Dundee Sailing Club

Development Plan

12th March 2015

Summary

The club was awarded 3 years focussed support from the Royal Yacht Association (RYA) in early 2014 to help the club improve and expand, thereby widening interest in sailing more generally. A number of new initiatives were introduced during a busy 2014 sailing season (described in the section "where are we now" below) which helped increase the number of members significantly over the previous year, though with limited initial involvement with the RYA.

However, following RYA club development guidelines, a comprehensive member survey was carried out to gather views about all aspects of the club and, based on the survey results, the Club Committee have prepared this development plan to target areas that the Committee and members think will have the biggest impact on improving and expanding the club.

Expanding the club successfully will involve a lot of effort and support from members and will require a balance between marketing/recruiting activity to attract new members and expanding/upgrading facilities, equipment, training etc. to meet this new demand effectively.

An annual 20% increase in membership is our key objective, illustrated in section B, with the club's development objectives for the 2015 season detailed in section C.

Broad, longer term goals are then shown, to be linked with annual progress reviews to see what was achieved, what lessons were learnt and to set new detailed objectives for the following season.

Brief history

Dundee Sailing Club was established in 1978 and the founding Commodore was Charlie Baxter. At that time the Club premises were owned by Dundee Council who ran a sailing school there, operated by Ancrum Outdoor Activities centre.

Within the first year or so club members had, through their own efforts, built the rescue boat shed. This included raising all the necessary funds themselves, a considerable achievement. From the beginning the club has had a family friendly focus which continues to this day.

In 2006 the club members took the decision to buy the premises and land from the Council and this was completed in 2007, a big milestone for the club and one which again involved considerable fund raising efforts by the members, led by Bill Clark. With its tremendous location and welcoming atmosphere, Dundee Sailing Club offers affordable access to sailing on one of Scotland's most beautiful estuaries.

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A. Where are we now?

This covers both 2013 and 2014 seasons, illustrating where we were in 2013 before implementing a number of initiatives during 2014 to create growth and improvement as part of year 1 of the club's RYA focussed support.

Recent/current position of:

1. Membership

Following a gradual decline in membership over a few years there were a total of 47 paid memberships in 2013, comprising 35 single Adult and 12 Family memberships. Overall total membership, including family members and 4 additional honorary members, was 69. This was largely male (77%) with 49% of members aged 50+ and a further 38% aged between 30 and 50.

Following an initial push to increase membership during 2014 the number of paid memberships increased by 28% to 60, including a significant 42% increase in family memberships to 17, increasing the total number of members by 35% to 93. This was despite an 11% drop at the end of 2013 when a number of members left.

The membership has also begun to become a bit more balanced with a 53% increase in new female members meaning females now made up a third of the club by the end of 2014. The increase of young members aged <18 from 7 to 18 also meant the percentage of members aged 50+ declined slightly to 42%. The females were less active sailors overall however, resulting in a slight drop in overall member participation from 68% in 2013 to 65% in 2014.

New members joining in 2014 were mostly novices which created challenges in being able to provide sufficient support from more experienced club members during sailing events. Even with some new members making rapid gains in their sailing skills, about half the membership were judged to be only level 1 or 2 skilled by the end of 2014.

New members historically are treated informally with no structured induction or training pathway, relying largely on the enthusiasm and experience of existing member volunteers to welcome them into the club, take them sailing and provide informal skills training. This has been bolstered by occasional RYA sailing and power boat, with this increased during 2014 through RYA training collaborations with the Sea Cadets and Dundee City Council Ancrum Centre.

The fee structure has been stable for several years with a flat annual fee of £125 for Adult memberships and £185 for Family memberships. Discounts are given to students, youths and part-year late joiners. The fee included storage of a private boat or use of club boats with additional fees for storage of additional boats and equipment.

2. Marketing / Recruitment

Typically the club carried out little marketing, relying on word-of-mouth and website enquiries to generate public interest. The exceptions have been getting involved with occasional external events and one or two annual open days where free taster sails are offered and members have made efforts to promote this through employer newsletters and Radio Tay.

During 2014 a more concerted effort was made at marketing the club including:

a. Putting a promotional sign on the front of the building for passing local dog-walkers.

b. Paying for classified section newspaper ads

c. Providing stories to media to get printed in the local paper

d. Offering sailing taster vouchers for £25 and promoting this on the sign and website

e. More actively following up web-site email enquiries.

