

National Scorpion Association Chairman's Report 2021

Hi All

It's been an absolute honour to have been the Chairman for the last year and it remains my absolute conviction to serve the Scorpion community for the next 12 months (assuming that meets with the association blessing), and a heartfelt thank you, to you all for being such a wonderful class to be part of.

I've built on last years report to continue the theme and show progress.

My report is broken down as follows:

- The situation
- The long-term solution
- The people
- The output
- The outlook

2019 is normal text, **2020 is bold**, **2021 is green**

The situation:

All discretionary leisure spend has, and will continue to be, put under extreme pressure. This is in part due to the economic climate but also to major changes in social relaxation decision making.

(2020) This situation since C19 has been made more acute as social distancing will have significantly altered the risk profile of discretionary leisure activity.

Sailing as a sport has many perceived barriers to entry that are well understood. Additional pressure is created by virtue of the sheer number of different dinghy classes now existing, all attempting to compete for 'customers' with associated financial and 'extinction' risks.

(2020) It is my belief that like many business' that have fallen due to C19, so that the same for many classes

However the class with the committed membership has fought this challenge head on.

- 1. We attempted an end of season championship at Plymouth, now to be a first of the year event.**
- 2. The committee worked tirelessly since May 2020 to bring the event to fruition.**
- 3. The Thursday evening quiz nights have been fantastic community engagement events.**
- 4. The virtual sailing events have kept the community alive and enjoyed the competitive experience both against other classes and from within.**
- 5. The Tallulah effect has given the class qudos nationally and been a catalyst for boat building**
- 6. The support of P&B/Ovington, Paintcraft/Duffin has seen unprecedented boat building activity not seen for many years and unlikely to be present in other classes this year.**

(2021) in summary to the 6 points added in 2020:

1. Sadly the Plymouth event like virtually everything else in 2020 became a casualty of the c19 effect. Sailing like all sports had a very difficult 18 months but I'm proud to say that the class finds itself in an enviable position due to the incredible support of:

the membership

the committee

and the constant communication across the many social media platforms.

2. The committee . There are no superlatives to describe their collective drive and commitment. Just a very big thank you from us, all to you all.

3. Thursday evenings Virtual Racing and team racing against other classes, whatsapp chat rooms, lock down quiz nights, fabulous association archive, open meeting attendance etc all contribute to the " class' culture of inclusive Friendship"

well done all.

4. The Scorpion community is our identity and thanks to you all is bringing back old friends and making new ones. Russell's report will show the impact this has had on the emerging financial strength of the class.

5. The "Tallulah Effect", is staggering . The math is difficult to comprehend but here we go:

- there has been over £110,000 spent on new boats!
- over 25 boat sale transactions representing in excess £60,000 invested in 2nd hand boats.
- Probably c40 complete set of sails representing in excess of £40,000 invested

Total investment in the boat

£210,000

6. Thank you to JJ Boats, Ovington, Paintcraft Duffin, Gosling Dinghy Craft, HD, North's and P&B .

Lack of experience in the amateur dinghy sector on how to achieve a class 'turnaround' is resulting in what I shall call a "Catch 22"; a paradoxical situation from which an individual or community cannot escape because of contradictory rules or limitations. The term was coined by Joseph Heller who used it in his 1961 novel of that name.

(2020) C19 has just heightened this reality.

(2021) It is my belief that the turnaround has been achieved and we can collectively look to the future with renewed confidence. We have new boats being built, increasing membership money accumulating in an insurance policy and incredible sponsorship deals emerging.

The long-term solution:

Recognise that the reality of 'The situation' will be a reduced active participation within some fleets and that linking up with other classes for Championships and Open meetings will give opportunities for two significant added-value benefits:

(2020) Delivered the committee believe we are on the path to securing medium to long term partnerships that will insulate the class to further inclement head winds.

(2021) It's incredible to report that Catherine David and Steve have secured financial support to the class in excess of £5k for this financial year!

• **Combined class turnouts will be greater than those for an individual class alone, so the prospect of a larger fleet will open up a wider range of sailing venues which in turn proves more attractive to participants and sponsors alike.**

(2020) delivered. Dave Elston has been an absolute star in proving the art of the possible with Penzance.

