



Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club Club Development Strategy



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Background

Introduction

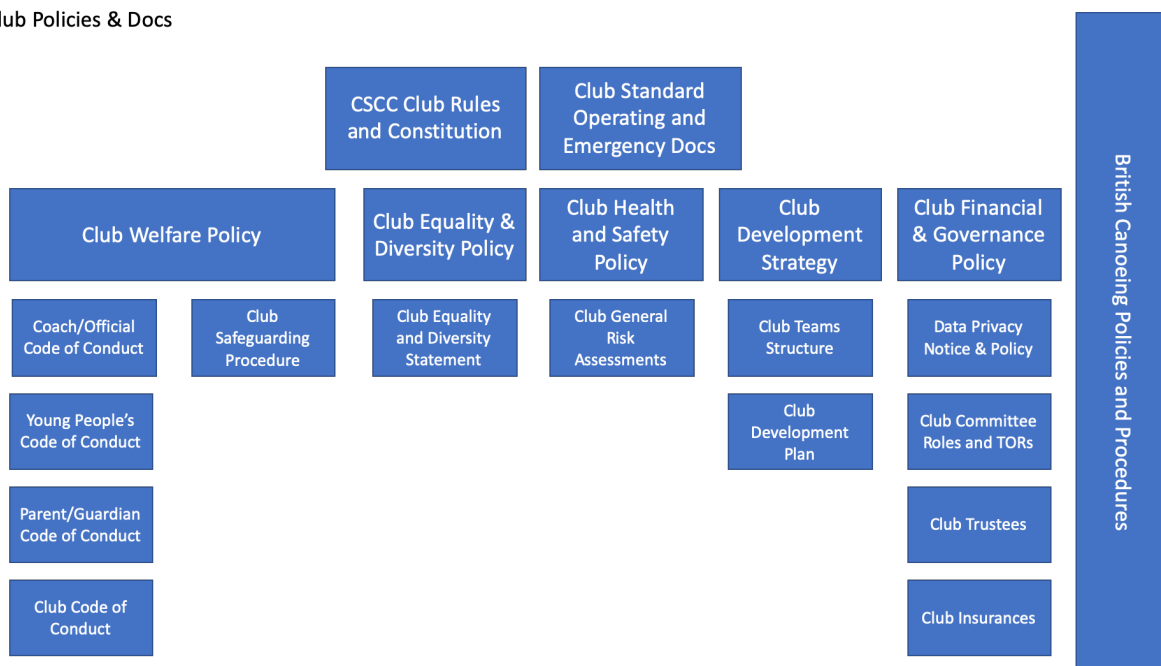
Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club (CSCC) have developed this strategic plan in order to define and guide the a discovery period for the club’s paddlesports development direction. This document will outline CSCC’s canoeing Aims (the long-term aspirations of the club) and Goals (the short-term measures we will seek to meet), which can be used to inform operational decision making throughout the period addressed in this document.

Feedback is welcomed and encouraged, and this document should be reviewed at the beginning of the next season to ensure it still meets our needs, as things do change! It is recommended that such reviews provide a steer forwards into the next period for the club.

To support this document, the Committee will also need to review the club policies and procedures already in place, and create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in order to support the ‘business as usual’ running of the club

Figure 1: CSCC Proposed Policies & Plans

Club Policies & Docs



CSCC’s Vision and Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement reflects what we feel our current purpose or state is, while our Vision Statement reflects our ‘end goal,’ where we would like to be.

CSCC’s Paddlesport Mission Statement: *‘To make paddlesports accessible to people in the local area.’*

CSCC’s Paddlesport Vision Statement: *‘To be a great place to paddle, allowing individuals to develop their paddling in a way which suits them by providing quality coaching, facilities, equipment, and an environment accessible to and inclusive for all members.’*

Key Strategy Areas

In developing this strategy, CSCC has identified six key areas in which we have set out our aims for the future. These are:

- Club Growth;
- Infrastructure;
- Equipment;
- Corporate Social Responsibility & Social Events;
- Paddlesports Programme (including Coach & Leader Development); and
- Communications.

