

## Commodore AGM – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

As I conclude my 2 year tenure as your Commodore, it's a time to reflect on the positives but also to avoid complacency because with every best intention, your Committee comprises volunteers who give a considerable amount of their time to making it all work and things do fall through the cracks, inevitably. More of that shortly. It is with enormous enthusiasm that I welcome Commodore-elect Guy Williams to the role and in the interests of helping ensure seamless continuity, I am offering my support to Guy and the Committee by standing as Vice Commodore – not with any intention of standing for Commodore again I can assure you!

I will leave those that follow me to highlight the last 12 months in more detail but suffice to say, we are in a very robust state of health:

- Record year for Corporate Charter and Club Weekend bookings
- A mix of social weekends, longer cruises and a race programme which we believe fulfils the interests of our members – the highlight last year being a most memorable Fastnet race
- Growing membership, especially in the vital under 35 age category
- Regular, monthly, member socials firmly established once again
- Better communication through a combination of newsletters, social media and the Blog on our website
- The reinstatement of our bi-annual end of season dinner – a huge thank you to Viv Russell, with help from Charlie Whittaker, for pulling that off and attracting a capacity 100 seats.
- The longest serving professional skipper, James Close, who has committed to the next 2 years at least which, crucially, sees us through the 2025 Fastnet campaign
- And above all else, we have had a fantastically committed Committee who aim to get the balance right between effective operational delivery and having fun working together – recognising that what any of us do is purely for that, *fun* – a first-world problem for sure

### The Committee

Let me turn to this latter point for a moment because the evolution of our (the members') Committee has been a key priority for me personally. The emphasis within the Committee over the last few years has been to move towards a rather smaller, very hands-on operational group with far more being developed and delivered by members from outside the Committee itself. The size of the Committee a few years back was, frankly, completely unwieldy with rather nebulous responsibilities amongst a number of the Committee members. So we have all agreed to downsize ourselves so that every person therein has specific accountabilities with as much as possible being done through other willing members – either because they have the specific experience or because they have the time quite frankly.

This seems to work well and we have been testing it over the last 12 months with the U35s to the extent that the role is being removed from the Committee and will be driven, going forward, by dedicated members such as Charlie Whittaker and Megan Wasey.

It is already also working well in the areas of Communications, with thanks to Jeremy Cross, and Membership admin (thank you Christine Hunt). The Over 60s represent a key group within our membership and I'm sorry to say that, since Philip Oxford left the Committee, it is one that has fallen between those cracks. So I'm delighted that Geoff Cozens has put himself forward to lead this area – thank you Geoff, I can promise you will get all the support you need from the Committee. We also plan to have someone focus on helping our members get access to external training and RYA qualifications from outside the Committee.

In fact, we are downsizing the Committee by 3 people this year as the 'member outsourcing' model takes effect. Members seem to like this as it allows them to contribute to the Club without the obligation to attend every Committee meeting – this results in less people getting more done in our monthly 1 to 1.5 hour meetings. I personally believe this is a much more contemporary way to run an organisation and perhaps especially one run by volunteers.

It has always disappointed me that more members have not been more forthcoming to the Committee by formally bringing their ideas, concerns etc to a committee meeting – as enshrined in our club rules. This allows more members to see how we operate and identify areas where they may be able to add value. I suspect we have not publicised this enough, something I will be keen to see happen this year. We are committed to transparency and welcome input from members on any issues they regard as important, all the Committee's contact details are on the website.

### **Ethics & Conduct within the Club**

Now I turn to an equally important area for your Committee...

LLYC is an inclusive, warm and welcoming club that cares about its membership and as such we were pleased to sign-up to the Lloyd's Clubs Code of Conduct towards the end of last year. As we use Lloyd's brand we are considered an extension of Lloyd's and therefore committed to maintaining standards of conduct which are aligned to the Lloyd's Diversity & Inclusion Policy. This means all members and suppliers are bound by the Code of Conduct and must adhere to the following principles:

1. You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including employees, volunteers, attendees/participants, suppliers, or any other person connected with Club business.
2. You must not engage in unwanted conduct or behaviour related to a protected characteristic (gender, ethnicity, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender identity) which an individual might reasonably find offensive, intimidating, degrading or humiliating.
3. You must not be a bystander. We encourage members to challenge inappropriate behaviour as it occurs.
4. You must report any incidences of inappropriate behaviour to the event organisers.

We have a reporting obligation to Lloyd's enforcement team and there undoubtedly will be consequences for any breaches of the code.

As an inclusive club, with a considerate and inclusive membership, we hope this will not be a challenge for us. We do, however, on occasions receive informal complaints – two such in the last 12 months in fact which would have needed to be reported to Lloyd’s under the new code. We discuss these with the complainant to understand whether the complainant wishes to formalize their complaint. If they are substantiated, then the Committee will exercise its right to remove these individuals from the Club. We would ask members to think very carefully about their conduct and the ramifications of any poor conduct at Yacht club events.

Of course, we will encourage every member to ensure their conduct can never be called in to question as threatening or making a person feel uncomfortable or fearful for their safety. We will review the club processes to ensure we have fully embedded the code into the club’s operating infrastructure over the coming months and you will see more information on this shortly. If, however, you have any questions please reach out to Viv Russell, who as landside Rear Commodore is the club’s conduct liaison officer.

### **The Next Lutine**

Lots of members ask us about ‘the next Lutine’ and as I indicated this time last year, we have established a working group looking specifically at our options for the eventual replacement of the x-55. We start from a very solid foundation in that we have a superbly maintained boat currently and one that our members and corporate charterers who sail on her tell us they love. However it is prudent to look at all the options but certainly we are at a different start point to the replacement of the last Lutine, the Swan 53, with the current x-55.

The working group is considering whether we actually replace the x-55 at this point and if so, with what and how we finance that or, alternatively, if we have a boat that meets most or all of our requirements, then is a complete refurbishment a more sensible option that could see us comfortably through the next 5 years or so?

We also want to know what members think and to this end we will be sending out a questionnaire to all members over the coming months so that we can be inclusive in our decision-making. We will canvass the views of all Club Weekend participants this season as well – to be part of the post-weekend questionnaire everyone now receives.

Finally, I would like to thank those stepping down from the Committee this year (Jonathan Spry, Max Walker and Annabel Savage) for their commitment and time given to the well-being of the Club and I wish the incoming Commodore and his team all the very best for the season ahead – I am absolutely certain that we are in fantastic shape and in good hands.

*Everything we do is about reshaping our club for the future and this means listening to our members and embracing change – your Committee is up for that and above all else, remembering that this club is 100% about having fun both on and off the water.*