

Falcon Rowing Committee
DRAFT MINUTES
March 17, 2025

In attendance: JC, MHB, JB, PM, KPC, TB, SJ, Junior captains Rupert and Harrison
Apologies: CK, RW, IV, JH, CP, LF

Date of next meeting: May 12, 2025 7:30pm

Minutes from previous meeting approved.

Matters arising from previous meeting:

Harrison (junior captain) is on the email distribution list, **other juniors to be added (JC)**. Recruit **[JC] still awaiting other junior captain email addresses** for some positions: social media (in conjunction with website development); social secretary; touring group captain. Are there descriptions for these on the website and are these broadly accurate? Some prospective candidates have been identified, **JC to follow up**. **[JC] no takes for the positions so far**

Weights have been evaluated and supplemented where necessary – JH.

Ergs and starlink have both been reimbursed to JC.

SJ or JC to ask Simon what he'd like added to the FAQs for juniors' sections. He had indicated **[JC] no progress from my side on this. Need Simon to define his requirement**. previously that improving the FAQs might address some of the more basic queries that he receives and reduce the admin load.

Check with Clare so that information about juniors capsizes and swimming is shared between junior coach and water safety. **To be followed up with SJ and CP**.

Reinforcement of spinning locations – this information has been sent out in an email.

Outreach – discussions of a secondhand 6 seater boat have not progressed (European), JC would like to get quotes for this at least. **JB to get quotes**.

Still refining efficiency of boating during heads, improvements have been noted by the junior captains.

Trailer bookings – is information showing up on both relevant tabs? To keep an eye on trailer congestion. **JC to remind LF about this and consider improvements to forward-looking processes**.

[JC] Done and closed

LTR inductions: Currently towards the end of the course there is the offer of an induction. The question remains at which point in the course are they introduced to the captain, vice-captain? Should this be at the start of the course? **To be discussed with JH as part of the ongoing transition of LTR.**

[JC] done and closed. This is in part done up front but we will still run assessments as they transition out of L2R – ie once they are mostly done with L2R sessions and starting to join club sessions / dev squads.

Captain's Report (JC): Club IT and website, email server. Boat investment plan.

Cox development, or how do we develop coxswains? This is a continuing discussion that follows from an incident several months ago, the question remains how best to provide additional training in more challenging weather conditions (in amber flag, for example) for underqualified coxswains? A variety of possibilities were mentioned, including ensuring the crew is comprised of more experienced rowers and the use of bank riders. This conversation is ongoing.

DM – admin/representative for master's programme

RN – admin/representative for the club squad.

Club development – broadband still relies on starlink. Open reach has completed the cable installation but not enabled the connection, should be sorted in the next few months.

Canoes. Expansion, coordinating with them about their racking.

Building expansion plans – early stages, but possibly to include extension on the side of the building? Increase one bay of boat storage. Early discussions about this 1-4 years' horizon.

LF – keen to get regatta plan in place.

Membership (MHB) – shared information about rowing membership data, over 1/3 of adult members come from local post codes. Fee structure – full membership or student membership. LTR has 3 options – student, unwaged and adult, which is not entirely consistent with the club membership structure and these should be adjusted. Proposed an aged 18-25 membership which is easier to administer to replace the student category. Estimated that there have been 27 student memberships over the past 12 months, which was considerably higher than had been previously assumed. **MHB to determine how many of the current members in that 27 would fall into the 18-25 age category.** The question of membership categories and fees to be continued, particularly in conjunction with the LTR discussions.

TB – following on from the question of affordability of the club for young people, TB asked about affordability in a broader sense. Funding for outreach is to make rowing affordable for local children in schools programme and larger question of how local people, particularly those in the areas nearby the club, can join. Discussion followed and the difficulty of managing

affordability for a sport that necessarily requires expensive equipment and facilities was raised, the conclusion was that this is not an easy problem to solve and that it is going to be an ongoing conversation. There was agreement that good progress has been made with current outreach efforts for schools.

