AGM Minutes

16/01/2026

Welcome

Sarah Webster welcomed everyone to the AGM, outlined the agenda and gave a brief overview of the things the club has been doing over the last year including; working towards Paddle UK's new deployment policy that comes in at the end of the year, helping aspiring leaders working towards qualifications, and resolving the clubs tax status.

Approval of last year's minutes

Copies of last year's minutes were distributed prior to the AGM and available to those present. The minutes from last year were approved.

Treasurers report

Tricia provided copies of the accounts for the year which had been signed off by Mike Pain.

Over the last year we spent more than we took in but this was predicted starting the year with £9,093 and ending the year with £7,166. The main reasons for deficit being

- We purchased some new and second-hand boats
- An increase in kit maintenance (new paddles, helmets and BA's)
- We are still paying money out from a Paddle UK grant received in 2024
- We now pay bank fees

The issue over the club's liability regarding Corporation Tax has been resolved and methods of capturing the required information and payment have been put in place.

Finally, Tricia thanked Ed for an excellent handover

Membership

Paul reported that membership in the last year was stable at 125, however the male to female ratio remains above parity at 62.38%. We have only 11% of members below the age of 18 however, Paul noted, we are one of the few local clubs who take kids.

There are no change to membership costs for 2026.

This will be the first year of using Spond to renew membership, so if nothing has changed individuals should be able to pay on the platform or via the email which will be sent out shortly. If details have changed you'll need to let Paul know to update the system or start from scratch. The paper form remains on the website.

It was questioned if, as a club, we wanted to grow. It was commented that whilst we have no ambition to new paddlers are always welcome. Also, it would be nice to have more young and/or female members of the club and that most new members come as a result of coming on one of the taster sessions.

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Training and Qualifications

Rob presented an overview of the year's training. The main summer series had 20 students taking part including 7 junior kayakers, 5 canoeists and 8 adult kayakers.

We were also, for a short period, able to run some pool sessions at the beginning of the year. These were sadly paused again following the pool getting into financial difficulty. We are continuing to look at how we can get these running again.

It was very much a year of qualifications with over 28 qualifications being gained by club members, notably WW Canoe Leader and Moderate and Advanced Sea Kayak Leader. We also have members continuing to develop these qualifications over the next few months.

Rob concluded by thanking all of the coaches, leaders and helpers for making the courses happen and that we're always looking for more leaders and coaches and have bursaries to help their development so please get in touch if you're interested.

Trips

Stuart presented an overview as to the different trips that had been run over the year ranging from sea kayaking to touring to white water. There had also been a lot of independent paddlers amongst club members including a number of trips to Cardiff White Water Centre.

We're now looking to put on more trips for 2026, aiming to do more WW through to March but we need some short trips to accompany the spring/summer courses and if anyone had any ideas to let him know.

Stuart finished by outlining the changes coming in at the end of the year from paddle UK with the requirements for leading trips tightening. It was highlighted that we only currently have 2 qualified WW leaders.

Hugh Vickers Bursary

Sarah gave a short overview of the Hugh Vickers bursary, the man, and purpose behind it – promoting the development of skills of younger paddlers between 8 and 21. This year no funds have been awarded so if anyone was interested, or knew someone who would benefit from this they should let someone on the committee know.

Election of the committee

Sarah noted that as this was her 3rd year as chair of the committee, as per the constitution, she could not stand for that position again. Out of the 14 positions the existing office holders were happy to continue however the role of chair and safety officer were currently vacant.

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Sarah thanked Amanda for her work in the role of Safety officer putting together the clubs safety framework and aligning to the needs of Paddle UK.

Jeff Miles was nominated for the role of Chair and was voted in by those present

Natasha James was nominated for the role of Safety Officer and was voted in by those present

Those present also voted for the current office holders to remain in post.

Sarah thanked Richard Bennet for all of the support he had given the club over the years including, but not limited to, supplying equipment and signing of the accounts. To recognise this the club has awarded life membership of the club to Richard.

Awards

Steph Stephenson presented the awards in the following categories:

- Adult Paddler of the year
  - Sammy Shellard (winner)
  - Ian Mathias
- Junior Paddler of the year
  - Tom Clemow (winner)
  - Albie McLaren
  - Lincon Stevens
- Most Improved Paddler of the year
  - Laura Hellwig (winner)
  - Steve Birkenhead
  - Natasha James

Lastly, after many years of duty representing the Swimmer of the year award, the fish trophy has been reassigned for the Summer River Challenge award. This goes to the winner of the summer activities – last year was the Cross-Stream Challenge at Saltford. This year's winner Was Martin Wrighton.

Any Other Business

Sarah reported the death of Steve Spokes, one of the founding members of the club in 1984 he remained a member for over 25 years instructing with great enthusiasm.

Rob Umfreville

01/02/2026

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