Dundee Sailing Club – Member Survey

Summarised by Kerstin, with graphs by Duncan

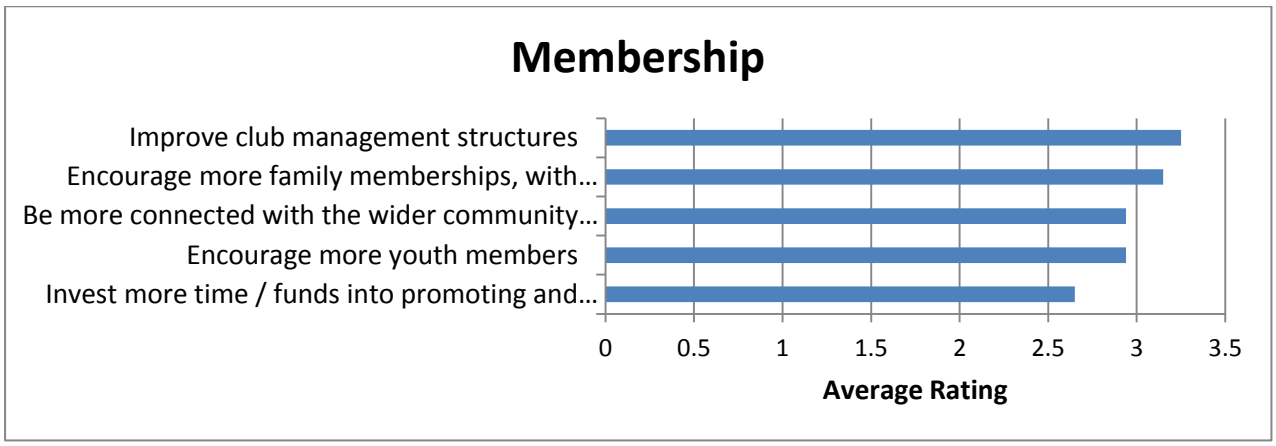
Key Points:

1. 33 respondents answered most questions, many of these included useful comments
2. Clear response in favour of keeping focus on wayfarers and cruising
3. Clear majority seeing improving management structures as a key issue
4. Clear majority sees risk assessment and safety as a key issue
5. Regarding focus of membership, strongest response in favour of family membership with many useful ideas; youth membership and involvement of the community also seen as important
6. Clear majority sees training as important for the club, with a smaller number seeing training as important for themselves
7. Only a small majority thinks that it is important to become an RYA training centre
8. A clear majority thinks that improvements are important, especially to club boats and changing facilities, followed by tools and the kitchen/lounge area
9. A large number of respondents said they'd be willing to help with over 20 willing to help with boat maintenance and safety boat cover and over 15 with coaching, PR work and cleaning
10. Significant numbers would be willing to undertake training where required with a small number already qualified

In summary, this survey shows significant commitment from at least 20 club members to contribute to various club improvements with 27 willing to contribute at least 2 hours per month and many helpful ideas from all 33 respondents.

The following pages show more detailed analysis of the different sections.

How important are the following issues?



1. Membership

a) **<u>Family membership:</u>** 78% thought that encouraging family membership was important (42.2%) or very important (36.4%) – 16 members added comments which fell into several categories with majority around either advertising or positive suggestions

a. Several people mentioned advertising – advertising, fliers, schools, press, marketing

b. Events – bring a friend to events free of charge, repeat Viking event (especially bonfire and raft building and kids sailing), local sail fun day/ family sailing with wayfarers, child friendly trips, sailing treasure hunt, desert island disco, raft races

c. Family friendly environment with family activities even for those not sailing; ensure at least one set day will have children's activities so families can plan for these – sailing if weather suitable, alternative if not; also involve children in duties so they are occupied (hosing down boats, simple maintenance, woodwork, painting)

d. Training – opinions recognised that some structured learning is required but learners (especially children) cannot always be forced to learn: three comments about structured learning (cadet style, structured learning (sailing, safety and club responsibility), learning needs to be a focus) versus helping newer members next year, and recognising that learning happens at different rates (for children and adults); one person reminded people that advanced sailors also need to learn and being forced to take out novices every single time can slow down the development of their own skills

e. Sailing: family sailing with wayfarers and also toppers/smaller boats with supervised sailing for learning, fun days (as above), shorter sailing/ child friendly sailing

f. Two respondents mentioned the positive impact of enthusiastic children on membership as they drag their parents along rather than the other way round – but they need to have something to do at the club to stay enthusiastic (see c)

g. All best summarised in: "kids make life more interesting, provide members for the future and are an important way of attracting more members generally"

h. Money: Keep membership fees as they are; there may be funding available for schools outreach

b) **Youth Membership:** Almost as many (70%) thought that youth membership was important or very important – several comments said "same as above"; new points included

a. There may be funding - Sports Scotland or Lottery

b. Promotion to include Website, blog, facebook, posters, weblink – invite small youths groups down to see for themselves? Links not just to schools but also colleges and universities as well as sea cadets

c. Training: this time as focused training, clearly defined, RYA levels.

