



Minutes ITCA (GBR) AGM

11th September 2025

AGM Commenced: 19:30

Location: Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

AGM Attendance: 53

1. Welcome from Class Chair, Ricky O’Kane, and presentation of the Chair’s Report 2025.

A note on membership figures for 2025-26 - this is where we're at so far, but is not a representation of where we're going to get to this year. However, membership numbers are a little bit down on this point last year.

For the 2024-25 membership year, we were down about 7% on the previous year - well below where we were pre-COVID, on par with the COVID years in membership last year.

The class were aware of a falling membership trend and have taken steps to try and increase that, which will be discussed further during the AGM.

An interesting point is the age spread of the membership. This is again something that the committee have been aware of, but it has changed quite drastically over the years. The sailors in the class effectively have got younger. There used to be a low proportion of members aged 10 and under, whereas that has now increased. The shift has definitely been towards younger sailors.

Last year, 80 members (approx. 26%) came from the South East. Followed by the South West, South East and Midlands. Scotland had 25 members last year, which is a lot higher than we've had previously. This is possibly because the Nationals were held in Scotland.

Thanks to our sponsors; Rooster, Topper, Noble Marine, Optimum Time and Harken.

Additional thanks to Mark Antonelli for organising ice cream at the Nationals and Tunnocks, who supplied us all with wafers through the Nationals at Largs.

Thank you all to our volunteers. We can't do this without the volunteers. We've had a lot of support and as the series progressed this year, we had a lot of newer volunteers joining us as well. This really helps because otherwise paid people have to pick up the parts the volunteers aren't doing.

And to all of our sailors, I wish you all the best for the next year through the Topper class and obviously for your future endeavours as well.

- Matters Arising: None.

2. Election of Honorary Members:

Two RYA representatives to be elected as Honorary Members for the 2025/26 membership year
– Chris Atherton and James Deaton.

James Deaton has been employed by the RYA as the Topper Lead Coach. The RYA will fund 20 days of his time, which will include about four days of coaching professional development, either on his own or with other coaches across the country.

The Topper Lead Coach role is primarily to support the national squads, help bring through sailors and point them in the right direction, guide the sailors on their next steps, and also to work with the ITCA (GBR) Class Development Officer and, if time, to work within some of the regions.

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair, noted this is different to what we've done over the previous years, and the class will work closely with the RYA to see how this develops.

Will Penny to be elected as Honorary Member in order to stand for the role of Safety Officer.

When first elected last year, Will Penny would attend events as CSL. Recently, due to mounting costs, the role of CSL at events has been covered by the host club, but Will Penny would still like to assist the class in the role of Safety Officer. He may still do the CSL role if it becomes cost-effective to do so, but would like to continue to assist in a safety lead position - looking at our safety policies, etc.

- Proposed: Marcus Lambert
- Seconded: Greg Croxton.
- No objections raised.

3. Treasurer's Report, Marcus Lambert:

As a note, we're discussing the year ending 31st October 2024. The financial year runs from 1st November to 31st October, so it's slightly out of sync with our membership year.

In the 2024 year, we had a 5% increase in income. Even though the membership is down approx. 7% we've had more income coming in.

But, looking at expenditure, expenses have gone up quite considerably around 9% since the previous year. Notably, coaching fees have gone up, this has risen quite steadily after COVID and continues to rise. One of the biggest costs is mileage, the distance that people have for getting ribs to events. We've also had more ribs compared to 2023, so this is what's really driving the expenses increase from 2023 to 2024.

Key events - the majority of our income and expenditure is based around NS events and nationals.

At the last AGM, we didn't have a figure for the Nationals because the AGM was held earlier, during the Nationals. 2024 was a particularly bad year, making losses on our events.

The 2024 Nationals at Weymouth made a loss of £10,000. On average, we make a loss of around £1.8k for NS events. Costs can fluctuate up to £3.5k due to the cost of the venues, amount of ribs, mileage, etc.

This year, we've continued that trend of making a loss, but one big success is controlling costs, this year at the nationals - we did make a loss but it was nowhere near the level of the previous year. Three or four months before the nationals, we were looking at a much bigger predicted loss so the class made some adjustments and brought that number right down. This is part of the reason why this year we've had to put the event entry fees up.

