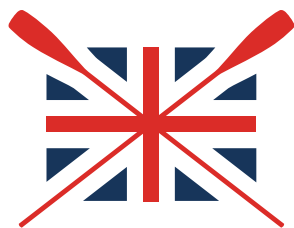


CLUB
GUIDES



BRITISH ROWING

Club Management Guide

Managing your club effectively.





Dear Rowing Club Members

Welcome to the British Rowing Club Management Guide

Following consultation in 2019, this guide is one of several developed in response to clubs' requests for more guidance and support on a wide range of club related topics. We hope it will help to increase the overall standard of club management and build good practice so that new and existing members can continue to enjoy rowing at all levels for many years to come.

If rowing is to prosper as a sport, we need a network of strong and sustainable clubs that give members the best club experiences. Whatever your club's size or circumstances, there are resources available to help support long term growth.

In this guide, we cover a range of topics and provide a working framework to help you manage your club more effectively, from growing your membership to managing your facilities and planning your finances.

This guide:

- **Highlights the most important aspects of club management.**
- **Flags some key questions to ask yourself and your club committee.**
- **Provides top tips and practical advice to help you manage your club more effectively.**
- **Signposts you to additional guidance and resources, either on the British Rowing website or through third parties.**

The guide will be a working resource, to be updated on a regular basis, so please provide feedback and share examples of good management practices or experiences from your club.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The British Rowing Community Support Team

clubsupport@britishrowing.org

British Rowing would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this Club Guide for their input. We would also like to acknowledge Sport England and the Sport England Club Matters website that provides a range of useful resources and information to support effective club management.





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Section 1 - Introduction to club management

I.1 Introduction

In this British Rowing Club Management Guide, we cover a range of topics relating to the 'hands on' experience of managing your rowing club. This is different to club governance (see British Rowing [Club Governance Guide](#)) and includes topics such as managing your membership, planning your finances, maintaining facilities and effective marketing/communications.

In order to thrive, rowing clubs must continue to adapt to the ever-changing needs and lifestyles of their members. Whatever your club's size, local circumstances or stage of development, there is guidance and resources to help support long term growth. Every club is unique and so this guide provides a working framework rather than a wholesale solution.

First, we introduce the different aspects of operating a rowing club by exploring **what makes a strong and sustainable club**. This provides a broad introduction to the other sections in this guide including:

- [Section 2: Managing your membership](#)
- [Section 3: Financial management](#)
- [Section 4: Facilities management](#)
- [Section 5: Marketing and communications](#)

Throughout these sections, we highlight some key questions to ask yourself, provide some top tips and signposts to other relevant information and links to other resources.

I.2 What makes a strong and sustainable club?

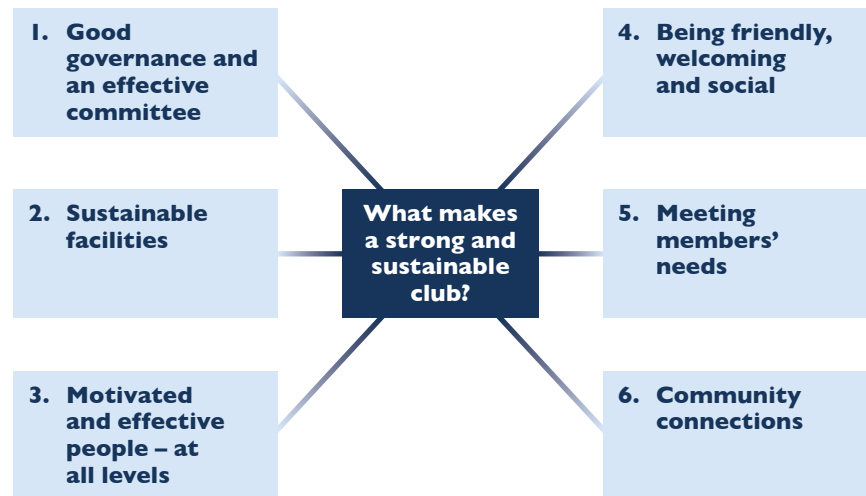
If rowing is to prosper as a sport, we need a network of strong and sustainable clubs that give members the best club experiences.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



We have identified six key ingredients that contribute to a strong and sustainable club:



I. Good governance and an effective committee

Good governance is essential to the long term sustainability of all rowing clubs and is the bedrock of any well-run club. It means having the right structure, people, policies and procedures in place, with a committee prepared to make decisions in the best interests of its members.

