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Minutes from the WHF meeting in Saalburg, 2024

Forward:

Following on from a very successful World hovercraft championships, please find attached the meeting minutes from Saalburg. I would like to congratulate all the new champions as well as all who competed and also Manuel and Jessica Metzner for organising them.

We wish the HCGB the best of luck for their accepted bid for the next world championships in the UK in 2026.

As you will read below, this will be my final email I will be sending out as secretary, I would like to thank you all for your support over the years and also wish the best of luck to the new secretary Marie Trussler.

Best regards,

Sacha Rouchier
WHF Secretary

Meeting time and location:

Location: World Hovercraft Championships (WHC) Race Site, Saalburg.

Date: 29th of August 2024, 19.30

Agenda:

Presidents Welcome and Report for Board meeting 2024 Saalburg, Germany.

Welcome to the meeting:

Thank you all for giving your time and support this evening to attend this WHF Board meeting.

I start this meeting by asking you to stand, if you are able, and remain silent for a minute to remember Michael Feulner who in 2012 at this venue, and Daniel Newton who in 2022 at Flottsbro lost their lives racing hovercraft at our World Championships.

[Minute of silence observed].

Thank you. I'm sure we all miss them as much as their families do. I will reflect later in my report on the actions we have taken since the fatal event at Flottsbro.

As in previous years I have agreed to hold this Board meeting prior to our Championships and not the day after so that those who wish to leave as soon as possible can do so. However, should any appeals arise during the Championships that need to be considered by the WHF Board then a Special Board meeting will be convened before prize giving on Sunday for that purpose.

Now normally our Board meetings comprise our Vice Presidents, elected officers and two representatives appointed from each of our member countries. However, providing we can have an orderly meeting all are welcome.

Presidents Report:

At our last meeting in 2022 we were informed we could not hold a World Championship in Germany and did not have any other hosts. But after much negotiation we find ourselves here again. So, a huge and well-deserved 'thank you' to Jessica and Manuel Metzner, their supporting team, their sponsors and to the German Hover Club for coming to our rescue when it was looking very likely that we did not have a host for our Championships in 2024. I ask everyone to join me in wishing them and their team every success in organising a great Championship. Without their help we would not be having a World Championship this year.

I do not wish to dwell on the detail of the fatality at Flottsbro but would quickly like to inform this meeting of the measures we have taken since then.

There were two possible causes of the accident, a carburettor becoming detached or an electrical wiring failure. It was simply not possible to identify which came first. To minimise this happening again in the future our Construction for Racing Hovercraft WHF002 has been amended. Section 8.3 Carburettor Supplementary Restraints, and section 9.1G Electrical Connection and Joints have been added.

At and immediately after the incident and the following days there were things that the WHF and Race officials got right and some that frankly we could have done better. To improve on this, we have completely re-written our Marshals Guidelines, turning them into a Marshals Handbook which now has a major new section dealing with 'Critical Incidents'. This new section formally sets out the procedures we will follow should such an event happen in the future.

Another area we identified, in conjunction with Daniel's family, is the responsibility a participant has to their families and others if they are involved in a serious accident or worse. Added to this is the responsibility the WHF has in collecting information from a participant that would assist them, their families or national investigating officers should the worst happen. To help and close this loop we have introduced a Participant Entry Pack WHF018. If you have not already done so I really urge you all to download it and read it.

I would like to thank all those who helped with the content,

production and publishing of our revised and new WHF documents. In particular, I wish to thank Daniel's sister Jenny, Heather & Ewan Black, Tim Shaw, Nikki Turnbull, Michael Rausch, Magnus Ivanoff, and last but not least Jamie Lewendon for their time, effort and expertise they gave me with our new and revised publications.

However, just providing words in a WHF document is not the only answer to minimising risk in our sport so we have encouraged both craft designers/constructors and users to consider ways of making our racing craft safer. Some work has already started in the UK by the Hovercraft Club of Great Britain, and you will hear more of that as an agenda item later in the meeting.

I would also like to tell you that because of the generosity of the hovercraft community the following funds were generated and passed to Daniel's sister to be used to support his children into the future (The SEK are accurate whereas the EUR and £'s are approximate due to exchange rates at the time):

Collected at Flottsbro	34,200SEK	3,200EUR
£2,700		
By GoFundMe	128,902SEK	12,000EUR
£10,200		

Turning to other issues now.

Regarding the WHF Finances, two things:

Firstly, there was no income from the Swedish World Championships in 2022. As the event organisers had so little money to host the event it to make it viable it was decided not to levy our normal charge.

Secondly, immediately after the Swedish World Championships in 2022 the WHF donated half of our funds to Daniel Newton's GoFundMe page which was, £730 approximately 880€euro. You don't have to be a mathematician to realise that as of now we now have £730 which is approximately 880 €euro left in our funds. For convenience and because the balance is so small our funds are currently in a PayPal account.

In past years it has always been a challenge to find a host for our next World Championships. This time not so as the Hovercraft Club of Great Brittain have already made us an offer for 2026 and one which I have on your behalf provisionally accepted. Proposed dates, location and most other details have been decided and again you will hear more of this later in the meeting.

If you are not already aware of it, I would like to introduce The Hovercraft Society. This Society was formed in 1971 as a forum for engineers and professionals involved with the air cushion industry. Over the years The Hovercraft Society has evolved into more of a global society for students, engineers and enthusiasts alike. You will

hear a little more about the Society from Alan Bliault, their Technical Secretary later in the meeting

As is my tradition I would like to end with a few well deserved ‘thank you’s’:

To Cathy Godicheau, our unsung hero who keeps our website in perfect order.

To Sacha Rouchier our retiring Secretary, and to my Vice Presidents for all the help and assistance they constantly give me.

To Jamie Lewendon, our Technical Director, for his technical expertise and the outstanding amount of time he has given in the production of our regulations and publications.

And finally to your good selves and everyone who supports the WHF and our Championships. Without you the WHF would cease to exist.

Thank you. That ends my report. I will take just a few questions if you have any before we move to the next agenda item.

Election of Officers:

President. (Tony Drake is prepared to stand if no-one else is proposed).

Secretary & Treasurer. (Currently Sacha Rouchier). will be replaced by Marie Trussler

Vice President – Europe. (Currently Magnus Ivanoff).

Vice President – Americas. (Currently Kent Gano).

Vice President – Asia. (Paul Hibbard).

Vice President – Africa. (Vacant).

Technical Director. (Currently James Lewendon).

Director of Endurance Racing. (Currently John Gifford).

All existing officers unanimously re-elected for another term except for secretary.

Any other notified and previously circulated business.

Request to open discussion in the future of the possibility of teams participating in the WHC. To be discussed further via email.

Apologies.

John Gifford, Jos Vanderhoven and Owen Ellis have sent their apologies that they cannot be present.

Dutch Club.

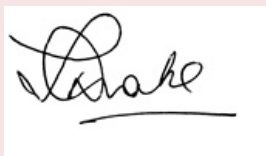
It was informed that the Dutch club will now be governed by Ron Hemeler and Lex Van Schaik.

Close:

As I said at the start of the meeting thank you for giving your time to be here this evening. I hope everyone will compete in a spirit of true competition but with the greatest respect for each other and everyone's safety.

I look forward to some excellent racing and a fantastic World Championship.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Drake', with a horizontal line underneath.

Tony Drake
WHF President



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