
NEW FOREST SAILABILITY

NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN 2020

Charity no: 1105212



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Dates for your diary

AGM 2021

To be advised

Everything else—on hold

EDITORS INTRODUCTION

I am aware that in these strange times, it would be all too easy to lose touch with NF Sailability and so we are issuing this newsletter to let you know what is going on – and, yes, there are things going on – and bring you up to date with developments.

Obviously, it is unlikely – or more realistically, impossible – that we will be able to start our normal operations this year but that does not mean that no-one is at Spinnaker Lake. We are unable to welcome our sailors but some volunteers are managing to get to the lake to carry out maintenance projects.

Some volunteers - our skippers - have actually been able to go sailing. Please see the article on the sailing activities later in this newsletter. Malcolm Bentley has stressed that if any sailors who have previously sailed single-handed but are not “skippers” would like to consider sailing (with limited safety boat cover) then please get in touch with him or Richard Savill.



Prepping a 303

Richard has described some of the maintenance activities which have been going on this year around the site. Steve Kitson has given us a report on the Hansa Racing. Andy Holmes has commented on our finances. And our chairman, Malcolm Bentley, has given us his views on the prospects of our operations in the future.

This is my first time as “editor” of any newsletter, so please excuse any odd layouts or photos in weird places!

Rowena Marsh

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN: MALCOLM BENTLEY



This has been a very challenging year for many people and particularly those that are vulnerable or already have great limitations on their options for activities and social life. It is very disappointing that the pandemic has effectively closed the running of NFS for the benefit of our many sailors and has stopped our volunteers getting the rewarding benefit of helping at NFS and being part of our normally thriving community.

We do not anticipate being able to open this year but are working on the assumption that things may return to normal next year. We very much hope that our sailors will have retained their love of sailing with us and that they and their carers and families will return as usual as soon as it is possible. Likewise of course we look forward to working again with all our volunteers. As Andy mentions, our finances are sound and thus we can weather this period and be ready to reopen.

In the meantime, we have worked closely with Spinnaker Sailing Club to offer as much sailing as possible within the Government guidelines, as mentioned above. Spinnaker were at the forefront of sailing clubs seeking ways in which a return to boating was possible and NFS was similarly one of the first Sailability centres in the country to make it possible. The opportunity to sail is by necessity limited to those confident to sail independently or with a family member but it has at least allowed several members to be regularly on the water. We introduced a limited use of the safety boat when the weed became a problem and advised sailors to only go out when the safety boat was manned, generally by only a single safety boat driver to help de-weed or tow back to the pontoon. There is a Whatsapp group of sailors and safety boat drivers so that times can be coordinated. If any sailors that have in the past sailed single-handed but are not skippers would like to consider sailing with this limited safety boat cover then please get in touch with Richard Savill or me in the first instance.

The weed has been a big problem again this year and Spinnaker has been actively examining solutions to reduce or clear it and Spinnaker are sharing their plans with NFS. Having the lake reasonably free of weed throughout the season is fundamental to the successful running of NFS and the weed affects our boats with their fixed centre boards more than the dinghies generally sailed on the lake. This all has to be done in discussion with Wessex Water, the lake owners, and Natural England, particularly as the lake is a SSSI. The clearance of floating weed using a specialist weed boat contractor has proved successful and it is likely that a specialist weed boat will be acquired along with a tractor for moving the weed once brought ashore. We are working with Spinnaker on the best way to jointly invest in this equipment.

Malcolm Bentley

FROM OUR BOSUN: RICHARD SAVILL



Our 2020 Boat work team (*or shed boys as I call them – ED*) started de-winterizing the boats early in February before we were aware of what the season had in store for us all. The team worked with the usual enthusiasm and tea, plus a Rowena Cake.

By half way through March we had the dreaded news that we would not be opening the doors to our visitors. This also meant the cancellation of our NFS 20th birthday party and the launching of our latest donated 303 'Twelfth Knight'

It also meant that we had to postpone our annual 'Hansa TT' due in May. It is almost certain now that this event will not take place this year.