d. Keeping interest: Several respondents mentioned that keeping their interest may be more difficult than for younger children – a peer group is required, a suitable environment, or even for some sailors to "adopt a sea cadet"

e. Boats and sailing activities: several comments on needing different, smaller boats, possibly more racing, special youth sailing days

f. Note of caution that club members working with children or young people need to be PVG checked

c) **Improve club management structures:** This got the strongest response in this section with 87% thinking that this was important (46.9%) or very important (40.6%)

a. There were many comments about lack of clear structure, direction, planning, and roles and responsibilities by committee members

b. A few respondents were unhappy about tensions within the 2013/14 committee and different people not adhering to "rules"

c. Both a) and b) link to comments about poor communication to non-committee members of what structure, roles, responsibilities and rules actually are and also some members feeling that they are not consulted about decisions – useful suggestions included an organisational chart, publication of rules, a published strategy, a regular bulletin or more communication (minutes?) via the website

d. Several respondents mentioned that many non-committee members are keen to help but again lack of structure means that some areas are not covered at all (e.g. health and safety, first aid) and helpers are not always sure what the overall aim of the club is

d) **Connections to the wider community:** the majority thought that this was important (59.4%) or very important (18.8%) but comments varied as if the question had been interpreted in different ways

a. Many comments focused on advertising/ promotion; these included: speaking at community events over the winter, having a "May Open month", improving the

website, using social media, tapping into gala week and other events in Dundee, soft marketing,

b. Others suggested special events, e.g. “Tay in May” (May Open month) with sailing and RIB offered to new comers every Saturday; day trips for scouts/guides and youth groups

c. A couple mentioned links to other sailing clubs and associations, schools and universities

d. A few noted some caution regarding capacity (having enough volunteers to take novices out, having the club ready for significant increase in membership)

e) **Invest more into PR/advertising**: this got the weakest response in this section with only half thinking it was important (29%) or very important (22.6%). Several respondents felt that this had been covered in sections above and the remaining respondents were split into two camps:

a. Some thought that more advertising was required, especially website, local advertising (include passing trade/ cycle path), leaflets, social media, better use of the press (small articles about cruising and promotion of open days)

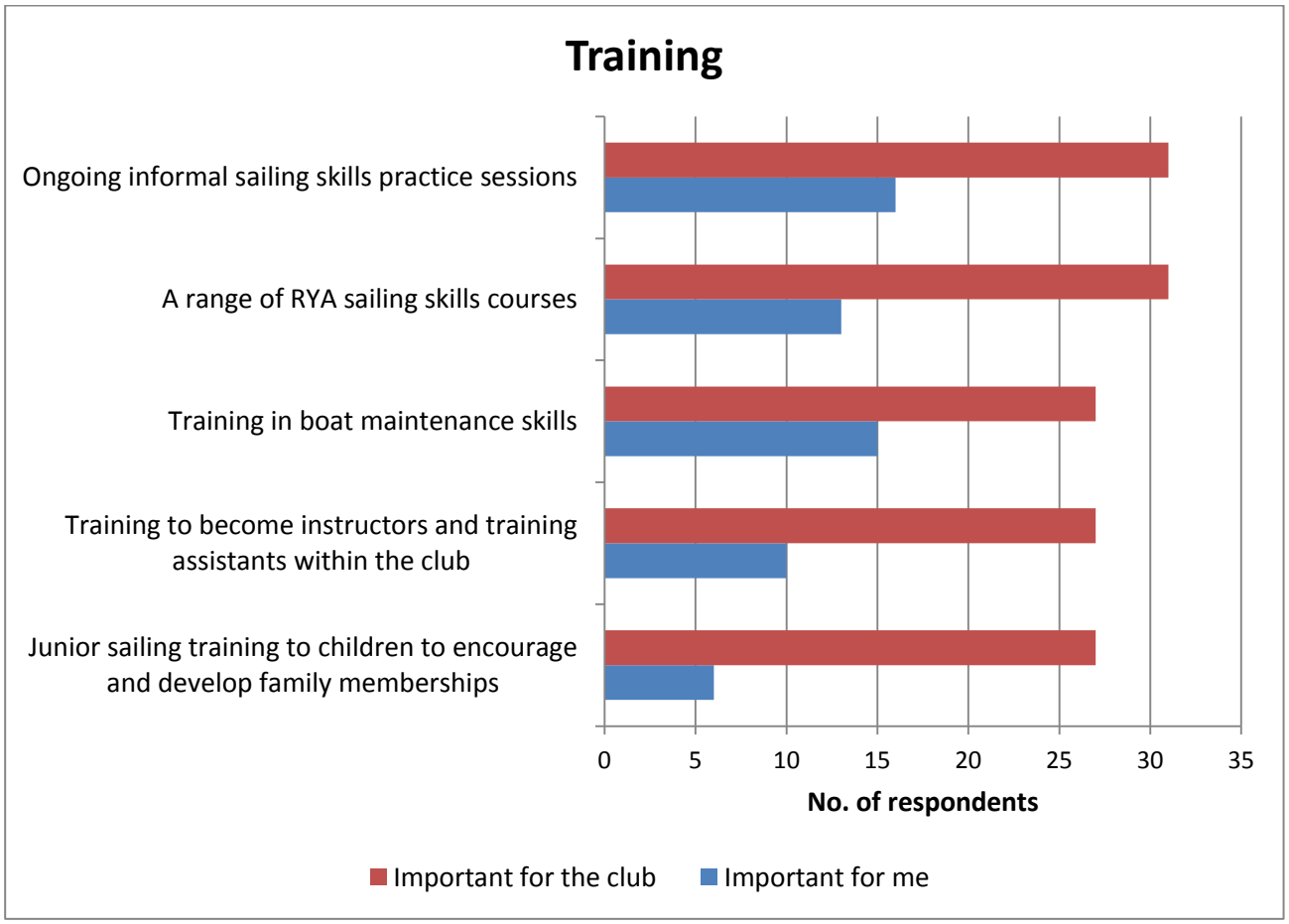
b. Others thought of more informal promotion from within “a happy club will grow”