In 2017, Sport England launched the Code for Sports Governance, which sets out some minimum requirements that clubs applying for funding from Sport England need to meet. By meeting these requirements, you demonstrate that your club is managed in a professional, safe and legally compliant way.

Good governance is reflected in many aspects of good operational management.

Make sure you:

- Have a clear vision and development plan for the future.
- Implement effective and robust policies, procedures and processes to help your club run effectively, transparently and responsibly.
- Get your club structure right – it's one of the most important decisions that clubs make.
- Attract people with a range of skills and experience to take up committee positions.
- Have the right people in leadership and decision-making positions who:
 - Have the best interests of your club in mind.
 - Engage with members and encourage new people with the appropriate skills and experience to get involved.
 - Are accountable for your club's governance (finances and policies).
 - Are prepared to make sound long term decisions.
 - Lead in a way that supports your club's overall vision and values.



Top tips for an effective club committee structure

A management committee will typically consist of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and other roles that offer a broad and fair representation of members.

The size of the committee is a balancing act – keep the numbers manageable and ensure diversity, but have enough people to implement your strategic plan effectively.

Typical committees are formed of 5-10 people and need:

- **Clearly stated terms of reference.**
- **Role descriptions for all key roles, with each role ideally filled by a different person.**
- **Clear division of responsibility between any paid staff and committee volunteers, with a manageable workload for each person.**
- **Committee members recruited on their skills/strengths.**
- **Diversity, inclusivity and representation of all members' interests, including representation from each membership section.**
- **Effective policies and procedures.**

Consider sub-committees/groups to reduce the size of the main committee if necessary. If you set up sub-committees or working groups to support projects, make sure that the chair of each sub-committee has direct access to the main committee.

Word of mouth is often the best way to recruit committee members so get to know your members to determine the most suitable roles for them. **Assigning the right people to the right roles can be a challenge but get it right and you'll see the benefits.**

Manage key meetings such as AGMs and EGMs effectively. Poorly managed or overly time-consuming meetings can disengage and demotivate people.

(See [Club Governance Guide](#), Appendix A – How to run club meetings effectively).

Make sure that your committee members have:

- **Good listening, communication and analytical skills.**
- **Ability to demonstrate club values.**
- **Integrity, confidentiality and fair judgement.**

And finally, remember to follow British Rowing's [Safer Recruitment Policy](#)

Questions to ask

- Do you have a clear vision for your club? Is this vision understood and bought into by everyone at the club?
- Do you know what resources you need to achieve your vision – people, budget, facilities, partnerships, marketing?
- Is your club AGM managed as effectively and efficiently as it could be?
- How often do you communicate with your members? Do you seek feedback and act on it?
- Do you have clear and comprehensive organisational policies in place? Is it time for a review?
- Do you have good financial controls and a medium-term plan?
- Have you considered networking with other clubs to share good practice or attending local forums such as the Regional Rowing Council?

Further information

Please refer to the British Rowing Club Governance Guide for further information, including the different ways to structure your club.

For further information, see [section 3](#) (Funding and fundraising) and [section 4](#) (Facilities management) of this guide.

Other guidance is also available from the [Sport England ClubMatters website](#) including:

- [What makes a good leader.](#)
- [Club meeting minutes template.](#)
- [Effective delegation.](#)



Photo credit: John Stead



2. Sustainable facilities

Having reliable and regular access to facilities is a fundamental rowing club requirement that can significantly impact on member satisfaction – whether these facilities are club-owned or not. Ideally, there should be room for your club to develop and grow.

Make sure you:

- Have a comprehensive maintenance plan, aligned with a long term financial plan so that your facilities can be enjoyed by members for years to come.
- Build relationships with facility owners (for non-asset owning clubs) so they understand your needs and requests.
- Workout your annual finances to plan long term facility improvements, whilst balancing the books.
- Know how much you have invested – it's particularly useful to know these figures if you want to access funding opportunities.

Questions to ask

- Do you have a long term commitment to the facilities that you use? If so, make sure you are clear about who is responsible for all aspects of repairs and maintenance.
- For asset owning clubs, are you happy with the condition of the facilities that you use? Are they due for refurbishment? Do you have a comprehensive facility maintenance programme?
- For non-asset owning clubs, do you have good relations with the most senior staff/ owners at the venue that you use? They are likely to be the key decision makers.
- What are your plans for facility development in the future? Are these plans viable and realistic? Is British Rowing aware of these plans?

