

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY BOAT CLUB

### *Constitution*

#### **NAMES AND OBJECTS**

1. The Club shall be known as the 'Oxford University Boat Club' or the 'OUBC'.
2. The purpose of the Club shall be to select and train rowing crews to compete to win against the University of Cambridge in The Boat Race, an annual head-to-head race of eight-oared rowing crews first contested in 1829 and traditionally held on the 'Championship Course' on the River Thames between Putney and Mortlake.
3. The names 'Oxford University Boat Club' or 'OUBC' shall be used by all rowing crews competing in The Boat Race and may only be used in other events with the permission of the Committee.
4. The men's and women's rowing crews selected for The Boat Race shall both be known as the 'Blue Boat' or the 'Blue Boats' or the 'Men's Blue Boat' or the 'Women's Blue Boat', and a rower who has raced in the Boat Race shall be known as a 'Blue' or collectively 'Blues'.
5. The name 'Isis' will be used to describe the men's crew competing in the Reserve Boat Race and the name 'Osiris' will be used to describe the women's crew competing in the Reserve Boat Race. The names 'Isis' or 'Osiris' will normally be used by men's and women's crews respectively when representing the Club in competitions outside The Boat Race.
6. The men's and women's rowing crews selected for The Lightweight Boat Race, who shall comply with the relevant weight limits, shall be known as the 'Lightweight Boat' or the 'Men's Lightweight Boat' or the 'Women's Lightweight Boat'.
7. The rank order of boats will be Blue Boat, Reserve Boat and Lightweight Boat. Unless a rower specifically requests to be considered for selection for the Lightweight Boat only, they will automatically be eligible for selection for all boats.
8. The Club colour will be dark blue. Only those who have competed in The Boat Race are allowed to wear the Club's dark blue blazer with dark blue trim and the dark blue or white jumper with 'OUBC'. Those who have competed in The Reserve Boat Race are entitled to wear the dark blue blazer with white trim and the dark blue or white jumper with 'Isis' or 'Osiris'. Those who have competed in The Lightweight Boat Race are entitled to wear the Club's dark blue blazer with white trim.
9. The Club shall be a member of the Oxford University Rowing Association (OURA), an unincorporated association whose purpose is to promote amateur rowing for the benefit of the public by supporting, developing and improving the participation by student members of the University of Oxford in annual races against the University of Cambridge.

#### **COMPLIANCE**

10. The Club and its operations will comply with the following points:
  - (a) The Club shall be administered in accordance with the [University's Regulations for the Activities and Conduct of Student Members](#).
  - (b) The activities of the Club will at all times be conducted in accordance with the University's procedures, codes of practice, complaints procedures, and policies in force at any given time on equality, harassment, freedom of speech and safeguarding (which are available via the University Student Handbook and on the [University's webpages](#)), and the Club's Code of Conduct, Safety

Policy and Complaints Procedure shall be updated as required from time to time to ensure compliance.

- (c) The Club shall affect and maintain registration with British Rowing, the national governing body for rowing, and make every effort to comply with all safety procedures that British Rowing prescribes or recommends as good practice.
- (d) The Club shall ensure adequate insurance cover is in place to cover its activities. Details of the cover must be submitted to the University Insurance Office on request.
- (e) The Club shall ensure that all coaches are registered with and, if required, accredited by British Rowing and that the Director of Sport is informed of all new coaching appointments.
- (f) The Club shall observe the Club Safety Policy, ensure compliance with this Policy, and follow an appropriate procedure for risk assessment, which will be overseen by the Health & Safety and Welfare Officer. All activities and events, whether in the UK or overseas, and whether in term or out of term, will be appropriately risk assessed. Both the Policy and the procedure for risk assessment must be acceptable to and approved by the Sports Safety Officer.
- (g) No member of the Club shall participate in any activity overseas organized by the Club during term-time, unless the plans for such activity have been notified at least one calendar month in advance of the date of departure from the United Kingdom to the Director of Sport and approved by the Proctors.
- (h) The Club shall maintain a dedicated website, shall supply details of its web address to the Sports Federation for listing on the University's sports club website, and shall appoint an IT Officer to liaise with the University and other related parties as required on all IT matters.
- (i) The Club shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the resources available to the men's squad and to the women's squad, including financial resources, equipment and access to training facilities, are equal in all material respects.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