After a number of emails and telephone discussions, the committee looked at the possibility of opening up slightly restricted sailing sessions to our Skippers, with only couples from the same household being able to share a boat. Another "rule" is that the skippers have to sanitise the boats before and after each session.

To allow sailing to happen, we launched three of our 303s. Tony and Mags Ryle did yet another magnificent job of prepping and launching our two 2.4s.

We had a number of good sailing sessions, until mid-July when the weed started to show its ugly head or is that heads, making any attempt at good sailing impossible.

Over the last few weeks Spinnaker have employed a man and a specialist weed clearing boat to start de-weeding. By 21 August he had cleared about 70cubic metres of the stuff. And, as usual, the safety boat cleared further bundles of weed either from the bottom of the 303s or directly out of the lake. However, there is still a lot of weed!

In the meantime, Roy Arnold erected our new flag pole, Steve Kitson found an engineer who very kindly constructed a centre board hoist attached to our Boat box trailer, making it much easier to lift the centreboards out of the dinghies. This, Steve kindly donated to NFDS.

Earlier in the season, we had teams of volunteers cleaning the pontoon, cutting back growth around the pontoons and the shed plus a team re-painting the shed. So, work still goes on even if we can't fulfil our main purpose of taking people sailing or giving trips in a safety boat.

Richard Savill

FROM OUR HANSA REPRESENTATIVE: STEVE KITSON



Hansa has been busy keeping all our racers entertained since the lockdown was put in place.

On 21st April Hansa Class UK (HCUK) announced a new partnership with GUL. GUL will support HCUK with sponsorship and prizes throughout the season, this begins a new relationship which is very exciting. The Hansa Class has a vision of inclusivity; enabling people that have found barriers between themselves and sailing to gain access to our fantastic sport. The British watersports brand has much to offer, including quality merchandise and technical support.

Also in April HCUK launched Hansa GUL VR Series 2020. This is a Virtual Regatta sailing competition which has 10 events spread over the coming months. Our very own Dave Jolliffe has been taking part and seems to be doing very well. This competition has brought our racers, who are particularly vulnerable and isolated, to another level and enabled them to continue to enjoy our sport in the same way.

Another first for HCUK was the launch of an art competition back in May. Hansa was overwhelmed with the entries they received. It was clear that friends from all over the globe wanted to get involved and they had artworks from Hong Kong, Australia and The Philippines. All the 4 categories were shared on the Hansa FaceBook page (Hansa Class UK) as well as Instagram and Twitter. More information on all the above can be found on the Hansa Class UK website.

In the month of July, Spinnaker started their racing on a Wednesday evening and on Sundays. It is open to NFS sailors using our 303s or 2.4s. For more information please contact Malcolm or Andy Holmes.

Thanks again for your support.

Steve Kitson

FROM OUR TREASURER: ANDY HOLMES



While many charities are suffering financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19 we are extremely lucky that our finances are still in a relatively healthy position. In fact, they are looking better than they were at the same time last year. This is despite the fact that the income from subscriptions and sailing fees has all but disappeared because we have been unable to continue with our normal sailing activities this season.

As you will know the committee has made the decision to ask only those members who have been able to sail to pay a membership subscription this season.

There are of course unavoidable expenses such as the cost of insurance and our Spinnaker membership fees which still have to be paid. Our running expenses are however considerably lower than normal due to the very limited sailing activities.

We have continued to be supported generously by our donors and one large donation (by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous) enabled us to buy the new 303 at the beginning of the season. This is the boat - 'Twelfth Knight' referred to by Richard earlier.

We recently received an unexpected donation of £9,758 from the Estate of Sheila Black and whilst some thought has been given by the committee as to how this donation might be used no decision has yet been made.

During this financial year, we are also fortunate to have received donations as follows:

- £500 Verwood Bowls Club
- £1,000 St James's Place
- £300 Ringwood Carnival, which at their request will be used to purchase replacement sails.

These, plus our regular monthly donations are very much appreciated in these difficult times. Hopefully we will be able to resume more of our normal sailing activities next season so that we can welcome back all our sailors and volunteers.

