



# The Society of Consulting Marine Engineers and Ship Surveyors

An M.C.A. Appointed Certifying Authority

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## The Annual General Meeting

Royal Southampton Yacht Club, Southampton, 10th June 2014

### In Attendance

Robert Barnes, President	Ian Anderson	Steve Clarke
Fiona Dando	Mike Eckles	Chris Fairgrieve
Norman Finlay	Ed Geary	Nick Gladwell
Marcus Lankford	Maurice Perrin	Clive Robinson
Mike Tillman	David Walker	Paul Owen, Secretary

The President declared the 2015 AGM open at 18:30 hours.

### Apologies

The following members offered their apologies for being unable to attend:

Charles Bevis	John Bowen	Euan Davidson
Ian Ellis	Ian Green	Peter Hicks
Ross Hunter	Andrew Jagers	Paul Johnson
Chris Jones	Daniel Krisch	Richard Langman
Russ Larkin	Irving Levington	Jim Lauder
Mark Lockie	Simon Oaks	Jendrik Odenwald
Lionnel Parant	Tim Parr	Anthony Protopapadakis
Jan Robbert Ten Veen		

### Minutes

#### Ordinary Business

#### 1. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes to the last Annual General Meeting, held at the Hornet Services Sailing Club, in Gosport on 10th June 2014, had been distributed to all members and were adopted on the proposal of David Walker, seconded by Chris Fairgrieve.

#### 2. Election of any Nominated Fellows to Council

There were no nominated Fellows at this time.

#### 3. Presentation of the Unaudited Accounts

Extracts from the accounts had been distributed to all members with the notice of AGM. Mike Eckles, with assistance from the Secretary, presented the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014, for both the Society

and the Benevolent Fund, full copies of the accounts were made available to the AGM.

There were no questions. On the proposal of Ian Anderson, seconded by Clive Robinson, the accounts were agreed.

#### **4. Appointment of the Society's Accountants for the ensuing year**

Menzies LLP was reappointed as the Society's Accountants for 2015.

#### **5. To receive the announcement of office Bearers for 2015 / 2016**

The list of office bearers had been distributed to all members. They were agreed on the proposal of Ed Geary and seconded by Nick Gladwell.

#### **6. To Receive the President's Report**

The President read out his report, copy attached.

#### **Special Business**

#### **7. To confirm an additional one-year term of office for the President R.H Barnes**

It was agreed that Robert Barnes should serve an additional year as president of the Society on the proposal of Maurice Perrin, seconded by Nick Gladwell and agreed by all present.

#### **8. To receive proposals for the future Membership structure**

The President invited the chairman of the Development Sub-Committee, Clive Robinson, to explain his proposals.

He started by saying that the big issue is who we are. The first proposal is to separate the CA and Membership sides of our activities by placing the CA business into a separate company with its own Chief Executive (CEO). Some say the CEO should be a Coding Surveyor, which raises problems regarding conflict of interest. Regarding costs, he said we had ample reserves for a rainy day and suggested this is a rainy day.

Chris Fairgrieve asked for clarification on whether or not a decision had been made to split the two functions. (*Post meeting note: Extract from Council Minutes "There was a suggestion to split the Society into two separate businesses – the CA and Membership. Council decided to appoint a business consultant to assess the financial viability of certification."*) The President added that Council has a Statutory Duty to consider the Society as a whole.

Ian Anderson asked if it was necessary to separate the two business entities or whether they could be managed by using two cost centres. The President replied that it is difficult to know at present and that is why we intend to appoint a business consultant to advise us on the options for the way ahead.

Mike Tilman commented that Scotland went through a similar process last year with the independence vote and finished up with a spilt country, he would not like to see the same happen to the Society. Maurice reiterated that his focus is on both sides.

