

MMA Chairman's Notes, October 2020

The evenings are drawing in, and this is the time of year when historically we would be looking forward to the MMA Laying Up supper. The MMA Social programme has been but one casualty of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Such is life. Aspirations to run a classic dinghy event crashed at the first hurdle. Continental cruises are but a distant memory. The Cowes racing programme never really started until August but even so the Round the Island Race and Cowes Week were other early fallers. However when reviewing the last 6 months or so I observe that restrictions on the way we would otherwise have spent our time have allowed us to focus on "sorting things out".

At the MMA Committee Meeting on 30 September the Membership Secretary reported that the dinghy park is in excellent order. All berths are filled and only 2 annual berthing fees are outstanding. MMA finances are in good health and we are investing in more kayak/paddleboard racks to free spaces for inflatables that currently await vacancies. The current target is removal of large and generally-unused sailing dinghies and road trailers to make room for more small family boats that we are going to see afloat regularly. .

This summer the Folly Public Slipway has been in greater demand than ever and during busy weekends all available car parking has been filled to capacity from early morning. The Folly Inn management has found it helpful for MMA Members to display parking badges. No sign yet of the expected Greene King charges for parking but we are ready for when this is eventually introduced.



As mentioned our classic dinghy regatta was a Coronavirus casualty but there has been encouraging support for some less formal Saturday afternoon sailing. The number of MMA mirrors and scows has

increased and prospects for more informal racing in 20-21 are promising. Well done those intrepid crews who proved that scows can be sailed in winds over 30 kts. MMA is trying in particular to encourage children to get afloat to benefit from the special nature of our river and taste the "swallows and amazons" experience.

The oar house and surrounds have been tidied, and abandoned launching trollies and masts disposed of. The perennial issue for some considerable time has been dumping of waste and refuse in the dinghy compound. Some time ago a member donated a recycling bin for the convenience of members. Unfortunately this facility has been abused and significant amounts of overflowing garbage dumped on the assumption that somebody else would deal with the problem have created a health hazard. MMA does not employ a bin fairy. Committee members have done their best to clear up the stinking mess left by others but now the limits of charity have been reached. The waste bin has been removed. Members are directed to either take their waste home with them, or place it in the large Biffa bins, funded by the Isle of Wight Council and sited immediately south of the gate to the scrubbing berth compound. This is a public facility and is not connected to the pub. Thank you for your cooperation.



The cancellation of boat jumbles this year has led to a steady accumulation of “stuff” in many garages and stores. The new MMA website is running well and it has been suggested that it might be useful to have a “sales and wants” section on the website. This is being investigated. Meantime if anybody is prepared to come forward and arrange a boat jumble next spring, please let one of the committee know. All subject to Covid restrictions of course.

The running of our association is totally dependent on having a committee willing to devote a relatively modest amount of time to keep MMA on course. They have achieved over the last few years a huge amount in improvements to car parking, the dinghy park and oar house. MMA is in good shape. However the ravages of time mean that it is unfair to ask some key officers to continue well beyond their agreed tenure. Both our Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer have indicated that after the 2021 AGM, to be held provisionally in mid April, they need to move on. To take over from them we are looking for people who, while not necessarily highly qualified in either disciplines, are prepared to devote a few hours each month to keeping the accounts in order, to field enquiries and maintain, with the help of professional IT support, our internet website. The Committee meets about 4 times each year, of late on zoom. What the Committee does not do is undertake all the practical jobs such as clearing mud and shingle, disposing of waste etc. (The MMA policy is to contract these tasks out) Working parties of members are very few and far between; I can recall only 3 or 4 during the last 3 years and even for these, committee members are not obliged to attend. Both the Treasurer and Secretary receive a nominal honorarium which is currently £350 per year. More information on these posts can be obtained from Colin Gilbert or Mary Phillips. No Committee – No MMA. MMA needs you!



Finally, MMA continues to have a voice on both the Newport Harbour Users Group, and the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee. If anybody has issues that you wish to raise on either of these fora, please let me know.

Nobody really knows how the 2021 sailing season is going to pan out. Meantime, when venturing out to check moorings etc over the winter season please be over-cautious with safety. Water temperatures are falling fast. Always wear a lifejacket in your dinghy; keep your mobile phone in a waterproof bag and please ensure that somebody knows your intended movements and when to expect your return. Folly Ventures, by arrangement, will always check your boat for you.

With best wishes for a happy and safe winter.

Peter Jackson
October 2020.