**Online Council Meeting, 12 February, 2017 – 19:00 UTC**

Steve Chesney; Andrea Minoni, Ben Schulz, Chris Turner, Christina Härdi, Dave Laing, David Carroll, Debbie Kirkby, Francois Schluchter, Francis de Roek, Jakub Napravnik, Jean Robillard, John Heywood, John Manson, MihaKavčič, Penny Gibbs, Rob Thompson, Tom Egli, Umberto Coccuzza (Mianne Erne: minutes)

Excused: Hiroshi Kato, Clay Poulson, Jackie Barker

1. **Commodore’s report**

Good year in 2016, with a very good, though small World Championship in Dec in SA.

Enough money in the bank to think of how to spend it.

At this moment we have several events lined up. In 2020 we have no proposal yet. 2021 big Europeans because of bid by Australia early in 2022. Basically saying, we’re in a pretty good position.

2017 is an election year, Steve isn’t standing again. We need to find someone new, who was not involved in the mess we had a few years ago.

1. **Secretary’s report**

Jackie is in NZ at the moment. Her role has been re-defined, so she isn’t as active as the former secretary. She sends out the stickers and membership cards. We built 10 boats in 2016, which is double of what we had the year before.

1. **Treasurer’s report**

We are in a very stable financial situation. Some money has been budgeted for trainings, as had been discussed, but not used in 2016. Question about the accounts from Chris, concerning different amounts in membership – it’s a technical difference because some money has to be paid back.

We still pay some patent money. The Norris brothers haven’t answered questions about buying off the patent rights.

Chris: what is our reserves policy? Penny: We haven’t got any, it wasn’t necessary in the past.

Steve thinks money in FI’s account is unimportant, the class would work on national levels even without FI. That’s why we should do our best to spend some of the money we have today. NCAs should apply for reimbursement of events.

Chris Turner: experience in UK is that big training events don’t work, training is more effective at club level.

UK has boat shows. Jean says in France participation is much too expensive. Jean also thinks training at club level is more efficient.

Fancois: would it be a good idea to publish a new booklet? With tuning guides etc.? Christina and Chris think it should be done electronically. Steve: we’d need to find the right people to do that. Ben: the electronic data is there, it’s all on the website. From there it could be linked to facebook.

Website: we’ve put google translate on, has that been of help? – Christina: for Swiss people the Swiss Fireball website is much more important than FI website. Christina thinks the website should be very topical, but now it still says next Worlds is SA. Ben: no new information on future Worlds because we haven’t decided yet, there is no information yet.

We should have videos that national websites can put up. We should have promotional videos. Ben: series of videos.

Rob Thompson: sending money around the world for training isn’t really helpful. Promotion: we need to find “young” places. Try to get college sailors. As of now, we don’t have enough growth. Chris will try to find someone skilled enough to do it. Ben: SA showed that even with not much money, a lot can be done in the field of media. Live-streaming might work and it would be cheap. Chris Turner: this is being looked into for Lyme Regis. David Laing: the whole video stuff cost about £40.-. Francois: has seen a pro company who did promotional videos for the Melges, with virtual reality etc., but it costs money.

FI could for instance help pay for trackers on boats. Ben: should we hire trackers?

Christina: there should be guidelines or forms about how to apply for money from FI.

Steve suggests sending proposals out by email, to be discussed by correspondence. Aplications could be made and approved in the same way, because it shouldn’t be the Executive who decides but Council.

1. **Constitution Change status**

All the NCAs who did answer voted yes. Now it is up to Tom Egli to send it off to World Sailing for their approval.

1. **Rule Change Proposals**

**Two trapeze harnesses** – Tom: pre-1997, weight jackets were allowed, clothing weight was unlimited, then those rules came in and it was agreed that the helm wearing a trapeze would be seen as a weight jacket. If we could guarantee that the overall weight would still be under 8kg, it might be possible. Basically it would be difficult to get a second trapeze harness rule past World Sailing. In Canada, teams often have a second harness on board without wearing it, never had a protest. At club level it should not be a problem, but at international level it should stay illegal. Chris: there shouldn’t be different rules at different levels. To further the class, this would not be a very efficient method. **Chris Turner withdraws the proposal on behalf of UKFA**.

**Twin poles**: Steve: the system hasn’t been propagated as well as it could have, a lot of sailors still don’t really understand the system. Chris. We did send out a lot of information. The discussions have been from the wrong end of the problem. Steve: that’s why UKFA should put the proposal together in a way that’s easier to understand.

