



Chanonry Sailing Club
The Harbour, Fortrose, IV10 8TP
Commodore's report to Annual General Meeting
Friday 10 December 2021.

This report communicates a synopsis on Social events, Sailing, Coastal Rowing, and Training along with notes on work undertaken by the Covid focus group, SCIO working group, the Development working group, and additionally a list of actions of the Board/ Committee since the previous AGM. The Treasurer's report forms a separate agenda item.

We sadly noted the passing of Helen Rowson, a long-standing member of the Club and indeed a former Commodore. And also, of Eddie Ralston a former member who was quite a character in the cruising section of the Club in times past.

Social

On the 13th March we held a highly successful Club Quiz by Zoom – thanks to George and Sandra Hogg for running the quiz.

Three superb Sunday Fundays were run during June, July and August and allowed a chance for the whole club to have fun on the water. With opportunities to dinghy sail, take a trip on a Drascombe Gig, row and try other water sports like stand-up paddle boards and kayaks. These were well attended, and I hope presented a welcome return to the water for many as the progressive easing of lockdown took place. Janet Witheridge coordinated BBQ facilities with members bringing their own food and helping foster a relaxed social feel to the events.

We did not hold a "full" Lifeboat Day/Open day as controlling/ recording numbers and contact details for Track and Trace was not felt to be practical.

We are delighted to have Trina McEwan and team being able to offer some catering capacity, including (so far) the Musto Skiff Traveler and the post Black Isle Challenge Cup meal; I know the hospitality was well received at both.

The coming year will need a Social Convener to coordinate and the social side of the Club, Club room bookings, cleaner etc.; Covid has allowed us to get away without this role this year to some extent. There is a broader community desire to engage with the Club socially and we need to meet that expectation.

Sailing

Towards the start of the year Board noted the lack of Sailing Secretary. Heavy workloads associated with Covid, SCIO conversion and trying to provide a development pathway for the future, along with the picking up Harbour, Slipway

and Mooring issues took away Board capacity to pick up the remit of the Sailing Secretary role. We further appealed to the membership for a Sailing Secretary but with the ongoing vacancy a decision was made to programme Wednesday evening and Sunday Sailing events as per recent years as far as Covid would allow (events being cancelled until lockdown eased, and where possible substituted by socially distanced recreational alternatives). We also decided to facilitate larger events only if individuals were prepared to take on the organisation to ensure safety risks were managed appropriately.

On the dinghy front, as the season progressed Fridays were used for Adult Training and some 'come and try' sessions for non-members. Interest in beginner sailing appears to be high and it is understood we have some new members interested in dinghy sailing. Sunday recreational sailing was promoted successfully, and part way through the season we renamed the Sunday race events Recreational sailing and racing to encourage broader participation. Attempts at encouraging some focus on laser sailing continue; given the large number of lasers in the dinghy park this should, with member support be an easy win.

The Light support boat Meikle continues to support member organised activity outside the Club calendar and occasional club racing safety cover.

Gavin Campsie stepped up to organise the Ness Cup on the 13th June and with some support from Richard Evans put all the paperwork in place for the event, only for the weather to conspire against the best made plans.

Over the weekend 24th to 25th July 9 boats attended the Scottish Musto Skiff traveller event, which included 5 visitors and 4 club boats. The event was organised by Ben Yeats and Jon Bailey with the support of Richard Evans. Richard has been doing some succession management and running through and passing on the key documentation required to run an event (which is appreciated). The event was supported by many volunteers. The class has already requested a return for 2022 combined with a training day; the thought is that this would attract more participants from the south and should be run alongside the Dinghy regatta.

The Moray Yacht Axis (MYA) cruiser race calendar was heavily impacted due to Covid with only a handful of events taking place. The Cruiser Regatta scheduled for 7th August was cancelled due to lack of interest. The Black Isle Challenge Cup went off well on Saturday 11th September with 13 entries (7 from CSC); thanks to Ben Yeats for undertaking the Race Officer duties.

Sailing in numbers:

Number of club organised sailing events delivered	56
Number of sailors taking part	128
Number of external events delivered	2
Number of member organised events	52

Thanks to all the safety crews, water-taxi drivers and race officers who helped all this take place. Thanks for those who have undertaken maintenance and repairs on the Club owned boats. I would like to highlight Diarmid Hogan for his efforts around the Race Marks. Likewise, Diarmid Hogan and Tim McKeggie for work on the moorings and planning the crane out in the autumn. A big thank you also to Malcolm Wilson (son of Mike Wilson) who became a guest member and undertook the banksman duty at crane out in October – very much appreciated.

Coastal rowing

Despite COVID restrictions that meant that rowing wasn't possible from January to May, it has been a fantastic year for coastal rowing within the club, with both growing membership and activity.

