

Looking back and looking forward, it's that time of year.

Sailing is what we're about and it has not been all bad. Following the first lockdown the Government finally admitted that our sport is very healthy both physically and mentally. Since then we have been allowed and encouraged to go out and play with our friends. Knowing this I think none of us understood why the slipway was closed to us in the second lockdown.

Generally though, we made the most of what we were allowed to do, and there were positives. We rediscovered some of the benefits of fixed marks, and realised the advantages of sailing around high tide. We have a more flexible approach as a result.

Sailing is not the whole story. The effective loss of the social side has been difficult. Whether meeting good friends for a chat over Kathy's always excellent food, or enjoying quiet and well informed discourse regarding slight rules infringements over a pint (really?), we have felt the loss deeply.

Sitting in small defined groups in a cold clubhouse or huddling in the boat park over a tin of 'Old Particular' generic supermarket beer like a bunch of vagrants really hasn't been the same.

So then - next year: I think most of us are expecting a post-festive lockdown but I'm sure we'll leap over that hurdle like huge demented bullfrogs. It's no secret that the club is facing some pretty serious financial challenges in the coming year. It's not the first time in our 100 year history and it won't be the last. Even with the probable approval of the Oxford vaccine this week it seems unlikely that social restrictions will be eased much before June. Obviously that means we will then have to make up for a lot of missed socialising. As Homer Simpson would say, *what can you do?*

We can be pretty sure that sailing will continue to be approved and we will be pushing to do all that we can within whatever rules and guidance are thrown our way. Whether you enjoy ...

... racing a dinghy, racing a cruiser, cruising a cruiser, cruising a dinghy, training others, getting trained, sailing just to be out there, a meal from Kathy, a drink from the bar ...

... Or, you just enjoy hanging around the club chewing the cud with your mates - we will do all we can to make it happen.

Because that's the bottom line; that's what we're really all about. Enjoying ourselves and helping our friends to enjoy themselves.

Enjoy your seasonal festivities and let's be positive about enjoying the next year.

Cheers

Rob