Outreach Coordinator (TB) – in addition to the conversation previously, TB thinking about adjustments for next year, what to do differently. Identifying positions for open day and what's needed, some kayakers have already signed up. TB wanted to coordinate with social media etc.

Fundraising – asked JB for a whole year report of spending in order to do some planning for next year, needs information on actual spending from JB to compare with projected spending.

JB to provide information.

IT (TB) – has drone video footage, in progress, Bill is working on this, in addition to work on the website. Url for the club website is moving to a cloud service. Old website will be a documentation tool for members. These updates provide ability to move LTR to the club website. Also provides ability to run email server so won't have to use gmail accounts and email accounts can be handed over 6-9 months.

Club app (TB) – leaning towards using Spond rather than ClubHub, working towards an initial test soon. JB asked if this will be ready by September for the new financial year? TB – yes, with current plan should be done well in advance of that.

Reminder about photography project that is currently going on, some portraits and backstories of the rowers. Previous exhibition was kayakers and canoeists. PM asked whether there are any juniors who could be photographed? If so, this is a potential issue for safeguarding.

Treasurer's Report (JB) – Sent report around before meeting. Next big expenditure is £2500 on EA registration. Additionally there will be some expenses for setting up the new workbench.

Junior finances – coaching fees are paid up until February. Waiting on some information about allocations from Simon (7k) for the second 6 months. Coaching fees for regattas – could Sam work through a projection for how much is needed for the rest of the season? Need to consider how much could be allocated for equipment. **SJ to prepare an estimated projection for the rest of the season.**

Boatman's Report (JB) – pair of sculling blades with one broken. Might be able to salvage one – was not reported, which is frustrating. **JC to remind members in an upcoming email about the reporting procedure.**

[JC] this is now being done correctly. Closed.

New 2x should have arrived, will be here in the next week or so. Other repairs included bow ball on Sea Eagle and the runner on Aquila Eagle. Need to get Crane Hawk looked at (Nilo 2x) as it

leans to the left. JB to ask Mark Seal to look at this to determine whether this is a hull or a rigging issue.

[JC] It was a fin alignment issue- adjustment made, awaiting conclusions from trial users

Rack space – One empty rack, considering the new 2x or move one back inside. The boathouse is running out of rack space – crews than can should consider the use of other 4xs. JC Need to get crews to be more creative about use of equipment. Based on current usage, the club will soon need more 4xs. Need to think about which boats might be moved, which boats are not used very frequently. JC said two seem like they are underutilised, Goshawk, Athena... Should these boats be replaced? Is the rack space being used efficiently? MHB mentioned that it is possible that these are not signed out every time they are used and it might be a good idea to make sure that there is an accurate assessment of usage before deciding to replace these boats.

A discussion followed about which crews might make more use of these boats. What's the weight range of these? 55-70. Target weight is 65. Can any junior crews use these boats? How can the usage of these boats be improved so that more crews can go out?

It was agreed that usage of these boats will be monitored over the coming months to determine how to optimize rack space and make sure that the fleet is meeting the needs of members as efficiently as possible.

On the question of rack space, JC said that as a general policy, no more racks were to be allocated to private boats. When rack space becomes vacant, private spaces will be reallocated to club boats. It was emphasised that private singles that are sold cannot retain their rack space as part of the transaction. Racks do not convey with the sale of a private boat. JC reiterated that the club will not ask people to give up racks, and to be clear that there are no plans to push any private boats out. JB noted that there was one outside 1x rack currently available.

Again on the question of the fleet and the boat development plan, a brief discussion of small boats followed. Are 1xs available in good quantity? Need to revisit this over the summer.

The question of trailer hire was raised and in light of some recent experiences, it was decided that it is likely best not to hire out the trailers in the future.

Juniors' Report (SJ and junior captains) – M&A to be repaired after the regatta season. JB to look at this with a view to effecting a temporary repair and the boat being properly refurbished over the winter. JB/JC noted that the workshop should be finished in the next few weeks.

