

LETTER FROM THE COMMODORE TO ALL MEMBERS

11 October 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There has been some speculation recently about the latest direction from the Garrison Commander about the running of clubs within Dhekelia and the Eastern Sovereign Base Area. Some inaccurate rumours have come to my attention and it is the purpose of this letter to quash what is wrong and to both communicate to you the truth and to set out my store on how it will affect the club.

Primarily, the aim is not to discourage non-entitled membership or to encourage any current member to leave. That is not the objective of the Garrison Commander who acknowledges the contribution that all members play to life for those of us who live and work in the garrison. Rather the intention is to promote activity for entitled members and particularly serving soldiers and other ranks. I am sure you are aware of the Club Constitution which says this is the primary aim of the club, but for those of you who need reminding these are the reasons why it is important to stress this point:

1. Firstly, DSC is a military service club and not a private club. As such it exists to promote sailing amongst the service community and other entitled personnel who also work here. This is vitally important as we must remember that, although we all pay our membership fees, the club must not maintain an inward focus concentrating only on its members but must remain outwardly focussed constantly finding new ways to promote sailing and get more soldiers actively participating in the sport.
2. Secondly, the rules regarding clubs and societies of charitable status are becoming ever more stringent. Again, for those of you who are not aware, the money that funded the club's three new Laser 2000 dinghies came from a Charitable Fund that exists for soldiers (the Nuffield Trust). Now the club does actually have a large number of soldiers from the UN who use the club and its dinghies on a regular basis but for those of us (and I include serving officers here) who are not soldiers we must remember where the money came from to finance these new boats and therefore where our loyalties must lie. Again, we must promote sailing for soldiers and not just ourselves.
3. Finally, we all have a moral obligation to ensure that the soldiers who go and risk their lives overseas for their country are actively enjoying the recreational pursuits that have been created for them. Remember it is our privilege but their right to these organisations - a fact that is often overlooked as the garrison continues to exist with an ever fewer number of soldiers.

This brings me to my final point. Although there is the 15% non-entitled rule laid down by the Fiscal Officer this should not be the sole tool for managing club membership. The club can only survive through the active support of its members both in encouraging sailing and in renovating the club. It has always been difficult to get some members to take part in club activities - whether it be contributing to trysails or working on the clubhouse. There is a core of members who work very hard for which the club benefits enormously. However there are many members who use the club only for their own private benefit and this does not sit very comfortably with the three points mentioned above.

All members are encouraged to contribute to the workings of the club. I realise that some members, both entitled and non-entitled, have working commitments and do not reside within easy reach of the club. Members in this category are still asked to contribute. These contributions can be either through volunteering to help with sailing or renovation, or by taking up one of the committee posts. If you are not willing to do this then perhaps you need to think again about why you chose Dhekelia Sailing Club and whether perhaps you would be more suited to one of the other clubs outside of the Sovereign Base Area.

Having said that I want to reiterate my first point that the aim is not to make members leave but to encourage you all to work hard for the club and not just use it for your own personal benefit. If you are not clear about how you can help then offers of assistance to Lee Field the Bosun, Chris Dodds the Rear Commodore or Edward Boag the Vice Commodore would be a good start. I am sure they can soon find ways you can help support the club and increase sailing activity.

See you at the club

Jason Hurndall.