Figure 2: CSCC Key Strategy Areas and Goals at a Glance



CSCC's Mission To make paddlesports accessible to people in the local area.

CSCC's Vision To be a great place to paddle, allowing individuals to develop their paddling in a way which suits them by providing quality coaching, facilities, equipment, and an environment accessible to and inclusive for all members.

This strategy will take each area in turn and identify the top-level aim and the ways in which we intend to achieve this.

Document Structure

Each Key Strategy Area will have its own section in this document, each containing 5 parts:

- Where are we now?
- Our strengths and our weaknesses.
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- Goals at a glance.

Club Growth

Where are we now?

Our membership figures across the last four years are as follows:

- 2019 – 220 members;
- 2020 – 195 members;
- 2021 – 331 members;
- 2022 – 290 XXXX;
- 2023 – XXXXXX;

CSCC understandably had a slight reduction in memberships during 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 however we grew hugely, likely due to the number of people wanting to get back outside and enjoy activities like paddlesports! The number of memberships has settled at around 258 members across 119 memberships, but this is still growing at the time of writing.

Our Strengths:

- Recently implemented new membership system in order to streamline the application process and club administration for members;
- Continued to attract new members throughout the COVID-19 period, despite the restrictions in place.

Our Weaknesses:

- Currently no strategic plan to support retention of membership (or future growth beyond retention), in particular in understanding the demographics and supporting succession planning.

Where do we want to be?

Given the growth we have seen as a club over the last few years despite the COVID-19 pandemic, at this time general growth is not our key goal. We will focus on member retention, and in order to do this we will need to ensure the following:

- We have a greater understanding of the demographics of our members (who they are, what type of membership they hold, what equipment we may need);
- We have a greater understanding of the wants and needs of our members;
- We consider the succession plans and options in relation to the committee, coaches, and volunteers.

It's important to note that one of the key drivers of growth is a quality programme. If we as a club can offer a diverse and high-quality programme of events, coaching and trips, word of mouth and positive reputation will naturally lead to growth. We should therefore aim to centre this in our strategy alongside the key questions raised above.

As we move into the next strategic period (commencing in Summer 2023), we should begin to consider specific areas of growth including:

- Whether we can set up a youth programme to train the coaches of the future;
- Advertising the club on a wider basis (subject to the Communication;

- Whether club growth, and succession planning as part of that (including in relation to volunteers), can become a self-sustaining cycle based on the other areas of this strategy.

How will we get there?

The actions that the Committee and the wider club will take in order to support this area are:

- Review the response to the coaching programme put together, and seek feedback as to whether this is meeting the needs of the membership;
- Send out communications to the membership towards the end of the season to:
 1. Seek feedback in relation to the summer season's activities;
 2. Understand what, if anything the membership want more of;
 3. Offer the opportunity for a session on what it means to be an instructor or coach to gauge interest in becoming a coach among the membership.
- Review the Joining Journey for new members to reduce the time and effort required, in order to enable the club to focus on other activities.

Goals at a Glance

- Increase our understanding of our members and their intentions;
- Streamline the joining journey for new members;
- Offer sessions to support the membership to understand what it means to be an instructor;
- Have sought feedback to act upon for next season's summer courses.

Infrastructure

Where are we now?

The club has several older buildings, many of which need some attention and are somewhat insecure compared to modern standards. The key building functions at the club are the Clubhouse, club storage, private storage and toilets/changing facilities.

Repairs and patches are routinely carried out on buildings at the club, which has prolonged the usage of some buildings, but in looking to the medium/long term future the future state of the club will need to be considered.

Strengths:

- We have a good baseline level of infrastructure at the club, including the Clubhouse, Storage and facilities;
- We own the sizeable amount of land the club is based on;
- We have very good showers/cloakroom facilities.

