

BEDFORD ROWING CLUB

UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

I hope everyone is still staying safe and well. I'm sure we are all looking forward to the return of some sort of normality. It remains to be seen, as restrictions ease, how familiar that normal will be. Many will doubtless welcome the return of foreign holidays, retail therapy and visits to and from far-flung family and friends. Others may hope that the reductions we've seen in air and road traffic, and the burgeoning of wildlife, may impel us to question our addiction to consumption. Can we realistically envisage a greener future?

At all events, I'm sure fellow-members and supporters of BRC are united in longing for the return of the full range of rowing. Hopefully, not long now....

For the present rowing at BRC remains restricted to single-sculling, plus members of the same household in pairs or doubles. Captain Mike's booking system remains in place for reserving boats and boating slots. Keep an eye on the Club's FaceBook pages for developments as Government and British Rowing guidance evolves. We will also post changes in our procedures on the website. A risk assessment for the return to rowing (incorporating British Rowing guidance) has been adopted, and is posted in the News section of the website.

The Committee considered re-opening the bar from 4 July, the earliest date that Government advice would allow. This has been a difficult balance. Naturally we want to restore normal service as soon as possible and to take advantage of the summer season, usually our busiest. But this must be tempered by safety considerations, such as Bedford's position near the wrong end of the league table of Covid-19 cases per head of population. The need to cover overheads from, effectively, a standing start in a mixed economic climate also deserves careful thought.

A straw poll of members was undertaken over this weekend and attracted a strong turnout. Thank you for giving us your views. Overwhelmingly, these favoured 'safety first' at least for the time being. We have therefore deferred plans to re-open the bar. We will of course keep this under review, and plan to re-open it as soon as it is prudent to do so.

We continue to make progress on the project to change the Club's constitution from an unincorporated association to a limited company. This requires a significant amount of legal documentation, and the involvement of third parties such as Bedford Borough Council as the Club's landlord. This is all in hand. We aim to consult members in more detail once the Committee has considered all the proposed arrangements, prior to presenting the documents for members' formal approval at the AGM scheduled for September. Current thinking is that while members would be asked to approve the arrangements at the AGM, they would be implemented immediately after the Club's year-end on 31 March 2021. There are significant accounting implications and costs otherwise.

The Club Captain is elected annually at a special members' meeting in July. This has been set for 23 July 2020, and formal Notice has been posted in the Clubhouse and on FaceBook and the Club's website. Nominations are invited in the manner and by the date set out in the formal Notice. Mike Baker has indicated he is willing to serve for a further year, and his

nomination papers have been received. The Captain's year of office runs from 1 September to 31 August.

The Committee has also set 17 September 2020 as the date for the AGM. Formal notice will be posted in due course.

We are contemplating holding either or both of these members' meetings via the Zoom video conferencing app. Committee meetings have taken place successfully in this way for the past few months. I believe this may be a first for a members' meeting of the Club, but it may be the best way to ensure the widest participation. Covid-19 guidance is likely to evolve over the relevant period, but in any event we have a number of members in the vulnerable group still advised to shield at home for some time.

My very best wishes to everyone. I can scarcely wait to share time with as many as possible back at the Clubhouse, or on the river, as soon as may be.

MARTIN BANHAM-HALL, Club President

28 June 2020