

General Committee Report for AGM 2026

It has been such a busy year that I don't really know where to start. I've been putting off writing this because there is still so much going on and so many plans underway that I almost didn't know what to say. But here we go...

Incorporation

As we have mentioned previously, we are on track to incorporate Hayling Island Sailing Club as Hayling Island Sailing Club Limited on 2nd November 2026. This will make us a company limited by guarantee, giving us the legal identity we were previously lacking and which was making it increasingly difficult for us to engage with banks, insurance companies, and contractors. Graham Williamson has written a separate report on our Incorporation, which I urge you to read.

I would like to thank the entire incorporation group for doing an incredibly effective job. I'm not going to say any more until it's done, other than—as you are also aware—the new company does not require trustees. Their main role was to own the Club's land and buildings, but once we are incorporated, those assets will be owned by the company. Our trustees were all offered positions on the board, and Michael Massey has decided to stay with us and continue on our journey. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Tim Hancock and Rod Carr, who have decided to step down after their many, many years of service to the Club. They both know very well that they won't get away that easily, and that I will be on the phone to them whenever I need their excellent advice or guidance, just as I have been throughout the year.

Staff

In last year's AGM report, Graham Williamson covered how difficult it is to recruit a General Manager and introduced Chris Rainbow to you. Chris has had a fantastic first year with us, and the General Committee is delighted with how he has shaped the team and brought new focus to cost savings and overall management.

We also recruited Tom Harcombe as our new Marine Manager. He arrived in January and has had an excellent year getting to grips with our extremely versatile Club structure. A highlight of his year that I witnessed was a wonderful Family Fun Week. Tom and I have talked a lot about future plans for our younger members, and he has some great ideas in that area.

Sailing and House

I will leave it to Dave Hitchcock (Sailing) and Sophie Costard (House) to cover their respective committees, as I know they have both written excellent reports for your perusal. I would like to thank them both and their committees for the massive amount of work put into producing our Sailing and House programmes this year. It is never easy—and in fact impossible—to please everybody, but they've done their absolute

utmost to provide the best that our Club can offer, so we thank them wholeheartedly for their dedication.

Membership

This is possibly the committee I have asked the most of this year. We identified early on that we needed a push on membership, especially in supporting our families. We carried out a membership survey to understand what everybody does at the Club, what people love, and what people struggle with. We received a huge amount of information from this, which was subsequently divided up and passed to the relevant committees. They have been working through the comments and data over the course of the year addressing quick fixes and long-term goals alike.

At the RYA Dinghy Show in February, we shifted our focus to families and showcasing the Club to its best potential, securing a fantastic amount of interest at the stand. We also promoted our Open Day in May, where over 500 visitors came to see what we are all about. On that day alone, we signed up approximately 25 memberships, and we have enjoyed a strong overall membership uptake throughout the year.

We identified that the membership pricing structure could be outdated, and it is being addressed as I write, with a view to smoothing the curve for 2027 renewals.

We are also working right now on addressing our duty system—a tricky area that we have tried to sort many times over the years. I know all clubs face the exact same issues, but we think we have a potential solution which we will trial in 2027. I hope to tell you more about this in my next Commodore's Update,

Additionally, we are running a pilot for an Onshore Winter , Guest arrangement, based on referrals from members, to test whether this could help us better utilise our House facilities over the winter months.

During the year, our Membership Chair, Rob Cruickshank, stepped down, and Gill Browning has kindly stepped into his shoes as temporary Membership Chair until the AGM. I would like to thank Rob for his many years of service to the Club as Chair of the Membership Committee—I believe this to be in excess of eight years, which is an amazing commitment. Rob also volunteers regularly on race management and is a wonderful asset to any committee boat team. Thank you, Rob.

New Windsurf Lockers

We're still battling on with this project, and we truly understand the need for them. A massive thank you to Rosie Berry for creating all the architectural drawings for planning purposes. We have a slightly revised plan going forward that we hope to implement by Easter 2027. I know that's what I said would happen by Easter 2026, but we battle on! Our new Chair of Estates, Murray Maunder, is working very hard to make this plan a reality. Thank you, Murray.