Clive continued by saying that 90% of members are ex seafarers, in the last 10 years there have only been three years where membership has grown, he added he is particularly worried that we are not getting any new young members. New members are difficult to recruit due to the membership requirements and, amongst other things, the name of the Society. He suggested we should change the name to be more receptive to what we are. If you are a seafarer it is more difficult to become a member than if you are not one. He gave some examples for alternative names 'Society of Marine Technical Consultants', 'Society of Consulting Mariners', etc., the aim being to try and keep the Society initials/identity "SCMS". 7 out of 10 mariners are back ashore after 10 years at sea and 5 of those 7 remain in the marine industry, so there is a huge membership opportunity. He would like to see our membership structure to change to allow them to join at a lower level and also to ensure that those that who come from the shore channel can be operators before they become consultants. He also proposed changes to the structure of Council to be more representative of the membership.

Norman Finlay commented that we have lost the 'doers', we need people around the country to take an interest. He asked what happened to the Branch Funds when they closed down. The Secretary replied that we received funds from the NE Branch and London Branch, which were placed into the Benevolent Fund.

The President said that we will publish the proposals to the membership and ask for comments. Steve Clarke asked for proposals from the rest of the Council Members to be distributed as well. Clive Robinson said we need to find a general consensus.

There was a vote of thanks for the Secretary, Paul Owen, as this was his last AGM. He has been Secretary since 2001.

### **Close of AGM**

There being no further business the President closed the meeting at 19:40 hours.

Captain Paul Owen  
Secretary

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO AGM, 16 JUNE 2015.**

It has been a great privilege to hold the office of President of this 95 year old Society during the past 2 years. I would have like to add the words "and pleasure". However, the past 9 months have been very difficult, with the Ship passing through rock-strewn waters, battered by strong headwinds and a recent storm. The long range weather forecast indicates that the Ship will be blown on to the rocks if we do not do some urgent repairs and weather routing in the immediate future. More in a minute.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

You have heard from the Budget Manager that the Society is currently healthy, and we need to ensure that it remains so, in order to make it to our centenary in 2020. To do that, we must not only increase the membership, which in the last decade has fallen steadily from 386 to 267; but also restore the benefits of membership that have been rapidly and concurrently eroded during that decade.

After last year's AGM, Clive Robinson, who has taken on the task as Councillor leading development of the Society, presented his paper with proposals for a new membership structure. Following feedback and comments, he has refined these to a point where we can act and modernize the membership structure to appeal to a wider scope of marine professionals than the present constitution does. Also, we must set up a formal training and career development programme to encourage younger members to join. This may of necessity involve an adjustment, rather than a complete, change of our name; and I do urge you, very strongly, to support these changes.

Towards achieving that aim in the past year, we have passed resolutions at 2 General Meetings to amend the constitution. The first cleared away the old branch structure and relevant bye-laws. The second, a month ago, introduced electronic voting for Members to amend the Society's Memorandum, Articles of Association and Bye-Laws. Thank you to those who responded and voted in favour, unanimously by proxy.

In April, Council elected Mike Eckles as first Vice President. The second post remains unfilled at present; but see the plans for the new structure.

In the past year, 11 new members have joined the Society; and 8 members have left or not renewed their subscriptions. I was very sorry to receive the resignation of Captain John Wallace, due to age, ill health and family bereavements. He did so much to support the Society as President, later as Tonnage registration manager, and as Chairman of the Membership Committee. I have sent him our best wishes and sincere thanks.

I congratulate Nick Bushnell, Captain Ed Geary, Nick Gladwell, John Menezes and Chris Gascoigne, all with excellent records of achievement in our industry, who have been elected Fellows of the Society. Ed Geary, in particular, has contributed a number of articles to the maritime press, and has been selected as consultant for the new marina in Gibraltar.

Congratulations to Peter Hicks, whose 90th birthday we celebrated with a lunch during the year; and who continues to support the office daily. We propose to appoint him Honorary Fellow. He is busy organizing the annual dinner in London, for Friday 25th September. Please book a table and come.

