

## **The RS Elite class association sub-committee (technical) report – January 2026**

Following the AGM in December, a sub committee was formed tasked with investigating the poor service, quality and supply of spares and sails. To report on and propose ways forward in the best interests of the class and its fleets, both established and those just getting going. The committee consisted of Nick Peters, Ben Nicholls, Bill Blank, Paul Fisk and Joe Llewellyn.

The issues for the membership to resolve/vote are divided into two:

- Firstly, the principle and detail surrounding the transfer of control from RS Sailing to the Association.
- Secondly, assuming the proposed transfer is passed, to propose and/or accept proposals on the best ways forward. There is an outstanding proposal from the AGM from Neil Fulcher and the Burnham Fleet

Ideally both these issues should be resolved by vote on Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>. The detail surrounding the constitution and rule changes then required can be worked on following the vote.

### **The principle**

The principle of the transfer of control from RS Sailing is fully supported by the sub- committee.

- RS no longer see a market for the RS Elite
- RS's preference is to concentrate their marketing resources on the RS21
- As experienced by many members, customer service is poor and unlikely to improve

### **The detail**

- Attached is the Heads of Terms from RS. There is of course the consideration of the £20k which covers a largely complete boat and some spares. We believe it is a fair price.
- The moulds are in very poor condition and are stored in a container at RS.
- The HoT has been carefully looked over by Joe Llewellyn, with changes suggested and adopted.
- The transfer would mean the association would have full control of procurement, pricing and distribution of spares and sails; also any future build/builder of new boats.
- The easiest way to fund the £20k would be to appoint a distributor for spares and sails, who would purchase the boat and spares from RS, so long as they could earn a suitable margin over an agreed timescale. Although there may well be others, Mike Saul, an existing supplier to much of the fleet, has indicated enthusiasm, and has provided a small statement, attached.
- An alternative scenario to raise the funds (not requiring a dealer) would be for the Association to leverage each member boat (iro £500), payable back after an estimated 2-3 years.

### **Possible scenarios post transfer:**

- The Association will negotiate and secure the best prices and supply chain for sails and spares. If a dealer is appointed, it would manage the ongoing relationships with suppliers and members / end users. Transparent pricing controlled by the association, agreed service levels and a cancellable contract would be fundamental to any agreement.

- In the no dealer scenario, the association would continue to manage the relationship with suppliers, and storage for spares and the boat would have to be arranged. This could be with an existing trade supplier, and members dealing direct with appointed sailmaker/s.
- The promotion of the class will be the responsibility of the class association. The association will in time achieve an income from a royalty collected from the sale of spares and sails. Although firm supply chain models are yet to be finalised, this should be IRO £5-8k per annum. If working with a single sailmaker it has been indicated that the class could be regularly promoted on that sailmaker's digital media streams.
- The Association would have to store the moulds (or allow RS to destroy them FOC if deemed beyond economical use) pending new build ideas. (this could be IRO £2-4k)

### **Opinion from the sub-committee**

The sub- committee represented diverse opinion. Beyond the split from RS, we were unable to come up with a unanimously supported proposal for distribution of spares and sails. All agreed more work is needed to model different distribution scenarios.

The majority supported maintaining a continued strict one -design approach from the sails perspective. Conversely, poor service, quality and unfortunate experiences with both RS and Quantum prompted the proposal from the Burnham fleet, attached as separate proposal.

It is worth pointing out that open sailmaker (or two or more ) would make finding a dealer who will front up the necessary £20k to fund the transition from RS very difficult. At this point we would need to "fleet fund" the consideration to RS.

The sub-committee unanimously believe the split with RS is a welcome opportunity for the fleet to direct its own future, reduce and control the price of key consumables, notably sails, and achieve an income for the association. The sub-committee understand from early modelling that a 15-20% reduction in the price on a suit of sails for example should be achievable.

### **Action required from you:**

1. Vote on the proposal below reference a split from RS.
2. Vote on the two proposals attached: One from the Burnham fleet carried over from the AGM. One received today (Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan) from the HISC, RAYC and AYC jointly.

### **Proposal from sub-committee for vote:**

"The RS Elite Class Association should pursue an amicable and constructive parting of ways from RS Sailing, as detailed in the Heads of Terms. The Association should negotiate with suitable sail makers and suppliers, to secure improved service and reduced pricing on spares and sails for its members, and a regular income for the Association. The RS Elite one-design keelboat would become the Elite one-design keelboat."

Technical sub-committee, Jan 2026.