



SBC

The Small Boat Club Kingston upon Thames

Newsletter: 20th February 2021

Commodore's Message

Hello again everyone and a Happy New Year (surely an improvement on 2020!).

Covid has followed us into the new year along with its threats of restrictions on our boating desires but the Committee is forging ahead with plans to make 2021 better than 2020.

Following on from the agreement at the AGM to spend money on a Programme of Works, we have been building a little more detail and a cost profile. Whilst nothing is certain until it is done, we are planning to spruce up the clubhouse inside and out, do some changes to the jetty to accommodate some new dinghies (yes, you read that right) whilst making it easier to step in and out of them.

Finishing the new day boat and agree a hiring approach, additional work on the loo (mainly "under the covers") to improve the "atmosphere", potential replacement of the marquees, a new floating platform/pontoon to help the cadets in and out of the water, some additional mooring points for the dinghies when on the island and a lot of gardening work. This latter piece will involve planting some new trees (to make up for the two willows we lost last year), repairing the picket fence along the Middlesex side and re-turfing much of the island on the Surrey side whilst trying to improve drainage at the same time.

All of the projects will require your support, whether digging, building, painting or helping with sustenance! The biggest piece is the re-turfing. Whilst we can clear weeds, rotovate the soil, add topsoil in smaller teams and at various times, when it comes to laying the turf, we need to get it laid

within two days of delivery. **We estimate that we need team(s) of 10-12 folk over two consecutive days to do this.** It will be heavy work moving and laying turves. The dates and times will be dictated by the weather and Covid restrictions, but we need some level of "intent" to support this as soon as possible. So, if you think you are up for the task, please drop a note to Dom:

dominic@thevirtualgroup.co.uk

A further improvement we are investigating is the provision of lockers. The Committee are looking for "expressions of interest" to make some lockers available in the club shed for members' use. The dimensions of a full-size locker is

190cmx45cmx45cm a half size locker being 95cmx45cmx45cm (please see picture for illustration).

The half locker would be £10 per quarter, with the full locker £20 per quarter. If you are interested please email jamesmanthel@gmail.com



Given that we were unable to make full use of the island last year, combined with a marked increase in the number of Cadets joining the club, it is probably timely to remind members about safety. Whilst we try to make the island as safe as we can, there are dangers everywhere. The waters around the island are deep, can run fast and be cold. Our boats and machinery have sharp edges, anchors, rowlocks, boat hooks, cleats. And our mooring points can be trip hazards. Parents/guardians, please supervise your youngsters when on the island, don't assume that anyone else will and,

whilst a challenge, please dissuade them from running around. For the very young, we would also recommend the use of buoyancy aids.

This year's Handbook has been updated and should be with you soon, if not already! Included is the year's schedule of events and duty rota. **Please look for you duty day now. If you are unable to make the date, then it is up to you to find someone to cover.** The SBC Members WhatsApp group is there to help. As with last year, Club Rule 14 (Conduct of members) sub-sections b and c are still relaxed whilst we are in lock-down. The Committee will review as government guidelines change.

Given the increase in numbers of Cadets this year, our Committee member Vaughan has taken it upon himself to organise Cadet focussed events. See his notes later in the newsletter and over the coming months.

Looking forward to the lifting of restrictions and being able to meet up again!
AJ

From the Committee

AJ has outlined what is planned in the way of maintenance on the island: it will need involvement from everyone to get the island looking its best again. Please consider how you can contribute. Hopefully we can get back on the island before too long to start on some of the jobs that can be done by a couple of people maintaining social distancing. Social events are more problematic. We had a Fitting Out Supper pencilled in for March, but it is looking unlikely that we can hold this. Hopefully we can do something, maybe outdoors, in late April? Watch out for details. Vaughan is planning a family fun day for late June. We hope to be able to celebrate 25 years of our current Clubhouse between these events. The Committee is still working hard to plan work so we are ready to go as soon as conditions permit!!
Linda

River conditions

We have had some challenging conditions on the River since New Year, some of which have been recorded on WhatsApp and our Facebook page by members' photographs. The River has been

flowing very fast – we have only just come off Red Boards (16th February) and there is still water to come down stream. We have had flooding around and over the island with high tides – more to come at the end of February. Teddington Lock Cut froze over for a short while above the lock gates. People have been seal spotting as one has ventured above the Lock. Molesey Lock was scheduled to reopen on 15th February but will be self-service only (no lockkeeper assisted passage at present). Teddington Lock continues to operate 9am-3pm only. There is still maintenance work going on and there will be weekday closures at Walton during March for refurbishment of the flow gauge. Please check what is happening on the EA website before you head out or you can sign up for regular updates at riverthames@environment-agency.gov.uk.



