



# DARTMOUTH ROYAL REGATTA SAILING WEEK

## Follow-up to the recent yachting questionnaire, dates for 2023 and 2024, and a few words about Dinghies and Juniors

3rd December 2022

Firstly, a very big **THANK YOU** to all who responded to the questionnaire about the **Yachting events in Dartmouth Royal Regatta Sailing Week**. There were exactly 100 responses, which was a very satisfying level of response and enabled us to analyse your opinions in some detail.

### Yachting events - Which days?

The problem of finding suitable accommodation for visiting crews has regularly been mentioned in feedback over a number of years, particularly as self-catering properties commonly have a Saturday changeover – not convenient to a Sunday finish to racing. We looked at two ways to bring the finish forward to Saturday – firstly by starting the 4-day Series a day earlier, or secondly by shortening the Series to 3 days, with the possibility of more races per day.

The responses were very mixed, with the status quo (Passage Race Wednesday followed by a 4-day Series ending Sunday) coming out top as the “preferred option” for the most people (and also being rated as “an absolute no-no” by the least people). However it was not a large difference, especially when we combined “preferred options” with options people were “happy to go with” – here the option to shift back a day (Passage Race Tuesday following by 4-day series ending Saturday) was rated about the same as the status quo, while the third option (Passage Race Wednesday followed by a 3 day-series) lagged behind.

In addition to posing these options, we also invited your comments. While some people emphasised the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation, others commented that they have managed to negotiate Monday change-overs, or that they have already booked for next year. Others posed the counter-argument that starting a day earlier would mean taking an extra day off work for many crew, particularly difficult for those who race regularly in several regattas. It was also pointed out that clashing with our dinghy events prevents competitors from competing in both.

Taking all this into consideration, we have decided that **there will be no change to the dates for 2023** – so the Passage Race will be on Wednesday 23rd and the 4-Day Series Thursday 24th to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August. As already announced, the Dinghy Series will run from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> because of unsuitable tides at Dittisham on the Saturday.

However for **2024**, when the Bank Holiday Monday occurs at the beginning of Regatta week, the yacht events will move back a day : Passage Race Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>, 4-day Series Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 31<sup>st</sup>. We will also look at running a stand-alone Charity race on the final Sunday (1<sup>st</sup>

September). The Dinghy Series will return to its usual timing at the beginning of the week (Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>).

### **Races per day and the Bay Race**

Having decided to continue with a 4-day Series, we went on to consider your responses on whether to stick with 2 races per day, or to increase to 3, and whether to include the longer Bay Race. Here there was a clear difference in response according to class. Those likely to enter in the Cruiser, Day-boat and Squib classes showed a clear preference to remain with 2 races/day, while for the IRC competitors, there was roughly equal support for either 2 or 3 races/day. Both IRC and Cruiser classes strongly supported retaining the Bay Race, and there was a slim majority in its favour in the Day boat and Squib classes.

We decided that the Bay Race will be retained for all classes. For the IRC class only, as a trial in 2023, the number of races will increase on one or two days to 3 races/day, and we will review this again for following years.

As to the Bay Race scoring, there was a clear preference that the race should continue to be scored as two identical races with equal placing. Given the decision previously announced to reduce the number of discards in the series to one (in line with the RYA norm), one of the Bay Race scores can be used as a discard.

### **Other points**

Your comments provided us with much food for thought. Some matters we can do nothing about, such as the date being tied to the last Friday in August by the Regatta's Royal Charter. Opposing opinions were often raised, for instance some competitors asking for more windward/leeward courses and others for more triangle courses and more variety; some asking for longer races and others for more shorter races. Together with the Race Officers, we will continue to strive to deliver the best possible racing.

One point that was raised several times was the mix of boats in the Cruiser and Dayboat classes. To some extent this arose during the post-lockdown period when we wanted to encourage short-handed or family crews to be able to participate. Next year's NoR will tighten up the class definitions and encourage boats to sail under IRC if appropriate.

We will also liaise more closely with some groups to try to provide more appropriate classes and courses – so if you sail a classic yacht, a gaffer, a sportsboat or a dayboat, we invite your collaboration on how we can encourage more entries to make separate classes viable.

### **Not forgetting the Dinghies and the Juniors**

We were really pleased with the high levels of entries this year in the dinghy fleets at Dittisham. Next year, because of the tides, the Dinghy Series will run from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and in 2024 from Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>. We are aware that in both years, the final day will unfortunately clash with the Passage Race. One suggestion arising in the yacht questionnaire responses was to hold an event open to all classes on the final Sunday, and we welcome suggestions as to how the dinghies could be included in the proposed Charity Race in 2024.

The Junior Dinghy Series will take place at RDYC, and will continue to provide an excellent introduction to Regatta sailing for under-16s. This year's revised format with varying timing in line with the best tidal conditions each day was a big improvement, and discussions are under way

whether any further changes to the format could help to reverse the declining numbers of entries seen over recent years. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do get in touch.

### **Notices of Race and entries**

Notices of Race are being prepared for 2023, and we will let you know when they become available. We anticipate that **entries will open at the beginning of February.**

With best wishes,

Peter Boote (Chair) and the JRSC Committee