Finance

At the AGM, we don't tend to report too heavily on finance as we are mid-year (we report in greater detail at the SGM). However, I would like to share that we have had a fantastic year to date, and at this point, we are £107,000 better off than we were at this time last year. For years, our aim has been to establish a fund to support the ongoing maintenance and infrastructure of the Club and it's excellent news that this is starting to be a reality. However, we are moving into the winter months when traditionally we make losses, so it is vital that we look at innovative ways to support the revenue flow and reduce costs during this period.

The additional income this year has come from external House events, such as weddings and mid-week corporate activity, alongside particularly successful open meetings and championships. The main financial drivers were the Youth Nationals and the 505 Worlds. By generating additional revenue outside of membership fees, we are able to alleviate the pressure on members to keep our Club going; these non-member activities are vital for our survival. That said, our sailing events calendar for 2027 is currently less full than this year's. It is always a difficult balancing act between the number of events we hold, and the impact members feel on parking and on the atmosphere of a members club.

Rowing

If you've been down at the Club over the last couple of weeks, you may have seen *Valerie*, our wonderful new addition to the fleet—a Celtic Longboat. We are possibly the last club in Chichester Harbour to join the rowing scene, and we look forward to competing against our neighbours and joining the wider rowing community. We already have a very active group learning to row at Northney, and many more who have been waiting for our boat to arrive before starting their journey. If you want to get involved and haven't yet, head to the HISC website under "On the Water" > "Rowing and Paddling" to find out all about Coastal Rowing.

This project has been especially rewarding as it has been almost entirely self-funded. Simon Radford, our Rear Commodore of Racing, used his expertise to secure various grants, and our rowing community funded *Valerie* in part through a GoFundMe campaign in conjunction with Sport England.

Valerie was named following a member vote in honour of our first female Commodore, Valerie Catchpole, who served as Commodore of Hayling Island Sailing Club from 1994-1996

Updating on Completed Projects

Just a very quick update on projects completed in 2025:

- **Selene:** I hope we would all agree that the new *Selene* has been a massive asset to the Club. She has not only served as the tender she was designed to be, but has also been a workhorse for other jobs, including water retrievals and transport. At the start of the year, for the first time in many years, we had not let all our moorings. By the end of the year, we are full and in discussions with Sparkes Marina to see if we can procure a couple more.
- **Solar Panels:** Our solar panels will soon have been in operation for almost a year, at which point we will review their efficiency. However, I would like to remind members that the solar panels were installed primarily for us to do our bit for the environment. We did not have the funds to purchase them outright for our sole use, and we did not want to borrow money to do so. By leasing our roofs, we were able to support environmental sustainability with a long-term goal of slight reductions and stability in our electricity costs, until we own the panels outright after 16 years.
- **Boilers:** One of the reasons we could not buy the solar panels ourselves was that we had just purchased new boilers, costing the Club approximately £100,000. The previous ones reached the end of their life after 20-odd years, and our new ones are functioning economically and to their full potential.

Our Supporting Organisations

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members about the **500 Club**, details of which can be found on the website. The 500 Club is our small lottery with fantastic odds. It generates a pot of money to be spent on member requests for items around the Club that benefit members and might not otherwise be purchased. This year, it funded an irrigation system for the surrounding landscaping, oars for the rowing boat, and several other projects are being considered.

HISTT is the charity set up alongside HISC when the new building was constructed. It covers three sub-categories: Youth, Hayling Rescue, and Sea Defences, and is funded solely through donations. Their work is vital to supporting these three areas.

Thursday Club: Hopefully, you all know about this wonderful community project running on Thursdays throughout the summer. It allows local young people to get involved with sailing and watersports when they might not otherwise have the opportunity. It has a fantastic volunteer base and a warm family atmosphere, while providing a great platform for our young assistant instructors to practise their skills voluntarily.

Thank you for your time. I know there is a lot to read, but I hope you take the opportunity to read everyone's reports, as a lot of trouble has gone into writing them for your information. Go grab another cup of tea and enjoy the rest!

Thank you to our entire membership for your continued support. Whether you are active at the Club every week or only able to join us a few times a year, we value your membership and support equally.

Thank you,

Sarah Mitchell

Commodore