

Leander Club Limited  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee) (Registered Number: 09983188)

President's Report  
for the year ended 31 December 2024

Committee Changes

The AGM was held on its usual date at the end of June with an attendance of persons present and persons on Zoom. Rob Clegg and Marcus Bateman both retired after six years on the Committee. The Club is indebted to both for their dedicated service and for their contributions to the development of the Club.

Two new Committee Members were elected – Peter Greenslade and Luke Breen.

On the water

Our coaching team continues to be led by Matt Beechey as Chief Coach of the Men's Squad and by Ross Hunter as Chief Coach of the Women's Squad supported by Richard Chambers and Ali Brown. During the year numerous universities, clubs and schools have visited the club, many of which have trained alongside our crews.

Our Junior Coach, Jonny Jackson left us for Head of Rowing at Reading Blue Coat. He was replaced by George Nottidge as High-Performance Sculling Coach who continues the work of getting our junior athletes selected for the national team at U19 and U23 level.

2024 proved to be another very successful year for our rowers. Our two women's crews came first and ninth in the Women's Head of the River Race while the three men's crews came first, fifth and ninth in the Men's Head. It was the first time the Club had held both the Men's and Women's Headships since 2011 and in both cases these were club crews without assistance from our National Squad athletes.

With Olympic fever growing GB retained its position as top rowing nation in Europe after bringing home 10 medals at the European Rowing Championships in Szeged, Hungary. Leander rowers featured heavily in the success.

Our domestic crews recorded multiple medal successes at Wallingford Regatta, Ghent Regatta, the Met, Marlow Regatta and Henley Women's Regatta.

At the World U23 Championships nine Leander athletes won gold and one athlete bronze in St. Catharines, Canada.

At a rather wet Henley Royal Regatta we had 24 Leander crews racing, with six crews progressing to Finals' Day and coming away with wins in four events: The Prince of Wales Challenge Cup, The Queen Mother Challenge Cup, The Double Sculls Challenge Cup and The Visitors' Challenge Cup.

Thence on to highlight of the year, the Paris Olympics, enjoyed by many members at the Club on the decking. The Club had 26 athletes selected in the GB Team and 21 returned home with medals in the following categories:

7 x Gold: W4x, M8+, PR3 Mixed Coxed Four

4 x Silver: W4-, M2-

9 x Bronze: W8+, W2x

Special mention must go to Richard Chambers, coach of the women's eight, and to the Club's new Captain, Lola Anderson, winning gold in the women's quad in one of the most memorable moments of the Olympic Regatta.

Finally, at the Head of Charles in Boston, for the second time in three years, the Leander women won the Women's Championship 8+ event. Seven Olympic medallists returned to Leander to race in their club colours. The crew was challenged by USA favourites; Yale and the University of Washington, who put up great fights to finish second, third and fourth.

Olympic Bronze medallist Becky Wilde and her Paris 2024 doubles partner, Mathilda Hodgkins-Byrne (Upper Thames), took an impressive win in the Women's Championship doubles whilst Olympic Champions Lola Anderson and Hannah Scott finished in fourth place in the Women's Championship doubles.

In the Men's Championship 8+, the Leander crew finished 14th.

The Club continues to receive generous support from the Colgan Foundation, Paul Crudge and Mark Abelson making it possible to attend this event.

Off the water a new Donations and Sponsorship Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Peter Greenslade to better coordinate the raising of funds for the Rowing Programme. As a result, there have been two interesting initiatives:

- Using the Club's fleet of boats to draw bids for naming rights. At this year's HRR bids were invited for the naming rights of the men's eight racing in the grand. The Club was very grateful to Bill and Mary Way, the winning bidders, for what is effectively a very generous donation to the Boat Club Fund.
- The Club has many US members who have given generously in the past and in order to help them claim tax relief in the US the Club has established a relationship with a US charitable and not-for-profit organisation

### The Clubhouse

The garden and decking continue to be one of the most popular 'go to' places in Henley for a relaxing summer evening or for a family get together at the weekend. That said it is dependent on the weather and sadly the 2024 summer was unhelpful.

