

MINUTES OF RS ELITE CLASS ASSOCIATION AGM

Monday 21st October 2024

Held on Teams

Attendees: Jo Hewitson, Andrew Archibald, Colin Smith, Elliot Caldwell, Russell Peters, Nick Peters, David Nicholls, Mark Holliday, Richard Bavin, Mike Browne, Tom Hewitson, Simon Radford, Dan Belton, Gerry Reid, Ulf Lundvall, Steve Hammond, John McRobert, Barry McConnell, Debbie Jarvis, Neill Strain, James Yearsley, Gareth Edwards, Fraser Elms. Apologies if I missed anyone.

Apologies: Adrian Ward, Toby Strauss, Mark Fletcher, Jonathan Henry, Adrian Olsen, Janice McCrudden, Ossie Stewart.

2023 AGM Minutes

Approved. Proposed by Colin Smith & Seconded by Andrew Archibald.

Election of Officers

Chair: Jo Hewitson is stepping down with immediate effect and none of the attendees were willing to volunteer to take over. Jo explained that her admin role has become easier with reduced admin due to the new website and the involvement of Debbie Jarvis. Debbie is also doing PR & Communications. Gerry Reid is interested and will give it his consideration.

Secretary: Andrew Archibald continuing.

PR & social media: Debbie Jarvis continuing.

Treasurer: Elliot Caldwell continuing.

Rules: Tom Hewitson continuing

Fleet Captains: HISC: Colin would like to step down as HISC fleet captain if a replacement can be found.

Chair's Report

JH presented the following report:

We have 41 members, down 3 on last year. We have seen fewer members from Northern Ireland and gained members from Southern Ireland and Norway. European payments are now possible which should help encourage membership from Norway and Ireland. Last year I wrote that a fledgling fleet had commenced in Dunsmore East – just two then, and this year they have 6 with plans for more. They will be hosting the Irish Nationals in September 2025. Waterford Harbour looks beautiful so it should be a real treat. This year has also seen a new Elite at Horning Sailing Club on the Norfolk Broads which is being used to train and inspire your people to start sailing.

The highlight of my Elite year was our trip to Tonsberg Seilforening in Norway. Everything about the regatta was a delight from the beginning to the end. The setting was spectacular, the hospitality amazing and the racing great fun and competitive. Having been a little nervous that people would complain it was too expensive, it turned out to be the best value for money holiday I have taken for a long time. We were treated to home-made delicious food, alcohol on tap, Ribs were made available for us to transit between our accommodation and the club, and on the final Sunday, which was a lay day, our hosts took us on spectacular tour of the area in beautiful yachts. I cannot thank Erik and Ulf and all the members who made this such a special event. Congratulations go to the young Norwegian team expertly helmed by Jostein Aker who took the line honours after a match race with my husband.

Best of all they have agreed to host us next year, all you need is hand luggage! Provisional details are on the website – the dates are June 26th-29th 2025.

We have fleets sailing regularly in Northern Ireland, Burnham, Antigua, Norway, Hayling Island and Dunsmore East.

Website: Much of the first part of my tenure was taken up with launching a new website. We took inspiration from the old one, and added more functionality to streamline the accounting procedures, so members can join and pay online, and if we wish to pay for events. The For Sale section can be accessed by submitting a form, and only members can place adverts.

Finally: The class is run by a volunteer committee, and I would like to thank all the committee members and their wider support networks who have helped make this season so successful, the Class would not run without you. I am especially appreciative of Colin and Tom who have both supported me on many an evening when we have discussed options on all number of subjects. I do hope someone comes forward to take over my role as Chair, as the Class does need that support. Debbie Jarvis will be making the role simpler as the Class has agreed to pay her a small amount for her invaluable admin support. Noble Marine should be approached to see if they can provide some general sponsorship for the class.