c. Two suggested a marketing strategy/ a single person to be responsible for marketing and a clear budget – this links back to having clear vision/ direction for the club which makes it easier to advertise it

d. A couple of members noted caution as above: the club will need to be ready to cater to a lot of new members

2. Training

A clear majority of between 93% and 100% per area sees training as important for the club, with a smaller number (21%-52%) seeing training as important for themselves:



Training comments: 19 members commented and these fell into two categories, those about formal RYA training d those about informal training. There was some dissatisfaction about training available (cost, timing, planning, type of training) but there were also positive suggestions of how this might be overcome

a. Formal training: comments were partly about timing (best in spring), content (powerboat, VHF) and cost (especially for families) – a couple of people questioned the importance of certificates "a piece of paper does not make you competent" while others welcomed some structure/ minimum skill set that can be assessed

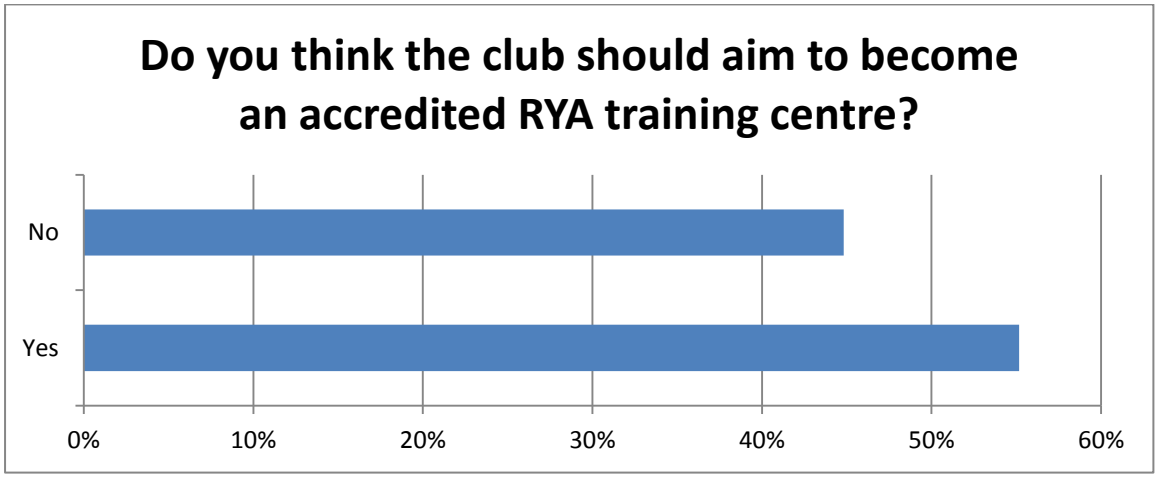
b. Informal training was generally perceived as a positive way of passing on skills and experience; there were two sorts of positive suggestions of how to make informal training more useful : a log of what has been learned and/or informal certification which again covers the basics without RYA cost

c. One respondent wondered whether accredited instructors within the club could be persuaded to provide RYA courses at cheaper cost than by outside trainers

d. A couple of people were concerned that intermediate and experienced sailors often pass on knowledge to others but have few opportunities to develop themselves

e. A few people mentioned boat maintenance as a source of frustration with several comments throughout the survey about club boats not being looked after well enough; at the same time there were two comments by inexperienced volunteers willing to learn and help but not being given the chance; there were several comments throughout the survey suggesting that people who don't own their own boats adopt a club boat and look after it more properly; this might lead to greater learning and understanding for the individuals but also benefit the state of the club boats