These initiatives were successful in raising the profile of the club and increasing the membership, although it was less clear that there were direct responses to the paid ads.

3. Management structure

a. Roles and responsibilities

The elected committee has provided the main focus for all club organising and responsibilities, with all responsible post holders also sitting on the committee. The committee meetings have covered all issues involved with the running of the club, including a lot of detail but with limited strategic development. Committee decisions however have generally not been formally communicated with members other than at AGMs, occasional emails about specific issues or a committee member being informally asked.

The club has generally relied on a core of enthusiastic volunteers who do a lot, with the wider membership taking little role in club responsibilities, although a 2nd tier of more involved members will respond to calls for assistance such as clean-ups and event preparation. Most experienced members understand the club ethos of "giving back" by volunteering to take out newer members as crew to provide early training in boat handling skills until newer members are competent and confident enough to helm.

b. Policy documents

There are a few existing club policy documents, including a brief constitution written some years ago, a recently written general safety policy and some written instructions attached to the club notice board. These are not well joined up, publicised or understood by the general membership. A new constitution has been drafted during 2014 in collaboration with the RYA, though this will be revisited during 2015.

4. Event management

a. Sailing

The sailing program has been a successful part of the club, with early focus each year by club officers and others in planning a varied calendar of club sailing events. This is based on 3 days per week of club activity – 2 week nights involving general sailing, Sunday afternoon cruises and other occasional events such as longer weekend trips and open days. The focus is on general sailing during the week and cruising at the weekend. The club also runs a racing series for members.

The sailing program has been well communicated with a spreadsheet produced and posted at the club and a pdf available on the club website. This was bolstered during 2014 with weekly emails from the Commodore reminding of upcoming events.

b. Social

This is another successful aspect of the club with planned social events generally attracting good numbers and raising additional club funds. The annual Burns night is the most popular and successful fund-raiser with curry nights, BBQ's and, during 2014, a more extensive Viking-themed family event. These events are hard work to organise, prepare and manage, with a core few leading with good support from members on

the day. A successful policy in 2014 was for different events to be "owned" by different club officers, to share the load.

5. Safety

Safety has always been viewed as important by the club and this is understood by the membership, although a recently written safety policy was not widely distributed and club safety policy itself is not currently clearly understood, particularly by newer members. A club safety boat is maintained and in attendance at all club events, manned by trained helms with portable radios. Buoyancy aids are required and provided by the club if necessary. The safety helm is in charge of club events and carries out a briefing before sailing commences, covering conditions and passage/event plans.

During 2014 cones and signs were purchased to reduce the risk posed by the use of the quad bike. Issues with the buoyancy of club boats were discovered during 2014 after a number of incidents where capsized boats filled with water and were difficult to right. Significant effort and investment followed to improve the buoyancy of club boats.

6. Communication

The club has maintained a website which contains basic information about the club for potential new members and event information for club members. The member responsible for creating and maintaining the site has left so the task has been more difficult, with the site becoming more static, though still functional. A club email is also maintained and receives club enquiries via the website and facilitates communication to members, which increased in volume during 2014. Some member-created informal Facebook sites exist and during 2014 a blog was created, with some success. These would all benefit from being more joined-up and supported by an expert from the membership.

General meetings are held twice a year to update members about issues and events, with all members invited by letter to attend the main post-season meeting, the AGM, where club officers are appointed.

7. Training

Over the years formal training has been organised through the Sea Cadets by active committee members, though lately this had fallen into abeyance due to lack of interest from existing members. In late 2013 and during 2014 an active and qualified Committee member pursued this more vigorously as a way to attract new members, in particular children and their parents. Winter sailing training for children at Clatto reservoir in collaboration with Dundee City Council, a range of RYA sailing and powerboat courses with both the council and Sea Cadets were carried out. This required a lot of effort to get members to commit.

Informal training of new members by more experienced members continued during ongoing sailing events and a capsize drill was carried out with members on one occasion, led by a qualified club member. Power and safety boat training had not been carried out for several years, with safety helm duties falling to the trained few. However this was re-introduced successfully during 2014 with several RYA powerboat courses held.