The Willy Waterman *Hints and Tips passed down*

De-winterising your boat

As the warmer months are just around the corner, it is probably time to think about de-winterising your boat. Here are some high-level hints to help:

Step 1: Check the Battery

You can choose from a few different kinds of batteries. In this example, we'll refer to the most common kind of boat battery, a flooded battery. Before you take your boat out for the season, top-up the battery with fresh, distilled water. You're in good shape if the battery holds a strong charge under a tester.

Next, remove the wires from the charge posts and scrub away dirt and rust. A small wire brush should do the trick.

Finally, coat the posts in grease to protect them from further corrosion.

Step 2: Test the Electronics

Test all the switches, knobs, and electrical equipment on the boat. All electrical systems are connected, so flip the switches on the helm and cabin. Now that the battery is running, switch it off

and see if the automatic bilge pump float (if fitted) switch works.

Step 3: Change the Engine Oil

If you didn't change the oil before storing the boat for the winter, now's the time to do it. Don't forget about the outdrive oil, either. Fill or change those as needed.

When you de-winterize your boat, you should also check your engine for:

- Power steering fluid levels
- Coolant levels
- Leaks below the engine area
- Visible cracks or wear in fuel lines

Step 4: Fill the Cooling System

You can fill the cooling system with equal parts water and antifreeze if you flushed it out before you stored your boat. If you left the water/antifreeze mixture in over the winter, drain it before you fill it. Check the hoses for cracks or wear, and look for any visible leakage.

Step 5: Inspect the Fuel Tank and Fuel Lines

Your fuel tank and fuel lines could develop rust during the winter. Hopefully, you filled the tank before storing it, and no moisture had a chance to settle.

However, fuel lines tend to crack when exposed to cold temperatures. Inspect and replace them as necessary.

Step 6: Put Your Safety Gear in Order

This step is potentially life-saving. Make sure your safety equipment is prepared, not expired, and not visibly damaged.

Follow these safety gear steps:

- Make sure you have enough flotation devices.
- Read expiration dates for fire extinguishers.
- Test all the lights in the cabin and on deck.
- Check the signalling equipment, such as horns, flares, and whistles.

Step 7: Check the Belts for Wear

During the boating off-season, the belts connecting the engines and motors can quickly wear down. Use your hands to check these belts for tears in the fibres.

Push down on the belts slightly to see if there is too much slack. If you notice any black soot around the machinery, you may want to switch out your belts for new ones.

Date for your Diary – Family Fun Day on June 27th

As we look forward to emerging from lockdown into a summer we can spend on the Island, we are beginning to make plans for the Family Fun Day which will be held on Sunday June 27th. There will be games, activities, food and drink, with something for everyone to enjoy. As well as things to do on the island we also hope to be able to set up water-based activities and challenges to bring out the competitive spirit in everyone! There are over 25 cadet members in the club this year so we hope that it will be a busy but enjoyable day for all.

To help with running the day we are looking for volunteers who can provide stalls or activities, or who can help with general logistics on the day. If you can spare some time or are able to support the day in any way, please get in touch with Vaughan via email at vaughansimpson@hotmail.com or via the club's Whatsapp group.

We are keen to ensure the day offers something for everyone, and whilst some activities will naturally be focused on the younger members and cadets we expect that some of the more experienced members will be keen to show off their own hard-earned skills from years on and off the water. So please mark the day in your diary – Sunday June 27th – and we look forward to seeing you there!

Vaughan



James Manthel makes it to the Island...

No bailing required!

Just smashing out the ice!!

Please send articles, notices & photos for future Newsletters to:
ianholiday54@gmail.com