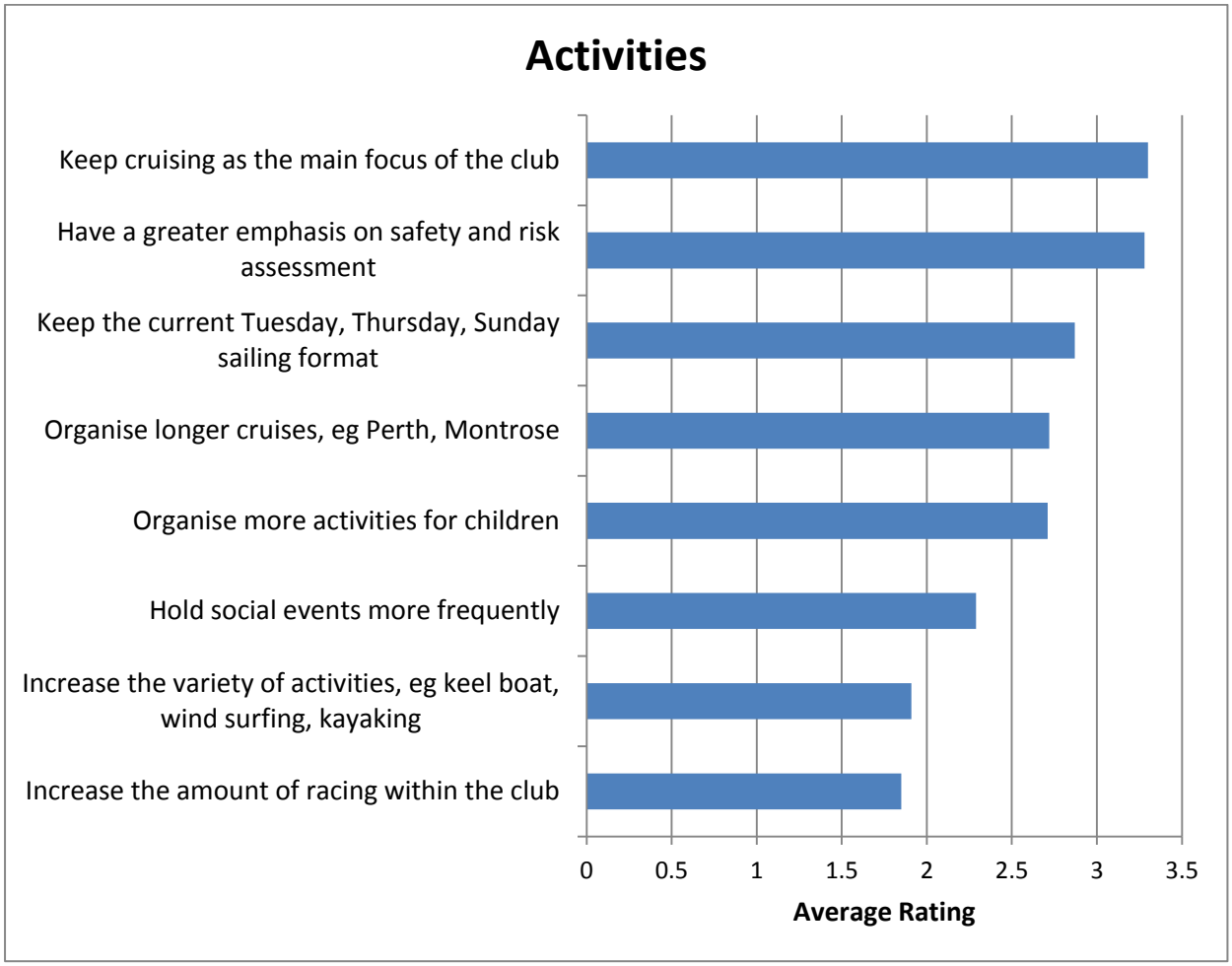
3. The following question about DSC becoming an accredited RYA training centre led to a split response with 16 positive and 13 negative responses (plus 5 who skipped the question).



4. Activities

Over 75% of respondents thought that keeping cruising as the main focus and having greater emphasis on safety and risk assessment is important or very important.

Over 70% thought that keeping the current format of Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday was important or very important and over 60% emphasised activities for children.



4.1. Cruising: Keeping cruising as the main focus of the club got by far the highest rating (85%!) as "very important" (48.5%) or 36.4% important ("it is what makes DSC different form other clubs", "cruising is what is missing on the Tay". Only one respondent (3%) though that this wasn't important. Despite this, comments were by no means all positive:

a. Several respondents commented on reliability of boats, health and safety (including helm/crew on safety boat) and not all cruises being suitable for all abilities; one respondent thought that better planning and advice to participants of each cruise (passage plan!) would be helpful

b. Several respondents also mentioned more ambitious timetabling possibilities

c. A few comments were positive about the current programme ("we like the existing programme")

d. Some emphasise positive experiences even of the shorter cruises

e. The split between adventure and safety concerns became stronger in the follow up question about **longer cruises:** A small majority (55%) thought that organising longer cruises is important or very important but several people were concerned that especially novices wouldn't be competent yet and that skills should be built up. Again there were several suggestions :

- Camping cruising (doesn't have to be far), lochs, meeting with other clubs, using longer summer evenings
- Training should include setting up boats, safety precautions,
- Communication (before and during) and sailing together as a group is even more important than in shorter cruises
- More cars with tow bars are required for one way or loch trips