Much of the growing activity is a result of the work of the club's Development Group which undertook a community and membership survey. A rowing focus group then identified key actions for the development of coastal rowing within the club. Thanks especially to John Robertson, Helen Robinson, Lisa Pattenden, Michelle Tucker and Steve Bramwell for their input.

We recruited 16 new rowing members in the year, many as a result of providing Come and Try Sessions and other opportunities to try rowing. We also improved the induction process. More rowing sessions were delivered as a result of training five new coxes, and we were able to deliver a more varied programme of rowing. Rowers were able to take part in two local regattas plus the RowAround Scotland legs from Cromarty to Fortrose and Fortrose to Ardersier. We held our own local fun UnRegatta in September which was a great success.

Coastal rowing in numbers:

Number of rowing sessions delivered	99
Number of rowers taking part	69
Number of people trying rowing at the club for the first time	24
Number of new members	16
Number of cox courses delivered	1
Number of new coxes trained	5
Number of external events attended	6
Number of external events delivered	1

Thanks to Sandra Hogg for her coordinating work, to the coxes who have led the rowing sessions and those involved in the maintenance of the St Ayles skiffs.

Other watersports

Since the external facing community survey, and the Sunday Funday events, and probably reflecting societal changes there has been huge interest from members and the wider public in a range of watersports; particularly open-water swimming and stand-up paddle boarding. This has driven a welcome uptick in membership, and we welcome these new members, and seek to understand how they can play their role in the Club and the Club facilitate their activities.

Training

The training season has been noticeably busy with 35 RYA certificates issued. Junior dinghy sailing was very buoyant with 14 attending Junior Week, a further 6 attending a Stage 1 course and sign-ups for 95 individual Dolphins sessions. A prolonged period of adult dinghy training was completed in September with 2 sailors achieving their Level 2 certificates. Two Powerboat Level 2 courses (9 students total) were run plus a Safety Boat skills one-day session (5 students). Rowing cox training, as a mixture of Zoom theory and on-the-water practical, was delivered twice for a total of 17 rowers. Four Dinghy Instructors attended their Part 2 DI in September completing their DI training which had been disrupted by Covid RYA mitigation measures. A broken Topaz mast has been replaced and a 6th Topaz acquired for the 2022 season.

COVID

While Covid-19 guidance at the club has been unchanged since August ('beyond protection Level 0'), the situation earlier in the year was more volatile causing much work for the club's Covid focus group (James Dargie, Richard Evans, Diarmid Hogan, Sandra Hogg & Richard Jenner). Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Scotland, working through SportScotland to the Scottish Government (Active Scotland), has produced 7 major versions of their guidance since January. Similarly, the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association (SCRA) has updated their guidance for fixed seat rowing several times. The club's focus group has had to wade through pages of this guidance to distil this in to measures relevant to the club, seeking the maximum 'permissions' that were responsible, to produce the related 7 updates since January. As well as producing the written guidance, the group has had to update signage and ensure the physical measures and equipment were implemented and the website was up to date. Sadly, this work has yet to conclude.

Membership

Despite Covid, membership renewals held up well, however by the time of this AGM there had been an increase in members to around 222. This is about a 25% increase over the end of year numbers from 2020. As usual we had new juniors who joined for junior training, in addition there was a steady flow of new rowing members throughout the year plus some new adult sailors, whether for dinghy sailing or cruising. Of note is the increase in associate memberships, mostly sea swimmers.

SCIO transition:

Conveyancing the deeds and assigning the Harbour, Dinghy Park and Slipway lease from the unincorporated Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) to the

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation has been a tortuous process which is very close to being concluded:

