



# LARGS SAILING CLUB DEVELOPMENT DAY



21<sup>st</sup> January  
2017

## Ideas and suggestions generated

A wide cross section of club members met to review and discuss the challenges and opportunities for Largs Sailing Club. This document captures all points raised and discussed in 6 sessions and by a group of young sailors and our coastal rowing associates.

# Largs Sailing Club Development Day

Like many other clubs and volunteer led organisations, Largs Sailing Club is facing both challenges and opportunities as we look to the future. Over 60 members from a wide cross section of the club met to bring their ideas for securing our successful future. The day's agenda made sure there was maximum time for discussion and sharing these ideas, each session facilitated by a member of the club's executive committee:

1030: Welcome and scene setting (Ewan Macpherson, Commodore)

1045-1215: Open discussions around 3 tables with facilitators and the option to rotate to another table after 25mins:

- What more could we do on the water (Howard Smallwood)
- What more could we do off the water (Gill McNicol)
- What more could we do for families and youth members (John Scott)

1215-1300 LUNCH

1300-1430: Open discussions around 3 tables with facilitators and the option to rotate to another table after 25mins:

- What volunteer skills do we need to develop and how (Graeme Robertson)
- What communications and marketing do we need to develop and how (Gordon Cochrane)
- What partnerships and other actions do we need to take and how (Howard Smallwood)

1430-1500: General session with feedback from all sessions and next steps

The following points were captured by the session facilitators from discussions, flip chart notes and post it suggestions. Additionally the coastal rowers submitted suggestions from their meeting the same day and Ewan spoke with a group of younger members to get their ideas for activities to appeal to their group on and off the water. Many ideas and suggestions appear in more than one session, which suggests their importance to participants!



## WHAT MORE COULD WE DO ON THE WATER (HOWARD SMALLWOOD)

This was a well attended topic with around 60 members from across the club contributing actively in 3 sessions.

### Main points:

- Plan a cruising/dinghy muster for this year – we maybe need 2 or 3 consecutive weekends to get good weather. Bring club together, BBQ etc.
- Facilitate open social sailing sessions such as dinghy sailing, (with safety boat provision?) on a regular evening during the season.
- Broaden dinghy activities into cruising. Linked to this and open social sailing, a dinghy pontoon somewhere would be useful as would rope or tackle arrangement to assist on slipway.
- Club to promote its own events/ rather than wait to be approached. Ideas for events .. Multi craft relay race? Long distance dinghy race?
- Cruising group Facebook chat page to pull in crews/ common destinations/ pilotage etc
- Use disabled sailing as a focus to attract interest/ sponsorship etc for the club - tie in with Inverclyde/ dinghy pontoon?/ ..
- Idea of rebranding the club as a 'water sports hub'. Very popular! Could bring rowers, kayaks, windsurfers etc into the fold. .... Why not motor boaters, divers, jet skis too?
- Take a long look at membership fee structure to accommodate this - basic house membership with add ons? This could be very popular with LYH and might get FYC (and other clubs?) on board?

### Some more general ideas:

- Work with Active Schools (8 – 11)
- Provide sailing opportunities without boat ownership
- Taster days across all sections of the club and all watersports
- Cadets – cruising taster sessions on keelboats
- Look at sponsorship of any aspect eg: sponsor ribs/marks etc. – breweries or local businesses (cf local taxis which advertise businesses)
- Training: mark laying/ RO training
- Challenges – e.g how many people can you get on a Topper?
- List of volunteer duties
- Events sub-committee
- Facilitate short time sailing (e.g. young families)
- Mentoring juniors
- Publish club cruising notes e.g destinations in the Clyde and beyond
- Expand Facebook pages generally to allow for arranging activities (training on privacy settings?)