4.2. Emphasis on safety and risk assessment: This was the second most import area for members with 78% thinking it was important (25%) or very important (53%!!!) to have greater emphasis on safety and risk assessment with all but one comment mentioning short comings (one however thought they had seen an improvement in safety helms). Comments are especially around the following themes:

a. General points: management of safety as it is one of the club's responsibilities; minor disagreement whether this should be a strict set of rules or risk assessments guidelines but more members mentioning risk assessments; one suggestion that there should be a health and safety officer

b. Safety boat – having two people at all times and "appropriate" safety helm; checklist to ensure it is well equipped

c. Record keeping/ check lists to ensure that rules are known and adhered to , logging who goes out in which boat, ensuring that any damage is recorded and parts can be repaired/replaced before boats go out again, possible link to responsibility for boat maintenance

d. Training: include first aid training but also responsibilities of helming, capsize practice

e. Frank discussion/ debriefs after mishaps

4.3. Tuesday, Thursday Sunday format: 71% thought that keeping the current format is important or very important but several people thought that Saturdays could or should be alternative options; this links to two people suggesting that longer cruises could run on Saturdays; at the same time however, several respondents noted that having an irregular pattern (while favourable for planning according to weather) makes it difficult for members to plan ahead and might make safety boat cover more difficult too; having both Saturdays and Sundays may dilute attendance too much to be feasible.

a. Tuesdays and Thursdays agreed, with some suggesting keeping one of these for training and possibly one for racing

b. Weekends could perhaps be explored further with a very simple second survey suggesting only Saturdays, only Sundays, alternating Saturdays and Sundays or sailing on both weekend days

4.4. Children: 60% thought that it was important to organise more activities for children; comments linked closely to those mentioned under family membership; several comments about family fun days and having activities on land including training or maintenance or sailing related games; however, a few respondents seemed concerned that this might distract from other activities

4.5. Social events: Only a minority thought that increasing social events was important but the majority thought it would be okay. Members stressed how important the social aspect of the club is but at the same time each events takes a lot of work – one responded commented "it's better to have a few well attended events than events every few weeks that don't draw many people". Practical suggestions included changing the pricing to ensure people get what they pay for (and aren't left with no food) , weekly supper and maintenance meetings during the winter months,

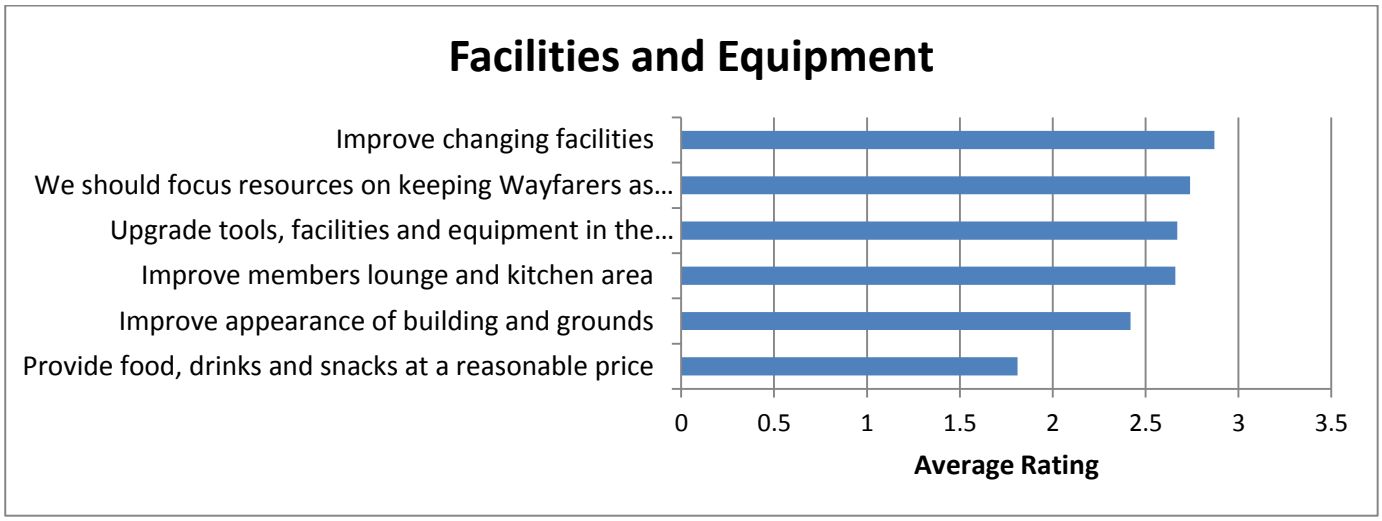
4.6. Increase the variety of activities: Fewer than 20% thought this was important with main concerns being lack of expertise/ thinning out what we do/ additional maintenance; this was with exception of the keelboat which received a few positive comments; practical suggestions for the other water sports included linking up with other clubs that are already very good at other water sports