There has been no formal training of members in boat maintenance, with maintenance of club boats carried out by a few core enthusiasts, led by the club Bosun. This proved insufficient during 2014 with increasing membership and use of

club boats putting too much pressure on a few people to keep club boats ready. Some training in the use of the quad bike was provided informally.

8. Financial position

The club successfully covers annual operating expenses through club membership fees and fundraising activities. There is usually breakeven or a small surplus to maintain a buffer of around £10k in the club bank account. While this covers ongoing facilities and equipment maintenance, supported by volunteer work, it does not generate sufficient income for large investments or improvements. With no applications having been made for funding grants this means club facilities and equipment are quite old, though adequate. In effect no large scale investments or improvements will be possible without a funding grant.

During the 2012/13 financial year (01/10/12 – 30/09/13) the club generated £7k in income - 85% from membership fees, with £6.7k in expenditure, including some investment in new sails for club wayfarers. The bank balance was maintained at £10k.

During 2013/14 there was a marked increase in effort and activity resulting in a 25% membership increase and a 37% increase in income to £11k (80% from membership fees). This was matched by a 37% increase in operating costs and also a £4k targeted investment in improvements to club equipment and facilities which reduced the bank balance to £8k by year end.

9. Infrastructure

a. Club boats

The club maintains a stock of club boats for member use, currently including 6 wayfarers (with 2 more to be brought out of mothballs for 2015), 1 kestrel, 1 ISO, 1 enterprise, 1 graduate and 1 optimist. Many of these have been donated from previous members and all are old but operational. There is a significant amount of cost and labour required to keep boats operational, particularly with the increase in new members during 2014 resulted in increased demand for use, particularly of wayfarers. As noted above, maintenance is carried out by the Club Bosun, together with a small, committed group of club members. There are current problems with the deteriorating quality of wayfarer launching trolleys and the significant cost of replacing them.

b. Member boats

Most space in the club compound is taken up by a wide variety of approximately 50 member's boats, storage of which is included in the annual membership fee. Most of the more experienced members of the club have their own boats and these can be supportive in adding numbers to events and taking out new members. However some boats aren't used much and there is an ongoing shortage of space for new member boats which needs active management. Many private road trailers are stored at the club, for an annual fee, which are rarely used, although these take up little space when stored efficiently.

c. Club equipment

The club owns a 5m Avon Searider RIB safety boat and a quad bike, replaced in 2014, to tow the safety boat and heavier dinghies up the slipway. The lawnmower was also replaced in 2014 being the main tool for keeping the boat storage yards tidy. The club has purchased few tools for the boat workshop, relying mainly on member-supplied or donated equipment. Sets of waterproof jackets and trousers and buoyancy aids are also kept to supply basic sailing equipment to new members.

d. Building

The main building, safety boat shed and compounds are owned by the club, with an on-site shed used by Dundee City Council to store 2 Council safety boats and, under the terms of a legal agreement, limited access is still required by Council staff. Workshop, changing rooms, toilets and kitchen and lounge area are all adequate, though basic, and housed in the main building. The building recently passed an electrical inspection required by the insurance. Gradual incremental improvements are carried out, e.g. in 2014 the lounge area was repainted, security cameras installed and new flooring fitted to changing rooms. A new security perimeter fence was also installed around the whole property. The upstairs lounge is used for evening social events, après-sailing socialising and off-water training, though it's poorly insulated, leaky and hard to heat!

10. Partners / Collaborations

The Club has regular training events run by sailing instructors from the Dundee Sea Cadets; is increasing ties with Dundee City Council via Ancrum Outdoor Centre, particularly with activities for children and is engaged with the RYA with its 3-year focussed support program since March 2014. The Club is a member of the Tay Yacht Club Association and, during 2014, increased contact with other local sailing clubs (Montrose, Anstruther, St Andrews, Newburgh and Wormit) with the aim of increasing collaborative sailing events, building on the annual weekend trip to Perth Sailing Club.

B. Where do we want to go?

The Club has a solid foundation of members, facilities and equipment on which to expand, combined with an excellent sailing environment on the Tay, the RYA focussed support program and current Committee enthusiasm. The recent membership survey, completed by around half of members also demonstrated strong support for club development.