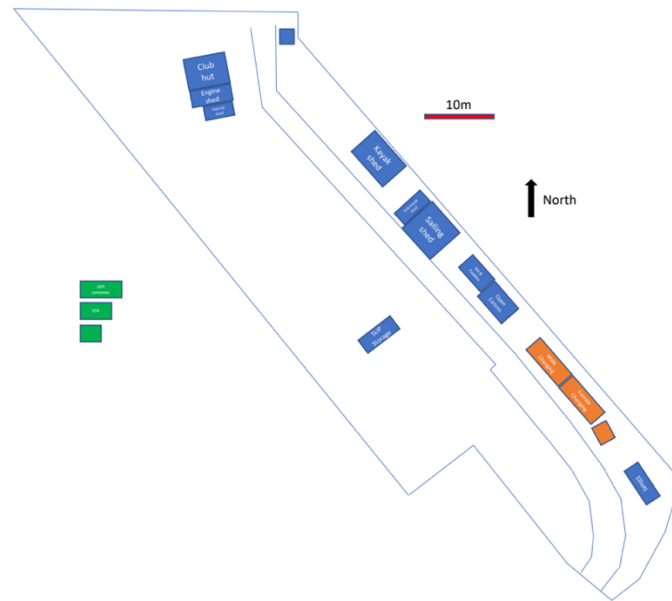
Weaknesses:

- Many of our buildings are older, and could do with some refurbishment;
- We currently do not have enough storage for private boats, and will likely face the same issue if we see any growth in equipment;
- We are currently storing items of equipment that are old, not used, or are private items without an identifiable owner.

Where do we want to be?

In the long term, there is an aspiration to regenerate the entirety of the club's infrastructure, to ensure it meets the needs of current and future generations, considering accessibility as a key area. This will include a new Clubhouse, increased club and private storage areas, and potentially an upgrade to the toilets and showers. Initial thoughts and plans have been drafted in an informal manner. Further work may be required to understand the art of the possible, and any limitations imposed by local planning restrictions.

Figure 3: Initial Thoughts on Infrastructure Plan



How will we get there?

In order to assess the needs that this future state needs to meet, the following short-term actions should be taken:

- Review during the club season what facilities and buildings are used in terms of events and storage;
- Clear abandoned boats and equipment in accordance with the rules to free up space;
- Undertake a review of the ‘problem statement’ – i.e. what needs our current facilities aren’t meeting; and
- Review the ‘ideal state’ of the infrastructure, and visit other clubs and facilities to see what others do.

From this, in the next strategy period, a route to updating the infrastructure (including a funding plan) can be put together.

Goals at a Glance

- Have a draft plan of what our future needs are;
- Create an ‘ideal state’ of infrastructure;
- Clear the compound as best we can in order to understand what the ‘now’ looks like.

Equipment

Where are we now?

Currently the club holds a variety of equipment of different ages and uses. The Club Equipment Officer has a good record of the equipment we hold and a plan for servicing. The club currently holds:

- Canoes, Kayaks, SUPs, mostly suitable for flat water usage, with some additional craft for white water use;
- Ancillary equipment including helmets, buoyancy aids, paddles, all of a club specification;
- Several sailing boats;
- A trailer.

The club also has use of a trailer of Dagger GTX Kayaks, but there is no formal agreement over the use/storage of these.

Strengths:

- We have some good equipment, including some newer SUPs and white water and crossover kayaks;
- We are regularly auditing our inventory of equipment and have a good rolling programme of equipment checks;
- We have sufficient equipment for the numbers of club members paddling at any one time that we currently experience.

Weaknesses:

- We have several older boats that may not be appropriate for the type of paddling and coaching we are doing, or that may not be consistent with the aims of the club in the future;
- We do not have a club equipment replacement plan, to ensure that the equipment we have is not held beyond its useful life (which in turn will become a liability rather than an asset);
- We are holding a large number of assets which are not fit for purpose, or the purpose is unknown, and have ambiguous arrangements for storage of private boats (whether private paid storage or 'private on loan'). Further, at times, arrangements are in return for jobs or favours, creating an inconsistency in records;
- We are holding sailing boats that are currently not fit to sail, and may not have the expertise within the club to repair them. It could be queried whether this space could be better utilised for club kayaks or canoes.