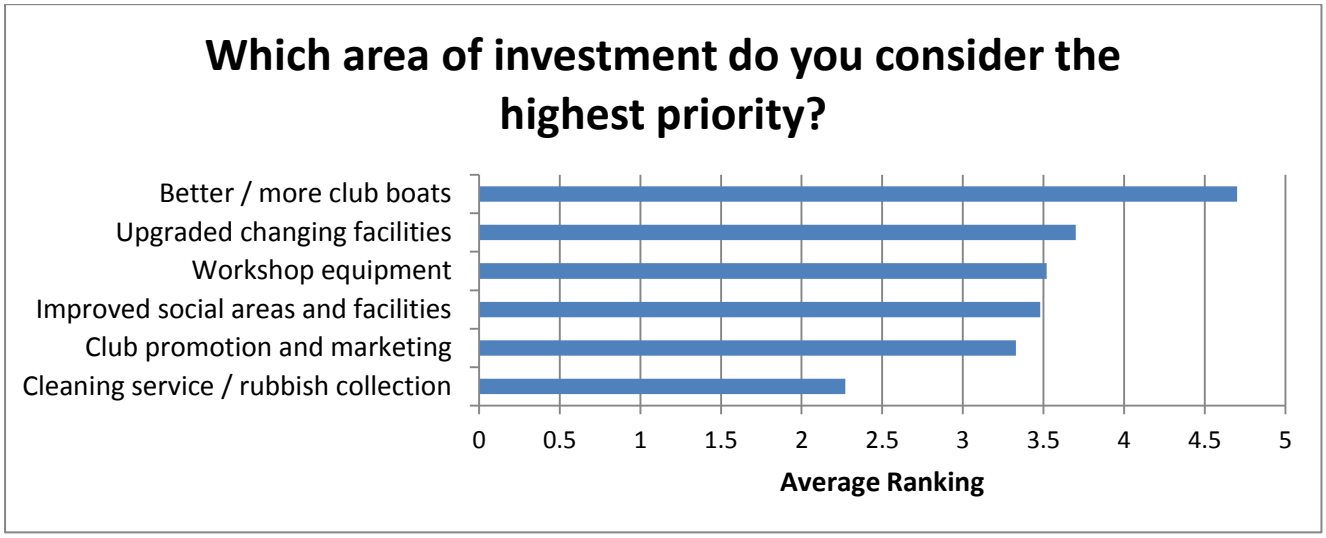
4.7. Racing: while just over half of the respondents thought that increasing racing would be okay the other half was unequally split with more people (33%) thinking it was not important than those who thought it was important or very important (15%). As in the wayfarer section, respondents emphasised that they liked wayfarers and the club as a cruising club. However, none of them said that there should be less or no racing and several respondents pointed out how useful racing is for honing skills with one even pointing out that without being able to sail successfully round a racing course members will find it difficult to safely. There were several useful suggestions on how to resolve this split:

    a. Using some evenings (opinions varied between 4, 8, every other weekday, Saturdays)

    b. Several respondents mentioned better links to the RTYC as a solution – not least to avoid clashes but also to become involved more regularly where they can offer expertise and facilities

5. Investing in Facilities and Equipment





Key Points:

a. Strong majority in favour of boats being the main focus for investment – this is linked to strong majority in keeping wayfarers as main focus although a few respondents would like to additionally invest in other boats (see below)

b. There was also a strong majority in favour of improving changing facilities

c. The next two priorities were the workshop and members ljnge and kitchen

d. Only a smaller number of members wished to invest more in promotion, to improve appearance to buildings or grounds, to provide food or drink or to pay for cleaning/ rubbish collection

5.1. Investments in boats and boat maintenance:

Respondents agreed that investment in boats should be key priority. The majority thought that this should be investment in wayfarers but a significant minority also thought that the club should invest in other boats; benefits of other boats included suitability for younger sailors/novices/ training and increasing skills for all by learning to sail a variety of boats.

5.2. Improving changing facilities was seen as the second most important area for improvement with 68% of respondents seeing it as important or very important with especially the men's changing rooms being too small but both areas requiring some improvements. Several people mentioned ideally moving the changing rooms downstairs so upstairs would be dry clothes only – this also fits with improvements to lounge/kitchen area (see below). In the interim small improvements such as keeping cleaning going, have people hose/rinse things outside before going upstairs and fixing locks would help. Advantges of moving changing rooms downstairs would also be it being more child friendly and allowing disabled access.