10. Membership of the Club shall consist of three categories, collectively known as 'Members':
- (a) Squad Members, being full-time students of the University of Oxford studying for a course which requires compulsory matriculation and leads to a degree-level qualification who are selected to trial for the Club in any given year;
  - (b) Life Members, being those that have rowed or coxed in The Boat Race or The Reserve Boat Race or The Lightweight Boat Race; and
  - (c) Honorary Members, being those so determined from time to time by the Committee for exceptional service to the Club.
11. Only Squad Members of the Club are considered to be beneficiaries of any resources of the Club.
12. In accordance with the Club's Complaints Procedure, the Committee may, having specific regard to the Senior Member's advice in relation to the relevant matter, remove a person from membership if removal of such person from membership is deemed to be in the best interests of the Club. An Oxford University student, including any student who has a contract for study with the University, whose membership of the Club is removed under this procedure has a right to ask the Proctors to review the Committee's decision.

## **MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**

13. The Club shall convene an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Members in Trinity Term of each year and Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM) as and when called by a Club Officer or on a written requisition by twenty or more Life Members.
14. Notice of an AGM or EGM shall be provided at least fourteen days' in advance, such notice to be provided by the Chair, Senior Member, President or the OUBC Operations and Administration Manager, and to include notice of the agenda of the meeting. The agenda for the AGM will include written reports to members on the Club's rowing activities, the activities of the Committee during the preceding year, and any other business arising.
15. All categories of Members can attend and participate in an AGM or EGM.
16. Only Life Members have a right to vote in meetings of the Members.
17. Meetings will normally be chaired by the Chair or, in their absence, by another Club Officer.
18. A quorum shall consist of not less than twenty Life Members.
19. Where required, decisions will be taken by a vote of the Life Members present with a simple majority required to decide a course of action.
20. The OUBC Operations and Administration Manager will normally be responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting and assisting with other administrative functions required. Copies of the minutes and Committee's reports shall be made available, upon request, to the Proctors.

## **CLUB OFFICERS**

21. The Club Officers, who are collectively responsible for the affairs of the Club and for the relationship of the Club to external bodies, shall consist of:
  - (a) the Senior Member, who shall be responsible for liaising with the University of Oxford, and in particular with the Proctors and the Vice Chancellor, for the affairs of the Club, and providing information to the Proctors and/or Vice Chancellor on request;
  - (b) the Chair, who cannot be a student, who shall be responsible for leading the Club committees and being the line manager for the Chief Coaches;
  - (c) the Treasurer, who cannot be a student, shall be responsible for all financial matters of the Club, including submitting annual accounts to the Finance Department and for arranging an independent examination of those annual accounts, and who shall act as a Director of OURA Limited, a company limited by guarantee that holds certain property on trust and acts as a limited liability counterparty in respect of certain contracts.
  - (d) the Chief Coaches of the men's and women's squads, who shall be responsible for all rowing activities of the Club, and in particular for coaching and selecting rowing crews to compete to win The Boat Race;
  - (e) the Presidents of the men's and women's squads, who shall:
    - (i) lead and represent their squads;
    - (ii) work closely with their Chief Coach to produce an effective and inspiring team environment focused on producing winning rowing crews;

- (iii) arrange regular consultation with student members of the Club;
- (iv) represent student interests at Committee meetings;
- (v) act as a contact point for welfare concerns for Squad Members, including signposting to appropriate welfare resources both within the Club and within the broader University.