---

## **WHAT MORE COULD WE DO OFF THE WATER (GILL MCNICOL)**

Considerable participation by families, young sailors and more long term club members

### **Main points**

- Establish/strengthen links with other clubs with similar interests – negotiate incentives for them to attend our events/make use of our facilities to host events.
- Ask Carolyn at Largs Marina if it would be possible to share details about our events with Berth holders in order to attract new members from this area. (increasing our current 1/3 of berth holder members).
- Advertise our events and function availability through other clubs, in sailing magazines and on cruising/sailing websites.
- Encourage Fairlie to make use of our facilities for functions etc as Rowing Club do.
- Provide cruising experience packages for staff teams
- Advertise membership.
- Offer incentives for existing members to introduce new members.
- Promote Social Membership to foster interest in the range of experiences on offer at the club.
- Appoint 'Ambassadors' to talk to different groups of people about the club in order to attract new members.
- Offer group memberships to walking/cycling/slimming/craft groups to attract new members.
- Pre book social events through the calendar and make available a diary of these so that we can share the program with potential members.

### **General suggestions for Social Activities:**

- New Year's Day
- Quiz Nights
- Themed nights: Scottish Night, Valentines Night, St Patrick's Day, Mother's Day Lunch/Daffodil Tea, Hallowe'en Party, Christmas Crafts
- "Educational" events: Big Cook/Little Cook, Easy onboard cooking
- New Members Night, Cadets Open Day, Ladies Night
- Boat Jumble
- Pie and a pint for sporting events such as Rugby 6 Nations
- Promote as a venue for weddings, christenings, birthdays, kids parties, funerals
- Whisky Tasting, Gin Festival
- MacMillan Big Coffee Morning
- Prize Giving, all club Celebrations: Annual Dinner

### **Family specific suggestions:**

- Offer incentives for families to introduce other families.
- Offer entertainment for children alongside early evening entertainment and promote the events and venue as a place to socialize as a family.
- Extend the program of activities available during school holidays – if possible providing a service to suit working parents (breakfast club and full day program).
- **NEED TO CHECK INSURANCE ABOUT TAKING CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE CLUB.**
- Kids Menu and Homebaking, Kids Play Area

## **Promoting Health and Wellbeing**

- Fostering healthy lifestyles through starting walking, running and cycling groups perhaps (but not necessarily) in conjunction with existing groups in the local area.
- One day events – fun run, raft race.
- Hosting regular yoga, Pilates classes.
- Offering Healthy Snacks and juices.

## **Personal Development**

- Welcome groups which will support the personal development of members and allow them to develop new interests and learn new skills, particularly during the winter months; camera club, art group, poetry/literature or book group, sewing classes, language classes, first aid courses, cookery....
- Sunday Afternoon Talks – local history, Charles Rennie Macintosh (member is expert), sailing topics
- Email out to members asking for requests for topics and also asking if anyone would like to give a talk themselves. (calendar of Sunday talks as soon as possible – A new cruising convener would be advantageous here.

## **WHAT MORE COULD WE DO FOR FAMILIES AND YOUTH MEMBERS (JOHN SCOTT)**

### **Main Questions tackled:**

- How do we get more young people and families involved in sailing?
- How do we get our younger and family members to use the club more?

### **Getting current families and juniors sailing:**

- Opportunities to get more experience outwith training and racing
- Social sailing night with safety cover – Fridays or Tuesdays
- Buddies for new sailors wanting experience
- Safe sailing area for younger children
- Temporary pontoon
- Publicise availability of LSTA boats for member use
- Encourage more cadets into club racing
- Improve timing of events so they work for families – morning (or afternoon) - don't take up all day
- Avoid events running over lunch – sell more food
- Social coordinator / explainer for onshore parents
- Jamboree/ all club cruise or muster
- Day cruises for yachts and dinghies
- Family / team sailing, running, walking event round Cumbrae
- Yacht sailing tasters for cadets
- Night sailing experience for cadets

- On the water fun sessions / games – family / group racing , relays; use dinghies, windsurfers, canoes, SUPs...
- Treasure hunts
- Sponsored junior events i.e. 24 hour sailathon
- Involve parents as slipway help, RIB crew

### **Recruiting more juniors**

- School day trips for watersports
- Open day / taster sessions
- Grandparent / grandchild tasters
- Bring a friend day
- Cadet parent sailing evening
- Sailing for children of non-sailing parents
- Teach kids to row

### **Broadening the club's offering to members**

- Make LSC a watersports club – rowing, canoeing, windsurfing....
- Provide a gym / fitness equipment
- Working binoculars in lounge
- Use of iPad / tablet sailing apps
- Publicise local onshore activity options – walks, geocaching

