



Commodore's Report 2022

Hello to our 71 new members – and welcome back to our existing ones! We've had a brilliant year growing the club, providing a wide range of water sport activities (sailing, rowing, paddle boarding and swimming), and delivering on our development plan.

This year, our focus was on introducing and supporting new activities, enabled by our new membership structure, as well as getting back to pre-COVID levels of activity and the return of open events and regattas.

Here's our review of 2021-22. We hope you enjoy it!

Membership

At our last AGM members voted to change our fee structure to give all members equal access to activities, facilities, and equipment and encourage members to participate in a range of water sports. This has proved to be a huge success and our membership is now the largest we've seen for many years. We've increased the number of members by 15% on our 2021 levels, to a total of 256. The biggest increase was in family members. Most new members are interested in more than one activity and the interest is evenly spread across our all our activity areas. This indicates that our new multi activity membership model is attractive to new members.

We sadly note the passing of former member Mike Wilson, who lived in a house overlooking the slipway and harbour, and had a boat called Sun Sierre. He was also very involved in the build of our beautiful St Ayles skiffs, freely sharing his extensive woodworking skills.

SCIO transition

I can report that we have finally transferred all the assets, including the property, from the old club association to the new Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The association has been wound up and we are now in a great position to go forward as a registered charity.

Development Plan

In 2020 we embarked on a development planning process to help us improve our club. This led to several objectives, many of which, such as increasing membership, widening our activity base, and engaging better with members are being successfully actioned. Over the winter we will revisit the objectives and plan for 2023 delivery. We'll also be engaging again with members through a survey to find out what you value and want to improve.

Events

2022 saw the return of events and regattas following the COVID restrictions of the previous two years. We held two very successful Fun Days where we offered a range of activities to members and the public.

In August we hosted our Dinghy Regatta, incorporating the Scottish Musto Skiff Traveller. The event was a great success seeing 12 dinghies and 17 Musto Skiffs competing over two days. The cruiser regatta also ran, with 5 boats competing. The long-distance race, the Ness Cup, was also a great success, with 12 dinghies and cruisers competing.

We had a fabulous Grenville's Sail/Paddle/Row/Swim where over 50 club members made their way to Rosemarkie Beach for lunch.

Stand Up Paddle Boarding

Stand Up Paddle Boarding (SUP) is a new activity at the club and this year it has become firmly established. We started the year offering SUP courses at our Fun Days delivered by an external provider. During the year both Claire Scott and Graham Bull achieved SUP coaching and leadership qualifications that allowed the club to deliver training. Claire also joined the board in May as the SUP lead. 52 paddlers took part in SUP at the club and 19 became new members. We've also bought 4 boards to support training and allow members to have a go.

Swimming

Sea swimming continues to grow as more people recognise the benefits of swimming in the lee of the harbour and the opportunity to use the club facilities. There are around 23 members who regularly swim at the harbour and of a nice summer's day there may be 10 - 12 in the water together. often followed by après swim drink, cake and blethers. Swimmers have also taken the opportunity to get involved in club events and activities.

Rowing

This year has been a very successful one for coastal rowing at the club with a large increase in participation and activity. Both boats have been out on most sessions which makes rowing even more social. We've also been able to travel out and about to regattas and events enjoying the opportunity to come together with fellow rowers. We had more people rowing regularly and more than doubled the number of rowing signups to 1336 (636 in 2021). The increased activity has put strain on the boats and oars, but they have been kept on water thanks to the maintenance team led by Steve Bramwell, Donnie McLeod, Richard Cherry and Anatole Beams. We're looking forward to trying out new, longer oars soon. Looking forward we are considering how we might deliver youth rowing next year.

Sailing

This year saw us get back to a full sailing programme, including regattas, after the COVID disrupted years. We also welcomed Lisa Pattenden as Sailing

Secretary who quickly got the grips with the brief and, with the Sailing Subcommittee, delivered a great year of sailing.

We ran a full dinghy racing programme on Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoons, and we celebrate the participants' achievements. These events were also well attended by recreational sailors taking advantage of safety cover. In the coming year we will need to make sure we meet the needs of all those taking part.

Demand for learning to sail is probably at an all-time high, and despite our volunteer instructors running five adult and junior courses, junior week and informal training during recreational sailing, we still had to turn people away. This bodes well for the future of sailing at the club but, although we have four new dinghy instructors, we are still constrained by what these volunteers can deliver.