Treasurer's Report

We are currently running at an annual deficit with annual expenditure £3,500 (2024) and income £2,090 although there is a refund due from the Royal Southern. The Membership fee was increased from £30 to £40 in 2024 but 43 members is insufficient to break even. Many joint owners and crews are not members. £600 per annum is to be paid to Debbie Jarvis. Renewals are due in February 2025.

Membership Fee: this was debated and the following was agreed:

- To change the membership structure from Individual/Family/Associate to **Boat Owner @ £60**

This was proposed by Gerry Reid and seconded by Colin Smith.

- To remove associate membership and add **Non Boat Owner @ £40 per annum**. Removing Family & Associate memberships was proposed by Nick Peters and seconded by Tom Hewitson.

- Charterers would need to pay the £60 Boat Owner fee to be eligible for regatta's unless they are already a member.
- All members would have full voting rights

Proposed Rule Change for Antifouling

Members have asked the Committee to consider the antifouling rule. This was discussed at a Committee Meeting on the 10th September and due to the following considerations, a rule change has been proposed.

1) Practicalities: Modern antifoul paint is much less effective than it used to be leading to a larger number of boats being dry sailed or regularly lifted for cleaning. When dry sailing antifouling paint isn't needed, but may be applied by choice. Might this give an unfair advantage of one boat versus another? The Committee felt that the paint itself is not the key differentiator. The Committee believes the bigger advantage in season is likely gained by the hull being clean. They also perceive that any team attending a championship is likely to sand or burnish their boat's antifouling to a smooth finish, thus negating any disadvantage of having antifouling paint applied. The weight of paint was not considered to be a material performance inhibitor.

2) Cost: Antifouling takes time, effort and costs money. The Committee would like to keep running costs to a minimum and therefore feel that mandating the application is not in the interest of cost-effective sailing.

3) Environmental: Antifouling is by its very nature a toxic substance introducing VOC's to the environment during application and toxic substances leaching into the marine environment while afloat. Hence the Committee would prefer to have the application of antifouling as optional rather than mandatory.

It is proposed that Class Rules 7.4.6A is deleted & 7.7.6 is amended as per below:

7.4.6A Deleted: *All boats competing in open events must be antifouled. Open events as include any event organised by the RS Elite Class Association or host clubs and events such as Cowes Week and Burnham Week. Note - this rule has been added here for clarification, as a fundamental rule - it also appears in 7.7 below*

7.7.6 Changed From: *The rudder and hull up to the designed waterline must be covered in at least one coat of antifouling.*

Changed To: *The rudder and hull up to the designed waterline may be covered in at least one coat of antifouling.*

Outcome of Rule Change on Antifouling: According to the constitution only full members are permitted to vote, and we need 2/3rds to vote for the outcome to be carried.

38 full members means we needed 25 votes. We received 33 votes and 3 were disregarded due to lapsed or being an Associate member (i.e. not a full member). Thus 30 valid votes were received which exceeds threshold required. We had answers for and against from all fleets with the resulting vote being 26 for and 4 against, so the rule change is carried.

Tom will adjust the rules and they will be posted on the website.

Jo commented that she is very pleased this result has been passed as in the course of her work she has seen some very disturbing results on the micro-pollutants in Chichester harbour and there is no doubt that antifouling is one of the culprits.

Recommendations: For those considering how to prepare their boats in future, it is suggested that shiny bare gelcoat is probably the best solution.

Fleet News

Hayling Island (Colin Smith): the class is as popular as ever with 23 boats dry sailed from the beach, racing regularly, many of the boats being jointly owned. We have had a very active programme of Sprint weekend events, and two Open events, Chichester Harbour Race Week and the Southern Championships. 2025 will be the 20th anniversary of the RS Elite fleet at HISC.