## THE COMMITTEE

22. All members of the Committee will act in accordance with the Club's Code of Conduct on Finance, Donations, and Gifts.
23. The Committee is responsible for directing the activities of the Club in pursuit of its purpose, and in particular:
  - (a) the recruitment, appointment, oversight and support of the Chief Coaches and, if appropriate, their termination;
  - (b) securing the funds necessary for the activities of the Club;
  - (c) appointing a Health & Safety and Welfare Officer, who will normally be an employee of the Club;
  - (d) appointing two representatives of the Club to sit on the Board of The Boat Race Company Limited (BRCL);
  - (e) nominating Trustees of The Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Foundation (OCRF), a UK registered charity that supports and advances The Boat Race;
  - (f) supporting the welfare of its members and staff, including the impact on the academic progress of Squad Members.
24. The Committee shall consist of:
  - (a) the Club Officers (except in the case of specific discussions regarding one or both of the Chief Coaches, in which case the Chief Coaches will not be present);
  - (b) one of the two BRCL Representatives, each of whom shall act as directors of the Boat Race Company Limited (BRCL), a company wholly owned by the OCRF that is responsible for organizing and delivering The Boat Race, and ensure the interests of OUBC are represented on the BRCL board; and
  - (c) up to four Ordinary Members to take on specific tasks as required to support the effective running of the Club, such as:
    - (i) Fundraising – to generate income for the Club, including via donations, sponsorship, merchandising, and other commercial activities;
    - (ii) Student Recruitment – to support the Chief Coach in the identification of future talent to row at the Club and assisting with visits, open days and applications where appropriate;
    - (iii) Performance – providing advice and undertaking reviews to support the training and performance programmes put in place by the Chief Coaches;
    - (iv) Alumni Relations – coordinating communications, events, and other alumni activity and assisting in the maintenance of alumni databases;

- (v) Health and Safety – providing advice and assistance on all matters relating to health and safety, risk assessments, and student and staff welfare;
  - (vi) College Engagement – ensuring collaborative relationships with colleges and college rowing clubs.
25. The Committee may invite other people to attend meetings, including:
- (a) the OUBC Operations and Administration Manager, who will normally be responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting;
  - (b) the Chair of the OURA, the Director of Sport, and any other individuals as deemed appropriate by the Committee from time to time.
26. Alternative representation is not permitted at Committee except in the case of:
- (a) a President, who may be represented by their Vice President;
  - (b) the Senior Member, who may appoint and be represented by a Deputy Senior Member, who must be a member of Congregation of the University of Oxford;
  - (c) the Chair of the OURA, who may be represented by another OURA Trustee.
27. The Senior Member will chair the Committee in the absence of the Chair.
28. The Committee should strive for gender balance and must at any time have at least twenty-five per cent representation from each gender.
29. The Committee shall meet at least six times a year at regular intervals as required by the business to be transacted.
30. A quorum shall consist of not less than six Committee members of which at least two must be Club Officers.
31. Where required, decisions will be taken by a vote of the Committee with a simple majority required to decide a course of action. In the case of equal votes, the Senior Member shall have the casting vote.
32. The Committee can create new sub-committees, including a President creating a sub-committee of Squad Members, to support their work.
33. The process of appointment to Committee positions will be transparent and skills-based, reflecting the needs of the Club. Initially, positions will be filled by existing members of the committees of the antecedent clubs. Thereafter, vacant positions will be advertised via appropriate channels and applications considered by a small sub-group of the Committee appointed and chaired by the Senior Member. The sub-group will then make recommendations to the Committee.
34. Any dispute arising about the validity or propriety of any action or inaction under this constitution should be handled in accordance with the OUBC Complaints Procedure.

## **TERMS AND APPOINTMENTS**

35. The Chair, who shall not currently be a student and who shall normally be a Life Member, shall be appointed by the Committee for a four-year term that is renewable once. The Committee may, by exception, permit further terms if the Committee agree that is in the best interests of the Club.

