



Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club

COMMUNITY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Contents

1.	Introduction
2.	Existing difficulties
3.	The way forward
4.	Economic benefits
5.	Community benefits
6.	Land for the community
7.	Project Proposals
8.	Summary

Whilst these particulars are prepared with all due care, the information is intended as a preliminary guide and has no contractual intent.

Introduction

The Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club has been in existence for almost 200 years and is one of the oldest yacht clubs in the world. It is an institution of some importance historically and culturally and has played an important part in the local economy and community for a very long time.

The Club has played an essential element in introducing young sailors from all backgrounds to sailing and has operated a very successful training programme which has, ultimately, led to one local sailor competing in the 2012 London Olympics, two sailors in the 2016 Rio Olympics and two selected for Tokyo this year. Two others very narrowly missed out on selection. These sailors retain a strong allegiance with the Club and the local community, regularly visiting and sharing their experiences with members, local schools etc, and this has certainly motivated some to take up the sport.

Over the years it has brought many major championship events to the area including Area, Scottish, UK, European and World Championships, all of which have benefited the area economically and otherwise. Recent years have seen, for example, the very prestigious Fyfe Regatta, the 8 Metre World Championship, the International Sonar World Championship, the Flying Fifteen National Championships and the World Blind Match Racing Championship. In addition, we have hosted regular, prestigious team and match racing events. Our Patron HRH The Princess Royal has attended a number of these events, most recently in 2018.

The clubhouse plays an important role within the local community and offers facilities for a number of other organisations, clubs and societies. It is also home to an important collection of yachting artefacts.

Like many other clubs and organisations, however, the Club faces significant challenges moving forward. After much deliberation and planning it has been determined that for the Club to have a thriving future, significant change will be required.

Existing clubhouse difficulties

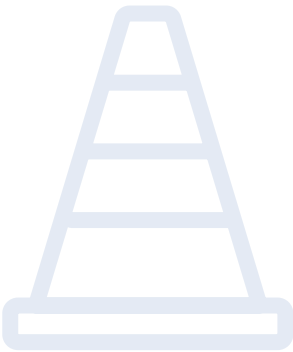
Like many local sports clubs the financial model is very challenging.

Underlying our current predicament are the undisputed facts that;

1. The current Listed clubhouse is too large for our needs and too expensive to maintain.
2. The garden and grounds are extensive and maintenance is a huge drain on resources.
3. We have explored all avenues for additional income from functions, room lets, etc. These can help, and do help, but they are extremely variable and require considerable management.
4. Our training facilities and access to the water are inadequate by current standards, seriously hampering our ability to attract new and active members, particularly younger members. The Club requires to be in a position to attract new young members to secure a properly balanced and sustainable membership for the future.
5. The lodge and other external buildings have fallen into disrepair because we are unable to generate the extra funding that would be required to maintain them.

Simply put, if we remain in our current premises, the position will only get more challenging and the long-term viability of the Club will be under threat.

We have seen the deterioration of the important listed lodge building through lack of available funds; the same could potentially happen to the larger clubhouse and the area would lose a valuable asset to the local community.



The way forward

The Club believes that to ensure its long-term viability it requires to address 3 fundamental issues;

- 1. Be located at the heart of sailing activity in the area in such a way that we can raise the profile of the Club and attract high calibre events to the Rhu/Helensburgh area.
- 2. Provision of sailing and training facilities that will be attractive to new and younger members and support development of sailing in Argyll & Bute.
- 3. Reduce our operational costs and move to a sustainable business model.

In addition, it should maintain an open and inclusive ethos and continue to provide a home for other clubs and organisations.

NEW CLUBHOUSE AT RHU MARINA

The Club is of the opinion that we can best meet these challenges in a modern, efficient building of a more appropriate size and that this building would be best located near the hub of local boating activity.

The Club considers that a move to Rhu Marina would best provide the platform for a vibrant club with a sustainable future, and conditions are currently such that this could be possible. We are contracted to buy a piece of land at the marina suitable for the construction of a new clubhouse and associated facilities. Sale and development of our existing premises and grounds could fund such a move.



