

# SIDMOUTH SAILING CLUB



Port Royal  
Sidmouth  
Devon EX10 8BG  
(01395) 512286

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## Club Development Plan

### 1. Introduction

This development plan considers:

- The current position of the Club (SSC)
- Aspirations for development
- How we might get there

It has been drafted with a 5 year period (2010 – 2015) in mind. It will be regularly reviewed and amended in the light of changes experienced and progress made.

### 2. Current position

#### a) *Membership*

The Club currently has 213 members, broken down into 159 adults and 54 children.

Membership has dropped in recent years, but there has been an influx of new blood in the last year and a slight upturn in numbers.

#### b) *Subscriptions and fees*

Members pay an annual subscription and a boat parking fee (for each dinghy kept at the Club). These are reviewed annually. There is currently no joining fee or additional fee for normal club sailing activities. Special events and training may incur additional fees. There is also a small sessional charge for using club boats.

#### c) *Premises*

- i) The Club shares premises at Port Royal with the Sidmouth Sea Angling Club. The premises are leased from the local authority through the 'Port Royal' club, an 'umbrella' club to which all sailing (and sea angling) club members automatically belong. The current lease expires in 2026. The Sailing and Sea Angling Clubs each pay an annual subscription towards Port Royal running costs. Sidmouth Running club and Sidmouth Gig club also use the premises
- ii) The premises are licensed, through Port Royal, for the sale of alcohol and for musical performances. Access is limited to Port Royal club members (and their guests) apart from 30 days of 'open' access each year (mostly used for Folk Week and Regatta). All bar takings are put towards Port Royal running costs.

iii) There are a number of other associated users of the premises who bring valuable income to Port Royal e.g. Darts Teams and Euchre Club and the premises are also let for private and corporate functions.

d) *Management*

SSC is operated entirely by volunteers. The current structure is:

*Officers*

President

Commodore

Vice Commodore

Rear Commodore

Secretary

Treasurer

Sailing Secretary

Membership Secretary

*General Committee*

Officers plus 3 to 6 elected members

*Sailing Committee*

Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Sailing Secretary, elected Fleet Captains plus 3 to 6 elected members.

Junior representatives are invited to attend meetings of the General and Sailing Committees.

Informal Officer appointments are made from time to time to provide specific areas of responsibility. Presently these include Funding Officer, Development Officer, Child Protection Officer and Principal Race Officer.

An Annual General Meeting is held each year in January.

e) *Affiliations*

The club is affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and has achieved RYA Recognised Training Centre status to deliver sail dinghy training to level 2 and 3 and powerboat training to level 2.

f) *Assets*

The club owns 3 RIB-safety boats (with outboard engines), 10 Topper dinghies and 5 other dinghies – 1 Otter, 1 Laser II and 3 Lasers. These are used for training activities and are available for hire by club members.

g) *Sailing*

Club sailing is carried out on Saturday afternoons from Easter to the end of November, plus Wednesday evenings during the summer months. Racing is mainly of the 4 adopted classes: Lasers, Mirrors, Scorpions, Toppers.

'Open' meetings are held for each adopted class each year. Larger events are held occasionally for the adopted classes – Laser Masters National Championships (1999 and 2007), Laser Masters World Qualifier (2002, 2008 and 2009), Laser 2000 Nationals (2010), Scorpion Nationals (1983, 1995 and 2004), Mirror Nationals (1988), Mirror Western Championship (2007).

#### *h) Training*

- i) The Club-offers training courses for both adults and juniors to RYA standards through its Training Centre.
- ii) In 2009, Tuesday 'Taster' sessions were successfully revived. These are a fairly informal introduction to sailing for juniors, running on Tuesday evenings for six weeks in early Summer. The sessions are designed to teach the basics of sailing in a fun way and lead on to improver sessions to develop the juniors' skills, allowing for and encouraging junior training at minimum cost to the participants.
- iii) The club encourages its members to obtain and retain recognised and appropriate qualifications in first aid, sailing instruction, powerboat and safety boat instruction and use, VHF radio use and race management.
- iv) A relationship has been developed with Sidmouth Community College and sailing is offered to the College students as part of their activities week with dinghy instruction to level 2.

#### *i) Fundraising*

For many years the club has raised additional funds during Sidmouth's annual Folk Festival by providing catering and shower facilities for visitors.