(2021) We set a modest target of 50 entries for the Penzance championships and we have delivered over 75! This is not only 50% higher than the target but 100% greater than the previous 3 to 4 years. Well done Dave, Nicola, Steve and you all!

• Host clubs can expect to realise higher food and beverage revenues, which are more likely to be sustainable rather than being dependent on one class alone.

(2020) Delivered again by Dave Elton.

(2021) We hope that the hosting clubs will realise that the team led by Dave of Nicola, Steve and Catherine will have delivered with Penzance a viable long term financial model that benefits all concerned.

(2019)combined these two benefits yield the key to breaking out of the 'Catch 22' situation! The Scorpion class isn't exclusively unique but the longevity of the hull means that a reduction in the number of new boats produced does not mean that an 'extinction risk' is imminent. To the contrary, it actually enhances the fleet's status because competitive boats are always available irrespective of age. A quick analysis of the Top 5 boats at this year's Scorpion Nationals in Llandudno underlines my point here; the winning boat 2013 being 10 years old and the fourth placed boat 1923 a mere 30 years old! Rationalisation of Open meetings/ events is also important.

(2020) we all know this.

A vibrant, well-attended and 'perfectly formed' Open circuit with a concise number of meetings will support greater attendances; in contrast to many meetings where the reality is reduced fleet turnouts. Dovetailing the circuit to include high-profile 'Regatta' events enables the class to showcase its vibrancy and competitiveness to other fleets, i.e. a subtle form of 'come join us' marketing! A great example of this approach in action was the mid-July Sika Weymouth Dinghy Regatta held at Castle Cove SC where the Scorpions accounted for 22 boats out of the total 99 entries and were the largest single fleet with their own starts; ahead of the Ospreys and Fireballs who accounted for 18 boats and 11 boats respectively. The remaining 50 boats consisted of at least nine classes and were split into asymmetric and fast/ slow handicap fleets. Doing the math you can see that their average turnout was only 5-6 boats!

(2021) 28 Scorpions at Notts County , 15 Scorpions at Eastbourne and 32, yes 32 Scorpions at Castle Cove writes their own headlines an extraordinary achievement.

(2020) Pete Gray had delivered this for 2020 and we shall roll over the events into 2021.

(2021) thanks to Rachel and Pete we have a vibrant open event circuit with "new" emerging fleets at Lyminster and South Cerney which means the class is building choice.

The people:

(2019)Without doubt the 'Scorpion Gang' are the most inclusive and fun seeking bunch, and the long term friendships thus formed are a unique and under-leveraged resource. The Committee structure is set along traditional lines but members make extensive use of e-mail and the WhatsApp smartphone messenger application to optimise time management and aid decision making, which in turn encourages devolved responsibility and accountability.

(2020) The Committee members this year have been absolute stars:

• Steve keeping us on-script, without Steve we would be so much the poorer and lack direction without his leadership

(2021) A true rock and guiding light thank you

• (2020) Malcolm has done an amazing job and our thanks go out to him. After Tenby who would have thought we could have gone through C19 and still have £8k in our bank account. For also taking on the class website and putting that on a better footing. This is a cause for celebration and we will the next time we meet up.

(2021) Well done to Russell his report shows the baton has been accepted and the class finances continue to add long term security.

(2021) thanks to Malcolm for maintaining the website and enabling us to start having a consistent message

(2021) thanks to Nick Lightbody for building the data base so that our History and Cultural building blocks are preserved

• (2020) Dave – goes without saying that Dave has delivered a partnership approach both with the clubs and classes. Well done and thank you.

(2021) what can anyone of say but a heartfelt thank you. Extraordinary planning and execution has delivered for us all something that 4 years ago felt like an impossible dream.

• (2020) Peter continues to be a bright star, building a new boat and being a chief advocate, along with Rachel, of the class at the top end of the national dinghy racing scene.

(2021) thank you

• Nicola for not only bringing a 'family of boats' to Open events and the Nationals but also for her ingenuity in sourcing unique and valued prizes. I cannot wait to see the fab prizes for 2021. Thank you.

(2021) thank you

• Jerry for taking on the class rules and pushing them through the RYA.

(2021) thank you and to the RYA boys for assisting with Scrutineering.

• Hannah for her continued creation of bespoke graphics artwork and PR activities. And rework needed for 2021, thank you Hannah.

• Colin for his organisation of the membership database and glad to see you have fully recovered from your op.