Since COVID, our costs/expenditure has gone up year on year. Venue costs go up approx. 10% each year, but our event entry fees haven't followed in line. We increased them a little last year, but this year we've had to make a much larger correction to start getting events to break even.

We made a loss in 2024 of £18,000 over our events and this year we made a loss of £13,000. So there has been a big improvement. This year, we've made some changes to ratios, using mark layers into the safety ratios etc, which will really help us to breakeven on our events.

So hopefully this time next year, we'll be seeing a much better situation with our event costs.

Member query: I run a sailing club that's on there and know exactly what you charge, what we charge you and what margins you'll be making. So I'm just wondering how you come up with those figures and what costs you put in those events?

- Marcus Lambert, Treasurer: Every venue charges slightly differently, some have a fee per sailor, which is all inclusive. Some have a sailor number, then additional costs for things like harbour fees and dues. But ultimately, we have a venue cost, RIB hire costs, RIB fuel costs. mileage for RIBs, Jury and the Events Manager (and possibly their accommodation). Each NS event also has a budget for trophies and prizes. The nationals have a bigger budget for trophies and prizes because we have more entries. The charging structures do change from venue to venue, but we essentially record them as venue expenses.
- Member: I find it quite worrying that knowing what I charge you with per sailor with our ribs included, how you're getting so overspent. I know certainly in the Draycote one and the one that you've got coming up very shortly, you should be making considerable money.
- Marcus Lambert, Treasurer: 2023 made a slight profit, but 2024 didn't. 400 is not a big loss compared to the other events.
- Member: It should be a healthy profit. We're charging a fraction of the charge the class charge to the members to go to the event and the class should be making considerable profit.
- Ricky O'Kane, Class Chair: It's not just the venue costs. The point that we're making is a lot more costs.
- Marcus Lambert, Treasurer: Some of our mileage costs will be 5000 pounds per event.

Member query: There is a big difference in the figures between Largs & WPNSA. Are we comfortable returning to WPNSA in 2026?

Member query: What does 'others' include (in the figures)? Approx 36k in 2020 to over 100k in the last few years. What was in it in terms of expense?

- Andy Millington, Ribmaster, noted that the massive expenditure at WPNSA was to do with the amount of ribs that we had at the event, which we know was a problem - we're definitely on top of it moving forward. We had 42 ribs in total. We shouldn't have had that many.
- Marcus Lambert, Treasurer, clarified that the category of 'others' includes things such as the photographer at the Nationals, rib fuel.
- Ricky O'Kane, Class Chair, noted that RYA Scotland lent us 4 ribs for the Largs Nationals, free of charge, which saved us an awful lot of money and went towards reducing the loss that we made at Largs.

- The WPNSA cost was over 27,000 pounds for last year. The revenue that we made from sailors was about 30 to 33,000, so there was very little to cover everything else, including accommodation, travel, trophies, events manager, and everything else that went into that. Plus, we were still on recovery mode at that point from COVID.
- Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair: [At WPNSA Nationals] *“So we were still trying to put on some events at night. We had the Mexican night, I think, for example. We’re now not in that mode. We’ve done that as best we can. We had the ceilidh at Largs which cost us 250 pounds I think. So a bunch of students did it and actually was brilliant. So I’m really aware of it but you know perhaps it’s not the be all and end all to go to WPNSA every year or every second year because it is becoming very expensive. However I think where we are getting to is that we can’t continue like this. The class can’t continue. It just wouldn’t be able to continue because the reserves will run dry. So something very drastic has to be done and looked at. So we’ll come on to discussing around that.”*

4. The Appointment of an accountant Andrew Budden:

Andrew Budden of Cheshire Account Services has been supporting the class for a number of years.

- No objections raised.

5. Any proposal of the National Committee or of the International Committee

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair: With the current losses that the class is facing, something needs to be done. An Events Sustainability Sub-Committee was formed to review the current situation and a list of recommendations was produced. We are not intending to hold a vote on this proposal (Agenda Item 6.2), but the proposal is intended to start conversations and see what the membership think.