Economic benefits

LOCAL ECONOMY

A move to the Marina would enable the Club to provide launching and support facilities to run youth sailing/training effectively again. In the past the Club, operating from the Marina prior to its sale to the current owners, had a junior sailing programme involving almost 40 children, some of whom have gone on to become Olympians. Revival by the Club of such a programme would again lead to increased activity, and consequent additional economic benefits to the locality from visiting families. In 2019 a pilot scheme was initiated, relocating our training activity to Rhu Marina and this overwhelmingly reinforced our view that this is the way forward.

Moving to more appropriate premises would enable us to reduce our overheads and restructure our operational model. This would enable us to focus on operational activities and club development which, in turn, will ensure the long-term viability of the Club and secure our future. The Club would no longer have to direct the vast majority of its resources, financial and otherwise, to simply maintaining a large listed building which is no longer suitable for its purposes.

The Club is pleased to provide a venue for other clubs and organisations to meet and this would continue. Better facilities, particularly for disabled and other minority groups would be a benefit to these also and it is envisaged that others would likely be interested in exploiting the opportunities. The new clubhouse would very much be a community asset.

A sustainable model for the Club would ensure staff positions and those of others dependant on the Club would be safeguarded. Indeed, we expect that increased activity as a result of the Club moving to the Marina would indeed likely lead to additional employment.

The Marina, with the Club situated there, would become a more attractive destination for visiting yachts, and be a more attractive location for major yachting events. Presently, the Club is restricted in the nature of the events it can attract because its facilities are less than ideal. A move to the Marina would enable the Club to host more, and larger, events,, leading to consequent additional economic benefit to the locality by way of spending in shops, hotels, restaurants, bars and other local businesses. At the Marina the Club would be able to set itself up properly for running yachting Championships and develop a model for such events which would be repeatable, and become known elsewhere, particularly within the UK, as an effective model.

RYA

The Club works very closely with our governing body, RYA Scotland, and regularly hosts high profile training and racing events in partnership. A significant proportion of race training takes place in the winter months and location of the Club at the marina would enable us to expand these activities and establish RNCYC as a leader in this arena, again leading to obvious additional economic benefits to the area.



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Marina has a desperate need for social facilities. All good marinas have such facilities and Rhu Marina will not reach its potential without such facilities, which are required to make the Marina an attractive place for owners to keep their yachts, an attractive destination for visiting yachts and for yachting events. One of the most successful marinas in the British Isles is at Howth, which it is believed is owned and operated by Howth Yacht Club. The Club would provide such social facilities, including facilities for non-member users of the Marina.



The Club’s proposed move to the Marina is supported by the RYA.

Community benefits

TIES WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

A move to the Marina would enable the Club to work further with local schools and universities for student sailing activities and events. The Club already has an arrangement with one local school, for sail training, including race training and also has an arrangement with the sailing club of the University of Glasgow. Our current location, with poor access to the water and inadequate launching facilities, has hampered development of these activities. Being able to do so would also lead to increased economic benefits to the local area, by way of spending by those coming to take courses.

WINTER TRAINING

At the Marina the Club would be better placed to run winter training. Being at the Marina, would enable the club to market such activities to boat owners and other visitors to the Marina throughout the year.

LOCAL CLUB’S AND SOCIETIES

The Club has always been ready to open its doors to local community clubs. For example, the local Helensburgh Bridge Club, Probus, the Rotary Club, Harmony Choir and other organisations make regular use of the clubhouse. Moving to the marina would ensure these clubs continue to have a home.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Being located at the marina will enable the Club to broaden its range of activities and the Club is particularly keen to initiate schemes that have a strong volunteering ethos. Of particular interest is the establishment of a coastal rowing hub. Coastal Rowing is a relatively recent, but extremely popular, phenomenon. The basic principle of a local group building their own boats from kits, then competing in them around Scotland is just the kind of activity we would very much support.

We would be in a position to support the construction and storage of boats but, more importantly, extend an invitation to the wider community to make use of the facilities for training and social purposes and to host open events. In addition to community benefit, this would also bring additional economic benefit.



