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**LETTER FROM MIKE HOWARD TO BE PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING OF THE AMATEUR YACHT RESEARCH SOCIETY  
ON SUNDAY 22nd JANUARY 2017, UNDER 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'**

To: The Hon. Secretary of the Amateur Yacht Research Society

Mr Chairman, Members of the Committee, Fellow Members,

First of all I must apologise for not being present in person to deliver this document. The cost of travel and accommodation from my home on Merseyside to Thorpe in order to attend this meeting is beyond my means.

Although a relative newcomer to the Amateur Yacht Research Society, I joined in 2000, I have been actively running the North West Local Group since March 2010. During the past seven years we have met as a Group four times per year, at three monthly intervals, and enjoyed at least two organised outings per annum. All of these meetings have been documented in past editions of the CATALYST magazine.

We began with nine members out of a total of sixteen members who were initially contacted by me. Over the past years we have 'lost' two members who have passed away and one other who is now reluctant to travel long distances.

Last year (2016) the North West Local Group had a stand at the Northern Boat Show and successfully recruited eleven new members, plus we 'captured' an existing member. Of the six new members who live locally, three have become active members of our Group, thus swelling our numbers back to nine again. This was accomplished by every member of the North West Local Group 'doing their bit' while manning the stand.

**Perhaps of more significance, Almost every one of the members of the North West Local Group are now actively engaged in developing their own pet project, encouraged by the support given to them by their fellow members.**

In the same timeframe that the North West Local Group have been active, and given its success, it appears that there has been no effort on the part of the Committee or individual members to start other local groups.

I acknowledge that AYRS have made appearances at the Dinghy Show at Alexandria Palace and Beale Park Boat & Leisure Show as well as organising Weymouth Speed Week, all these events being supported by a very small group of members. I also

acknowledge that Fred Ball, Tim Glover and Simon Fishwick have organised isolated local events from time to time.

However, the once quarterly CATALYST magazine, which kept the membership informed about current activities has now degenerated into an annual edition. This comment is not meant as a slight to our current Editor who struggles to get enough suitable content and find the time in his busy schedule to edit the magazine.

In fact it clearly reflects the situation we find our selves in - Committee members have no alternative but to continue in their current roles as there are no new, young and able takers for their positions.

Likewise our new Website, which I applaud, has a 'built in forum' but is little used. In fact, how many of our aged membership have the computer skills to use it?

My question to the meeting is:

**Does the AMATEUR YACHT RESEARCH SOCIETY have a future due to the apathy of its current membership and their reluctance to take an active part in running, organising and participating in its stated objectives?**

I have to state at this point that I am not prepared to stand as a member of the AYRS Committee as I already make a considerable commitment to AYRS in running the North West Local Group as well as being actively involved with several other local organisations.

However, I do not want my comments to appear totally negative and I believe that a suitable course of action might take the following form in order for the current Committee to come to a decision.

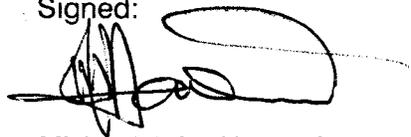
#### **Audit of Members.**

I am prepared to undertake an Audit of the Membership. I will prepare a Questionnaire which I will submit to the Committee for Approval. Once approved, if the Hon Secretary will furnish me with an up to date List of Members, I will mail out a copy of the Audit Questionnaire, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to each paid up Member of the Amateur Yacht Research Society. The Audit Questionnaires returned to me will be analysed and a spreadsheet of the results submitted to the AYRS Committee.

I expect the cost of this Audit Questionnaire to be about £1.50 per member.

I envisage that this Audit Questionnaire, together with the results of AYRS appearances at the three boat shows planned for 2017 will give the Committee a clear indication of how the membership feels about the future of the Society.

Signed:



Michael John Howard