### **Getting juniors involved in running the club:**

- Encourage students / 20s /30s to stay involved in sailing and LSC
- Youth voice on executive committee
- Youth commodore

### **Getting current families and juniors using the club:**

- Family socials nights
- Kids' / teens discos
- Kids' quiz night
- Movie nights for kids by age group
- Kids' menu
- Family meal deals before cadets and racing
- Kids' play area
- Advertised party / birthday / anniversary packages rather than completely bespoke
- Publicise that young members can sign in visitors

## **WHAT VOLUNTEER SKILLS DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP AND HOW (GRAEME ROBERTSON)**

It was clear to all participants that all of the suggested ideas from the morning sessions would require significant volunteer skills, some of which may exist in the club and some of which may need to be developed. These skills were captured by 3 groups during the afternoon session:

### **On the Water**

- Race Officer, Race Training, Assistance to the Race Officer
- Instructor/Sailing (and other watersports) Skills
- Race Mark maintenance and Mark laying
- Safety
- RIB driving
- Slipway maintenance
- Assistance from Parents and list of their skills
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Refresher training
- Pre-course training in basic seamanship
- First Aid + specific skills e.g: Defibrillator

### **Off the water**

- Called a “Sailing Club” but is really and aims to be a “Watersports Club”
- Meet-and-greet (all members’ awareness; clubhouse, outside, events)
- Patience/respect and other soft skills
- Bartender
- Administration
- IT
- Integration with other Stakeholders
- Boat Maintenance – Dinghy and RIB
- Branding/PR/Advertising/Posters/Design
- Fabric Maintenance (in and out of club)
- Volunteers Calendar
- List of Volunteer Groups and contacts
- Volunteer tab on Website
- Volunteer management
- Compliance

### **Family and Youths**

- FUN
- Cruising mentoring of youths
- Cruising-in-company
- Youths tab on website
- Sailing apps for youths
- Inclusivity



- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Informal dinghy evenings
- Media equipment for youths
- News section for youths
- IT rep for juniors
- Dedicated resource area for juniors
- “Clubs” for juniors by age group
- Club as a hang-out place for juniors
- Events for juniors
- Knots
- Informal learning on-the-job
- Non-RYA courses on e.g. gelcoat repairs
- Develop LSC as a place to learn (sailing, life skills, etc)
- Develop life-blood of the future
- Focus groups for youths
- Youth group represented on ExecComm

### **Volunteer Management**

- Harness the skills of our 900+ members; volunteers coming forward, being trained, then not used
- Manage volunteers
- Volunteer fatigue
- Sensitivity
- People skills
- Communication
- Promote declaration of member skills and capture on a volunteer skills database (e.g. Microsoft Access, or DutyMan)
- Database of names and addresses/contact
- We have a pay-and-play culture and expect others to do the work
- Reduce subscriptions for volunteers?
- Volunteering for n hours a condition of annual membership?

### **WHAT COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP AND HOW (GORDON COCHRANE)**

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

##### **Main channels and methods of communication within the club:**

- **E-news** - appreciated. Once/month is about right
- **Brief e-news** (no attachments) - very useful. No more than one/week



- **Web site** - under-appreciated and under-used resource. Huge amount of information on it. Also, already has links to many club activities - calendar, LSTA, Facebook, WebCollect, Club Management Rules etc. Could we add a for sale / wanted section?
- **Facebook page(s)** - many members of discussion group didn't even know we had Facebook pages (main club, racing, and youth). Main club page is for official club news and information. Racing page is well used, and often "chat" - who's going sailing this weekend. Should definitely add a cruising FB page
- **Twitter** feed - dormant / dead? Last posting September 2014 ...
- **Notice boards** - should be kept current - remove old notices etc. Use porch notice board to welcome visitors to building, and give (very brief) information on activities and membership
- Use **old flat screen tv's** mounted in various locations (e.g. office window, facing porch) to set up rolling information and publicity on club activities
- Relocate "**open**" sign in porch to upper level, so it is visible across the marina
- Set up **rolling electronic banner** on balcony facing approach roadway to highlight that day's activities, dish of the day etc - and even the simple fact the club is open (many members don't know when the club is open - despite it being in the e-news, on the web site, and often on notices in the clubhouse). Could we rent (or share) such a banner? Only limited time to view. Any safety issues with distracting drivers as they approach where members (often kids) and dinghies are crossing?
- How to connect dinghy sailors / cruising group / rowers / kayakers etc??

