



■ Powerboats – Ensign Craft, the company which organised the event, has been put into liquidation by its director

# Festival organiser: I've lost £100,000

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THE organiser of the Harwich Powerboat Festival has revealed she expects to lose £100,000 of her own money on the venture.

Ensign Craft, which organised the event, has been put into liquidation by director Barbara Spraggon.

Administrators have been appointed to recover debts.

The National Powerboat Championships and a two-night concert came to Dovercourt Bay on July 31 and August 1 this year.

Acts included Tinchy Stryder, Olly Murs, DJ Ironik, Simon Webbe, DJ Luck & MC Neat and Jamie Archer.

Mrs Spraggon says low ticket sales, the wrong band choices, poor transport links and a fatality during the racing contributed to the failure.

Mrs Spraggon, who

**“We didn’t sell enough concert tickets because they were completely the wrong bands**

ploughed more than £100,000 of her own money into the company, said: “I’m just added to the list of creditors like anyone else.

“I might see a couple of hundred pounds, but I won’t be treated any differently than any other creditor of the company.”

Mrs Spraggon blamed the failure of the festival on lack of ticket sales.

She estimated about £200,000 had been spent to bring the event to Harwich, but admitted it could have been done for £20,000.

She continued: “When I

think how much was spent, it was totally unnecessary.

“We didn’t sell enough concert tickets because they were completely the wrong bands. We paid too much for some of them.

“We were trying to reach people outside Harwich, but it was impossible to do.

“We thought, by having well-known bands, we would get more people, but it is very difficult to get people along the A120.

“People came for the powerboats, but not for the concerts.”

The death of powerboat racer Ian Stirling on the Saturday caused events on the Sunday to be cancelled.

Mrs Spraggon added: “The decision

to cancel the events should never have happened and we were not consulted about it.

“If we had been involved in the decision, it might have gone ahead.”

Mrs Spraggon said she has not thought about what to do next.

She said: “I’m going to sit back and lick my wounds for a bit.”

Bridge Business Recovery was named as administrator after a meeting in London.

The company has no other employees except Mrs Spraggon and her husband Chris.

■ Huge loss – Barbara Spraggon



## REPEAT WOULD NEED NEW PERSON AT HELM

A SECOND powerboat festival is unlikely to happen unless a new organiser can be found.

The festival name and rights, which belong to Chris and Barbara Spraggon, would have to be handed over for the event to happen again in exactly the same format.

Mrs Spraggon said: “I can’t see that we would do the festival next year.

“The only thing we would do is lend our help to someone else who was willing to take it on.

“We have still got the contacts to arrange it and now we know where it all went

completely wrong and where it all could go right if we did it again.

“So we would be happy to pass on the know-how.”

Mrs Spraggon also thanked all the traders and residents who had supported the festival.

She said: “You have no idea

how supportive everyone has been.

“Just the other day, a couple came up to us and said how much of a good time they had at the festival.

“We didn’t know who they were, but it was lovely for so many people to offer their support.”

# Cross-party panel to interview chief exec

CROSS-PARTY panel of councillors, and had been politically contentious should be presented its chosen candidate