Wiring looms for the 8x needs to be replaced.

Juniors asked about blade allocations, blue vs white. Gearing. Shortage of the white, esp at heads. Juniors prefer the white gearing – can these be changed? Rebalanced to switch some of

the blue to white. JC agreed that the juniors could switch 4 blades over and change the white electrical tape to see if this alleviates shortage of blades with preferred gearing. [JC] done and closed, though this is creating a shortage at adult level Trying to divert those adults to the crokers.

Welfare Officer (PM) – (KPC need to return PM to his regular spot in the agenda) Need to remind people about the safeguarding training. LF JC to check whether this can be added to the membership form? PM reminded the committee that it is the requirement of BR to take the [JC] It certainly can be. Just need to make sure the requirement is clear. safeguarding training. Needs to be flagged to membership. This is for everyone involved in rowing to make them aware of juniors in rowing. TB – this can be added to spond. PM asked if the club has an employment policy, particularly as the club should have references for everyone who works with children – whether they are technically an employee or not. Just a DBS check is not sufficient. JC – should this apply to volunteers? PM – yes, this should apply to anyone who works with children or vulnerable adults. This is a BR policy. PM to draft an employment policy. This should also address how to assess people who are known to the club, for example if someone who has been a member of the juniors for years then works as a coach, would they need to provide references?

Water quality testing – Is water being tested in other locations in Oxford that would make this redundant for the club?

Water Safety (CP sent apologies). Need to be clear on the policy about any junior being appropriately dressed, in any context. JB – asked what should be reported to BR and what should be assessed internally? Is there an agreed threshold for incidents that are managed internally vs those that are reported externally?

Learn to Row (JH sent apologies, but a brief discussion followed)– JH has 2 cohorts planned for this year. Mel and Seb to run a possible 3rd cohort? Needs to be assessed, concerns that JH has raised need to be addressed.

As part of getting LTR moved within Falcon, focus needs to be on helping more people to be able to run these sessions. Important key step is to get other people running cohorts. MHB – the process should be simplified in order to enable more people to help with this. PM – can we add sculling to this? Smaller boats, smaller groups, etc. Taking the courses within the club means not just the admin, but the actual running of the course. By the end of the year, it is planned that LTR will entirely be brought within the club.

MHB – what about taster days? Are these completely separate to LTR? Are these the starting point to LTR? [considerable cross talk] Pay deposit for the course, then taster day and then the LTR. JC – need to discuss this with JH, whether this is separate or not? JB – should the taster day continue or should this be discontinued? Marketing, video, etc. JB asked if there should be a sign on the bridge, etc. JC – possibly, need to work with JH and see if there's a reduced size cohort? JC – the transition to the club from JH will be gradual, the club needs to be more

proactive in seeing what can be done with the next cohort to facilitate the transition. JC – to ask specifics about qualifications for coaching under 18s for single specific case of this month's LTR, whether this should be through juniors. JC – more work needs to be done to discuss how the courses should be structured going forward with JH.

[JC] Extensive discussions have been held and we have made progress, but still some work to do to complete the onboarding of L2R including refining the model.

Coxing competency issues – JB – does not think you need a bank rider with Red Kite if the rowers are experienced. How can we give people coxing experience? The question is still complicated and should be deferred until CP is available to consider who is qualified and who is not. JC asked are the rules fit for purpose? MHB – these are still coxing guidelines, judgement plays an important role. Discussion is TBC...

[JC] its still TBD. One key point is to agree that competition coxing criteria should be extracted from the overall model

Club Squad Representative (RN) KPC Need to add RN to the regular agenda items. Asked about when the evening sessions start again. Asked about how decisions about outings and conditions are made, JC said there is a list of coaches who can make decision.