5.3. Upgrading tools/ investment in the workshop

Organisation of tools that belong to the club and training were two areas of improvement were identified by at least three members each:

1. Many comments were about better organisation/ labelling rather than necessarily investing in a vast amount of new tools and equipment; to first organise and assess and then to decide; there were three comments saying that the club relied on Alistair's tools – so it looks like an inventory of what belongs to the club would be a good starting point
2. Several comments were about training in boat maintenance and in the use of tools
3. Other comments included need for better lighting, "decent hand tools", small things (saw blades, drill bits, sandpaper)

5.4. Improving the lounge/kitchen area

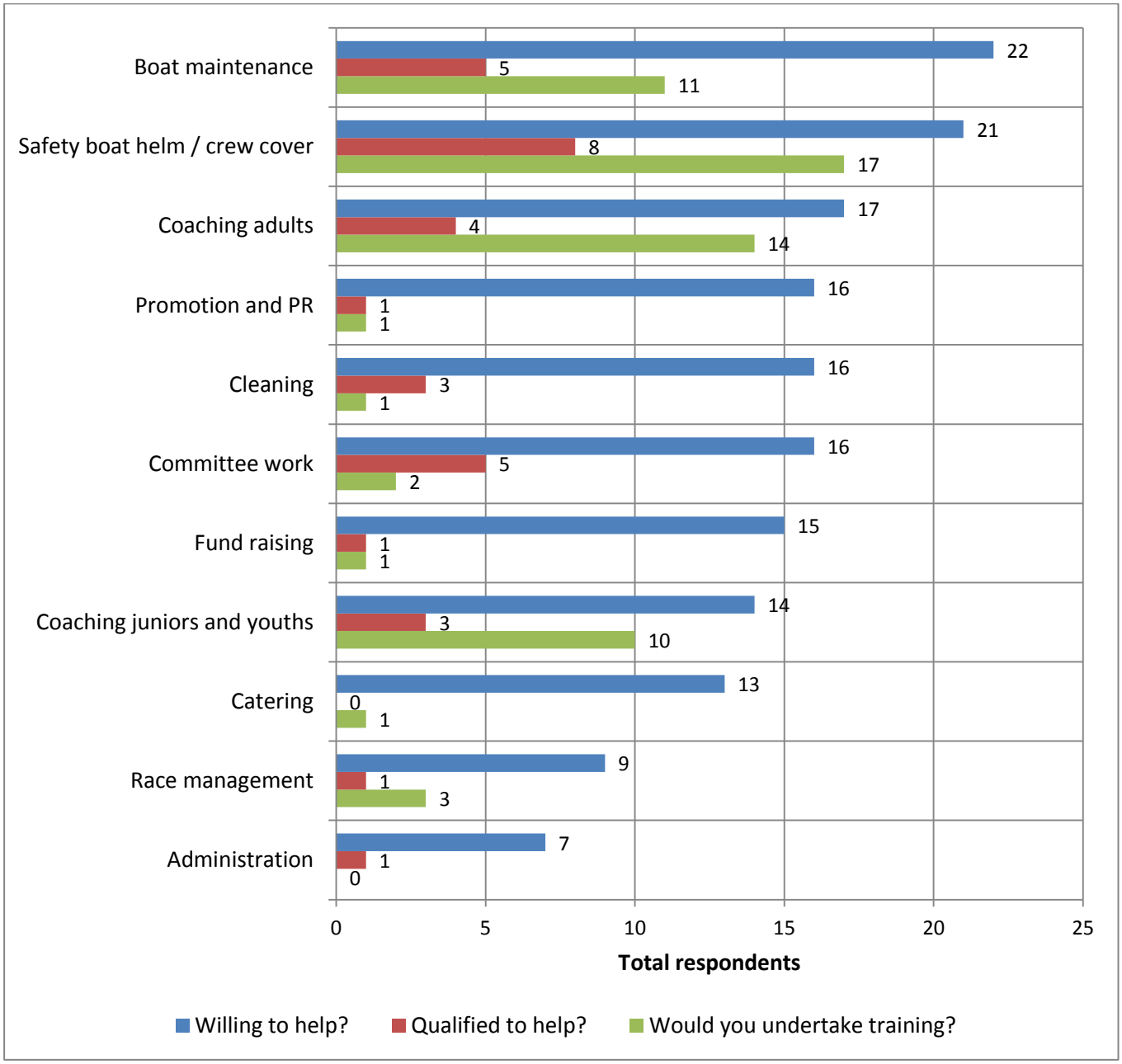
While this wasn't seen as a key priority it was still seen as important or very important by just over half of the club; of these the possibility of the lounge (great views) was the main attraction. Suggestions were split into basics (heating, dry floors, windows fixed, hygiene) and major improvements into an attractive facility (couches, pictures, even mention of a library and a balcony for the lounge and industrial cold storage! Similarly the kitchen was seen as adequate by some while others would want at least better worktops and cupboards.

5.5. Improving appearance of building and grounds was not seen as a priority by most, yet there are many comments about how little improvements could be achieved without much cost or effort. These include: signage/ information board, basic maintenance/ keeping it neat and tidy (one comment saying it had already improved!), a bit of paint, a flag or windsock; two comments were about the possibility of a hedge (one in favour, one against), but two also thought that especially in comparison with the new RTYC buildings DSC buildings look shabby and whether an architect was required or major funding form Dundee City Council.