This desire is based on the principles of:

1. Promoting the sport of sailing
2. Making affordable sailing available to the wider population of Dundee
3. Providing club members with a safe, friendly and challenging environment for them to enjoy their sailing and develop their sailing skills.

Expanding club membership successfully will involve a lot of effort and support from members and will require a balance between marketing/recruiting activity to attract new members and expanding/upgrading facilities, equipment, training etc. to meet this new demand effectively.

Specifically, the club wants to increase the number of memberships over the next 5 years to 150, 2½ times the current level, which will require greater efforts to retain existing members, combined with an ambitious 20% annual increase through new membership recruitment.

2015 season end Goal Year 1	2016 season end Goal Year 2	2017 season end Goal Year 3	2019 season end Goal Year 5
72	86	104	150

C. How are we going to get there?

Year 1

	Goals	Achieve by start of 2015 season	Achieve by end of 2015 season
1) Membership	• Broaden club demographic – e.g. more representative of local community and more young and female members. • Try to improve skill levels of members to have a higher proportion of skilled members, to help train newer members		
2) Marketing / Recruitment	• Increase membership and improve demographics and potentially skills • Increase public awareness of club and sailing in general		• Create a recruitment subcommittee to develop and implement marketing ideas to achieve membership targets, reporting to main committee. • Ask new members how they found out about the club
3) Management structure **a) Roles & responsibilities**	Improved clarity about roles and responsibilities within the club, on the Committee and during events	Identify, appoint and communicate committee and other non-committee roles and responsibilities important to club operations	Establish sub-committees, reporting to main committee, to develop and implement ideas for: • Marketing / recruitment • Training • Safety and other operational policy docs • Event issues e.g. Racing, family-focus
b) Policies	Develop a new set of club documents to achieve clarity about governance and operational procedures	• Development strategy document • A list of club roles, role holders and responsibilities • A list of required policies to be developed	• Develop a set of operational and safety policies for key activities • Develop an exit form, to ask departing members why they left • Revise Constitution

	Goals	Achieve by start of 2015 season	Achieve by end of 2015 season
4) Event management **a) Sailing**	• Uphold tradition of wayfarer cruising • Continue successful varied program of events • Continue current level of member racing in program • Introduce improved passage plans and risk assessment of an increased number of longer trips for suitably skilled members	• Complete 2015 Sailing program • Implement clearer roles and other improvements to event management – e.g. Officer of the week, safety boat roles.	• Keep a record of successes/failures. • Explore ideas for expanding family/kids events in future • Develop templates for passage plans & risk assessment; safety policy docs
b) Social	• In support of sailing program, continue existing level of social activities for fund raising and socialising. • Same number, better organised • Continue with clear lead roles for each event and add wider help with organising • Consider more family-friendly events	Will be kept at similar level to 2014	• Communicate clearly in advance to maximise numbers • Review success, failures to keep improving
5) Safety	Need to develop, communicate and follow clear policies, based on risk assessment	• Capsize training into program • Safety boat serviced	Have clear risk assessment and other safety policies in place and a safety boat service plan
6) Communication	Build on recent improvements - keep members well informed about events, policies, new developments	New web site with blog and members area, containing 2015 sailing program	• Weekly events email. • Members area populated with new club documents
7) Training	Develop an ongoing formal and informal program of training that continuously develops member's skills at all levels.	Develop new ideas for 2015	• Communicate and implement a 2015 set of formal training • Train trainers to start running internal sessions
8) Financial position	• Be self-financing. Increase income to enable incremental club improvements without relying exclusively on grants • Develop and submit grant applications for larger improvements	• Set a budget • Identify potential surplus available for 2015 investment	• Produce financial report for 2015. • Review income v spend v budget. • Identify costs for grant application. • Explore new ideas for generating income for improvements

