

FRC Draft Minutes
May 14, 2025
7:30pm

Attending: JC, LF, CP, MHB, JB, JH, TB, RG, KPC, SL, RN, SJ, PJ, RS, R&H (junior captains)

Apologies: IV, DM

Date and time of next meeting: July 16th 7:30pm

1. Minutes of the previous FRC meeting were approved unanimously.
2. Matters arising from previous minutes:
 - a. *Website and email addresses for juniors* – website has progressed, demonstration to follow. JC still awaiting junior captains' email addresses. Still recruiting for vacant roles, MHB had some suggestions, JC to follow up.
 - b. *Junior capsizes and swim test info*. CP still waiting on this information, suggested that this now could be shared with the start of the next academic year, SJ and CP to follow up.
 - c. *6-seat touring boat*. JB reports no possibility of a used boat, but there is the possibility of a new one with some sponsorship. JC and JB to confer on this, particularly the issue of storage space.
 - d. *Projection of Juniors' spending for the remainder of the year*. SJ has discussed this with JB, but agreed to provide an estimate of the remaining planned spending for this year to JC within a week or so. JC stressed that it just needed enough detail to help accurately inform decisions about spending on boats and equipment for juniors.
 - e. *Safeguarding training for all members*. Low uptake on this, should be added to Spond in the future. PM to work with TB on this. PM has also circulated a draft of an employment policy related to taking up references for paid coaches and volunteers who work with juniors in order to improve safeguarding measures. PM described the response from the club to the proposed policy as generally apathetic.
3. Reports
 - a. **Captain's Report** - Burden of regatta organizing has become too time consuming, so captains of squads need to be more proactive about selecting a representative and one person be the organizer for a regatta. If there is a conflict over boats, LF will help with this. JB said before payment is made to BR, all payments need to be made to the club, JH asked what about registering provisional crews? JH uses a £500 float to help make sure that payments to the club can be made promptly. JC noted that there had been ongoing congestion in usage of 4x, people need to share boats and negotiate time slots; emphasized need for flexibility with boats and time slots; any crew should be able to row any boat; cooperation is key, particularly when boats/time are relatively scarce.
 - b. **Coaching proposal from Paul Jenks** - wanted to introduce himself as a performance coach to bring a sense of race discipline for anyone who is looking

for this, emphasis on how to learn to take feedback and coaching. JC described it as a pathway, how people move from one level to another and get some of the benefits of a squad system. In previous discussions, there has been some concern about how this might be implemented in Falcon and how it interacts with the club's existing ethos. Does not confer any priority of access to equipment over any other group. Currently this is not something Falcon offers, PJ wants to have a conversation about how this might be implemented.

A number of questions were raised during the discussion. CP asked given that the club has 17 qualified coaches on the current list, how will PJ work with these coaches? Rosa – WDS has put together information about possible pathways for members, important for the community to maintain contact and stay together without siphoning off some members. PJ responded that he wants to bring self-evaluation into the crews. PM asked how do you envision this being practically implemented at the club? Practically how does this work? PJ said that he would use his own rowing experience, previous experience in business and understanding of psychology. JH said that PJ has suggested some interesting ideas, JH has tried coordinating the coaches but hasn't worked in the past. Would like to think about how to use PJ's input in the various development capacities without changing the structure we have? It was agreed that PJ could consider further his ideas, perhaps talking them over with JH and submit a more formal written proposal to the committee if he wanted, then it would be possible to find out if there is enough interest among the wider club membership.

- c. **Junior Captains' Report (R&H)** – Boat issues, Atlanta is out of commission right now, needs to have Mark Seal look at it, Sparrowhawk is also out. Gryffindor needs a new set of riggers. The issue of junior finances was then discussed and it was agreed that new riggers was a good idea but depended on budget. In order to determine how much was left for equipment spending for the next several months, more information was needed by JC from SJ & SR about projected expenses for the same period. SJ & SR to put together an estimate in the next week or so.

JB explained that the confusion comes from there being two streams of income, parents' fees and then summer course fees. There were only 2.5 months left in this financial period so, should be able to get a good idea of what remains until July. SJ mentioned that there were not enough working cox boxes, JC agreed (based on budget availability) to the purchase of a few more cox boxes.

