

To Whom it may concern, to support my application as an OKDIA Committee member.

I've been a sailor since I was a small child growing up in the UK and North Wales. I've been a sailing club member since I was 5 years old, I started in Cadets and then crewed with my family on a J24 where we competed nationally and internationally until approx 1990. My Father who skippered the J24 was on the general committee of the National J24 association and later the International Association which culminated in my mum and him organizing the 1991 J24 World championships at our home club in Abersoch, North Wales. Dad then retired sold up and sailed around the world. Stepping up and being involved with sailing at an organisation level is in my blood.

In 1989 I took an apprentice position at North Sails UK and after a year transferred to North Sails San Diego, During this time I got more and more serious about my sailing and was a regular on many types of keelboat and one-design classes. On returning to the UK I raced pretty much full time while living on the south coast and that's when the perennial problem of the low paid, semi-pro sailor, eventuated as winter was coming so I disappeared over to the Med and Caribbean and got into the Superyacht industry as crew and then later captain. I sailed the world met my partner (who was a Kiwi) and move to NZ in 1998 to start a family.

Once we got the small children phase out of the way, and I shifted into the IT industry and built a career, I got back into sailing in Auckland from 2002, mostly keelboats initially but some dinghy sailing in lasers and Sunburst (local NZ 2 handed dinghy) to reasonable success. When my kids were old enough to start sailing we joined Wakatere Boating Club I started to get involved with the organizational side of the club. Within 2 years I was running the entire junior coaching program from learn to sail to Youth World attendees that included over 200 sailors and 10+ coaches. I also joined the general committee and spent 8 years serving as a flag officer including 3 years as Commodore. I was a founding member of the NZ RS Feva association and served 2 years on the NZIODA (Optimist NZ Association). To date, I have organized 10+ major regattas at Wakatere including 7 National Championships, 1 world championship and the majority of these had over 100 participants.

While working around the juniors at Wakatere and being a flag officer I noticed a growing group of friendly OK sailors starting to build at the club and many of them were friends. They encouraged me to think about joining the fleet, and the lads helped me get a very basic boat together and start club racing. After the first day I was hooked. I built my first new boat in 2016, upgraded rig and sails and haven't looked back.

My first OK regatta was in 2015, my first worlds in Barbados in 2017 and I competed in a chartered boat in 2018 in Germany and was very proud of the work I did in conjunction with Al Deaves to run the last OK worlds in NZ in 2019.

The skills and experience I offer to OKDIA, and the wider OK community, can be summarized as:

1. People Skills - I'm great with people, particularly large groups of volunteers.
2. Leadership - I've spent the majority of my life in leadership positions and am always comfortable with assuming responsibility for a project or assignment to ensure the outcome is achieved.
2. Organisational skills - I'm very good at organizing most things from superyacht yard work as a yacht captain to sailing regattas and have a wealth of experience doing so.
3. Sailing Experience - It's been my life.
4. Sales and Commercial Experience - From my business career starting and running high growth business and from my experience with many other committees and associations.

I'm a passionate OK sailor, I love the boat, the fleet and most of all the people. They have quickly become some of the closest and dearest friends.

I'd be honored to serve OKDIA to ensure the legacy of the class is upheld and maintained as we push forward for more growth in some challenging but exciting times.

Kind Regards

Simon Probert

OK Sailor for life.