

Chair's Report to the 2020 ACM

After last year's ACM we were looking forward to a busy 2020; hosting the Senior European Championships at Lee Valley, cheering on our Olympic slalom team in Tokyo, GB selection to earn the chance to race in the various International competitions and a full season of races for paddlers of all abilities. This very evening, we would have been looking forward to our bi-annual awards dinner. Sadly, none of this came to pass due to the emergence of the COVID-19 virus and the ensuing pandemic that has rendered "normal" activity impossible.

The Slalom Committee looked at ways in which racing could continue and it quickly became apparent that there was no way we could support a racing programme that would be fair to paddlers, organisers and volunteers. The decision to suspend the ranking system for the remainder of 2020, although disappointing, was supported by most of the slalom community. The Committee are guided by the rule book and that supported an approach to consider the season to span 2020/21 and preserve results achieved by paddlers who raced in the few competitions before lockdown commenced.

What has been encouraging is that paddlers have continued to get on the water where they can and many clubs have found imaginative ways to keep interest going, including running local mini competitions. Clubs are the bedrock that supports the sport, and it is heartening that enthusiasm remains undiminished even in these trying times.

The outlook for 2021 remains challenging, certainly in the early part of the year. Although there is a full calendar planned for 2021, we need to be prepared for races to be cancelled, possibly at short notice, and look to reschedule events where we can.

Hazel Ridge and Andy Neave are leaving the committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank both them for the dedication and enthusiasm they have brought to their respective roles. Chris Bailie is standing down as Scottish rep and I thank her for many years supporting both the committee and the interests of Scotland in equal measures. We welcome Fraser Glasgow onto the committee as the Scottish representative.

On a personal note I have decided that this will be my last "shift" as Chair and I will stand down at the next election for Chair in 2022. With Colin Woodgate moving to Treasurer the Vice-Chair position will be vacant and this gives the community the opportunity fill the role with a volunteer who would be interested in standing for Chair in 2022.

Finally, thank you to paddlers, volunteers, organisers, committee members and everyone for their efforts and dedication in supporting Canoe Slalom.

Dave Spencer
Chair, Slalom Committee
November 2020