

Chanonry Sailing Club - AGM 2020 - Commodore's report:

This report attempts to communicate to members reports submitted by the Sailing Secretary, Coastal Rowing Secretary, and the Training Principal, work undertaken by the Covid focus group, SCIO working group, Development working group, and additionally actions of the Committee since the previous AGM. The Treasurer's report forms a separate agenda item.

Social

A highly successful and well attended Burns Supper was successfully held on the 24th January.

On the 6th March we hosted a well-attended and successful Quiz night with Syrian themed cuisine.

I'd like to thank Janet Witheridge who is stepping down from the role of Social Convener. Janet's food offerings have become legendary within the Club, as someone who likes food and drink the social events have been one of the best aspects to the club. I know Janet had intended to go out on a high with a couple of events this year (one of which would have likely been this evening). Janet is very willing to impart her knowledge to those who take the social convener role forwards.

COVID

The Club response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been actioned through Committee with advice from a dedicated Covid-19 focus group (Richard Jenner, Sandra Hogg, Diarmid Hogan and Richard Evans). Between the 13th March and 2nd September, we issued a series of 12 dedicated Dutyman communications and additionally a series of supporting Social media announcements related to Covid-19. These communications have reflected announcements by Scottish Government, and guidance issued by Sport Scotland, Royal Yachting Association Scotland and the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association. The focus group has worked hard to interpret the Government approved guidance issued by these bodies to provide safe activity participation for members; this has taken very considerable effort.

Scotland entered lockdown on 24th March 2020; relaxation of lockdown did not begin until late May, when visits to the Club and single household member organised sailing became permissible. By the 28th June further easing made it permissible to programme recreational sailing and this was trialled on 5th July following intense efforts to put into place all requirements to make the activity compliant. During July we also created a Guest membership category to assist getting same household safety boat crews into place and arranged for physically distanced race mark refurbishment and committed to purchase a light support boat that might in appropriate conditions be used for single-crewed safety cover. We were able to offer a reduced Junior Week in July, (afternoons only, stage 2 or higher) with parental support, that was enjoyed by 11 sailors. We have also managed a few Dolphins sessions. In late August,

the arrival of “field of play bubbles” allowed a resumption of Coastal rowing, multi-household safety boat crewing and multi-household dinghy sailing, with mitigation measures and test and protect protocols. This allowed first informal racing from 13th September and then formal racing from early October. Social access to the club remains off limits and safe access to the changing rooms problematic. Installation of the mooring risers by divers became impossible and with no crane hire options coupled with the closure of both Inverness Marina and the Caledonian canal to new arrivals at lockdown meant Chanonry based cruisers were unable to launch.

The Committee appreciates that despite the efforts of the focus group it has been impossible to offer as full a programme of events as members would have liked; it is conceivable that Covid-19 will continue to impact the Club to some degree in 2021. Work for the focus group remains ongoing responding to further iterations of guidance from Sport Scotland, RYAS and SCRA. Early thinking around possibilities for re-instating mooring risers, changing winter risers and a crane-in operation for cruiser members in 2021 will require detailed thinking very soon from the Harbourmaster in communication with the cruisers, COVID focus group, dive contractor and crane hire operators.

Volunteering

The club functions through the work of volunteers who undertake a diverse range of tasks that make the club work: web masters; dutyman administration; maintenance of safety boats, rowing skiffs and club dinghies; catering; harbour master and mooring role; collecting safety boat fuel, maintenance and deployment/ recovery of race marks; race officers, safety and assistant safety officers; instructors and coaches, administration of trophies and cups; club radios; coordinating grant applications; building custodian; grounds maintenance; Committee roles, sub-committee and working group roles.

It is interesting to note that all of these roles have been needed and active this year even with Covid, so I would like to convey a heart felt thank you from the Committee to all who volunteer; member participation in activities and as volunteers is what has to drive this club forwards.

I'd like to thank the following Committee members who have not sought nomination for the coming year for their service: Richard Evans, Callum Pearson, Janet Witheridge and Robin Witheridge.

At this point I have the privilege of awarding the Senior Endeavour award <winner to be announced at the AGM>

Dinghy Sailing

It has been a difficult year to organise any sailing and committee members have worked tirelessly to give members as many sailing opportunities as possible following RYA Scotland's interpretations of the Scottish Government guidelines. We started off in July by offering recreational sailing on Sunday

afternoons so we could at least get out on the water and by October we were able to offer an Autumn race series in parallel with recreational sailing although the weather has often produced the wrong sort of wind. In total we've been able to programme 11 Recreational Sailing events and a further 8 combined racing and recreational Sundays. Attendance has been good despite the restrictions.

We were also able to offer several member organised sailing sessions thanks to the purchase of Meikle; our new lightweight safety boat. Many thanks are due to Ollie Bull, Graham Bull and Chrissie Lane for being the driving force behind these sessions.