AOB

JC final item scheduled for discussion is how does the club develop coxes? Need to consider how this will be done, given how people can practically and safely gain experience with adverse conditions. 3 meetings to be scheduled – LTR, cox development/kite usage. [Notes from the meeting about LTR held on April 4th are added to the final page of these minutes]

JB observed that the gym lights have been left on. Need to consider a notice or a timer. JC/JB to forward to facilities committee?

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded.

Notes from meeting about LTR held on April 4th
In attendance?

[Notes taken by JC]

L2R Admin and CashFlow

For the first cohort (starting 5Apr) we will use the club membership signup process (already underway with about 10 signups at time of writing). Mary Heather will run the usual process, leading to Jeff invoicing them for payment, and once paid then Mary Heather will enable them at the club IT etc. This will all be tracked in the usual way on the membership sheet.

In terms of cash flow - normal fees are £195 per course, payable once the applicant is committed - this can be prior to day1 (called "Taster") day or at the end of that day. Optionally the applicant can pay just £30 to attend the taster day and then decided if they want to continue, in which case they would be invoiced for the balance (£165). For L2R-25/1 cohort they have all paid John directly for the Taster Day so if they decide to continue, they should be invoiced only for the £165. John and MaryHeather will have to liase to determine, for those that only paid the Taster Day fee (£30), which of them plan to continue with the main programme. Possibly this is the people who have just filled out the membership application form.

From a club perspective, having invoiced the attendees and received payment (tracked by Mary Heather in the membership sheet), Jeff will then transfer the paid amount less the 3months membership fee (25% of £295 = £74) to John Hills account and he will defray his costs from this and determine what to do with any profits. From a club income perspective our working assumption is that the rowing section will be deemed to receive £74 per attendees rather than the full course amount.

We have elected not to use this cohort to pilot Spond, apologies to Tim, but it was felt there would be too much to learn, and this was best left for the next cohort.

For the future we will discuss possibly changes to the L2R programme when we have more time to consider. For this cohort John will lead with support from Seb and Mel, who we hope will be upskilled sufficiently to run a limited cohort during the summer as John does intend to run another cycle until August. One thing to consider is whether we have sufficient capacity in the development pathways (Club, MDS/WDS) to accommodate such large cohorts, esp. if the membership renewal rate continues to be high as seen with recent past cohorts.

Finally we need to capture the above financial model in a 'contract' between John and FBC for the purposes reporting of the club finances.

Club Squad Equipment

There has been a historical understand that Club Squad gets priority of access to boats during its sessions, similar to Juniors, but not so well documented - this has led to some misunderstandings. Proposal is Jeff to identify his key boats he feels he needs the most and there will be marked in some way on the booking sheet so members know they are booking at risk. Laura to make a note of this in the club booking sheet emails.

Captains Permission Boats

It was agreed that we will take Marsh Hawk out of captains permission, and the new 2x (about 75kg to 85kg) wil go straight into general usage, ie not spend time in CP category. This we hope will receive some of the pressure on mid range weight 2x's.

Dormant Private Boats

It was agreed in principle (to be proposed in the next RSC) that singles or doubles that have not been used for 6 months will lead to a query from the captain to the boat owners about whether their intentions going forward. As it happens we no longer have any such boats so this is a theoretical ask. There was a discussion about the preference of private vs club boats, in the content of a member planned to release their rack and possibly sell their boat to the club. Jon and Jeff to liase on this last point.

Employment of Staff

Just noting that PaulM will be distributing guideline contract for retaining paid staff - per BR guidelines.

BowSteer/Coxing/Flag Policies

It was agreed that the current system of cox/bow steer classification and development is a bit opaque and obstructive and we need to come up with something better. For example there are bow steers perfectly capable of racing who are not "Gold" but also perhaps not ready to navigate the isis in light red flag. We need to find a way to recognise this whilst still protection our equipment from the vagaries of the Isis in heavy conditions. Plan is for everyone to put their thinking caps on and meet at a later date with ideas - we need to include Claire in this discussion.