Class Secretary’s Report to the 2020 AGM

The Finn class finds itself at a strange crossroads in its history, with an undecided Olympic position, a postponed Olympics, an uncertain future as well as changes in the key administration of the class, all in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. The 2020 AGM was going to be used as a platform for future change and growth and has now been downsized to get through the basic needs of the class at this challenging time.

At the end of last year, Corinne left the role of Executive Director, leaving a huge hole in class administration, which has been hard to fill.

Since taking on the role of Class Secretary in November, I have encouraged the executive to look to the future and plan a strategy that supports the various strengths of the class through a range of initiatives. The purpose of the survey was to gather ideas and support for some of these, though current events have overtaken progress with that. A key question asked of us is what happens after the Olympics and what can IFA do to further encourage and support national fleets and promote international competition that is both affordable and pragmatic. I have always maintained that we must look after and support the 95% of the membership as well as the 5% with Olympic ambitions and that is the overriding objective of anything we attempt.

The Finn class will of course still appeal to the huge numbers of Masters, but we must also find ways to appeal to the youth, to the seniors as well as those with aspirations that range from club sailing to international regattas.

Since November we have:

• Reassigned some admin jobs within the executive to bridge the gap following Corinne’s departure and possible replacement.

• Implemented Xero for accounting processes and invoicing to improve the efficiency and transparency of the class accounts.

• Carried out an in-depth class survey early in the year, which is now closed. It had 366 responses and more than 700 comments. The intention was to present a report at the AGM, however this will be published later.

• More regular contact with national classes to inform and capture feedback.

• Began to create a major championship strategy for 2021-2024. We want to encourage venues to bid further ahead, however the current global situation has left that process on hold for a while.

The Finn class is in great health, and the executive remains positive about the future, inside or outside of the Olympics. Many plans were being formed before the season closed down but in brief the following are being discussed:

• Creation of a small circuit of events involving our more popular regattas. There were lots of ideas from the survey and they will be included in the report. To
support this series, a small group of sailors could be formed from the main participating countries to coordinate the calendar and provide feedback.

- In the absence of the World Sailing Ranking list, a new Finn World Ranking could be created.


- Look at opportunities for innovative events and exciting venues, on the back of our existing major championships.

- Explore how best to support national classes in the smaller Finn sailing countries worldwide.

I have served the Finn class for nearly 30 years now, 23 of them with the IFA and I look forward to continuing that work in this new role brings. We always have a lot to do, now perhaps more than ever. While this report was supposed to reflect much more definite plans, it has perhaps become a mandate for future work and I hope you will all support myself and the rest of the executive as we work to keep the Finn a relevant and appealing class for anyone looking to sail a challenging, welcoming singlehander, whether they are an U23 beginner, an experienced Legend or anything in between.

Robert Deaves
Class Secretary