- In March we learned that The Highland Council (THC) Legal Services had still to be instructed by the Estates Department to address the issue; we brought as much pressure to bear by contacting Black Isle Ward Councillors and encouraging them to consider the issue at their Local Area Meeting, that didn't happen, but it did raise the profile of our case.
- In mid-March we learned that THC Legal Services had now been instructed by the Estates Department to lead on the issue and were in contact with the Club's Solicitor Anderson, Shaw and Gilbert.
- By June the THC had produced minutes of waiver that would allow the deeds to be transferred without the pre-emption clause being enforced. However, the clause would be re-created in a Minute of Agreement to protect THC interests in the future. Additionally, THC had finally produced 3 historical documents (1590, 1592 & 1661) which they believe establishes their title to the Harbour, Dinghy Park and Slipway this assurance was required to allow us to assign the lease from unincorporated CASC to the SCIO.
- In August the wording of the Minute of Waivers (setting aside the pre-emption clause in the Club house deeds) was agreed by THC, and the Club's solicitor had requested the terms of the new agreement re-asserting THC's right and security backing that up.
- In September we were still awaiting the THC's new proposed terms (in the form of a Minute of Agreement (which re-instates the THC's pre-emption rights) but had noted their intention to bill the Club their own legal costs in the matter. Some deft negotiation on the part of Richard Jenner led to the Ward Manager agreeing to reimburse the fees of THC Legal Services from the Ward Discretionary Fund.
- In October, THC finally produced the wording of a Minute of Agreement.
- On the 8th November The Commodore, Treasurer and Club Secretary on behalf of the CASC under Clause 67 of the CASC Constitution and on behalf of the SCIO under powers delegated by the majority of board members, met at the offices of Anderson, Shaw and Gilbert in Inverness. The 3 officers/office bearers signed documents transferring the clubhouse deeds from the CASC to the SCIO and similarly assigning the lease with THC covering the Harbour, Dinghy Park and Slipway. They also signed the Minute of Agreement with THC that gives THC a right of refusal should the clubhouse be disposed at a future date (effectively reinstating the pre-emption clause previously in the deeds). These documents were witnessed by the Club's solicitor.
- We now await THC's signature on the Minute of Agreement, once THC do that the Club's Solicitor will submit the documents to Registers of Scotland. Registers of Scotland can take up to 2 years to complete the registration of the documents but after discussion it was felt reasonable to wind-up the CASC 2 weeks after the documents have been submitted; any further signatures on residual documents to be made by the Commodore, Treasurer and Club Secretary of the SCIO.

- The Treasurer has been in contact with HMRC who have confirmed that Capital Gains Tax will not apply to the transfer of assets as these are going from the CASC to a SCIO.
- The wind up of the unincorporated CASC is therefore imminent. Huge thanks are due to Richard Jenner, Joe Duncan and the others for their diligence and persistence in these matters.

Development planning:

We analysed and considered the members survey run at the end of last year. We took the results of this work into four focus groups to look at more detail on training, dinghy sailing, coastal rowing, and cruiser sailing, pulling in more expertise from interested members. The main development working group also undertook its own more detailed thinking on facilities and volunteering.

We also ran an external facing survey to gauge community interest in and perceptions of the Club, this was well received, generating responses from 7 organisations and 132 individuals.

The Development working Group has had something of a hiatus through the summer as its core was heavily involved in running other aspects of the Club and getting out on the water.

By the time of the AGM a small piece of consolidation should have been undertaken to draw together the work undertaken so far and release at least some of it to the wider membership, articulating essentially a list of items that with guidance from the development working group over the next few months can be prioritised by Board as the basis of an implementation phase. Looking forwards there is a piece of work for this winter to look at Club Communications (internal and external), to ensure we get our branding and messaging consistent.

During the next phase the Board should provide a clear steer and focus on facilitating implementation; that is very much dependent on obtaining membership buy-in in the form of volunteering and ownership of the various initiatives and works – the Club's strength is the sum of its parts. Meantime thanks to the wider membership for their input to the members survey, and those who put so much effort into the focus groups and the core of the Development working group itself; it is worth noticing that RYA Scotland are taking a keen interest in the work we are doing on development and have I believe used us an example of how to go about development planning.

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 roles, support for dive operations; 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; Board roles, sub-committee and working group roles.

I'd like to thank Lisa Pattenden for increasingly taking on the Safety Boat Bosun role, Gordon Robinson and all those who undertook grounds maintenance, Trina McEwan for taking on several catering events which have been well received.

I would like to convey a heartfelt thank you from the Board to all who have volunteered; member participation in activities and as volunteers is what drives the club forwards.

I'd like to thank the following Board members who have not sought election for the coming year for their service: Helen Jenner, Richard Jenner and Chrissie Lane.

There are though some challenges around volunteering, and there is need for the new Board to look at how we engage with volunteers, and how key roles are defined. Ultimately though we still at this point lack a Sailing Secretary, a Social convener and need to examine where we are going with the Harbourmaster role. It remains the case that a relatively small number of individuals are taking on a hugely disproportionate amount of the work needed to keep the Club running. Put simply we need more volunteers to help spread the load more evenly. Paraphrasing John F. Kennedy; Ask not what your Club can do for you – ask what you can do for your Club; think what we can do together to move forwards.

Board actions:

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

- Arranged purchase of a second-hand launch trolley for the light support boat Meikle
- Arranged for a survey of the harbour shoal area to in due course to support a licence application for removal
- Authorised purchase of new buoys and strops for visitor moorings
- Agreed to hire of a skip to dispose of obsolete moorings equipment and other items cluttering the harbour area and dinghy park.
- Implemented a key-box access system for the Clubhouse.
- Purchased a new Topaz mast
- Authorised the purchase of a 2nd hand Topaz Uno

James Dargie

Commodore

commodore@chanonry.org.uk