## **CERTIFICATION AUTHORITY**

The storm has blown severely around our small vessel register. The Society was appointed a small vessel certification authority by the MCA in 1994. The contract was renewed 2 years ago. Their annual audit last September, and follow-up audits in December and last week were very searching and highlighted serious deficiencies in our systems, and their management. We have no excuses. We had taken our eye off the ball some time ago. The number of registered

vessels grew exponentially and the apparent success of certification became a run-away train, out of control. In March, the MCA stopped us adding new vessels to our register, whilst we sorted out our register.

One need look no further than the MAIB report into the loss of the yacht CHEEKI RAFIKI last year for a background to the MCA's increased surveillance of CAs.

Since January, a great many man-hours work have gone into improving our record keeping and procedures. We have been given until September to complete this work. If not, our authority will be withdrawn. Paul Johnson has taken over from Norman Finlay as Chairman of the CA Committee, and bears the heavy task of managing this corrective work. I place on record the Society's thanks to Norman for his past contribution to our CA; and to Paul for his very hard work, ongoing, in the reviewing and updating the records of over 1,100 small vessels, whose safe condition we have a legal responsibility for ensuring. I ask all examiners to support Paul with help in reviewing vessel files and taking any corrective actions needed before the end of August.

There are some facts about our operation as a CA that concern us all, and which we are going to address with vigour. Of the 260 or so members of the Society, only 50 are concerned with small vessel certification as code examiners, scrutineers and assessors. Of these 50 members, 10 per cent are responsible for 80 per cent, i.e. the majority, of certified vessels. In short, the very small tail has been wagging the dog harder and harder; the dog has become a very tired beast; and is in danger of losing its tail through fatigue. We have to correct that quickly.

## **SECRETARY & HQ**

In HQ, almost all the effort and work is now in the certification business to the detriment of our members services. I commend our Secretary, Paul Owen, who has struggled harder and harder to keep the Society going as the certified business grew exponentially.

Although he has been ably supported by his staff, Linda, Avril, Beverley and Lesley, and by his predecessor Peter Hicks, he now feels unable to continue as Secretary on his present part time contract; together with his other appointments as Secretary of FEMAS and Deputy Secretary General of IFSMA.

You will see from the Annual Accounts that the certification business produces about 70 per cent of our turnover. Also, it is becoming harder to determine whether or not certification is financially viable. This is a serious administrative problem for the Society's health; to be addressed.

Therefore, Council intend to separate the CA business from the Society's main account and to divest it into a subsidiary company to be managed by a full time Chief Executive Officer. This will leave the Society better able to restore membership services and professional support and development, which the CA has submerged and almost drowned.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES**

Last August, I spent 3 days in Gibraltar to promote the Society, meeting the Deputy Port Captain, and learning of their active plan to become a major bunkering facility for LNG ships. I was made very welcome by the Maritime Administrator and his Chief surveyor, which resulted in a request for a draft agreement to act as a small vessel register, similar to our arrangement with Jersey. I had a very pleasant lunch meeting with three of our members.

In December, the Secretary and I attended the Executive Committee and annual general meetings of FEMAS in Genoa. FEMAS is in good health with plans to develop its influence and membership within the EU.

In May, I had the pleasure of presenting a workboat certificate to Lord Ambrose Greenway, Chairman of the Restoration Society of the former London Fire Brigades fire tender MASSEY SHAW, built in 1934 and fully restored with HLF grants to train young people in seamanship and marine engineering on the Thames. As a Dunkirk Little Ship, she took part in the reunion two weeks later.

## **PRESIDENT'S TERM OF OFFICE**

Finally, the Articles of Association give the President a 2 year term of office. Before the CA problems arose, I was asked by Council to remain in post for a third year to see through the development and restructuring. I have agreed to do so as long as the development continues and completes this coming year. When the time comes to vote on resolutions for these changes in a month or so, should you decide against, then I will of course immediately resign and retire.

As Prime Minister Gladstone said, a few years before the Society's foundation, "There is nothing more constant than Change", and change we must, if we are to avoid going aground on the rocks.

Bob Barnes, FCMS