



West Mersea Yacht Club



**WEST MERSEA KEELBOAT RACING JOINT FORUM**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**  
**Dabchicks Sailing Club**  
**Minutes**

Chairman: Roger Sydenham

First can we thank all the people who have volunteered or assisted in the running of races this year. Especially Brian and Wendy without who we would have many problems filling duties, and the teams who run Friday night racing at DSC under the management of and including Peter Fitt.

Overall throughout 2017 we have seen a decline in the number of members taking part in cruiser racing whether this is Locally Handicapped , IRC or White sail. This trend is not unique to West Mersea, but we would like if possible to reverse the trend. We believe through this forum we try to understand what you as a group want us to do and the racing you would like.

At the cruiser forum last year we endeavoured as a combined sailing committee to give sailors what they asked for as expressed in this forum. We took the opportunity to review notes from that meeting and we changed a number of things to align with the sailors requests This appears to have resulted in the numbers racing continuing to fall, however we do see an increase in the numbers cruising. We have tried to get members to this meeting who do not usually race to try and get their input.

Besides the challenge of getting more boats out to race we need to get more volunteers to actually come forward and volunteer to run some races and score those races, we cannot continue to rely on the same people doing this every week.

### **So where do we go from here?**

The combined sailing committee have tried to put their heads together and change a few things to try and reinvigorate the racing and whilst we do not we think have all the answers we are trying to do somethings differently.

We have received some feedback from members which we have considered and put into this programme and some of those are;



- Family time constraints
- Sportsboat races/series
- Avoid (where possible) clashing white sail races with cruises
- Availability of volunteers
- A desire for some longer courses

Jack Davis sends his apologies but he is on holiday for a few weeks.

The cruising programme is now confirmed following a cruising in company forum chaired by Jack. Once again we would have liked a few more participants to gain more views but you will find I have circulated the programme as published and this is contained within the overall programme.

So what has changed

1. On a 3 occasions during the season we have put in two days of racing both Saturday and Sunday with some kind of social taking place. That is not necessarily a sit down dinner but maybe an early supper of street grub idea to keep people together. The racing format is not totally settled but as well as counting for the points series we will have prizes for the weekend awarded during the weekend. Racing may be a combination of two shorter races on one day and a longer race.
2. White sail races do seem to be popular and we have we think settled down the NHC handicap system after a glitch this year which we now understand. We have also corrected some errors in the initial handicaps caused by people mis typing numbers nationally. We have increased the number of races to 10 and tried where we can to avoid the same dates as the more popular cruises which take place. Done with the help of Jack Davis.
3. Following a request we have combined some white sail starts with a new series for IRC sportsboats, all new and see how it goes.
4. New Standalone Summer Regatta over two days.
5. We have removed the short handed series as we got no entries except for the wallet cup.
6. Not totally for the cruiser forum, but certainly relevant information we have moved Round the Island from Mersea week to 12th August with we



hope a bigger tide. We are also going to change the format to include windsurfers, Rowing and potentially paddle boards, all with prizes etc.

7. So what happens in the middle of mersea week? The RNLi Pennant Race which we hope can be bigger and better with cruisers and dinghies, especially if they have already participated in the start of Mersea week.

That in as brief a form as possible covers the changes we have made in the programme which is open for discussion here. The NOR's and the Sailing Instructions have not yet been written for the new events but will be done following feedback

Additionally though Brian, Wendy and me have agreed that during February on dates we will advertise we will happily hold some OOD evenings and some scoring system evenings. These we would like to do mid week if we can and try to avoid weekends.

Prior to this we will circulate the programme with Ood's on it. Where there are spaces which cannot be filled by our usual volunteers we will pick the names of boats from the results of this year. This should enable people to plan for their duty and if they have any concerns then we can help people.

- A. Suggestion from the floor for a Line honours prizes. We have already put in some new prize strategies for 2018, not just a line honours prize. This is aimed to get people back to the sponsor club.
- B. Some modifications to the Sportsboat series, increase the number of races and on some days two races. Consider carefully the number of races to count.
- C. Some concern that the programme is a fait a complet, and should we have the meeting in September and a second in November. This has been tried in the past but there was no increase in numbers. Additionally this date is known for a whole year and people do send us ideas during the Autumn which we incorporate. An example from this years programme is the IRC Sportsboat. To be considered by the next joint sailing committee.
- D. Could we have longer legs, more corners, shorter races, longer races etc. When this was all put together after the meeting it was apparent that we just need to mix it differently. We will take a look at that in 2018.



- E. Change of sail definition for white sail in the NOR. If this is preventing people taking part we will review, amend and try for one year and bring it back to the forum.
- F. Could we shorten the length of the Southern OLM and Eastern OLM to the length similar to the Western. To be addressed as we also need to think about the IDM in Mersea week.

The questions concerning handicaps for LH, should be directed towards the handicap committee, Richard Hayden.

The questions concerning NHC should be addressed to the Joint Sailing Committee.

There being no further discussion points the meeting closed and was followed by the DSC Prizegiving. Thank you for everyones participation.

Sailing committee