• (2020) Catherine McGuire and Andrea Fellows have taken up the challenge to bring us medium and short term sponsorship. They expect to deliver great things in 2021 that they had lined up for this year. Thank you both for being so resourceful.

(2021) The extraordinary success is simply breath taking

- craft insure £1,000 2 year deal thank you Catherine and Steve

- Typhoon £2,000 1 year deal that can roll over if we are lucky to multiple years of support, Catherine extraordinary

- Moat sails

- Paint craft

- Gosling Dinghy Craft

- and the list goes on and on, thank you.

• (2021) Jo Mahy picked up the membership challenge as if she had never left. As ever, well organised and membership under control. Thank you.

- Richard Jones – with the role of encouraging event attendance – you will get your chance to shine next year. Thank you.

The output:

With the above solution and people in place, I am confident that we will deliver the following results to build on everything we've achieved to date and ensure the viability of the Scorpion Class well into the future:

- Take the 'Catch 22' as an opportunity and drive attendances at each of our Silver Scorpion events to meet or exceed the benchmark figure of 23 boats.

(2020) Ongoing

(2021) the class is on the move as previously reported. Great news indeed. But don't stop supporting the open meetings

- Deliver medium-term partnerships with one or two other dinghy classes; effectively forming a mutually beneficial 'firewall' to protect the Classes against transient factors and economic risk. **(2020) Great work in progress.**

(2021) we mustn't become complacent or lack the vision to support others and form partnerships. The Hornets are a great group of people but this occasion we parted for PZ . However, we must look beyond Looe to ensure all our events don't have any risk.

- Trawl through our membership and boat register/ historic records to encourage lapsed members to renew their subscriptions and get their boats back on the water for Penzance 2020! Set a baseline entry target of 50 boats. **(2020) Well we had a travel of 50 and have achieved significant success with the pre entry process entries, lets all ensure we deliver this for 2021.**

(2021) c80 entries delivered . Success well done all

- Keep the core Committee intact for three years so that the Class can benefit from a period of stability. **(2020) work in progress.**

(2021) the committee is strong with succession planning constantly on our mind to ensure continuity

The outlook:

Today you have heard about a concise programme of (six) Open meetings for the 2020-21 Silver Scorpion circuit which is now published on the website (sailscorpion.co.uk) and also maps directly into our WebCollect online membership/ events management portal (webcollect.org.uk). Well done to Peter for all the work necessary to book and firm-up these events with the respective host clubs. **(2020) In train for 2021.**

(2021) delivered

Steve's work with WebCollect allows you to get all of the meeting dates in your diary and then to book and pay for them on-line! **(2020) Amazing result Steve, well done**

(2021) we have learnt a lot and realise there are many improvement that we can make to ensure we have a better experience and accurate planning

. You've also heard that we have achieved financial stability, with a small profit resulting from the Llandudno Nationals. Fleet partnering can only see the Class finances move further into the black, so

no more Tenby-style losses of £1,500 or so due to diminished entry levels. **(2020) Well done Malcolm.**

(2021) see Russell's report

We have a 5-year plan which can now be revealed as follows:

- 2021 – Penzance, shared venue with Hornet class.
- 2022 – Looe (was Porthpean) not shared with Hornet class.
- 2023 – Eastbourne , shared venue with Hornet class.
- 2024 – Castle Cove SC (was Paignton) , shared venue with Hornets (TBC).
- 2025 – TBC

All delivered and we would like you're views, should we just roll the programme round for 2025 ?

With our partnership plans, Nationals venues and Silver Scorpion fixtures confirmed for the next five years, the Class now has the appropriate structure and leadership resource to stabilise with a level of confidence and look to the future with real optimism.

Many people continue to support our great Class and I am conscious that I haven't been able to recognise everybody who has played a part this year – no matter how great or small – in helping to take us forward.

I extend my sincere thanks, if I've missed someone or somebody out, I apologise in advance! Just remind me not to forget next time!

From myself and on behalf the Committee of the National Scorpion Class Association, a heartfelt

I cannot begin to summarise the last 4 years!

All that there is to say is thank you to the committee and to you all for being the bedrock of our great Class.

Thank you

Thank You.

Best as always

Chris

Chris P Yates

Chairman

National Scorpion Class Association

17/08/2021