	Goals	Achieve by start of 2015 season	Achieve by end of 2015 season
9) Infrastructure **a) Boats**	• Continue a mixed fleet of members and club boats • Improve management of club boats • Review and improve stock of club boats • Main, but not exclusive, focus on cruising Wayfarers • Achieve a balanced set of training boats	• Review condition of all club boats and produce report • Identify club boats for disposal	• Assign all useful club boats to designated members for dedicated maintenance responsibilities • Identify skilled members to provide maintenance support and training • Provide training in boat maintenance • Review options for newer boat investment
b) Other equipment	Have necessary equipment in place to support activities and growing membership	Safety boat and quad serviced	Upgrade/replace club wayfarer launching trolleys
c) Building / grounds	Need to invest in and improve facilities to support expanding membership. A combination of ongoing incremental improvements and grant applications for bigger projects	Review immediate requirements for improvements that are most urgently required and can be carried out without clashing with a future funded development project - currently increasing male changing space	• Repair leaky windows • Improve capacity of current men's changing area • Improve transparency of workshop organisation – e.g. labelling, new tools and storage for use by wider membership • Continue exploration of facility improvement options for a grant application particularly around changing areas.
10) Partners / collaborators	• Build on current relationships with Ancrum and Sea Cadets • Get involved with Wayfarer Association • Explore possible collaborations with Royal Tay Yacht Club. • Expand presence within Tay Yachts Clubs Association.. • Expand activity within Community Sports Hub network.		Potential use of Ancrum to: • develop mutual family/ children training activities with use of their equipment and our facilities • develop opportunities for club facility improvement funding Training courses with Sea cadets.

Year 2

Achieve by beginning of 2016 Season

Following the completion of the 2015 sailing season a review of the year's objectives will be carried out to see what was achieved, what lessons were learnt and to set new detailed objectives for the following season, within all above categories. This is to be led by the Committee, supported by a more active membership developing new ideas, through focussed sub-committees and working groups. This review will be held at the end of every sailing season, backed up with member surveys to get input and feedback about particular issues.

A grant application focussing on building improvements, developed during 2015, will be ready for submission, supported by the RYA.

Longer Term

	2016 season end Year 2	**2017 season end Year 3**	**2019 season end Year 5**
1) Membership details	Continue focus on retaining existing members and attracting new members.	Continue to achieve recruitment targets	• A stable membership level with a more evenly spread member demographic. • A thriving junior section in place.
2) Marketing / Recruitment	Continuing to develop new ways to reach out to community to promote sailing and club		
3) Management	Clear roles and responsibilities distributed across membership	Review and revise operational docs	Mature, devolved structure managing activity and developing new approaches
4) Event management	Continue to expand number and variety of sailing and training to cater to expanding membership	• Expand number of active sailing days during week. • Explore more family-friendly events. • Expand longer cruising program.	• More continuous activity through the week. • Events for junior and family members integrated into program
5) Safety	Comprehensive set of operational procedures and clear roles and responsibilities	Have 2nd safety boat to support expanded activity	All equipment fit for purpose, with rolling renewal plan
6) Communication	Continue upgrading of website and blog to have clear membership communication. Carry out surveys annually for feedback. Widen communication to community.		

	2016 season end Year 2	2017 season end Year 3	2019 season end Year 5
7) Training	• A more structured program developed with RYA to cater to all skill levels within club • More trainers involved within club. • Clear safety boat helm development pathway established as policy	• Basic courses every year, rolling 2-year programme for other courses. • Encourage non-dinghy for variety	Ongoing structured training integrated into program and provided by qualified members and others, providing clear development pathway for all club members
8) Financial position	• Continue operational surplus, to allow basic investment and replacement of equipment • Review options for further grant applications for facilities and equipment improvement	• Have increased income from alternative sources to membership fees • Review club financial model status - charity?	Sufficient income to support club equipment and facility maintenance and rolling equipment replacement
9) Infrastructure **a) Boats**	Structured maintenance program in place with fit for purpose fleet. May need to acquire more 2nd hand wayfarers to accommodate expanding membership	Suitable junior club boats in place with replacement policy, in collaboration with Ancrum	Club boats varied and fit for purpose. Potential funding application for new club boats
b) Other equipment	Apply for funding for 2nd safety boat		Equipment fit for purpose, with replacement policy
c) Building / grounds	Continue incremental improvements. Review ways to accommodate boats for expanding membership. Changing areas upgraded	Solution underway for wider facilities improvements.	Facilities fit for purpose
10) Partners / collaborators	Develop relationships with existing and new partners, particularly through local community, equipment, funding and training links with Ancrum Centre. Start taking more of a leading role.		