Likewise, despite a wet Regatta week the Club was busy. The queuing problems experienced in 2023 were alleviated by creating a new riverside entrance on the towpath towards the bridge enabling a larger area by the landing stage to be incorporated into the Club once the Stewards had closed the Boat Tent Entrance. This also enabled the area in front of the boathouse to offer another food outlet.

The Annual Dinner was well attended despite many of the Club's Olympians being invited to Twickenham for an England v South Africa match! The guest speaker Miriam Luke gave an entertaining speech on her prodigious international rowing career and her work as the former Chair of Henley Women's Regatta. We were also fortunate and honoured that Ollie Zeidler, the new Olympic sculling champion, attended in his capacity as a member.

The popular Club Dinner was again held for Members and their Guests with Past President, Rass Randall presiding over another entertaining and profitable auction.

Sadly, Al Heathcote gave notice of his intention to leave in the New Year after a very successful five years at the Club as General Manager and instigator of many initiatives not least the decking and outside bar, redesign of garden, building of sculling shed (with the ulterior motive of use as a bar during HRR) and proposals for creating the new balcony. As the year ended the Chairman and Committee were busy seeking a replacement.

Finally, the Club was honoured to announce that HRH The Princess Royal had graciously accepted the Patronage of the Club for an initial period of three years. This followed patronage of Her Majesty

Queen Elizabeth II, who served as the Club's Patron from 14 December 1952 until her death in September 2022. This was a fitting way to round off a highly successful Olympic year at the Club.

### Financial Highlights

In 2024 the Club reported a surplus of £116,175 following a deficit of £44,766 in 2023. The 2024 surplus is despite £95,740 of one-off costs from the renovation of crew facilities. The Club therefore made an underlying surplus of £211,915 before these one-off costs which compares to an underlying surplus of £212,908 in 2023 when there was also exceptional spend related to new external facilities.

It is therefore pleasing to see another year of good underlying surplus generation. Thanks are due to the dedicated involvement of all staff and, of course, the loyal support of the Members, sponsors and donors.

The total cost of the Club's rowing programme in the year was £770,634 which was partially offset by receipts from British Rowing, The Leander Trust and from donations. After the benefit of these receipts the net cost of rowing to the Club was £533,798. This compares to a net cost of rowing in 2023 of £462,295. During 2023 British Rowing revised its grant making levels nationally and the Club, amongst others, has seen the financial support from British Rowing reduced. Looking forwards, changes to British Rowing's funding mean that its financial support may reduce further.

Membership numbers (Full and Club) stood at 3,604 at the end of 2024. This is a slight increase on the 3,585 at the end of 2023. Members' subscriptions remain our most significant source of income and underwrite the foundation of the Club's activities and services. The Club's Committee remains focused on maintaining and growing membership numbers.

The financial contribution from Accommodation and Catering activities was £129,586 in 2024, compared to £68,598 in 2023. This increase was driven by improved results from Catering in particular.

2024 was the second year of The Colgan Foundation sponsorship of the Club. The partnership is targeted directly at the Leander rowing programme and supporting the development of the Club's young rowers in their search for personal improvement and for international success. Leander remains very grateful to The Colgan Foundation and all other donors to the Club.

As mentioned above, Regatta week in 2024 was very busy with various refinements to the arrangements for the 2023 week. Financially the contribution from the Club's activities during Regatta week was slightly improved year on year with a contribution of £137,736 in 2024 compared to £123,474 in 2023.

The Club Shop continued to perform well with a profit of £56,150 in 2024 compared to £33,485 in 2023. This performance continues to benefit from ongoing strength in online sales.

The level of overheads spent to support all the non-rowing activities described above increased to £853,074 in 2024 from £823,801 in 2023. This was a growth of 3.5% year on year which reflects a focus on cost control despite the inflationary context.

The Committee remains very mindful of its duty to ensure the long-term success of the Club, including maintaining a strong financial position. The recent physical developments and refurbishments at the Club, as well as the good levels of underlying surpluses in recent years mean the Club is well positioned for the future. That said we are not complacent about future challenges and the need to continue to deliver on the Club's aims for all its Members.

Finally, from a cash and debt perspective, the Club remains debt free and its cash position at the end of 2024 was £585,387, an improvement compared to £462,494 at the end of 2023.

Dick Lester  
President Leander Club