### **3. Analysis**

#### *a) Strengths*

- i) The Club occupies an excellent position adjacent to the beach at Port Royal, with sufficient local parking and access to the Ham.
- ii) The clubhouse has excellent facilities, with a licensed bar and plenty space for club functions.
- iii) There is sufficient boat parking space for the current demand.
- iv) Subscriptions are low by comparison to other sailing clubs. This is largely due to:
  - Low premises costs due to a favourable lease from the local authority
  - Income from the bar
  - Absence of paid staff due to the active involvement of members in club operations.
- v) The club's race management team, which facilitates the provision of high quality courses and racing.
- vi) The ability to successfully host National and International sailing events.
- vii) The management continuity of the club, driven by the wealth of experience and depth of knowledge of the officers, committee members and other long-standing club members.
- viii) The willingness of club members to help each other in a friendly manner, especially with launching and recovery of boats and with disabled sailors.

#### *b) Weaknesses*

- i) Launching and recovery of dinghies and rescue boats is problematical in some sea conditions.

- ii) Boat parking facilities are restricted, which limits significant expansion of sailing membership.
- iii) Active support and involvement of members is essential to maintain club activities. A small core of members provides most of the impetus to organising activities. Expansion of the range or scale of activities would require significant additional input from members. Losing the contribution of one or two key members could have a detrimental effect on the ability of the club to function effectively.
- iv) Replacement of the club's capital equipment is contingent on fund raising from 'exceptional' activities (such as hosted events and the Folk Festival).
- v) The reintroduction of junior / youth training is still quite new and has yet to lead to a 'critical mass' of independent youth sailors. Youngsters would rather mix with people of their own age, if they are often the only young person sailing that can lead to them drifting away.
- vi) Most of the qualified sailing instructors associated with the club are young adults, who have a tendency to move away, leaving the club with a continual recruitment headache.
- vii) There is a lack of involvement by the Club and its members (as Club members) in local community activities. This leads to the Club having a relatively low profile in the town.
- viii) Insufficient opportunities are offered to disabled persons wishing to participate in sailing. This is partly due to the difficulties of sailing from a pebble beach with little protection for launching and recovery and the need for specialist equipment.

*c) Opportunities*

- i) Having RYA Training Centre status provides the opportunity to expand membership, in particular through joining the RYA's OnBoard programme for children and youths.
- ii) The Port Royal is underused in the evenings and there is scope for the provision of more social functions for fundraising purposes.
- iii) The run-up to the 2012 Olympic event is likely to promote interest in sailing. There is a possibility that foreign competitors will seek opportunities to sail in 'local' waters.

*d) Threats*

- i) The redevelopment of the eastern end of the town and the promenade has been repeatedly mooted in recent years. Such plans typically anticipate using the Port Royal area for theatre / leisure centre / museum purposes. Lip service is usually paid to the sailing / sea angling clubs (and to the inshore lifeboat), but it is not assured that equivalent premises (including boat parking spaces) would be made available to us. Even if provision were made, it must be anticipated that costs would increase significantly.
- ii) Competition for members from other clubs and/or water-sports activities could increase. For example, the Gig club could draw in members who may otherwise have considered joining the sailing club.

#### **4. Aspirations for development**

a) *Growth in membership*

An increase in membership numbers would:

- Increase club income
- Provide a greater pool of potential volunteers for running Club activities

b) *Increase use of Club/Port Royal facilities*

This would:

- Generate additional revenue to support Club activities
- Help ensure that the club and the premises are seen as valuable assets to the town.

c) *Raise Club profile in the local community*

- Attract potential new members
- Help ensure that the club and the premises are seen as valuable assets to the town.

d) *Increase training opportunities for both new and existing members.*

- Learning how to sail is a key attraction for new members.
- Helping existing members to obtain qualifications in such topics as powerboat driving, race management and as Dinghy Instructors helps to keep them engaged and reduces the risk to the Club of relying on a few key individuals.

e) *Involvement with / benefiting from the 2012 Olympic event*

We need to consult with the RYA (and other watersports bodies?) to see what opportunities exist in the run-up to 2012 (and beyond).

f) *Safeguarding of the present location.*

g) *Encouraging the participation of disabled persons*

Developing sailing for the disabled through the RYA Sailability Scheme.

#### **5. How we might get there**

a) Develop a 'Welcome' pack for new members, including contact details for club officers (including their responsibilities), details of how the club is run and info on how they can get more involved.

b) Join RYA's OnBoard programme and use it as a springboard to expand and improve delivery of youth training, eg by creating an OnBoard club that leads to formal Youth training certificates.

c) Access RYA funding to increase numbers of qualified sailing instructors and rescue boat helms to support youth training and other club activities.

d) Improve engagement with the local community

i) Join in with community activities as a club, eg the Carnival, beach clean ups etc.

ii) Produce marketing materials, eg a poster outside the Club, a 'recruitment' leaflet, more info on the Club website.

e) Create a skills matrix to collect knowledge of club members' skills and to identify potential training needs/opportunities.

- f) Consult RYA on 2012 opportunities.
- g) Lobby / liaise with Town Council / EDDC / Vision Group for Sidmouth / RYA / Sports Development Officers / Sport England.