

General Committee AGM Report 2025

Welcome to the 2025 General Committee report to the AGM.

Once again, the year has been a busy one with a lot of participation in all our areas of activity. It seems that whenever I arrive at the club, there is always someone going out for, or coming back from, a session afloat. When winds are unhelpful for dinghy sailing, either the Wingfoil community comes out to play, or the SUP and paddle members are out making the most of it, which is brilliant to see.

We have seen a couple of major projects come to fruition during the year: new Selene was launched in June and has been operating very effectively. As to be expected we had a few teething matters, but these having been resolved, she is already becoming a valued part of the club fleet.

The installation of the PV array to the roof of the main club is well underway, and will provide low-cost electricity to the club into the future through the partnership with Energy South Downs. At a time when energy costs are inexorably on the rise, this initiative will help us continue to reduce our energy bills.

Staff:

It seems I may have tempted Providence a tad too far last year when we reported on a good level of stability in the professional team! The year has seen us appoint Chris Rainbow as General Manager after Henry sniffed greener pastures at Northshore in Itchenor. We are currently looking for a Marine Manager, Sonnie having been offered a great role at Andrew Simpson, and Ollie Blake headed off to a terrific opportunity in marketing for one of the Formula One teams. While we are always sad to see good members of the team leave, I derive great satisfaction from seeing these ambitious young people progressing well on the strength of skills learned while working for HISC. We have long been aware of the great depth of knowledge that we expect of our senior managers across a wide range of subjects in order for them to be effective in our world. We were reminded of this when looking for someone with the requisite skills to become General Manager and advised that there may only be a handful of such candidates in the world! Such is the unique character of Hayling Island SC. We are as always hugely appreciative of the support from the professional team. There is a perpetual search for efficiency gain, and cost reduction, and our understanding of where things could be done better is continually improving.

Membership:

The slow decline in number in some categories of membership from the all time high in 2021 is an ongoing cause for concern. We of course recognise that family budgets are always under stress, and many are still recovering from the sudden increase in mortgage costs of a couple of years ago. Being a member of HISC brings unique

benefits and great opportunities for families and particularly young people, and I am always impressed by the self-confidence and self-reliance of our youth and junior sailors, a sense that was further reinforced by their enthusiasm for the recent Round Hayling Optimist Challenge. I very firmly believe that these skills set our young people apart from the mass, and stand them in excellent stead when it comes to 'grown up' activities such as interviewing for university places or jobs.

A primary challenge for the incoming management team is to reverse the downward trend in Family Membership by showing how the value of being a member of HISC goes way beyond the pounds and pence of the monthly direct debit, and has a major role to play in setting young people up for success in what is going to be a very challenging employment market for them, quite apart from instilling a life long love for what we know to be a great sport and pastime.

Incorporation:

After the presentation at the SGM, the recent Commodore's Chat and the Convening Notice for this meeting, you will all be aware that good progress is being made with respect to the forthcoming proposal to improve the protection of members and the club's future by becoming a company Limited by Guarantee (Ltd Company). The proposal to be voted on at this AGM is to change the rules in order to pave the way for a future vote by the you the members on incorporating. There will be short presentation at the AGM to recap and update you before you vote on this rule change to allow the assets of the club to be transferred to the new company at a later date.

It is very good news that Helen Everest who leads the Strategy Committee is continuing in post to see this project through. Helen is one of those on GC who may not as visible to the wider membership as others, but as Guardian of the Rules has been a seriously hard working member, leading on some of the most complex and tricky aspects of club life, including not only Rules and Bye Law changes, but also disciplinarys.

Sailing:

Sarah's report highlights the main achievements of the year, and once again we can look back on many major events very successfully and professionally delivered by our volunteer teams, supported by our ever-present office stalwarts. Future events are booking as far ahead as 2030, and we are being asked to bid for some very significant international championships, as our long-standing reputation for great event management in a special club atmosphere continues to impress visitors – many thanks to our International Race Officers Tim Hancock and Mark Wood for volunteering their skill and expertise which is a contributing factor in securing these significant events. 2026 will bring the RYA Youth Nationals back to HISC after a long break, as well as the much anticipated 505 World Championship. These are great events with which to be

associated, and the value of their contribution to the future of the club must never be underestimated.

Our Club racing participation, while down on the 2024 high ahead of the Aero Worlds at HISC, still stands up well against the trends that the RYA are recording across the UK as a whole as a result of great work by the Sailing Committee. Thanks to Sarah and her team, as well as all the race management volunteers who provide us with an admirable standard of club racing.

House:

Sophie is reporting in detail on House initiatives during 2025, and we have certainly had some great parties! Arguably more importantly, the work done over the last eighteen months to grow revenue from external customers is now coming to fruition. Wedding bookings are well up, as are corporate events. Such events make the club more sustainable in many disparate ways from ensuring that there is an important steady flow of satisfying work for the chefs, to bringing money to the club which reduces pressure on members' subscriptions, although we know it doesn't always feel like that!

Our accommodation is as always the subject of an interesting debate We were surprised to realise that several rooms were not booked during some major events, when we would have expected them to be packed out. One factor in this seems to be the increase in AirBnB availability in the area around the club. This has a knock on effect in that when our rooms are empty, there are fewer visitors needing breakfast and dinner, and they may also socialise away from the club. The loss of this revenue challenges the whole premise that we need to have accommodation on site to be able to host major events. So when the capital cost of doing anything to Stocker Block could run into tens of thousands, which could then take tens of years to recover, some fundamental thinking is required to determine the best way forward.

Finances:

The Spring General Meeting is the designated forum for reviewing the club's finances, but this is a good opportunity to flag that 2025 has seen softening of demand for a number of club services – members' Food & Beverage, hire and training, moorings and accommodation to name a few. There could be any number of reasons for this which RC Finance John Message is analysing and will report back to the Spring General Meeting. GC is firmly of the belief that membership of HISC represents excellent value taking into account the range of opportunities for joining in, 24 hour access to a choice of outstanding sailing waters, the quality of the facilities, the level of service provided, free parking and not least the beauty of our environment.

This is perhaps a good point at which to acknowledge and thank the 500 Club for their support during the year, and to encourage members to sign up and perhaps win a share

of the proceeds! During this year funds from the 500 Club have, among other things, provided push button doors to the main entrance and bar which has assisted accessibility for members and guests with mobility needs, and provided some of the safety equipment for new Selene.

This is my third, and final, General Committee Report to the AGM, and heralds a number of changes to the composition of General Committee; Emma Toman is standing down after many years, latterly as our very effective Environmental Lead, and previously as Vice Commodore House. Dave Nicholls stood down earlier in the year, leaving a Trustee vacancy. Our sincere thanks go to Emma and Dave for their many years of support and service.

Thanks also to those members who have volunteered to take on Flag Officer and other roles on club committees and we look forward to them taking office after the AGM.

I have long suspected that few members fully appreciate the commitments of time, skill and energy that committee members make in order to keep HISC successful, and I extend my personal thanks to my Vice Commodores, Sophie and Sarah, who have done awesome work all year, as well as to the rest of GC, members of other committees and Working Groups and those volunteers in all areas who have continually gone above and beyond, for their work and contributions during the last three years.

Graham Williamson

Commodore

1.10.2025