Cruisers were also active at the club and did brilliantly achieving series firsts in the Class 1 and Class 2 competitions and overall club first in the Moray Yacht Axis (MYA) series.

Training

Training is a very important dimension to the club, enabling new people to get on the water and develop skills. This is delivered by our volunteer instructors and coaches who offered over 80 different training and coaching opportunities across the range of our water sports activities.

It was a very busy season for formal RYA training and despite scheduling extra courses, demand for dinghy courses has exceeded supply. Prolonged spells of very windy weather in the summer (the 2nd day of one Stage 1 course was rescheduled 4 times) also stretched our small volunteer team of instructors. But, an amazing 51 RYA certificates (35 in 2021) were awarded, exceeding pre-Covid levels, reflecting the greater number of active instructors and interest in sailing.

To support our activities four dinghy instructors, four power boat instructors and two stand up paddle boarding coaches/leaders and eight coastal rowing coxes achieved qualifications. 30 members also gained RYA First Aid certificates, supported by the club.

The club also provided a wide range of non-RYA and informal coaching and training opportunities. This included improvers dinghy sailing, junior dinghy coaching (Dolphins), SUP coaching, coastal rowing training and sea safety sessions.

Many thanks to Richard Jenner as Regional Training Centre principal and all the instructors and volunteers that gave their time.

Volunteering

Chanonry Sailing Club relies entirely on volunteers for leadership, management, and delivery of activities, and we have fantastic people willing to give time to do this. Thanks to you all.

However, we have struggled at times this year to deliver events and activities due to shortage of volunteers, whether it's for safety boat duties, to cut the grass or help with catering. A few volunteers are doing a lot of work, which is increasingly unsustainable.

If we are to reach our potential, we require volunteers with a wide range of skills and knowledge. Some things we can teach through RYA courses (this year we trained 10 new instructors, 8 rowing coxes, and issued 30 First Aid and 11 power boat certificates) and others require people with the right skills to step forward. We also need to be better at supporting volunteering activity and this will be the focus of the board in the coming year. If you can offer to help with anything at all contact commodore@chanonry.org.uk.

Many thanks to the board who supported me and the club over the past year. I'd especially like to thank the Diarmid Hogan who is leaving the board after several years. Happily, he will remain as Moorings Co-ordinator.

Defibrillator Campaign

This year we have been fundraising to provide a Public Access Defibrillator for Fortrose Harbour. To help someone who is in cardiac arrest effectively, a defibrillator needs to be found as quickly as possible. The harbour is a busy area, used by the whole community, as well as visitors to the area.

The whole club and wider community really got behind this campaign and we are pleased to say that we raised over £2000 to cover the cost of the defibrillator and community training. The club will cover installation and ongoing maintenance costs.

We are working with charity Lucky2BHere and waiting for availability of a defibrillator which we hope will be delivered in the New Year. Many thanks to everyone that supported our fundraising.

Communication

Effectively engaging with our members and the wider public continues to be important. This year have revamped our communications to reflect the club's full range of activities across sailing, SUPs, swimming, rowing and cruising.

Regular newsletters have kept members informed about what's going on. A YouTube channel was created, and we have started using more video to promote the club. A suite of Facebook groups provide space for members to share information and help organise activities for sailing, rowing, and SUPs. Our social channels continue to grow in popularity and have proven to be very effective way of reaching new people and raising awareness of the club.

Relationships with the media have been created with good coverage throughout the year in the local papers and on radio. Our website has benefited from a substantial edit to improve the site, archive a lot of older content, and improve the navigation. Huge thanks to Sandra Hogg, Richard Evans and Hanako Cameron for their work revising the website.

Abandoned boat

We were disappointed that a member abandoned a small cruiser at the harbour, in unsalvageable condition. Despite our best attempts the boat was not removed, and the boat was disposed of at cost to the club and through volunteer effort. We are currently pursuing the former member for costs, through the courts. We will not tolerate the abandonment of boats at the club. Thanks to Diarmid Hogan, Tim McKeggie and James Dargie for their efforts on this issue.

Looking forward

We have a great base for moving forward with new members and new activity. We need to make sure we capitalise on that and provide the best water sports experiences that we can and make the club a great place to be.

Sandra Hogg

Commodore

commodore@chanonry.org.uk