Where do we want to be?

The ultimate goal in relation to equipment is to ensure that the club has:

- Sufficient equipment to support the evolving paddlesport programme (in terms of quantity);
- The correct types and diversity of equipment in order to support the paddlesports programme;
- Equipment that is fit for purpose, regularly serviced, and disposed of and replaced at the end of its useful life.

Over the period of this strategy, we will need to work with the Equipment Officer to understand:

- Whether there is any equipment that may need replacing;
- What the equipment required to support our paddlesports programme is; and
- What the equipment and skills are required to support the future paddlesports programme.

How will we get there?

In order to assess the needs that this future state needs to meet, the following short-term actions should be taken:

- Review during the club season what equipment is being used regularly in club organized events and courses; and
- Review what equipment meets the needs of the current paddlesports programme, and the future anticipated paddlesports programme.

From this, in the next strategy period, a route to making and changes to the equipment provision (including a funding plan) can be put together.

Goals at a Glance

- Review our equipment holding and make a plan for disposal of unused/unneeded equipment;
- Begin a draft plan for replacement of oldest equipment and longer-term succession.

Corporate Social Responsibility & Social Events

This section will be split into two parts:

- Social Events within the Club; and
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), including volunteering within the club, community outreach and environmental issues.

Social Events

Where are we now?

We are in a position currently where we have a core group of members attending the social events we organise, which is positive. However, often these are the same members, and there is little growth in attendance. We have had a regular calendar of certain events, but don't always advertise these with enough time for people to book on. A lot of our events are organised and catered by volunteers.

Strengths:

- We have a number of volunteers interested in organizing social events;
- We have historically had a regular calendar of events throughout the year providing opportunity for members to come together.

Weaknesses:

- We haven't always had the records required in relation to social events, including attendees;
- We don't have the base level of policies in place to support volunteers in setting up social events, such as SOPs and Risk Assessments;
- While LoveAdmin has been put into place, consistent use/enforcement of the system as part of a culture within the club has not been reached; and
- Volunteers may feel they are unable to support or arrange events, as there is no specific process.

Where do we want to be?

A thriving club is supported by its social atmosphere and its members. We want to have a regular calendar of social events, supported by a range of volunteers ideally to reduce the burden on individuals, and accessible to all.

How will we get there?

Over the year, the committee should ensure some social events are arranged in order to build the social side, and continue the work already done by volunteers so far this year. Alongside this, we can develop standard operating policies and risk assessments to support volunteers in arranging their own sessions, and continue to mandate the use of LoveAdmin to ensure that appropriate attendance records are kept. We should further seek out volunteers interested in arranging activities, and support them to build the calendar further.

Goals at a Glance

- Develop standard operating policies and risk assessments to support events;
- Ensure LoveAdmin is used for all bookings;
- Plan in 3 social events for the club up to December.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Where are we now?

Currently, we do not have a strong CSR programme.

Strengths:

- We have a small group of core volunteers for activities outside of committee roles and coaches, including grounds maintenance and support;
- We have a track record of successful working parties to bring in volunteers to help around the club, though less so recently;
- We have historically had members interested in the environmental aspects of the club with positive activities to raise awareness;
- We have an involvement in the Chippenham River Festival, we have a positive relationship with Devizes Canoe Club in relation to races, and we regularly run taster sessions for local Scout groups.

Weaknesses:

- We do not have sufficient volunteers in this area;
- We do not publicise the volunteering discount enough to attract new volunteers;
- We don't do a lot of community outreach as 'CSCC', and there is inconsistency in the scope, costs and approach to these activities;
- We do not co-ordinate any environmental activities.

Where do we want to be?

In relation to general club volunteers, we would like to have a thriving community of people who enjoy supporting the club in whatever way they choose. We would like to provide a list of key activities, and support and enable volunteers to independently choose how they would like to support rather than being prescriptive in what they must do.

