

A Message from the Chairman – Richard Downs

First of all, I hope that everyone is keeping safe and well in these challenging times. It's been a while since our last meeting and this is just a short bulletin to keep you up to date with what has been going on during the past months behind the scenes.

Many of you will have been in communication with our Boatswain, Norman Mason, and this is a much appreciated and valued support. Norman is still undergoing treatment for his cancer – it's been a long haul and, as you can imagine, can be incredibly tiring for him. We look forward to the time when he can come and resume his duties as 'general overseer from a distance' once maintenance can continue. At the moment he says he's a V8 working on three cylinders!

Norman reports that the CHA is still safely stored at Peibron Farm, albeit a bit dusty, and all the materials are ready for the repairs planned to the stern. Some mahogany has been purchased by Simon Drakley to replace the rotten wood and we would like to thank the specialist engineering skills of Gerallt Jones, who has very generously been working on the necessary metal fixtures. At the moment he's manufacturing a replacement top pintle. We must also express our sincere gratitude to Dafydd Owen for allowing us to remain in storage at Peibron Farm with no extra charge. This is a very generous gesture of support that is really appreciated.

Mike Thompson is in touch with, and sends messages of goodwill to, various organisations that are restoring classic lifeboats in other parts of the UK. Two or three of these restorations will hopefully result in the vessels being returned to the sea. You may recall that some time ago a group came down from Scotland to visit the CHA and pick up any tips that Norman could suggest.

It has become customary for the Cemaes Boat Club to present a wreath at the Cemaes War Memorial on Remembrance Day. Thank you to Piers Beeland for helping to arrange this and, although I won't be able to attend in person this year, representatives from the Cemaes Boat Club will be there on your behalf. It is important that even though we haven't been sailing this year, Charles Henry Ashley continues to maintain its high profile in the community.

I was contacted recently by one of our Coxswains, Alun Pari Huws, who was keen to inform me about the forthcoming RNLi plans to celebrate their bicentenary. Alun works with the Llandudno RNLi team who are keen to involve classic lifeboats in their celebrations – particularly Charles Henry Ashley. It is something we could look forward to in 2024 that would create a positive aim for the future. We'd have plenty of time to complete our repairs – and make plans for a possible trip which could become that year's summer Adventure.

We were very fortunate to receive a £550 match-funded grant from Magnox in February this year which was to be spent on improving our safety equipment (lifejackets and walkie talkies). However, because of the unusual circumstances created by Covid-19, we have only just been able to complete this action. We have now made the purchase of 14 brand new lifejackets (Seago Seaguard 165 automatic with harness) and 4 Motorola T82 walkie talkies. The lifejackets are being supplied by Dulas Boats because we were keen to support local business on the island. The walkie talkies have been purchased in order to assist communications in the harbour area - particularly when the boat is being manoeuvred. This type of grant from Magnox is a key source of funding that enables us to provide safety equipment of the highest standards.

Cemaes Community Interest Company has been meeting regularly (via Zoom) and a number of developments have occurred. You will be aware that they have now purchased Capel Bethlehem and plans have been agreed for the building works.

Over the past months, the Directors (particularly Boat Club members Mike Whitlam and Jack Longman) have been involved in clearing it out and undertaking minor repairs to keep the buildings safe and the grounds looking tidy. The plans to commence building works are progressing – but everything has taken much longer because of the current restrictions.

However, ownership has brought with it additional responsibilities in the form of extra costs for water, electricity and insurance bills etc., at a time when it is difficult to generate any additional funds. During the summer a couple of community events have taken place – an Open Day and some outdoor markets which were welcomed by the community.

If you are able to, please support any of the events that they are able to organise. Charles Henry Ashley will really benefit from the Boathouse that is part of the overall Capel Bethlehem plan and we want to demonstrate our engagement with the project as much as possible.

Cemaes CIC have organised a Lottery Bonus Ball competition that starts in November – and if you are able to, please sign up by sending an email to Marilyn (mardowns23@gmail.com). It costs £20 for 10 weeks and you will have 2 chances each week to win £30. Visit their Facebook Page for all the details (@cemaescic).

We are continuing to maintain an interest in acquiring some space for the Boat Club at The Firs site in the Wylfa grounds and Steve Bray has kindly been in touch to confirm our interest with the group who are organising this.

Also on the agenda for future discussion is the big question about our trailer, which is not safe! We were investigating the means of launching CHA using a low loader when all plans were abandoned. This is going to be a necessary action when we are able to resume our regular meetings again.

Some of you may not be aware that Carys, the landlady of The Vigour, has been seriously ill. Carys has been a generous supporter of the Cemaes Boat Club and has always enabled us to hold meetings and events at the pub. She is currently recovering from a mastectomy, but still having treatment and I'm sure you will want to join me in wishing her all the best for her recovery.

All that remains is to thank you for your interest in the Charles Henry Ashley, despite our inability at present to be out on the water. Please continue to support the boat in any way you can, by renewing your membership and by attending any functions that we are able to hold in the future.

Stay safe and let's hope that we can meet soon.

Richard Downs

20th October 2020

