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DURHAM REGATTA

Report to Members of Durham Regatta, AGM November 2022

This year we are pleased to be able to report that Durham Regatta returned to its normal operation with a full range of races alongside a suite of traditional bankside activities, including for the first time a visit from the Vikings, and with vocal and financial support from a reasonable number of spectators. Despite adverse weather in the form of strong winds, particularly on the Saturday, the full programme of racing was completed successfully, if somewhat later than originally scheduled. Conditions were more favourable on the Sunday. Both days saw competitive racing across the board. Compared with 2021, volunteer support was much more consistent, though the effect of the pandemic in limiting experience at regattas generally did have some impact. Critical safety cover was however maintained at a high standard.

Meetings:

Members meetings – The regatta has continued to use online technologies to conduct members meetings attendance has increased over the year but is still relatively low.

The *Regatta Executive Committee* met regularly throughout the year to manage the day to day affairs of the Regatta. All nominated positions were filled by election or appointment and the committee also benefited significantly from the advice of a number of members who agreed to be co-opted.

The *Board of Directors* met three times in the year to discuss a range of strategic and operational matters. The board has been highly supportive of the Executive committee in its running of a full regatta, in particular helping to liaise with our founding member organizations, Durham County Council, Durham University, DARC and Durham School without whom the regatta would be at best a very diminished occasion. Dredging has remained a central issue for the Board though this has not yet been resolved.

Dredging: Durham Regatta has been acting in effect as the liaison agent for stakeholders for the last several years. In 2020, a survey of the River Wear commissioned from JBH Consultants (financed principally by Durham County Council and Durham University with significant contributions also from DARC and Durham Regatta) was completed, round table discussions with the Environment Agency took place (virtually) and the final stage of obtaining a permit to undertake a capital dredge within the previously accepted sustainable Gravel Management Plan was completed. A permit was issued in November 2020, with a validity of twelve months – though the permissible period for dredging is from the end of May to the beginning of October. Due to the pandemic and other factors the regatta took the decision last year to postpone the permitted dredging until 2022. The necessary extension to the validity of the permit was granted by the EA in December 2021. As everyone will be aware that dredge did not take place. We have applied to extend the permit for a further two years, to December 2024 and indications from the EA are positive. One estimate obtained in April 2022 for the cost of the works involved was of the order of £70k. It is likely that this quotation will increase. The regatta, its various members and member organisations and, more recently, British Rowing is now focusing on raising the funds necessary to carry out the capital dredge. The earliest date allowed under an extended permit would be 1st June 2023, and the latest 30th September 2024. The regatta is hosting a meeting of interested parties including a representative from British Rowing on 14th November to seek commitments and move plans forward.

Sponsors

The Directors are very grateful to all who sponsored the regatta this year. In particular the regatta thanks co-sponsor Alpha Security.

Regatta Grants

The regatta intends to continue to provide small grants to support local rowing clubs particularly in relation to coaching, safety and other similar activities.

Members of the committee and all volunteers

We record our thanks to all the members of the board of directors and of the executive committee for their efforts in managing the affairs of the regatta throughout the year and particularly during the event itself. Similarly we celebrate all the volunteers and look forward to seeing them again in 2023.