In relation to community outreach and environmental issues, the main two goals are to ensure that CSCC's activity do not have any detrimental impact on the environment, and to maintain positive relationships with other groups and organisations. In order to fully investigate and quantify this, we need volunteers with interest and expertise in these areas.

How will we get there?

To raise the profile of general club volunteering this year, we will:

- Advertise, through email and Facebook, the benefits of the volunteering scheme, how to record your hours and what this will mean for your membership renewal;
- Implement the 'teams' approach, to include satellite teams with a team lead, interface back to the committee (perhaps through bi-monthly attendance at the committee meeting) and a set of policies to support;
- Quarterly working parties and lists of activities that could be undertaken independently in between.

In relation to community outreach and environmental issues, we will advertise for these roles through email and Facebook, with short job descriptions and some ideas on what they could seek to achieve.

Goals at a Glance

- Promote the volunteering scheme and confirm how this will be recorded in future;
- Seek volunteers who are have interest and knowledge of environmental issues and impact;
- Seek volunteers and set goals for community outreach.

Paddlesports Programme (including Coach & Leader Development)

This section will be split into two parts:

- Paddlesports Programme for Paddlers;
- Leadership and Coaching Qualifications to run the programme, and the supporting CSCC Operating Procedures.

Paddlesports Programme for Paddlers

Strengths:

- We have a positive reputation for paddlesports based on our strong programmes historically;
- We have several keen coaches and leaders who regularly commit their time to running sessions for our members;
- We ran a number of trips last summer to provide opportunities for flat water paddling in new places;
- We run a good pool session programme as a club.

Weaknesses:

- We do not get a programme published early enough to enable people to commit;
- We don't have a full view currently of our members experience levels, and what kind of activities they would like;
- We have not filled our courses this year, with many having no bookings at all.

Where do we want to be?

The goal for any paddlesports programme is that it:

- Embodies the Vision and Mission Statements of the club;
- Meets the needs of the membership;
- Enables paddlers to be safe and independent on the water;
- Is fulfilled by a strong coaching and leadership workforce who are passionate about delivering coaching and leadership;
- Is constructed in such a way that it ties together and builds on the knowledge, experience and previous coaching of our learners in such a way that the learner is at the centre of the process.

Given the limited take up of courses over the last two years (albeit 2021 courses ran just after a lockdown), the Committee and Coaches need to review the offering and what the membership wants. Some potential options for this include:

- Whether structured coaching sessions should be mandated, in order to ensure safety given the number of new members to the club;
- What members want from the club; and/or
- Whether trip-based coaching is more appropriate in order to provide opportunities outside the Avon environment.

The 2022 season has shown a need to review the paddlesports programme offered, and how we can rebuild the programme in order to guarantee a successful future programme and provide coaching for members to access.

Setting aside the 'Club based' sessions, we have experienced a more positive uptake of the trips, and have had some expressions of interest in white water style trips. While further feedback may be required, we can assume from this that experiences and trips are what a number of members would like to have more of.

How will we get there?

Following cancellation of the courses in June and July 2022, feedback must be sought in order to learn from this experience. It is proposed that:

- We seek such feedback via email and Facebook, and request feedback around:
 - What paddlesport programme people want;
 - Why courses have not appealed to members this year;
 - Whether one off sessions may be more successful;
- 'Feedback Evenings' are arranged;
- The second set of courses are advertised in order to provide more advance notice, as this may have been a factor in low take-up.

It will be useful to seek feedback, and develop an updated plan for paddlesports programme.

Goals at a Glance

- Seek feedback on courses offered and taken up;
- Plan 3-4 more trips into the club calendar and evaluate take up and members ability.

Leadership and Coaching Qualifications

Strengths:

- We have several keen coaches and leaders who regularly commit their time to running sessions for our members.