[For clarification in the minutes: This proposal was conceived by the general committee, and was not in the recommendations of the sub-committee]

Roger Proctor:

“I’m the designer’s representative, so my father designed the Topper. I’ve been with Topper, since 1969 actually, but on the committee since 1991. So I just want to say that I’m really pleased that the vote on this is being deferred because I think there’s an awful lot of discussion and analysis that would really benefit that being done and I know I’m certainly I’m very much prepared to play my part and I know others are, people who’ve got vast experience of the class over the last many years and I’d also like to suggest that I know we’re not sort of discussing it today in detail because there’ll be many other ideas and ways of cutting the cake, if you like, that will be discussed over the next few weeks. But I’d also like to suggest that items 6-1-B and C, which is membership, having membership at events, I feel it’s all part of the same discussion. So I feel it’s premature to vote on those two items tonight, because I think it should be sort of folded into the bigger discussion, the bigger analysis that is suggested by 6.2, you know, so that’s my view.”

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair agreed that the class needs to complete a detailed review into how we operate, what we’re doing and think about understanding what these proposals might do.

Member query: Has the class reviewed the likely costs involved with the North/South proposal?

- No, this still requires further analysis. At this point, we are canvassing general feedback.

Russ Dent commented that, if the North/South proposal were to go ahead, the last event that Topper/Russ would attend would be NS4 2026. It would not be possible to attend both a North and South event on the same day.

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair, noted that this idea was based on feedback from members – whilst we could never please everyone, the overwhelming majority of feedback was that members are against travel. In Scotland, there only tends to be five or six sailors that travel to the national events. When the nationals were held in Scotland, we had approx. 26 entries from Scotland. This shows that if you have events that are local to people, you still get people that are happy to travel, but you also pick up people that don’t travel that far or can’t afford to travel that far (or so on). The feedback on distance for members is something that we have to listen to.

Andy Millington commented that we previously held a split north and a south event due to weather issues and about 50% of the sailors did both. So we didn't actually stop travel.

"A big number did both because it's more events and I think this is part of the strategic plan that we do need to look at, you know, you said yourself that the feedback is everything in the Midlands. Daft as it may seem, there's a lot of massive venues in the Midlands that would be good venues to use that we don't even think about. So I think the review needs to look at everything, not just the fact that it is north and south"

Member Query: Can the recommendations from the sub-committee be made public?

- Yes, these will be shared with the AGM minutes.

Ricky O'Kane, Class Chair, noted that we will need another consultation, another subcommittee, to review the class as a whole and gather everyone's feedback.

Claire Turner, Events Manager, noted that the feedback received so far has been from those attending NS events. It would be beneficial to gain feedback from all members. This should include reasons why they don't attend NS events. It may be because they've only just started sailing and are not ready to go to those events, or some may prefer to just sail at their club.

Member Comment: We need to reduce costs, but the proposal would lead to an increase in travel?

Member Query: Was the Treasurer aware of the massive costs of WPNSA [for the 2024 Nationals] before agreeing to two more events this year? Because that's going to bankrupt ITCA, without question.

- It was noted that a different Treasurer was in place at that time, but ultimately, the Treasurer is part of the committee and so this decision was made by the Committee as a whole.

Member query: Have WPNSA been asked to reduce their costs?

- It was noted that events are typically booked in a two-years in advance.
- Andy Millington asked to respond on WPNSA's behalf.

The WPNSA [Nationals] costs were over-inflated due to an excessively high number of coaching ribs in attendance and the associated rib fuel – this is an ITCA (GBR) issue, not WPNSA. The class uses WPNSA for NS2 due to the water temperature (too cold in Midlands venues).

Andy Millington is standing for the role of Ribmaster, and is looking to cut the costs of travel and also make sure we've got the right number of ribs.

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair, acknowledged the work of the Treasurer this year in looking at the rib costs. For each event, and particularly the Nationals, we looked at every single rib that was attending - we had everyone’s postcodes, and the distance that they were travelling.

The situation at WPNSA Nationals will not happen again. We need to make sure that the right number of ribs are there for the safety ratio and any coach ribs or any ribs that want to be there just to support their own sailors pay their own fees.

Member comment: Thank you to everybody on the committee. We've got to get the costs in order, but we're here for the kids. And there's nothing better for the kids than sailing the Olympic venue.