Land for the community

In 2014, when a masterplan for development of the Marina, including a substantial development of houses and a hotel, was under consideration, there was considerable concern within the community about subsequent “creeping” development on infilled land along the foreshore round Rhu Bay. As part of the arrangement to purchase suitable ground on which to build a clubhouse, the Club would obtain the entire foreshore from Rhu Marina right along to the Rosslea Hotel.

By a mechanism yet to be decided, it is proposed that the Club would transfer the greatest part of this to community or council ownership. This would ensure that a sensitive area and amenity is maintained for community benefit, and that any future change of use could happen only with the support of the community.



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Project proposals

SAVING LISTED BUILDINGS AND FUNDING THE NEW CLUBHOUSE

The clubhouse, ancillary buildings and grounds are proving increasingly difficult to maintain, stretching our resources to the maximum. Whilst the main clubhouse is not yet in a critical condition it is looking tired both internally and externally, and many of the facilities do not match our operational requirements. To address these issues, and meet the various regulatory requirements, would require funds which we do not have.

If the Club is forced to remain where it is, the inevitable result is that the condition of the clubhouse will decline, and it will be increasingly difficult for anyone to address that. The condition of the Lodge may become irretrievable – it is easy to see how that might happen when one looks at the Club’s former stable block and roundhouse overlooking the Gareloch, which were sold in the 1970s, and have become completely ruinous and derelict.

In simple terms we have entered into a contract to sell our current premises and land which is dependent on obtaining consent for approximately 30 new build flats, potentially up to 5 smaller units, conversion of the clubhouse into flats, and restoration and extension of the Lodge.

The extent of development proposed is only what would be required to enable the Club to move to the Marina. If that extent of development is not permitted, the Club will not be able to afford to move, and the long-term viability of the Club will be threatened. In those circumstances the prospects of saving the listed buildings will be uncertain, to say the least. The Club is aware of considerable difficulties being encountered recently in disposing of large, listed buildings in the Helensburgh area. We believe our proposals offer the best prospect of retaining the listed buildings currently in our care.

Having decided to explore the opportunity for a move, the Club embarked on a marketing and vetting process. The proposals from a number of vendors were assessed, not only with regard to the value of offers, but also the quality of the outline proposals for development and construction of a new clubhouse at Rhu Marina and housing development on our existing site. We elected to partner Dickie and Moore Homes Ltd, supported by architects GD Lodge.

Dickie & Moore are an established west of Scotland based housebuilder with a strong track record of delivering high-quality bespoke housing on small to medium sized sites. Working in partnership with the Club, Dickie & Moore are committed to delivering a high-quality residential development. The company also has a proven track record in the construction of sports facilities, having delivered in 2008 a new £1m facility for Greenock Wanderers RFC and in 2010 a sports facility for Kelvinside Academy.



As part of the turnkey operation Dickie & Moore Homes Ltd will commence development with the construction of the new clubhouse at the marina and an initial number of flats at the existing site. Once the new clubhouse has been completed, the Club shall relocate, and the remainder of the housing development will be completed.

Residential site plan



Summary

The club faces considerable challenges, and, without a fundamental change, its long-term viability is at risk. The proposed move is the key to our long-term future. The Club is an integral part of the fabric of the village and the wider community, whether you actively use it or are passively aware of it. If it was not there it would be greatly missed by all. This is not a dramatic statement but statement of fact that can be applied to many key aspects of built environment we often take for granted. Too often we are seeing the loss of the local pub, the library, the bank and local shops. All lost because too many of us passively did not protest or assist.

Life is changing at a faster pace than we have ever experienced and the vital role of the Club in the community is not just as a sailing club but as social venue providing cohesion in our village.

Your support will ensure the survival of an historic club in the community, continuity of facilities for others, and expansion of activities to a wider audience, and will assist materially in the development of the Marina. This, in turn, will bring additional economic benefit to the local area and protect and increase employment.



Your local club needs your support and Rhu and Helensburgh needs a thriving local facility.