5.6. Providing food and drink: Only 16% of respondents thought that this was important or very important and the vast majority felt it might be okay or isn't required. The majority liked the current system of having free tea and coffee and biscuits with fancier tea or coffee and food as an option not the norm. However, a few people did suggest adding a little more; concerns were around money how to keep it profitable with honesty boxes not always working, volunteers not wanting to be tied up in it and employing someone could make a loss.

6. Helping:

There was a great response to the question whether members would be willing to help with over 20 (2/3!) willing to help with boat maintenance and safety boat cover and around half of respondents willing to help with coaching (adults and juniors), committee work, promotion, fundraising and cleaning. Over a third were willing to help with catering and a few also with racing and admin tasks.



In addition to being willing to help, a large number of respondents were also willing to train in order to be able to help, with over 10 people each willing to train in in coaching and/or boat maintenance and 17 willing to do safety boat training. The additional qualified members of the club willing to help would certainly allow much more flexibility in safety boat cover.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	more!	Total responses	Average Rating
On average, how many hours per month could you help out with the club?	0	6	1	6	0	4	0	1	0	4	5	27	6.15

This adds up to 161 hours per month (counting more as 10) so that's about 40 hours per week, which is a lot of time! On average willing participants would spend 1-2 hours per week (=6 hours over a month) although several comments show that this may not be a regular commitment. However, it seems that with this much willingness many of the improvement s can be achieved.

Comments show clearly where the priorities lie:

1. Regarding time commitment several respondents said that willingness to help often depends on other commitments (work, family, other scheduled activities); it is clear that this means that different members would be available at different times – day time, evening, weekend)
2. A few people added that scheduling would be beneficial to be able to plan it in; this could be checked against when more than 2 or 3 people would be available and willing
3. One respondent asked whether the commitment to help is an essential requirement for the club – some people may just want to come along to sail and new members may not wish to spend lots of time training and helping out, especially if they have a lot of other commitments

Appendix

Tables showing quantitative responses in detail with **top response** highlighted in yellow

1. Membership	Not important	Would be OK	Important	Very important	Total responses	Average Rating
Invest more time / funds into promoting and advertising the club	3	12	9	7	31	2.65
Encourage more youth members	1	9	14	9	33	2.94
Be more connected with the wider community to both recruit members and encourage healthy sailing	1	6	19	6	32	2.94
Encourage more family memberships, with children	0	7	14	12	33	3.15
Improve club management structures	1	3	15	13	32	3.25

2. Training	Important for me	Important for the club	Total Respondents
A range of RYA sailing skills courses	13	31	31
Junior sailing training to children to encourage and develop family memberships	6	27	28
Training to become instructors and training assistants within the club	10	27	27
Training in boat maintenance skills	15	27	29
Ongoing informal sailing skills practice sessions	16	31	32

3. Do you think the club should become an accredited RYA training centre?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	16
No	13
Total	29

4. Activities	Not important	Would be OK	Important	Very important	Total Reponses	Average Rating
Increase the amount of racing within the club	11	17	4	1	33	1.85
Increase the variety of activities, eg keel boat, wind surfing, kayaking	11	14	6	1	32	1.91
Hold social events more frequently	2	20	7	2	31	2.29
Organise more activities for children	4	7	10	7	28	2.71
Organise longer cruises, eg Perth, Montrose	2	12	11	7	32	2.72
Keep the current Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday sailing format	1	8	16	6	31	2.87
Have a greater emphasis on safety and risk assessment	1	6	8	17	32	3.28
Keep cruising as the main focus of the club	1	4	12	16	33	3.3
5. Investing in Facilities and Equipment	**Not important**	**Would be OK**	**Important**	**Very important**	**Total Responses**	**Average Rating**
Provide food, drinks and snacks at a reasonable price	13	13	3	2	31	1.81
Improve appearance of building and grounds	4	14	9	4	31	2.42
Improve members lounge and kitchen area	2	13	11	6	32	2.66
Upgrade tools, facilities and equipment in the workshop, eg welding, bench drill	2	11	12	5	30	2.67
We should focus resources on keeping Wayfarers as the main club boat	4	8	11	8	31	2.74
Improve changing facilities	1	9	14	7	31	2.87

Numbers of respondents for each rank of investments	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Average Ranking
Cleaning service / rubbish collection	0	5	3	5	3	17	33	2.27
Club promotion and marketing	6	6	4	1	9	7	33	3.33
Improved social areas and facilities	2	5	9	9	7	1	33	3.48
Workshop equipment	1	9	9	5	5	4	33	3.52
Upgraded changing facilities	8	2	6	8	7	2	33	3.7
Better / more club boats	16	6	2	5	2	2	33	4.7

(top rank(s) highlighted in yellow)

	Willing to help?	Qualified to help?	Would you undertake training?	Total Respondents
Administration	7	1	0	7
Race management	9	1	3	9
Catering	13	0	1	13
Coaching juniors and youths	14	3	10	16
Fund raising	15	1	1	15
Committee work	16	5	2	17
Cleaning	16	3	1	17
Promotion and PR	16	1	1	16
Coaching adults	17	4	14	20
Safety boat helm / crew cover	21	8	17	27
Boat maintenance	22	5	11	23