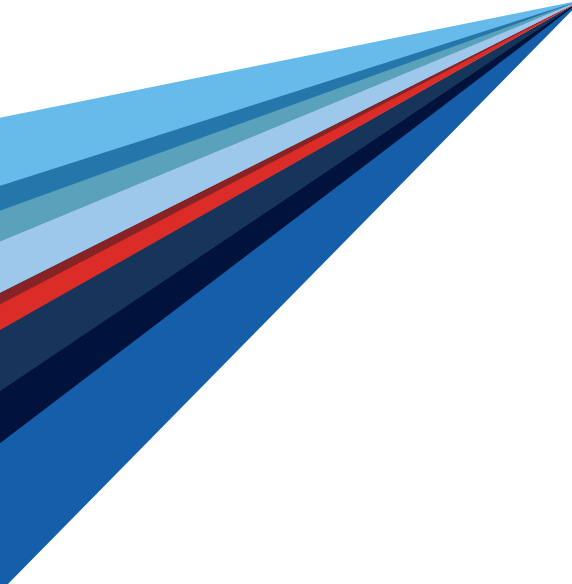
Further information

For further information, see [section 3](#) (Funding and fundraising) and [section 4](#) (Facilities management) of this guide.

3. Motivated and effective people

It's all about the people! This includes committee members, coaches, umpires, organisers, captains and anyone else that helps with the running of your club. Passion shows through in everything your club does – from hosting events to preparing the newsletter and from updating your club's website to attracting sponsors – and in every interaction with members and the community.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any club. But, as with rowing habits, volunteering habits are also changing. Sporadic or ad hoc volunteering is increasing, making it a constant challenge for clubs to continue to grow.



Understanding the relevant coaching, volunteering and umpiring pathways is key to developing a progressive and productive workforce.

Strong clubs have people that are:

- Positive and uplifting.
- Passionate about the club's vision and want to share it with others.
- Willing to share their knowledge and answer questions.
- Willing to listen to ideas.
- Open to others getting involved.

A strong and effective leader or leadership team will be able to recruit the right people into the right roles on the committee or to key positions, to help your club thrive for years to come.

But it's not just about recruiting them! To get the most from your committee members, umpires, coaches and volunteers, you need to understand what motivates them and provide them with appropriate opportunities to develop their skills or take on greater responsibility (if that's what they want!).

Make sure you:

- Have a very clear idea of what tasks need to be done and when.
- Are not wedded to traditional roles and adapt your structures to the availability and skills of your members.
- Try to attract people with a diverse range of skills, experiences and backgrounds whose characteristics complement each other.
- Invite new helpers to take on small tasks to begin with, to help grow confidence and then support them to develop in their role.
- Understand the development opportunities available to coaches, umpires and volunteers, such as courses, workshops or softer learning opportunities. These could include British Rowing club guidance and resources, or internal support through mentoring or coaching. Make sure you consider this when budgeting.
- Consider your financial and employment models carefully. Whilst paid roles are becoming more commonplace, make sure these appointments don't undermine your 'volunteer' culture.
- Engage with and motivate people so they feel valued and part of your team.
- Keep it fun!



Questions to ask

- Do you understand the mix of skills needed to run your club effectively? Does your committee have this mix of skills or is anything missing? Is there an over reliance on one individual to cover many tasks?
- Are there roles where there is only one person in the club who knows or is trained to do this (single point of failure)? Is there a succession plan?
- How do you recruit your club workforce? How do you approach them? Could this process be improved? Do you advertise roles and tap into your associated workforce effectively, such as parents and/or family members?
- Do you understand why people in your club volunteer? What reward and recognition do they want? Would they like more opportunities to develop?
- How do you support and develop members in administration roles?
- Do you provide training and development opportunities if people want them? Do you budget for this? How do you identify potential amongst your members/coaches/umpires?
- Where roles are paid, do you have clear management and employment structures? What is the long term strategy on paid roles and are they financially sustainable?

Further information:

Further details on supporting, managing and developing your paid and volunteer workforce are included in the British Rowing [People Development Guide](#).

4. Being friendly, welcoming and social

Year after year, club members of all ages say that their club experiences are greatly enhanced because their club is friendly, welcoming and social. This aspect is often even rated ahead of aspects such as the quality of facilities, coaching or the standard of competition. But, being friendly, welcoming and social shouldn't be taken for granted.