The final event of the year will be the Cold Turkey on Sunday 27th December with a 12:30 start. Weather permitting, we will hold 2 sailing races and the rowing skiffs will be out. Safety volunteers are in place. The Clubhouse will still be closed apart from one toilet and the Race Office and there will be no social/catering event. You will probably want to bring along a flask of soup to help keep you warm. Intending participants must Signup using the TEAMUP calendars for sailing or rowing.

Myself and the rest of the Committee wish to thank Richard Evans (who is standing down as Sailing Secretary, and from the Committee) for his service to the Club since the early 1980s. Most often as Sailing Secretary but also as Treasurer and Commodore, he described these years as happy years to me and tells me he feels that the future of the Club needs to be in the hands of a younger demographic. I know that Richard is very willing to pass on his knowledge to those who step into his shoes; and is at the moment going to continue some of his other technical and administrative tasks that support the Club more broadly.

Thanks too to those who supported Richard Evans on the Sailing Subcommittee, i.e. Ben Yeats, Peter Smith, Chrissie Lane, Diarmid Hogan and Calum Pearson.

At this point I have the privilege of awarding the Junior Endeavour award <winner to be announced at the AGM>

Cruiser sailing

Due to the impossibility of installing mooring risers and unavailability of crane hire options coupled with the closure of both Inverness Marina and the Caledonian canal to new arrivals at lockdown Chanonry based cruisers were unable to launch. Moray Yacht Axis race events were cancelled as other Clubs with cruisers experienced similar impact. As such the only cruiser activity has been by members who had boats on the water or were able to launch without the use of a crane as lockdown began to ease. A firm plan of action will be needed very soon to consider what might be achieved in 2021.

Coastal rowing

It's been a strange year for coastal rowing in the club. We had lots of plans for the year that were curtailed by COVID restrictions, but some things have been progressed and, since September, regular rowing is now taking place within the guidance.

We managed to complete the theory element of the cox training in March but the on the water practice had to be cancelled. We had seven potential coxes from Chanonry and six from Nairn Coastal Rowing Club taking part. We hope to be able to complete some elements of the on the water training soon.

The coastal rowing section has been progressing disability inclusion with a couple of members attending Disability Inclusion Training. We had organised a training session with Sight Action to deliver sighted guidance training for coxes but unfortunately this was cancelled due to COVID restrictions. The club supported the purchase of a disabled rowing seat that will allow a wider range of people to take part in rowing. Chanonry Maid has been adapted to take the seat and we hope to trial it soon.

The Scottish Coastal Rowing Association had organised an ambitious RowAround Scotland as part of the Year of Coasts and Waters and celebrating 10 years of coastal rowing in Scotland. Over 70 clubs were due to take part carrying a baton around the coast. Our leg in July would have us take the baton from Cromarty to Fortrose. The real row was replaced with a Virtual Row and you can see our entry at https://www.rowaround.scot/virtual_legs/cromarty-to-fortrose-section-7-day-13/. It is hoped the row will take place for real next year.

Last year we took part in the Castle to Crane long distance race on the Clyde. The race couldn't go ahead this year, but it was replaced with the 5 Miles From Home time trial in September. A team from Chanonry took part in this, completing our five miles from the harbour, out to Chanonry Point, over Skate Bank, and back to the harbour in a fraction over one hour. It was a great way to get rowing started and engage, albeit virtually, with other clubs.

While we were off the water we took the opportunity to give Chanonry Maid some TLC. She's now painted and varnished and looking great. Many thanks to Steve Bramwell, Richard Cherry and Donnie McLeod for their hard work.

Training

As we are all too aware, the 2020 training programme was seriously curtailed by the pandemic. The main limitations were the travel ban followed by the 'two-metre' rule that applied for most of the active season and the lack of changing facilities. However, we should be grateful for what we achieved in

difficult circumstances. We also note the excellent guidance we have had throughout the year from RYA Scotland.

2020 had a promising start when Calum Pearson, Richard Jenner, Kevin & Robbie Baird attended the RYA Scotland Instructors' Conference in February; it is reported as having been an inspirational day.

Shore-based training was run on 14 March for the St Ayles Skiffs but sadly, the second day was lost as lockdown bit.

A reduced Junior Week was run from 20 – 24 July. We could not take complete beginners and a lack of changing facilities and shelter reduced the week to afternoons only with the group split into 2 bubbles (6/15 'rule') each with its own instructor and safety boat. Nevertheless, it was deemed a success with 11 sailors taking part and good parental support ashore. Many thanks to Calum Pearson, Marisa Astill-Brown, Thomas Hardie and Helen Jenner for instructing.

We started Dolphins after the Junior Week but here the weather did not cooperate leading to cancellation of 2 of the 3 sessions but a substitute Saturday afternoon session on 5 September was popular and could be repeated in 2021.

A highlight was the delayed running of the Dinghy Instructor Course. We got the green light from RYA Central in August but only for a course delivered in single-handers and with the successful students receiving a limited ticket that restricts them to instructing single-handers; at some point there will be a 2 day two-hander module offered to 'upgrade' to the full ticket. Congratulations to Calum Pearson, Marisa Astill-Brown, Joe Hallwood and Morven Maclean on their qualification. The Club topped-up the individual contributions to finance the course and RYA Scotland provided the moderator free of charge, resulting in excellent value (the one external student was not subsidized). Thanks to Rodney Timson for allowing use of the Quay House open-sided garage as a makeshift Covid compliant classroom.