- d. **Boatman's Report - Oars** - The longstanding issue of gearing for oars was again discussed at length. System of white and blue has been mostly abandoned. Chaos. JB the blades could be glued [although this suggestion may have been in jest?]. JC – there are some blades on the other side of the boathouse that are not being used. People need to stop adjusting blades, there has been a lot of backsliding after the work done by MHB, JH and JB. JH – some of the junior setups suggest they have too long an inboard

length and the foot stretchers need to be adjusted. JC – previous approach was to offer 3 settings. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that perhaps better to try and get the offending parties together and hash it out. JC agreed to organise this discussion.

- e. **Treasurer's Report (JB)** - £6298 in adults, £20718 juniors. Expected liability of some coaching costs from now to July needs to be reported. Out of adults will come cost of cox box repairs, and MS for boat repairs., JC – about 2k of damage to boats has been incurred.

Private boat racking was increased by £25 last year. Wants to increase it by £15 next year mostly to cover the increased cost of EA registration. Voted and carried. JB asked if Spond will require a 2% increase, who pays this? JC suggested the cost was currently affordable and for now, could be absorbed by the club. RN – what about reviewing the incorporation of the cost on the next review of the membership fees? JC – vote on whether to absorb cost of spond for the next financial year – carried. JB lead time on new boats is about 6-9 months, do we need to think about any new boats? JC No, not right now. David Salveson thinks that changes can be made to Goshawk that would move it into more general usage. This and the possibility of a coxed 4x from the juniors will likely alleviate the pressure on 4xs. Focus should be on repurposing fleet. Athena has moved into more general usage and this has been successful.

- f. **Learn to Row (JH)** – JC started the discussion by stating that there is absolutely no intention to ask JH to stop coaching LTR. JH said that after reading the minutes of the previous committee meeting he had some concerns that ideas mentioned in the last minutes had already been tried and were unsuccessful and a discussion of some of these, including sculling, followed. JC asked about Mel and Seb's coaching qualifications? She does not, he does. JB what about a graduation from LTR, get them together etc. JH – this already happens in existing processes, depends on individual readiness. Described existing process of integrating LTR people into club sessions. Mel and Seb should be invited into the club sessions, like Tim and Dave did. JB are we planning another LTR group? JH Yes, in order to have one after the open day. Will be in August and 10 people are already expressed interest. JC problem is that CORC and Accies have both stopped doing LTR. CP what about creating a document from what's already on LTR website, needs to be added to club risk assessment. Still outstanding. JH to create a document, still an outstanding action. CP to contact JH again (some frustration was expressed at the length of time this action was pending...) At this point the longstanding issue of qualifications and bowsteering was again discussed. RG what about a buddy system to help people to increase competency for coxes and bowsteerers? JC Yes, this sounds like a good idea. JB added that coxes could also come to weekend outings.
- g. **Club Sessions (RN)** – said that there was not much new to report but that he was interested in Rosa's suggestion of a buddy system and reiterated that people are welcome to come along to club sessions.
- h. **Social Events** – It was suggested that another summer party in the boathouse should be planned for July, perhaps the 19th. This was agreed, assuming that there are no scheduling conflicts with other events. CK had already set up a date with St Hilda's for the Christmas dinner, JC to check with her about the dates and arrangements already agreed.

- i. **Outreach Coordinator (TB)** – TB said that RG has agreed to start helping him with the outreach. Open Day, most of a committee is in place for this, meeting this weekend. The emphasis was on moving on from the way they have been doing the schools programme to having a Falcon Schools Rowing Club that is open to children from any state secondary school from Oxford, which will be run by SJ. It is planned that then the outreach work is related to recruiting kids for that programme. JB asked what does Hinksey do in terms of teaching sculling in schools? TB It's a programme that is offered to schools for a fee.