Vote on whether to vote on Twin-Pole proposal now or later:

* ITA has no real idea yet. Vote later.
* SUI: what keeps people out of the class is costs, and too many lines. Vote later
* KEN: David: aim for a vote in Lyme Regis or afterwards
* CZE: postpone
* FRA: we need the proof, cost matters. Postpone
* SHE: have had single fly-away system, one crew is very light/small. Fly-away single helped.
* SLO: postpone; single fly-away would do the job.
* CAN: cheaper poles, we need to see a boat which is not in competition but can be tried.
* BEL: our kite is a lot smaller than 505, don’t need it. Postpone.
* AUS need more time to discuss it in NCA.
* Tom: Chris did supply what FI had asked; class was shocked by the price, especially for NCAs who have to import from UK. We should probably present different options, not go from present state to fully rigged twin poles based on 505 system.
* Ben: we tried Sayce-Rees System, cost about £400 but that would be less if it was mass produced. That might be true for twin pole system as well. That money we have in the bank could be put into that.

Fireballers need to get an opportunity to sail a twin-pole boat. **Vote on the rule change is postponed.**

1. **Future Championship venues**

**2017 Europeans, Lyme Regis GBR**

Organisation is well under way, very nice place; there is no entry limit.

**2018 Worlds Carnac FRA**

End of August at Carnac, the club has hosted a lot of big events, the place it good with a lot of accommodation, especially towards the end of August. The presentation that was sent out is still in French, will be translated into English shortly. Christina: Jean, is the number of racing days already fixed? The club is afraid they will not have enough volunteers for two full weeks. Christina: Lay days are important. Jean: We can discuss this with the club. John Manson: Lay days are welcome. Jeand: we plan two races a day. 32 … Rob: there should be flexibility about the date of the lay day. John Manson: it’s mostly the race committee volunteers that need a fixed date.

**No votes against Carnac.**

**2019 Worlds CAN, venue tba**

Rob Thompson: It looks like Nova Scotia can’t be pulled off, Kingston has not been definitely fixed but looks hopeful. Easy to ship to. Late August.

Steve: it’s important to get the boats there and back quickly. The last Worlds (1996) there was great. John Manson: is it possible to get an estimate about how long it will take to ship boats there and back? Tom Egli: Roll-on-roll off: 7 to 8 days, Containers hsoudl be the same, then trucking 2 days. The question is how often there are shipments going out of Montreal. So count about 10 days to two weeks. Ben: do we need to wait for a formal proposal from Canada or can we vote now? Steve: since Canada is right now the only name … Tom: European can attend a top-level event every year. For sailors outside Europe, taking part in a top-level event may well be a once-in-a-lifetime thing. John Manson: Could we ask Canada to set up a similar flyer as the French did? So we can advertise it in our NCAs. Tom: You can fly either into Montreal or Toronto, rent a car there or fly to Kingston. Debbie: The Club’s website has al the relevant information. Cork regatta club Kingston.

**2020 Vacant - should probably be in Europe.**

Francois: Catalonia would be interested in organizing a major event for FI. Steve: upside: it would be a new country, downside: no local fleet. Sponsorships are good.

Chris – Hayling Island would be interested in organizing. There is a strong fleet there. Ben/John Manson: We should probably go to other countries, eg. CZE, Jakub: wind patterns are not reliable enough for a Worlds, for a Europeans maybe. Tom: If UK wants to host is, we should consider going. Steve: in favour of the Club, but wouldn’t want to have the UK go to the trouble of putting a proposal together only to be turned down. John: GB has had a lot of events recently; Christina would like to have something in continental Europe. Jakub same thing. Mianne: Maccagno has shown interest in organizing a big event.

**2021 Vacant - Europeans only**

Jakub. Could a Europeans be done in 2019? The problem is that the Worlds are in the Northern hemisphere, so boats can’t do both. Barcelona?

**2022 Melbourne AUS.**

Ben: Geelong Yacht Club is the oldest dinghy club in Australia, have organized many top-level events. There should be a lot of juniors there too. A lot of accommodation, no massive waves, end of January to Mid-February, keep it away from Christmas – all prices drop. John Manson: it might be more attractive to have it closer to Christmas. Ben: over Christmas–NewYears price triples, up to about 16th January. Experiences with Nationals. A booklet has been put together by AUS.

1. **AOB**

Chris: Number of Clubs with Fireballs has decreased. Situation isn’t great. There is quite an issue with number of boats. Some sailors just come to international events but don’t sail in local races any more. Steve: This is a problem that is difficult for FI to tackle, has to be looked at by NCAs. Chris: There is a big competition between different classes internationally, Fireballs don’t seem to play a big part in the picture. David Laing: in SA numbers have gone up after the Worlds – changing gadgets on the boat won’t change numbers, being out on the water will. Steve: FI can do little about this, FI can support NCAs. Tom: a clear strategy should be worked out, where are we now, where do we want to get, where can we get.

Robert Thompson: There are still people building their own boats, they should be supported. John Manson: Plans stay well within the official measurements, modern plans could be sent out digitally, could be much closer to the limits to make them more competitive. Steve: this should be discussed by mail. Tom offers to put up a bit of a programme. > General approval. John Manson: Some boat classes have been very successful with building kits. Tom: in Europe self-building isn’t really worth-wile where price is concerned. Christina: But this also concerns Africa and other areas.

Steve thanks David Carroll for setting up the internet connection.