We have not issued any Certificates this year nor conducted adult training, powerboat training (apart from conversion training for those using Meikle, the Light Support Boat) or Race coaching.

RYA annual inspection went very well with no follow-up actions.

Programme for 2021: the way ahead for 2021 is not clear yet but we hope we can return to some formal courses, perhaps still only in single-handers. We can also try some Zoom theory training. We have had a significant number of adult enquiries for training from people looking for new activities close to home.

Membership

Membership numbers have varied very little from last year, at around 167 total. This is probably partly because renewals were due and completed before the restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic started.

If it had been possible to run more dinghy training we might have expected a few more new members but even so we have been able to welcome 10 new members, mostly coastal rowers or people returning to sailing after a break.

This year we created a new non-voting category of membership, "Guest" to enable a few family members of existing members to help in single household safety crews under Covid19 restrictions.

We will start the renewal process as usual in January next year. Hopefully, members will appreciate that the Club has done its best to provide as much activity as possible in difficult times and feel it worthwhile to renew in 2021 and support the Club.

SCIO transition:

The Club was granted Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) status last year. We are still in the process of transferring all assets and undertakings from the current club (an unincorporated association) to the SCIO and this means that both organisations continue to exist in parallel for the time being. Members belong to both the SCIO and the association until such time as the association is wound up.

We have made significant progress in the transition to the SCIO, opening a new charity bank account, completing an asset register, having a digital survey made of the harbour area (to identify the leased areas accurately for the land register) and in producing governance guidance for trustees.

However, there are two significant assets awaiting transfer to the SCIO, firstly the legal title to the clubhouse and land it stands on and secondly the lease for the harbour/ dinghy park areas. The issue of transferring title is with the council (Black Isle Ward Manager and Legal Officers are involved). We need the Council to issue a waiver of pre-emption to a clause in the deeds, that means (without a waiver) we would have to offer the Clubhouse title to the Highland Council for whatever amount we were prepared to sell it for. We have worked with the Black Isle Ward Manager and Councillors to explain what our intentions are and to ask them to support the waiver of the pre-emption clause in this instance which will need the approval of the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth Committee at their next meeting in February 2021. The complication is that the Fortrose Common Good Fund would be the beneficiary of any dispolement in favour of the Council. We have made it plain that under no circumstances would we dispolement of the Clubhouse to any other entity than the Club. We understand that the Chairman of the committee (Cllr Gordon Adam) is sympathetic to our case.

It is frustrating that this issue is still outstanding, we had hoped to have completed the transfer of assets by now. Committee through the SCIO working Group and offices of the Club Secretary will re-visit this issue to keep the pressure on, so that things can be signed off at the February Council Area Committee meeting.

The assignment of lease for harbour and dinghy park to the SCIO will be less complex but we don't wish to do that until such time as the transfer of title for the Clubhouse to the SCIO is complete.

Development planning:

The Committee has convened a Development working group (Marisa Astill-Brown, Ollie Bull, James Dargie, Sandra Hogg, Richard Jenner & Chris Taylor) to produce a development plan following the RYAS Club Development Framework. This process is looking at where we are now, where do we want to be and how do we get there. Our focus so far has been on where we are now by firstly undertaking a fact-finding mission by gathering information about membership, activities, people, facilities and access, equipment, good governance and social. Secondly, we have designed and undertaken a membership survey which many of you will have participated in. We will publish the analysis of the membership survey and the fact-finding mission in January. We see the member survey as the start of a conversation with members and we will seek to listen to groups of members based on the themes returned from the survey. Once we feel we understand wants and needs the focus shifts to using them to develop a vision, set priorities, implement good governance, and tying the work together in a development plan; the work will proceed over the winter months. It then falls to the Committee and membership to implement the plan.

Committee actions:

The Committee have approved several actions to facilitate the running and development of the Club I highlight these to the membership:

- Authorised the repair/replacement of harbour handrails
- Part funded Dinghy Instructor course hosted at CSC
- Approved conditional use of a Club RIB to support dinghy sailing out with the sailing programme.
- Decision to cease the sale of drinks in single use plastic bottles.
- Agreed to the purchase of a Lomo race mark and tackle as suggested for use, initially, at regattas and for training.
- Authorised cleaning of the Clubhouse gutters (a quote has now been received after several contractors declined the opportunity to quote for the work, the work is authorised to proceed).
- Approved the purchase of an adaptive rowing seat.
- Authorised maintenance and repairs to Club ribs.
- Approved purchase of a Light Safety Boat (Meikle) to support dinghy sailing out with the sailing programme and to assist with safety cover where physical distancing may require short-handed launch and recovery of safety boats.
- Approved the purchase of Covid kits for safety boats, and upgrades to **first aid kits to include resuscitation masks for Covid compliance.**

James Dargie

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