In terms of the north and south proposal, and the potential of reducing to three events; I think you've got to take into account kids with working parents, who can't necessarily attend every event. So giving them optionality to attend as many events as possible is the right thing to do. Also, for working parents, they need to attend the Worlds and then the Nationals a week after or two weeks after. Trying to take that much time out of a working schedule or a family schedule is difficult. This is something big to consider.

Claire Turner, Events Manager *“In advance of NS2 in March and the Nationals next year, I've already had a meeting with WPNSA a couple of weeks ago. I've already had a meeting with them about costs and things we can do to minimise costs there. Andy and I have already had a couple of meetings about RIBs and how we're working with RIBs going forwards and what we're doing. So whilst it will always be one of the more expensive venues just purely because of the nature of what it is and what their fixed costs are. We're already working behind the scenes to do as much as we can to minimise the cost there, but we are keen to keep going there purely because of what the venue offers in terms of that experience for a lot of sailors to be able to sail, to be there. We are doing what we can to minimise the cost there. . . . So the dialogue is open and we are trying to improve things from that going forward. So I just wanted people to know that we are aware of it.”*

Ricky O’Kane, Class Chair: As stated in the AGM agenda, the class were intending to defer the vote on Agenda item 6.2. As Roger Proctor put forward that the other proposals relating to amendments to the constitution are interrelated, are there any objections to deferring all proposals on the Agenda?

[no objections raised]

Ricky O’Kane noted the need for the class to speak to all members and carry out a thorough review (a new subcommittee will be required). Please let the class know if you would like to be involved.

6. The election of Individual Members, non members (who then become honorary members), honorary, Honorary Life Members or representatives of Family or Group Members to serve on the Committee until the next Annual ITCA (GBR) Constitution (Amended August 2022) Page 6 General Meeting unless before that they resign or cease to be a member of the Association:

Class Chair, Ricky O’Kane, thanked the following volunteers (who are stepping down) for all their time and support to the class:

- Michael Wemyss, Ribmaster.
- Mary Sparrow, Child Protection Officer.
- John Blackman-Northwood, East Area Representative.
- Mark & Maggi Dence, London & South East Area Representatives.
- James Willis, South West Area Representative.

Amendments to the list published in the AGM Agenda:

- 1) Mark Turner to stand for Fixtures Secretary.

The role of Child Protection Officer is now vacant. We urgently require a volunteer for this position, as the role needs to be filled at each event.

Clive Grummett, Webmaster, will be standing down in April 2026. Clive has supported the class for many years, as an Area Representative and also as Webmaster. The class will be looking for someone to take on this role next year. It is suggested that someone with experience of Microsoft 360 would be ideal for the role.

- No objections raised.

7. AOB:

Member query: Can the full accounts be shared with the membership, not just the events costs?

- The full accounts are produced and audited by our accountant, Andrew Budden. The full Profit & Loss Report will be shared once it is available.

Member query: Is there a possibility of bringing back NS5?

- Part of the issue surrounding NS5 was the lack of an available venue. The committee then decided to reduce to 4 NS events following the recommendations of the Event Sustainability Sub-Committee. However, if members want NS5 and it can be arranged without making a loss, it may be possible to reinstate. [the committee will review this further]

Member query: Why has the Nationals dropped to 4 days?

- The Nationals used to include 6 days of racing. This was dropped to 5 days (in 2022) due to a booking issue. The booking for the 2025 Nationals at Largs was made a couple of years ago, which is why it returned to 6 days. The duration of the 2026 Nationals was changed following the feedback from the sub-committee.

The following points were noted:

- 6 days of racing is a long time, particularly for younger sailors.
- The disadvantage with a shorter event would be if days are lost due to bad weather.
- There used to be 6 NS events, with the last one being held a couple of weeks before the Worlds so that boats could be collected from a single venue for transport to the worlds. However, it was noted that the event costs need to be rectified before introducing more events.
- It is a big time constraint for parents to commit to 5/6 days of racing.
- Sailors would be reluctant to travel to the Nationals if there was only a couple of days sailing due to adverse weather.
- Some venues are in holiday locations where accommodation is five or six days minimum.
- The ITCA (GBR) Events Manager advised that we have the option to extend the duration of the Nationals at WPNSA in 2026, if required.
- This will be considered further as part of an overall class review.