36. The Senior Member, who must be a member of Congregation of the University of Oxford, shall be appointed by the Committee for a four-year term that is renewable once. The Committee may, by exception, permit further terms provided such further terms are approved by the Proctors.
37. The Treasurer, who shall not currently be a student and who shall normally be a Life Member with professional experience in accounting or financial services, shall be appointed by the Committee for a four-year term that is renewable once. The Committee may, by exception, permit further terms if the Committee agree that is in the best interests of the Club.
38. The Chief Coaches shall be appointed by the Committee on a permanent basis or such term as the Committee deems appropriate.
39. The Presidents of the men's and women's squads, each of whom shall normally be a Blue, shall be elected annually in accordance with the following provisions:
  - (a) elections will be held in person in Trinity Term of the prior academic year and will be facilitated by the outgoing President of the relevant squad;
  - (b) the ballot will be anonymous and will be conducted in the form of ranked-choice voting, with the outgoing President of the relevant squad having the casting vote in the event of a tie;
  - (c) any person eligible to vote may vote by proxy, provided they notify the outgoing President of the relevant squad no less than 24 hours in advance;
  - (d) any person wishing to be considered for election as President:
    - (i) must be nominated by two Blue Boat rowers in writing who were Squad Members in the academic year in which the election is being held;
    - (ii) must be approved by the Senior Member in writing, such approval to be given to at least two candidates of each squad;
    - (iii) must be eligible to be a Squad Member in the year in which they would serve as President;
  - (e) an outgoing President or former President may stand for re-election;
  - (f) Members of the men's squad may only vote for the men's squad President and Members of the women's squad may only vote for the women's squad President. No Squad Member may vote twice in one year, meaning if a Squad Member qualifies to vote in both the men's and women's squad elections (for example, a coxswain who has competed for both squads), they must choose one election in which to cast a ballot;
  - (g) Those eligible to vote are: any Squad Members who rowed or coxed for the Men's or Women's Blue Boats or Reserve Boats or Lightweight Boats in the academic year in which the election is being held;
  - (h) the outgoing President shall invite a Life Member who is not eligible to vote to be an independent chair of the election.
40. Ordinary Members of the Committee shall each be appointed by the Committee for a four-year term that is renewable once. The Committee may, by exception, permit further terms if the Committee agree that is in the best interests of the Club.
41. Any Committee member may be removed from their role on the committee if this is deemed to be a necessary outcome following due process as outlined in the OUBC Complaints Procedure.

## **INDEMNITY**

42. So far as may be permitted by law, every Committee member and every Club Officer and any student acting in an official capacity for the Club shall be entitled to be indemnified by the Club against all costs, charges, losses, expenses, and liabilities incurred by them in the execution or discharge of their duties or the exercise of their powers, or otherwise properly in relation to or in connection with their duties. This indemnity extends to any liability incurred by them in defending any proceedings, civil or criminal, which relate to anything done or omitted or alleged to have been done or omitted by them as a member of the Committee or Club Officer and in which judgement is given in their favour (or the proceedings are otherwise disposed of without any finding or admission of any material breach of duty on their part), or in which they are acquitted, or in connection with any application under any statute for relief from liability in respect of any such act or omission in which relief is granted to them by the Court.
43. So far as may be permitted by law, the Club may purchase and maintain for any Committee member or Officer of the Club insurance cover against any liability which by virtue of any rule of law may attach to them in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which they may be guilty in relation to the Club and against all costs, charges, losses and expenses and liabilities incurred by them and for which they are entitled to be indemnified by the Club.

## **DISSOLUTION**

44. In the event of the Club being dissolved, its assets shall not be distributed amongst the Members, but shall transferred directly to the OURA on dissolution or as soon after as is practicable. If the OURA no longer exists, the assets shall be paid to or at the direction of the University of Oxford for use in support of rowing or other sporting activities within the University of Oxford.

## **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

45. This constitution may be repealed, amended, or added to by resolution of an AGM or EGM with a two-thirds majority of Life Members present and voting. Any such alterations are subject to the agreement and acceptance of the Proctors and, if accepted, must thereafter be circulated in writing to all Members of the Club.

## **INTERPRETATION**

46. Any question about the interpretation of this Constitution shall be settled by the Proctors.
47. This Constitution shall be binding on all Members of the Club. No regulation, bye-law or policy of the Club shall be inconsistent with, or shall affect or repeal anything contained in, this Constitution.
48. This constitution shall have effect from 05 September 2023 and was approved by the Proctors on 15 November 2023.