

## **DYC Commodore's Report for the AGM 29th January 2022**

I took over as Acting Commodore in September after the resignation of Tony Baker whom I would like to thank for all his hard work keeping the club going during a very challenging time. It's been a year of many parts, some good and some not so good. This is my take on 2021 and how we stand going into 2022.

Membership numbers continue to grow and unbelievably, now stands at 1,600 with 804 valid subscriptions. This represents a 20% increase on last year with paddlesports the most popular activity quoted by members.

On the water, kayaking has proven to be immensely popular throughout the period with new additions to the fleet and regular, organised events. Sailing and motorboat activities also fared well with a very active junior dinghy sailing community, numerous RYA training courses and significant DYC contributions to local events including junior regatta. It was pleasing to see the return of Dartmouth Regatta Week to which DYC contributed in the usual way with lots of members getting involved for the first time. We finished the year well, passing our annual RYA inspection with flying colours.

In the club house, we have invested significantly in the upkeep of the building. Projects have included the replacement of the bar floor, complete refurbishment of the men's showers, new umbrella for the outdoor embankment space and a new fire installed in the bar. There has also been a lot of work behind the scenes to improve our compliance with fire regulations; work which is ongoing. Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the middle floor into holiday rental accommodation. Unsurprisingly the cost of this conversion has increased significantly since the original estimate and we are currently seeking updated quotations for the works.

The town was very busy during the summer and the outdoor embankment space was immensely popular with members and visitors alike. The importance of this space to the profitability of the club is set out more fully in the Treasurer's report.

Overall, our financial performance was strong and we managed to outperform pre-pandemic sales of food and drink despite being closed for long periods. Our annual turnover was up 18% and we made a profit of £37,493.

However, it is important to recognise that, without the government grants and furlough payments totalling £59k this year, it would have been an entirely different story.

Due to Covid restrictions the club was closed for long periods and, when we opened, we could only offer a restricted service which required more staff to operate. As with the rest of the hospitality sector, wage costs increased the club and we struggled to recruit and retain kitchen and bar staff.

Whilst we recruited a new club manager to help steer us through the busy summer period, this appointment was problematical and, at times, we struggled to cope with the high volume of visitors, especially during August and Regatta. The situation reached breaking point in September forcing us to end that appointment, cease all catering activities due to service issues and restart the process of finding a new club manager.

The uncertainty due to Covid continued throughout the latter part of the year and the situation was exacerbated by the new omicron variant in late November. This severely impacted the planning of numerous social events and resulted in a number of frustrating cancellations. Undeterred, our social committee still managed to put on a successful and enjoyable member's night in November followed by a quiz night and outdoor carols on the run up to Christmas. 2022 started on a high note with a New Year's Day swim which attracted some 50 swimmers with hundreds more watching from the embankment.

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As I write this in January 2022, there is optimism that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and, perhaps, we can all look forward to a more normal year in 2022. As a club, we also have reason to be optimistic as we have a new club manager in place and it is hoped to recommence the provision of a food service in the very near future. Our 2022 social calendar gets off to a flying start in February with the six nations rugby showing in the club and a quiz night / fish and chip supper also taking place during the month.

Plans are in place for ongoing improvements to the club house including a new kitchen extraction system, installation of a curtain in the Gun Room and we would like to refurbish the downstairs toilets. We will also be upgrading the fire alarm system and will continue to work on the middle floor project to reach a decision point on when to go ahead with any works.

As mentioned earlier, the outdoor embankment space is crucial to our financial performance this year and we aim to be successful in obtaining a 3-year license to use this space. We eagerly await details of the tender process from SHDC.

Also crucial to our financial performance is a special resolution at the AGM to create a separate trading subsidiary for non-member income to protect our status as a CASC. A proposal paper has been prepared and is available on the club's website.

We also look forward to resuming and expanding our on the water activities this year and help members old and new get out on the water, it would be great to see more social events involving water activities. If you have any suggestions, please get in touch.

So overall, there are lots of positives going into 2022 but if I were to single out one area of concern it would be how we attract new committee members, prepared to eventually step into leadership roles and shape the future of the club. This seems to get harder every year and many of the current committee have been in post a long time, making succession planning a major concern. Hospitality management is a good example where, without a Rear Commodore Hospitality, we have no one leading in this area for the second year running.

On behalf of the club, I would like to thank all the 2021 committee members and others who get involved along the way, for their dedication and effort keeping things going during a particularly challenging year.

Finally, a special mention and thank you must go to Tim Freeman, who is standing down after some 26 years creating and leading what has now become the paddlesports section of the club. The importance of this section, and Tim's contribution, to DYC cannot be overstated. There are some fantastic tributes and accolades to Tim on the DYC Paddlesports Section Face Book page – thoroughly deserved and well worth a read.

All that remains, is for me to thank you for being a member of DYC and I wish you a healthy and happy year.

Tim Vaughan