

St Neots Small Boats Head Update

***** RACE CANCELLED *****

It is with profound regret that the Organising Committee has taken the decision to cancel this year's St Neots Small Boats Head that was due to take place this Sunday.

Due to a collapsed wall the other side of Town Bridge, a steel works platform was installed this week to house the works equipment being used to repair the collapsed River Terrace wall.

Despite being in regular contact with the district council, the Committee was not notified of these works until a couple of weeks before the day of the event.

Over the past couple of weeks, the Organising Committee have been liaising with the contractors and the district council about the feasibility of running the event with the structure in position.

Prior to installation, the contractors provided assurance to the Organising Committee that the structure would be relocated before the day of the event in such a way that it would only slightly encroach on the racing line.

However, after construction of the platform was completed on Wednesday night, and members of the Organising Committee went to inspect it, it became apparent that the size of the platform would protrude far more into the river than was anticipated. So much so that the Organising Committee felt that the positioning of the structure would pose an increased health and safety risk to competitors racing past it.

The Organising Committee explored a number of alternative formats of running the race, including shortening the length of the course. However, after lengthy deliberation, the Committee felt that by shortening the course length to almost half that of the original course, it would not have fulfilled competitors' expectations of a good-quality head race experience.

Also, after reviewing the weather forecast for Sunday, it is expected to turn into a cross-headwind for the majority of the course, which would have posed potential issues marshalling and circulation if the course were to be shortened.

St Neots Small Boats Head has always had two main aims: to ensure the safety of competitors is the utmost priority, and to ensure good-quality, safe and fair racing. Unfortunately, after reviewing the situation and all the potential alternatives, the Committee felt that both of these aims would not be achieved if we were to proceed with the event in the given circumstances.

On the event poster it is advertised that 10% of entry fees would be withheld in the event of cancellation to cover fixed administration costs. However, as a gesture of goodwill and because of the short notice of cancellation, the Committee have elected to refund all entry fees in full. The process of refunding entries will commence this weekend.

We are very sorry to have to cancel the event in such circumstances, but we hope all visitors understand that the decision has been made with the safety of all competitors being our top priority.

The St Neots Small Boats Head 2019 Organising Committee