Weaknesses:

- Creating a paddlesports programme for paddlers is complex due to the limited number of coaches and their other commitments;
- We sometimes struggle to get sufficient coaches to run some of the sessions we would like to, and in 2021 only had a limited pool on which to draw;
- We don't have a full view currently of our members experience levels, and what kind of activities they would like, which impacts on our ability to create progression/succession plans for current and future coaches;
- Being unable to fill some of our courses impacts on the morale of coaches;
- We only have 3 coaches with qualifications for moderate water environments, and have not provided delegation to any other coaches to operate in specified moderate water environments due to a lack of operating procedures defining the Club's view on risk management in those environments. We are therefore not utilising the skills and experience of potential leaders effectively, through a lack of delegation.

Where do we want to be?

We wish to have a coaching and leadership workforce that enables us to run a wide variety of trips, courses and other opportunities. We would like to develop our existing and train new coaches and leaders across sheltered water to moderate water environments,

including sea and white water, and leaders in the same environments, including utilising the British Canoeing Leadership awards.

We also recognize that coaching and leadership journeys are different for different people and will span different time frames, and that developing coaches and leaders needs to be an iterative process to counter this.

We need to develop our succession planning.

How will we get there?

This year, we have already committed to several coaching and leadership qualifications, including several core coach courses, sheltered water courses, a sea leader course and canoe leader courses (OW/WW). The Commodore has further discussed with several coaching volunteers' individual pathways. We will need to ensure that the expectations of the club are clear in terms of commitment following CSCC funded courses.

We will seek this year to more formally agree the pathways individuals would like to take, to understand what gaps this leaves in offering sessions, particularly in relation to trips. It may also be appropriate to buy in coaches to upskill both members and coaches – this will allow coaches to shadow, and members to benefit from alternative points of view.

We will develop a standard operating policy which enables experienced volunteers to coach in specific environments decided by the club either without or while working towards British Canoeing Qualifications.

Goals at a Glance

- Develop standard operating policies including deployment guidelines, allowing experienced paddlers to run sessions in appropriate environments;
- Map the qualifications required in order to run the future paddlesport programme to those of our current and future coaches;
- Formalise the discussions around development into a plan and gain commitment from individuals intending to complete courses.

Communication

Strengths:

- We now have email addresses for all members, and can now ensure that all members receive communications.

Weaknesses:

- We don't have a specific communications strategy, which can sometimes lead to messages only going out in some formats, or mixed messaging from different channels (e.g. Facebook only);
- We don't have a set communications schedule from the committee, which has resulted in a lack of communications coming out from meetings;
- We do not utilize the website, and it is unclear what the target audience for the website is.

Where do we want to be?

The goal is that all our communications this year:

- Have a clear purpose;
- Are written in plain English, and are easily accessible by members;
- Provide a positive and consistent message and picture of the club;
- Are engaging and well received by club members.

We also want to ensure that:

- Only club members have access to sensitive information;
- There is a clear definition of what our different communication platforms are for and how they should be used.

How will we get there?

Several ideas have been proposed, which can be trialled over the remainder of the year in order to assess their impact and gather feedback from the membership. The following proposals are put forward:

- Convert the Facebook Group to a Members Only group, and remove all non-members. This is because there have previously been posts that may impact on the external image of the club, or may cause a security risk to the club. This should also reduce the time required to effectively 'admin' the group.
- Utilise our Facebook Page and Instagram Profile (linked together) for any marketing of the club we wish to do. This would require a level of commitment from the club to maintain, but could be completed through a number of nominated individuals having access to both the Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Set up a newsletter. This would provide a consistent message across all channels of communication, but the following key points would need to be ensured:
 - Consistency of language and tone across all platforms, to provide the consistency of message;
 - A process for gathering information for inclusion, with a timeline set out, and a process for urgent messages that may need to go out in between.

The above will be trialled and feedback from the membership sought. Following this, at the end of the period of this strategy an updated communications plan will be developed.

Goals at a Glance

- Convert Facebook Group to a members only group;
- Create a marketing plan, as to how and whether we would like to market ourselves widely;
- Create a plan for a newsletter.