



Report to Members of Durham Regatta, AGM November 2021

This year's report has thankfully more to say than that of the previous year. In June 2021, unlike the previous two years, Durham Regatta took place with the full range of rowing competitions over the scheduled two days. The background of the continuing Covid pandemic meant that the committee, with the support of the board, organised the regatta solely as a rowing event, without the traditional bankside activities and with spectators discouraged. To judge from the feedback from a wide variety of sources, the 2021 Durham Regatta was deemed a considerable success. Inconsistency in volunteer support in some areas, partly as a result of the lack of experience and practice over the pandemic period, has led the regatta to consider additional or alternative ways of securing safety critical support., such as safety boat cover.

Meetings:

Members meetings – The regatta has made use of online technologies to conduct members meetings but due to various consequences of the pandemic, attendance has been low.

The *Regatta Executive Committee* met regularly throughout the year to manage the day to day affairs of the Regatta. All positions were filled by election, appointment or temporary combination of roles.

The *Board of Directors* has met three times in the year to discuss a range of strategic and operational matters. The support of the board for the decision to run the 2021 regatta under covid regulations and in the absence of spectators was welcomed by the executive committee. Notable also is the issue of maintaining the depth of the River Wear for rowing and other water based activities, where again the board has provided considerable support for decisions on the nature and timing of dredging and allied activities.

Dredging: Durham Regatta has been acting in effect as the liaison agent for stakeholders for the last two years or so. 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 factors such as the very low level of rowing activity and cancellation of most regattas and competitions on the Wear in Durham, the regatta took the decision to postpone the permitted dredging until 2022. The necessary extension to the validity of the permit is expected to be granted by the EA by the date of the AGM 2021. Subsequent to this, the regatta will obtain estimates for the dredging work. Depending on the sums involved, the regatta will undertake appropriate fund raising activities with a view to commissioning the work for the beginning of June 2022, the earliest date allowed under the permit.

Sponsors

The Directors are very grateful to all who sponsored the regatta and who have either donated previous year's contributions or transferred them to next year. In particular the regatta would like to thank 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. In the interests of financial prudence and expectation of the regatta's contribution to the costs of the planned capital dredge, the board has decided to postpone the operation of the small grants process until January 2022.

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 without whom the regatta would not take place.