canoeing, who own the shed.
6. **Cost and Membership Stability**. The cost of living is impacting us all, and several members were concerned about possible price rises. Yet some also said they would be willing to pay more, because the club represents great value to them.

Recreational paddling beyond the whitewater centre has taken off this year, thanks to the efforts of Peter and Helen Nash and our collaboration with Whoosh Explore. There are plenty of hidden paddling gems in the east and south-east and I recommend these trips for a relaxing and sociable day out. The club supported the mapping of a Paddle Trail on the River Lea, so if you fancy a domestic adventure, it's on our doorstep. We also have a North Wales peer paddling trip coming up soon, and I hope these types of events become regular fixtures.

Jon Halden and the coaching team have offered more coaching opportunities, although the take up has been less than we expected. If you've ventured into the club shed lately, you'll see the storage is safer and much improved – thanks Mark Coleman and Harvey Phillips.

On the competitive scene, club members and coaches continue to do well on the national and international stage, in race rafting, slalom and freestyle. Big thanks to Ros Kettle and her team





who have successfully organised several slaloms at Lee Valley. From next year, the club will host the prestigious British Open, the major domestic slalom competition. Flatwater racing is also an option, and we can now provide access to boats and Saturday morning training at Rammey Island, thanks to Martin Davies' continued efforts to gain and improve access. Kayakcross is proving popular after its Olympic debut, and the club co-hosted an introductory race on the Legacy channel with Paddle UK earlier this year, the first of several planned events.

This is also the first anniversary of Jake Brown becoming the club's first Paddlesports Coordinator. Jake looks after our introductory slalom pathway for youngsters between 8 and 11, as well as supporting other clubs and events across the south-east. He is formally employed by Paddle UK, and this epitomises the close relationship between the club and the national body.

After lengthy discussions, this year we formalised a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with GLL (Better), the incoming operators of the Lee Valley Whitewater Centre. As the club has grown it's been important to re-negotiate our relationship with the Whitewater Centre, and hopefully we now have clarity on our mutual responsibilities and areas of activity. We have sought to balance GLL's commercial interests with the Club's role as a community group. There are of course compromises involved and we hope to review aspects of the MOU annually. In this regard, you'll be aware that membership fees and session prices have increased as we respond to increases in the course hire costs. I know this has a negative impact and reduces paddling opportunities for some members. It also means that there is no longer a clear price differential compared to public sessions. Being a member of the club should not (at least in my view) primarily be about cheaper access. We offer the benefits of a peer community, coaching and access to equipment. Members who volunteer for bank safety regularly can still reduce their 'out of pocket' cost substantially. James Bradley has just joined the committee as Funding officer and we look forward to his expertise in gaining funding or sponsorship that will help us make paddling as accessible as possible.

There have also been suggestions to change the timing and format of Wednesday evenings, so we will run another poll to get your views on timing and additional sessions. We note the desire for Sunday sessions, but unless we can be sure that we will have at least 20 paddlers on the Legacy, these are not financially viable.

Looking ahead, we have opportunities to keep growing the club, attracting new members both young and old, and providing more inclusive access to paddlesports. We face challenges too, as rising costs put pressure on us individually and collectively. I know that for many of you, LVPC is your second (or even third) canoe club, but we can always welcome new committee members. I'm delighted that members have stepped forward to fill several vacancies (assistant welfare, youth rep, funding, and equipment) and would welcome support with communications and social media. You can also 'shadow' a current committee member to provide backup and eventual succession.

Thanks for being a club member and I hope to see you on the water again soon.

Jonathan Males  
Club Chair

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## Treasurer's Report



Financial year to March 2024

### Income

	FY24	FY23
Membership fees	15,608	15,046
Water fees - club nights	40,536	61,043*
Water fees - slalom	37,277	39,679
Equipment hire	1,730	
Coaching fees	5,350	
Other	3,156	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103,657</b>	<b>115,768</b>

\*Up to FY23 Water fee income included also equipment, coaching etc. If we assume same income as in FY24 the WF income would be 50,8k

### Surplus / Shortage for the year

	FY24	FY23
<b>Surplus / Shortage</b>	<b>£ -15,783</b>	<b>£ 7,799</b>

### Cash at bank

	FY24	FY23
<b>Cash</b>	<b>£ 53,139</b>	<b>£ 63,154</b>

## Treasurer's Report cont...



Financial year to March 2024

### Expenditures

	FY24	FY23
Water fees	66,119	60,113
Coaching	8,652	4,694
Slalom	36,252	34,759
Other expenses	4,331	4,364
Depreciation	4,086	4,039
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119,440</b>	<b>107,969</b>

