

## **Extraordinary Captains Meeting – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February**

Present: Dr David Munday (Chair), Dr Holly Hedgeland (Former Chair, Senior Committee), Prof Pete Convey (CU, former Chair, Senior Committee), Dr Ian Cowley (CU, Senior Committee), Mark Jacobs (Safety Officer, Senior Committee), Tom Grimble (DCU, former CUCBC Hon Sec, Co-opted without portfolio Exec Committee), Wilf. Genest (CUCBC Hon Sec), Michael Thornton (Co-opted without portfolio Exec Committee), Conor Burgess (Co-opted without portfolio Exec Committee), Josh Briegal (CULRC Hon Sec), representatives from all the Clubs.

Apologies: Dr Dan Wilkins (Webmaster, Senior Treasurer, Senior Committee)

David – Welcome & introduction

Wilf – confirms that every college represented by at least one Captain

David – Meeting because of the letter to discuss decision to reduce number of Lents divisions, Pete sent around CUCBC position document. David disagrees that the reasoning for reduced divisions was not discussed at the last meeting, spent 50 minutes discussing, and at the end no further people wished to speak and no one proposed a vote.

Pete – confirm everyone has read CUCBC document. Confirms that previous meeting was used to announce number of divisions. No requirement for number of divisions to go to a vote. As far as he was concerned no procedural problems. If people wished to hold a vote, it should have been done at previous meeting. Lents should proceed as announced, as a matter of correct procedure. Explained reasoning for running over four days, saves money, saves time for 6 divisions. Fundamental question is not about number of divisions that can be organized smoothly, CUCBC can organise as many divisions as are decided there should be. Real issue is of safety and competence of lower boats. Having umpired for 30 years, last 'decade' has seen a real decline, due to everyone (70 clubs) trying to get outings in the morning. Ten outings in the mornings is no guarantee of gaining the experience required to race Bumps safely. CUs seriously concerned about dangerous situations arising in recent years, not restricted to lowest divisions. CUs have no reservations with sending home dangerous crews and remove from subsequent days racing. CUCBC view is to try to ensure that all crews racing are safe. CUCBC committees can't change format for this year, and it is therefore no point in debating it. More generally, feared that CUCBC would be legally liable if they went ahead with a format the CUCBC committees and CUs advised against. It isn't practical to hold a vote to change the format for this year, as it isn't addressing the reasons for the reduced divisions. CUCBC committees and Officers would take a forced vote as a vote of no confidence and would expect to resign. What is the point of CUCBC? If everyone insists on lining up in queues in the morning then college rowing is not going to improve. If we are to try to improve standards, we need to look at other possibilities. Look outside the box, many possibilities: Novice Regatta, restructuring the annual race calendar, but need to think about actual proposals (subcommittees - can form them post-meeting) for improving overall rowing situation for the future. It has been attempted in the past to encourage mature thinking, but always failed.

Ian – I am chief Bumps organizer of on the day logistics. Emphasize decision from Senior Committee to keep the number of divisions as last year was made first, and then realized four days would be possible and was agreed.

David – You were quoted saying you have no objection to increasing divisions?

Ian – Absolutely, if there are enough safe crews happy to try to increase.

Pembroke – Why is bumps in week 6 instead of week 8?

Pete – Separate debate, it's tradition, haven't got permission from university to move it.

Holly – Senior Tutors were sounded out for it to be changed if there was a clash with WeHoRR, that was fine, but would need to renew discussion for a permanent change.

Ian & Mark – Something to do with exams timetable

Emmanuel – Disagrees that there was agreement at the end of the Captains' meeting. Also disagrees that Bumps safety is actually declining. Doesn't feel the Senior Committee has agreed on what the point of the reduced divisions is – quoted some personal opinions from Mark, Pete & Holly.

Mark – opinion from last year was that first boats took priority and made more use of emptier (better quality) mornings, and standards for them were better.

David – I felt that there was reasonable consent at the end of the discussion and that the debate had died out, with no vote proposed so moved on. I did not ask for everyone to move on. Believed there was tacit agreement.

Holly – Felt there was reasonable agreement at end of previous Captains' meeting. I hoped that with more training time for every crew that would actually be competing, standards would start to rise for everyone that actually rows.

Pete – No particular desire for more or less divisions. The concept of a trial, as a CU, we need to be convinced that the trend is for crews to be more aware of safety, and to row safer. It is not possible to organise Bumping races (or other races) for an arbitrarily large number of crews, if that exceeds the maximum capacity of Bumps. Sympathetic to attracting more rowers, but Captains need to realize that just because X boats exist, doesn't mean there can be bumping races for all of those boats. Need separation between boats targeted at these races and those who aren't meant to enter.

David – Feel that a positive outcome is more meetings like this, more discussion between all of CUCBC

Corpus – If numbers are based on competency, when is competency of crews assessed?

Pete – Not practical to assess competency of all crews before Bumps. Assuming a set of races run properly this year, CUs can assess quality and safety and competency of all crews as a whole. If better, they will be more inclined to trial more divisions next year.