#### **Local / external publicity:**

- Reasonably successful in getting material published in **local paper** ("Wee Paper"). Need to provide all text - don't rely on local reporter to take information and accurately produce the story. Also in **Yachting Life**. However, key is a volunteer with the time and skills to submit material!
- **Weather station and web-cam** - currently belongs to the SSI - what happens when David leaves the building? (Note - this is the most popular SSI web page, and is the only seawards facing webcam in the marina). Would need some pc software to link into our web site
- Not communications, but *who owns the SSI equipment (marks, ground tackle, GPS's etc)?* Apparently much of this was purchased by North Ayrshire Council, when they were funding much of the SSI's activities

#### **MARKETING:**

- What are we targeting?? More members? More events (post SSI)? More functions?  
Yes - all of these!!
- **Sponsorship** - any marketing specialists in club?
- Can we get small scale **local sponsorship** e.g. race series, or racing marks (could need numerous marks if we run events ourselves), or sponsorship for more major events? Harry Fairbairn sponsor Largs Golf Club - and opportunity there?
- **Name of club** - is the name Largs Sailing Club too exclusive?
- Enrol local funeral directors as corporate members?
- **Functions** – should NOT simultaneously use lounge & HK room for functions - prevents members access
- David's office – rent?

## **WHAT PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER ACTIONS DO WE NEED TO TAKE AND HOW (HOWARD SMALLWOOD)**

This session highlighted a lot of unknowns but generated some excellent starting points for further work.

- A lot of talk around sponsorship: it may be best to try lots of small sponsors ( local shops for afternoon races etc )
- Need to have well identified projects before approaching organisations
- Motivate cadets to run a fund raising activity
- Sources of funding could include: EDF, Peelports, Powergen, Windfarms, Decathlon, Lomo, Gaelforce, Common Good Fund, European Coal and Steel fund
- Should we reapply for lottery funds, other grants and trusts and go round marina companies again
- Possible partners with schools, sea cadets, sea scouts, - problem with 'elitist image' for sailing- need to get it into the schools curriculum
- Malin Waters
- RYA Sailability
- Council involvements/ rejigging of boundaries/ any funds there? Council funding through 'arms length trusts'

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGER MEMBERS**

- Kids / cadets birthday parties
- Graffiti Wall, rock painting, Chalk Wall: While the sailors wait to go out in a boat they can draw on the wall
- 6-Nations Rugby – advertise they'll be on TV here. Invite members to come along and watch them here (food, drink, company)
- Kids menu / kids lunch boxes (pre-order maybe for events)
  - Physical activities stations: outdoors: skipping, star jumps, plank, sprints, push ups & tyre rolling
  - Indoors: knots, sail folding, treasure hunts, sailing scrabble
- Games
  - Hide and Seek, outdoor draughts/chess, bin ball, ping pong, Dodge Ball, Cricket, Basketball

## **FOCCR'S SUGGESTIONS**

**These were gathered from post-its compiled by the coastal rowers during their regular social meeting in the club:**

- Kayakers as Associate Members (like the Rowers)
- LSC becomes a Marine Sports Club
- Increase catering facility
- Venue for Largs Music Festival
- Children's birthday party venue
- Monthly functions

- Open and publicise as a Cafe
- Incentives for Members/Families to hold functions at the club (birthdays/retirements etc)
- Extend 50-50 Club
- Craft Fair venue (20% commission)
- Car Boot sale venue (charge a fee)
- Art Gallery for local artists (charging a fee or receiving commission on sales)
- Solar Panels
- Gaming machines
- Pool Table – does anyone want or use it?

**Next steps: these ideas and suggestions will be processed and prioritised by the Executive Committee with regular updates to the membership via the website.**