Mark Dence offered some additional information on the Events Sustainability Sub-Committee, of which he was Chair.

The sub-committee received input from both ITCA Area Representatives and a parent group. The sub-committee produced a list of 15 recommendations (not including item 6.2 on the AGM Agenda – this proposal was an idea from the ITCA (GBR) general Committee after review the sub-committee's recommendations). One of the recommendations was to reduce NS events from 5 to 4 – this was recommended in order to reduce costs. Further, the sub-committee recommended that WPNSA be retained as a venue.

Mark requested that the full recommendations of the sub-committee be shared with the membership.

8. Boat Builders report Russ Dent:

Russ Dent offered apologies from Martin Fry and Rob White, both of Topper International.

"Boat sales and new toppers this year have reached 175 units and we're looking with the orders that we've got to 10 by the end of the year. UK sales have had a modest increase, which is encouraging. And noticeably Europe and the international markets are looking steady and we anticipate probably 10 to 15% in global sales for 2026. The UK market is a little bit different. So we've received quite a number of inquiries from schools and sailing clubs. They're still awaiting grant approvals. They'll probably come through, I think, which is good. Sales from institutions and clubs have risen by about 10%, which is good because it's grassroots, while sales in fleet racing have declined, they seem to be on the increase, and I think that's down to the grey boat getting more podiums which is also a good thing. There were some new rigging techniques for coaches and I think that's helped all the grey boats to come into the fleet a bit more. So that's helped grey boats and I think that's good for the future of Topper you know across all racing levels.

European market or export markets. China has been pretty quiet because of their economy. However, in 2026, they are looking to buy more boats, which is which is good. That's across the whole range of us. They like our association which is really well established. They're in their seventh year of their inter-championship through China and they've also been doing the Asian Games since 2018 so that further strengthens the Topper presence throughout the region.

Last but not least New Product Development; I think as you know, I've been trying to strongly push the 6.4 rig to keep youngsters our friendly class. So we've given a few out. There are some more still to go if anybody wants a rig. We were, you know, talking about 10, but I can probably go to a few more. So if anybody wants to use a rig for the year doing the National Series and the Worlds, that would be really, really good. You could contact me or come to Topper headquarters. Also, talking to Flip Foulds, she would like to do some training on 6.4s, but she needs to know where 6.4s are so she can find the right venue so that we don't travel that far. I've got a telephone number but she wouldn't want me to give that out, but if anybody's got Flip's e-mail address then please get it out there so that we can start this ball rolling."

- Proposed: Steve Blair
- Seconded: Mark Dence
- No questions raised.

Roger Proctor: ITCA World have applied to World Sailing for a sustainability award for the Learn To Dream Project. This project has involved sending used Toppers to emerging nations such as South Africa, Australia, Malta, Grenada and Keyna. Roger is attending the World Sailing Conference in Dublin in November.

Roger also discussed a possible upcoming project involving a study by a university student, looking at the physical impact on sailors of moving into a larger boat too soon.

Member query: Update on ITCA (GBR) squad applications?

- The class have received 93 applications to date. The application deadline has been extended to allow completion of the final selector events and NS1 (in case there are any queries raised during these events).

Member query: Are the squads financially viable if only 90 applications have been received for a possible 120 places?

- Yes, some applicants have applied for places in both the regional and national squads. Based on the current sailor numbers, the squads will cover their own costs. So far there's more applicants per region than budgeted for.

Steve Blair, Scotland Area Rep: Thank you to Ricky O'Kane (who has stepped down as Chair) for all of his hard work, particularly during the recent Nationals at Largs.

Greg Croxton (incoming Chair);

Thank you to Ricky O'Kane and the previous committee members who have given their time for the class. Welcome to all the new committee members.

Please consider volunteering for the Child Protection Role. This is an important role, but does have support from the RYA.

Going forward, the focus will be on raising money, controlling costs, and if we can, raising membership as well.

Thank you for all the feedback during the meeting. We will take it on board and review.

AGM Closed: 21:14