The Southern Championship 2024 took place at HISC on the 29th-30th June – a light wind event with very close racing and 18 boats. Competitors enjoyed a class dinner in the clubhouse. In stark contrast to the Nationals in the Hamble on 4th-7th July, where the wind never eased below 20 knots and was frequently over 30 knots. 18 boats. Russell Peters and crew showed a master class in high wind racing, although at times Matt Abbiss & crew on Disco Inferno got the better of them who also were amazing in these conditions. The Royal Southern Yacht Club were excellent and professional hosts. All agreed it was a very exciting event.

Eastern (Richard Bavin): Burnham regularly sees 8 boats on the racecourse. Ellanore No.13 has been refurbished after a long period and is now out racing too. They have just completed the Eastern Championships with Richard Bavin taking the honours.

Northern Ireland (Mike Browne): some handicap racing. 5 boats at Royal North; 1 Bangor; 2 Lough Neagh; 5 Strangford Lough.

Dunmore East (Barry McConnell): 2024 has seen the emergence and rapid expansion of a new fleet at Waterford Harbour Sailing Club in Dunmore East, which is around 40 miles south of Rosslare Harbour. 4 boats sailing every Wednesday; now up to 6 and more expected soon. They may need some new launching trolleys. Colin Smith will provide photos of the HISC trolleys and Gerry Reid will provide photos of the N Ireland trolleys. It is very easy for the English to get the ferry across from Holyhead. In the rest of Ireland, they have seen great success in Elite's racing under RYA YTC rating system with numerous regatta wins showing the boats pedigree not only in one design racing but handicap racing too.

Norway (Ulf Lundvall): 13 boats sailing every Wednesday. The League sailing format seems to be working very well. Tonsberg's sailing profile has improved as Jostein Aker & crew have recently won the J70 Sailing Champions League.

Future Events

2025 Nationals: Our flagship event in 2025 is to join the Royal Thames 250th Anniversary Regatta in Cowes. This was proposed by Gerry Reid and seconded by James Yearsley. It is shaping up to be an incredible event with an impressive social programme. On a couple of days we are likely to be sharing a course with the Etchells.

Other events in 2025: The Southern Championships maybe during Chichester Harbour Race Week. To be confirmed.

The Eastern Championships during Burnham Week.

The Irish Nationals at Waterford Harbour Sailing Club on 6th-8th September.

The Irish Southern Championships at Dun Laoghaire on 10th-13th July.

The Norwegian Regatta on 26th-29th June.

2026 Nationals: This will be at HISC, proposed by Gerry Reid and seconded by Dave Nicholls. 2026 will be the 21st anniversary of Elite's at HISC. No dates booked yet. Dave Nicholls thinks early June is too early.

2027 Nationals: This will possibly be at Waterford Harbour Sailing Club. To be discussed at the next Committee Meeting.

Chartering: If anyone is unable to attend but would be prepared to charter their boat, our Norwegian friends and others are keen to come to the 2025 Cowes Nationals. We are suggesting a new jib is suitable compensation. Please do come forward as to develop this class we really need to bring new blood into the fleet and create as much exciting racing as possible.

AOB

New Sails: There seems to be a problem with the luff boltrope on the new mainsails being too small diameter. Dave Nicholls, Fraser Elms and Bill Blanks have all reported problems of the boltrope pulling out of the track. Dave Nicholls and Tom Hewitson have agreed to investigate with Mike Lennon of Quantum Sails.

Actions:

Anthony York will need to be advised of the website changes for the new fee structure and new copy written – Debbie Jarvis

The Royal Southern needs to be chased for payment: Debbie Jarvis / Elliot Caldwell

Noble Marine need to be approached for general class sponsorship – before December '24 – Debbie Jarvis

Chichester Harbour Race week / Southern Championships needs to be confirmed – Debbie Jarvis / Colin Smith

The rule change as described above needs to be amended on the website, and news article placed on the website to give members the result. – Debbie Jarvis

Colin Smith and Gerry Reid to contact Barry McConnell on advice for a launching trolley

All fleet captains to provide Debbie Jarvis with details of their events so the website can be updated.