Andy Holmes

IS SAILING A “SAGA”?

Following the committee’s decision to allow sailing for “accredited” skippers, Richard, the bosun, and his ever willing volunteers got three 303s ready and put them back on the water. As Richard said in his notes, Tony and Mags Ryle got the two 2.4s prepped and also back onto the water.

To go sailing, there were some rules to follow:

- Skippers sail at their own risk, particularly as there is no formal safety boat cover.
- Only one person per boat, unless the two people were from the same household.
- The skipper needed to be agile/ strong enough to paddle the boat back in times of difficulty (weed, no wind etc).
- Advised totake a radio or mobile phone in case the skipper gets into difficulty.
- Must sanitise the boat – see below.

There were other rules, but these were the most relevant.

So, following an email from Malcolm Bentley, the skippers were invited to book slots for each boat – this was back in June and, to be fair, take up was not immediate. However, as soon as skippers went sailing, there was an appetite to go sailing again and there is a steady flow of people going to the lake and taking the boats out. Well, unless it is tipping with rain, gale force winds, and before the dreaded weed hit us again.

Anyway, to go sailing now it is necessary to book 1 ½ hour slots. That is to enable the skipper to sanitise the boats by spraying anti-bac on the seats and anything which is likely to be touched – the mast, the reefing lines, the tiller etc. Then these parts must be sprayed with water sucked up (by pumps made by our volunteers) from the lake. You are then ready to go sailing. About 15 – 20 mins before the end of the session, the boat should be moored and the anti-bac and water sprayed again on parts touched by the skipper. When the new skipper arrives for his booked “slot” he needs to do the spraying routine again. (Yes, even if he has seen the previous skipper doing the sanitisation 2 minutes beforehand.)

We have had a couple of Tuesday afternoon racing sessions and these will continue if enough people want to attend – and the weather/ weed enables sailing to go ahead.

Does this seem like a bit of a faff? Well, it does enable us to go sailing and, in reality, there are always people around willing to help. And when you get a good sail, when the sun shines and there is a reasonable wind, yes, definitely worth it



Jane Knight in a 2.4



Prepping the safety boat

FROM OUR EVENTS ORGANISER: ANGELA BENTLEY



As we start to emerge from these strange and difficult times we had hoped to organise an Informal NFS Lunch for our volunteers, along the lines of our usual successful bring and share event, as many of you have not seen each other for many months. Regrettably the current Covid regulations mean that Spinner would have to limit it to 20 people, with 2 households per table. Additionally it would have to be catered, and so it has been decided that this is not the type of event that our volunteers had in mind.

The Christmas Lunch Monday 7th December is now cancelled as Ferndown Golf Club can only accommodate 30 people with guests sitting also on small tables of two households per table. This would not make the event viable, as demand would outstrip availability.

Therefore both events are on hold until the New Year when hopefully the restrictions will relax. We know that this is not the news that you had been hoping for but we think everything will be rather different this Christmas.

We will let you know the date of the AGM in 2021 in due course.

Angela Bentley

AOB – OR “GOSSIP”

This is a bit with odds and ends. Not enough for an article in themselves but worth a mention. Please feel free in future to contribute to this section – either email me or pass on any gossip when you see me. Newseditor@newforestsailability.co.uk

- Who managed to drop one of the batteries for the water pump into the lake? And then, who insisted on jumping in to try to retrieve it? Without success, I might add as the water is murky and the bottom is muddy. Did anyone say “Rory” – if so, correct!
- NFDS is 20 years old this year. Unlikely to be much of a celebration – but no doubt the Trustees have something in mind for when we get back to some sort of normality.
- Mags Ryle has just gone into hospital for a knee operation. Good luck with it, Mags, and hope the self-isolation and social distancing before and after the operation is not too tedious. We look forward to seeing you and Tony back at the lake soon.
- And I would like to say a special “thank you” to the ladies who volunteered to help me paint the shed: Sue Shewell, Sue Harling, Rory Morrison, Jane Knight. And another mention for reaching the top bits which we could not reach – Tony Ryle and Peter Goodwin.