Selwyn – Like to propose a meeting after bumps to discuss the democratic process of CUCBC and asked CUCBC committee to confirm all of their roles

CUCBC committee confirmed roles (see start of minutes).

David – thoughts on working groups?

Ian – Democratic process was mentioned. The organization and responsibility of the races is taken by the Senior Committee and in particular the Chief Umpires, so if the process is judged unsafe, even if ‘democratically’ chosen, it will not go through.

Selwyn – we should think about how the constitution works, and how the committee works.

Wolfson – Can we confirm who / how these working groups are / should be?

David – Can I confirm that another meeting is wanted, and how best to prepare for it? Pete?

Pete – It would be a good idea to meet post Lents to decide on WGs – and mandate subgroups to go away and come back with current situation and future options. Groups could include, for instance:

- 1) Constitution and practices
- 2) Existing races (Uni IVs, Bumps, Small Boats Regatta, College-run races)
- 3) Early mornings
- 4) Change racing structures through the year – what might be ideal, including possible new events (eg lower boats regatta)

Christ’s – Agree with Nick, we only meet for three hours a year. Captains don’t feel that they can speak up, don’t know what they can do. Do not want to bite the hand that feeds them. More discussion can help, WGs can break down barriers. Need to move forwards together.

Wilf – Wanted to clarify the reason for wanting to delay the meeting was because we have so much to do to organise Bumps, and it’s not the ideal time, but I’m all for more discussion.

Churchill – For working groups, do we need to have Captains? What if other people are more experienced? Could those people come to the meeting.

Pete – Captains should come to the Captains meeting, Working groups can co-opt other people if need be, but Captains should be representing everyone from their club at the Captain's meeting.

Mark – Captains should consult alumni, boatmen / boatwomen

Christ's – Should there be a boatman's (boatwoman's) position on committee?

Holly – Position previously existed but has fallen vacant with approached candidates finding it too politically charged. It worked for a time, but then stopped working. Last tried to fill the position two to three years ago.

Darwin – Agree with Christ's view – we share a common passion. Appreciate that everyone puts in a lot of free time. It's important when looking to the future, make things more participatory, doesn't feel there was actual reasoning and communication. Today has been a lot better.

Ian – everyone does these jobs because they care. Want to protect and develop rowing in Cambridge. Some of the emails have implied that the committees don't know what happens with rowing in Cambridge – they do and genuinely care. Everyone here (excepting David) has rowed the Bumps.

David – I was asked to be chair partly because I'm the only fellow on SC, also because on other river committees (conservancy). Time running short, is anyone not happy with Lents continuing as proposed, and meeting after Bumps, will consult regarding time & date.

No complaints.

Holly – Please be aware of how much more admin can be handled, and that you wanting to contribute is fantastic. Please make sure you do as you say and get involved, because there is a lot of work done by the committees already. Thanks for wanting to be involved further, but must remain efficient. Please be careful not to generate tons more work for committees.

FaT – Can we confirm whether we can send people by-proxy?

David & Holly – Yes should be able to be more relaxed, just concerned about votes today. Next meeting week 8?

Catz – Can we check that quality observed in Lents this year won't affect Mays division decision?

Pete – Not necessarily linked, Mays more determined on GoR entries, and number of dropouts, and competition for places.

Ian – Last mays is a better indicator for this Mays, and also the quality of water time for crews in Easter term.

FaT – One frustration is that it's always phrased that it is too late to change anything. When is the decision actually made? When does it become too late?

Holly – It was announced at Michaelmas meeting that committee would think about it.

Pete – Regarding when it has to be decided, different for Lents and Mays. Lents proposed at start of term, and Lents (7 divs on 5 days or 6 divs on 4 days) fills available time, so decision needs to be earlier. Mays still announced at the beginning of term, but decision can be taken later (after entries), as there is more flexibility with Mays divisions. Lents set at beginning of term, Mays more flexible.

Selwyn – Regarding lots of traffic, we should decide on our actual metric for deciding if crews are safe to race.

Darwin – Could Senior Committee minutes be released?

Holly – There are many things which are sensitive and shouldn't be released. But there may be some things which could be circulated.

Downing – What about the lower boats regatta?

Mark – (to circulate his paragraph regarding this). The conclusion may be reached that attitudes should change not all boats should necessarily aim to race Lent Bumps (esp. if they are ex-novices), and instead aim to race Mays as first set of Bumps, and both in subsequent years. Could race a regatta instead.

Wilf – Small boat regatta could become a regatta for crews who don't aim for Bumps. SBR has low to no entries, but still has to be organized so no extra work to replace it.

Michael – First and Third already have this regatta (complementing Second Trinity Challenge Sculls), gaining traction over last two years.

Fitz – in terms of transparency, it would be good to have some evidence of what the senior committee have said. Captains need to hand over better, and explain how meetings actually work to their successors.

Holly – Regarding social media commentary, may restrict the number of people who come forward to help run Bumps, please talk to these people and encourage them to come forwards and help as they normally would. We need them!

Umpires can sign up here: <http://www.cucbc.org/node/421>

David – Must close meeting, thank you all for good debate.