MHB asked what was happening with the ergs that are currently in schools? TB This is probably going to depend on individual schools, gave the example of Spires and explained that the model that works there is different than what works at Greyfriars. MHB asked if this is targeted at a particular year group? SJ yrs 8 & 9 at Spires. TB max of 36 pupils, SJ said this is probably too many and she might struggle with this many, 20-24 seems more reasonable. JB – is this programme going to be using juniors' boats and is this what was originally proposed? JC asked about the difference between what TB is proposing and the juniors' squad in its current form? TB the aims are different with less focus on racing, if some kids are serious about racing then they can move into the juniors squad. MHB asked if this had been mostly boys up to this point? Because if so, then what's happening with recruiting? TB agreed that this has been the case and that he's aware that recruiting mostly boys needs further consideration. JC said that he agreed JB's concerns about equipment are valid. Need to be sure equipment is used appropriately. TB – depends on which kids and their stages of development in the programme. There were questions in the discussion about how the programme was implemented in schools, how financial need was assessed. JB brought up the question of transport - how do the kids get to the club? TB they are biking or walking right now. JB reminded everyone that Cheney Falcon fell away because of transportation problems and we needed to keep an eye on this.

The discussion then moved to the question of how is this positioned differently from the current junior squad? How is this charged? TB there is no charge for this and said that each school is going to look different based on experiences so far. JC Need to discuss this with trustees, because offering free use of the club needs to be approved at a trustee level.

The discussion moved on to the Access and Inclusion Proposal – TB how can the existing membership model be modified to be more inclusive? TB said that this is a relatively modest proposal, the club already offer a concessionary membership to students, so just an extension so that it is not just to students.

Everyone agreed that the existing student membership had been repositioned as a young person's membership to include those who were in work or other types of programmes – apprenticeships, etc. and not exclusive to those at university. The number of current student memberships was thought to be about 12. There was some discussion about the characteristics of student memberships – if this attracted people that would be intensive users of equipment for a short period of time.

A recent enquiry about a coaching membership vs student membership was discussed and the criteria for a coaching membership (which is also £50) was also discussed. The number of hours that a coach was expected to contribute in order to qualify. Whether they also needed a certification was also discussed. It was agreed on this occasion that a coaching membership was likely not suitable but JC would discuss other options.

The discussion returned to the issue of a concessionary membership proposed at £50. RG this is a much lower rate than the student rate, but numbers of these types of memberships will be capped. Allows the club to make this offer as part of the outreach efforts. Formalizes the current offer of LTR, which JH already offers. Proposes a small number of this type of membership which would be capped and reviewed periodically. Kayakers pay about £180 and have a family membership and a concessionary rate.

JC – happy to say yes to the LTR part as proposed if JH is happy with this. Disagrees with student as being 18-26. TB said this age banding is standard, same as railcard for example. JC need to decide about 18-23 or 18-26 but there are not enough people still here as it is now 10pm to take a vote. JC - Concession rate – operating cost of the club is £100 per person. This will come down when the loan is paid off, but possibly going up again if the extension is built. If a concession is £50 then the other members are subsidizing them. Is that fair, and is £50 a fair rate? JH – Falcon is an outreach club, more members scales up the cost of the club, so it doesn't have to work that way. Don't have to think about it as £100 overhead, each additional member does not actually 'cost' £100. RG £50 was suggested because its more affordable, rather than the idea of how much it costs the club. They decided that the cap was a better way to address the possible cost to the club. CP if the kayakers already do this, why wouldn't rowers want to do this? JC – volume has worked for the kayakers. KPC suggested that a proposed change in membership structure could be brought before the membership more widely, like at the AGM. The timing of this was then discussed, the importance of being able to offer a concessionary membership at outreach events, the timing of the AGM wouldn't work. It was agreed that it was likely that the membership would broadly be in support of the idea of a concessionary membership but might have questions about how the reduction was calculated – if it was a percentage that corresponded to that offered by kayakers, that might make more sense. KPC also asked if it was decided that a rate above £50 made sense, would there be any option offered to pay in instalments? JC said that he thought that the current payments system made that very difficult to support.

As it was getting later and there were no longer enough members to vote, it was agreed to schedule a separate online meeting to discuss this issue only, to be held before the trustees meeting in June.

The meeting was then concluded.