

# SAUNDERSFOOT SAILING CLUB

## WINDWARD July 2010

### The Future for your Club?

There comes a time when it is appropriate to step back from the “day to day” and review overall strategy and philosophy – a need “to look at the wood rather than just see the trees”. The new Government has been forced to do this for the Country because of the critical financial situation, our Sailing Club needs to do this because we are tending to drift rather than follow a clear course. Saundersfoot Sailing Club is now 61 years old and has come a long way and developed greatly over that time. We have nearly 200 sailing members and a total of some 250 including social members. The club finances are in a sound condition. We undertake 45 club dinghy races each year, putting around ten boats on the water each week. We run Coppet Week - a highly envied, friendly yet competitive sailing event each year, which attracts 60+ boats from across E&W including international level sailors. We are a popular centre for National Championships and would have no difficulty in attracting many classes of dinghy to hold their events in Saundersfoot if we wished. We have a well supported Sail Training School which has been RYA Certified for many years with a large number of training boats and other facilities devoted to growing the interest of new potential sailors. Our harbour facilities include tender and dinghy parking - and more recently kayak storage, convenient car parking and generally a fairly sheltered anchorage. Our clubhouse would be the envy of many larger clubs with a splendid position and outlook and satisfactory facilities for changing, storage, bar, kitchen and function area. We have a number of cruiser members although moorings are limited and difficult to acquire and sea access is limited to some six hours around high water. Overall the Club is recognised as an important permanent feature of the vibrant pleasant local community. SSC is specifically recognised in the new Harbour Commission Regulations as representing local boating interests which is a fairly unique inclusion afforded only to the most prestigious clubs elsewhere.

Despite all these pluses, we need to look forward and ensure that the Club develops - hence this overall review.

The Committee feel that it is difficult to obtain commitment from members. It is increasingly difficult to attract Committee members yet it is vital that new participants keep the group dynamic and fresh. Whilst there is considerable benefit in long experience, the entire Committee feel that there should be a better turnover of members.

Too few individuals are currently undertaking the necessary workload to operate club affairs and activities, and whilst this is not unique to our club it is certainly not a healthy or long term sustainable position. Can we promote events better to members to get more participation? If we cannot get more commitment and support it will be necessary to reduce the workload. This would mean fewer club activities and reduced benefits for members. This is particularly the case in respect of social activity.

Whilst it is felt that the social side is the cohesion that binds together the dinghy sailing, sail training and cruiser interests and to a large extent therefore forms the character of the club, it has been very disheartening to those involved in trying to organise and stimulate social functions to have very limited take-up. It is somewhat ironic that virtually all events we have held are deemed to have been very enjoyable but this does not seem to result in better support for subsequent events. This also has an impact on the financial viability in that it is more difficult to keep prices down for members and produce a small margin of profit for the club when numbers are low.

Social membership is an issue creating very polarised views at present. Some advocate this category of membership in order to enhance clubhouse activities and help finances. Others feel that it complicates the membership structure with little benefit and places a large demand on club resources (stocking, manning & operating the bar, staffing the club, administering the clubhouse, etc.). Views range from leaving things as they are, or abolishing this category or charging much more for it, or establishing a single membership category so that all members have equal rights and responsibilities but pay via the fee structure for what they wish to participate in.

Your views as ongoing members are now sought:-

**Do you want a social side to club activities?**

**What is needed to get you to join in?**

**Would you be willing to help organise events?**

**What are your views on social Membership?**

### **Social Events Coming Up**

Despite the limitations detailed above we are still trying to provide attractive social events for members. The next is on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July when a social evening in the clubhouse is being arranged with Wendy's home-cooked food. This will coincide with the end of the intensive sail training week and the Junior and Lady Helm races so there should be plenty of reasons for a wide selection of members to attend. 7.30pm start to the evening.

On the Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August - Saundersfoot Regatta weekend, after the dinghy racing, we are planning a hog roast for all members starting at 7.30pm. Again it is very much hoped that this will appeal to all members and that the attendance will match the last hog roast which was one of the best events ever experienced in the club.

Not wishing the year away, but the Laying-Up Supper will also be an opportunity to enjoy with good food and socialising on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October. Please put this date in your diary.

### **Sail Training Events**

A series of evening sessions has been arranged to provide training on Advance Sailing Techniques for those involved in Sunday Club racing and to all those who help with Sail Training.

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> August from 1400 hours; Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August from 1630 hours;

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August from 1430 hours; Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August from 1630 hours

For more information and to book into these sessions please contact Malcolm Williams on 01994 448383.

### **Commodore's Message**

As almost the longest serving member of the Club (yes, there is one with more years than me) I am saddened by the lack of members spending time at the Club. I was Club Honorary Treasurer for 18 years, I'm on my third spell as Commodore, a trustee for many years, original Sail Training Principal, Membership Secretary and first aid course organiser so I reckon that I've put in my share. Others have transformed the building with extension and balcony, overhaul of changing rooms and galley, double glazing and big screen facility. What an amazing facility we have! You do not have to spend much but please tell us what it takes to get you in there.

Finally, we are planning to have dinghy racing on Wednesday evenings at 1800 hours on 11<sup>th</sup> and 25 August with beach games at the same time on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August. Good sailing.

Trevor K Smith  
Commodore