### Tangible Assets

	FY24	FY23
<b>Equipment purchase value</b>	<b>£ 35,946</b>	<b>£ 34,116</b>
<b>Less depreciation</b>	<b>28,394</b>	<b>24,309</b>
<b>Net book value</b>	<b>7,552</b>	<b>9,808</b>



## Membership

As at 26th August

### MEMBERS CURRENTLY

<i>Individual Memberships:</i>	19-25	26-45	Over 46
Female	21	53	60
Male	38	122	153

447 Individual Memberships

<i>Junior Members:</i>	U13	U14 to 18
Female	17	16
Male	35	39

167

387

107 Junior Members

- 73 Family Memberships
- 28 Junior Memberships
- 17 Associate Memberships

There are currently 571 members on WebCollect, an increase of 1 from last year!

Our new membership year will begin on 01.10.24, renewable from 01.09.24.



## Welfare and Safeguarding

### New SubCommittee

Diverse perspectives to address member needs

- **Irina:** Middle-aged paddler perspective
- **Karen:** Slalom parent
- **Sophie:** Freestyle Youth Representative

### 2023/24 Update

- No major changes in safeguarding/welfare
- More thorough training requirements for club volunteers set by Paddle UK

### Goals for the Next Year

- Gather more member feedback through in-person communication
- Improve onboarding information for parents
- Negotiate separate changing rooms for Under 16/18
- Ensure full compliance with Paddle UK safeguarding guidance



## Activity Updates - Safety



Review conducted of separate risk assessments and consolidated into one updated RA

One of the main Quality Award topics

Thank you to all the Bank Safety volunteers

## Activity Updates - Slalom



### Key Successes/Achievements

- Another successful Division 1 event in March
- TCP and water collaboration is going well, retention and improvement within perf and dev groups is very high, having navigated less water.
- Developing a vision for water in the future with talent - more club opportunity.
- Clarified Club Slalom strategy and focused on community of support e.g. perf group and developing parents skills
- More robust financial planning and forecasting

### Next 12 months

- To bring together four slalom groups regularly to support an LVPC community
- Continue to ensure financial robustness
- Deliver two new events - British Open and Selection Prem race
- Renegotiate PPC contract from April 2025
- Develop and upskill more coaches and coaching assistants
- Deliver further kayak cross training and race opportunities



## Activity Updates - Sprint and Marathon

### Key Successes/Achievements

- Provisional agreement to use the facilities at Rammey Island Scout Campsite, but delayed until access improved.
- Progress made towards installing a Floating Pontoon at Rammey Marsh Lock, it should be in place before the end of September.
- As a member of the Flatwater Racing Association (FRA), we have negotiated rule changes to allow Slalom kayaks to race in the General Purpose (GP) category on 3 mile course, as well as to allow inexperienced (Div 7/8/9 paddlers over 14 to paddle a K1 on the same course.
- The Introduction of an affordable Flatwater membership category has resulted in more Flatwater paddlers joining.
- We have spent the last 18 months trying to remove barriers which prevent us from offering regular training sessions to our members.
- Members have represented the Club at a number of races with 5 at the Chelmsford Sprint Regatta with 3 finishing on the Podium.

### Next 12 months

- Being able to offer regular training / recreational paddling to members at Rammey Island
- Providing multi-discipline paddle sport opportunities (Canoe Sprint, Canoe Marathon, Wildwater Racing, SUP)
- Affordable Inclusive paddling opportunities on offer to the local community at Rammey Island
- Offering introductory training sessions to more LVPC members in racing kayaks
- An increasing number of Club members paddling racing kayaks on a regular basis.
- More LVPC members taking part in the FRA Winter Series of Marathon races at venues such as Cambridge, Chelmsford and Leighton Buzzard (first race is on Sunday 3rd November 2024).
- More members of LVPC taking part in the 2025 Hasler Ranking marathon series (next race in October 2024).
- A full scoring team of 6 K1 paddlers and 3 doubles taking part in a Hasler marathon (by July 2025 race).
- LVPC hosting an FRA Sprint Regatta and a mini-marathon event
- Some members of LVPC taking part in National Canoe Sprint Regattas at HPP (first competition in April 2025).
- A larger team of Flatwater Racing Coaches introducing more people to Flatwater racing.

If you would like to take part in Flatwater Racing as either a paddler or coach, contact me at: [lvpcfwracing@gmail.com](mailto:lvpcfwracing@gmail.com)  
Martin

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