Make sure you:

- Ask newer members about their experience of joining the club and how it could be improved.
- Think about the different types of members. Are some more socially active than others? In many clubs, adult socials are well established such as quizzes or annual dinners, but junior and parents' experiences are less well developed.
- Grow the 'family' at your club by providing a broader range of social activities to engage them. Ask members what they would like and, ideally, get them to help with the organisation.

A friendly, welcoming and sociable club environment is a key consideration for anyone looking to join a club.



- Plan club events that bring people together – brainstorm activities and events such as fundraisers or charitable projects.
- Stay connected with former members – they can turn out to be some of your club's strongest supporters.
- Use social media – it's now a standard expectation and can be a powerful tool to engage both former, current and future members.

Questions to ask

- What social activities do you currently provide and who do you target? Does your current membership model include a social only membership?
- What experience are you trying to create for the different types of club members, e.g. existing adult, junior, casual and social members?
- How do potential members become aware of your club? What's the point of initial contact and what information do they receive? Is it friendly and welcoming?
- What is the club experience like for new people? How would they rate their experience with you so far? Have you asked for their feedback?
- How many new members or Learn to Row participants do you retain each year? Do you know why members stay or come back and what role social activities play?
- Do you use social media to engage with club members? Could you do more in this area?
- How do you stay in contact with past members, such as members that leave to go to university? Can you do more to keep in touch?

Further information:

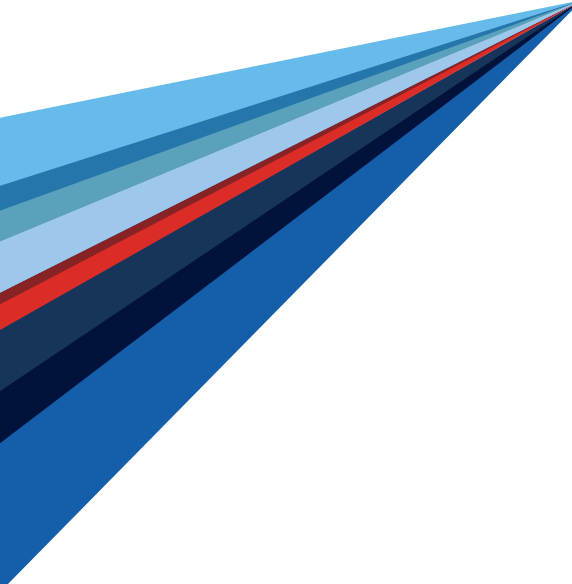
See [section 2](#) of this guide for more information on how to engage with and manage your membership more effectively.

5. Meeting members' needs in different ways

Our lives and behaviours are changing and our desire for great experiences is ever increasing. Club rowing competes with many other leisure and family commitments and needs to meet expectations if people are to keep coming back.

More and more, the broader experience of being part of a club, such as the social and development opportunities, need to be considered as part of an overall club offer.

As with many other sports, there is often a natural drop off through the teenage years. The competition for young people's time intensifies with academic pressure and competition from other activities. Many clubs are working hard to improve the transition to adult racing or are providing opportunities to just row for those that want a more casual experience. Have you tried adapting provision, such as providing more sessions across the week, so that more people of all ages have access to the water?



People join a club because they hope it will add value to their life – the strongest clubs are those that review their club offer regularly and try new things to enhance members' experiences.

Whilst masters rowing caters for the competitive age groups, many clubs have seen an increase in the age profile of those accessing Learn to Row courses or other types of rowing activity such as stable boat or recreational rowing. Providing a range of opportunities is becoming more commonplace, with membership models catering for a range of circumstances. Clubs should aim to provide opportunities for those that want a different experience from traditional competitive club rowing.

Make sure you:

- Understand what your members are seeking from their membership and what's important to them. Have you asked them?
- Cater for a range of expectations. For many members (but not all) progression is a key part of joining a club. This may require you to adapt, by providing extra rowing opportunities or access to other clubs to progress through the Rowing Pathway. The same is true for coaches, umpires and administrators.
- Provide a broader range of training and competition opportunities for members, such as 'challenge', 'recreational' and 'outcome' events across all three disciplines of the sport (indoor, sliding seat and fixed seat).
- Consider shifting away from 'performance' and 'outcome/regatta' events towards a culture where both participation and performance objectives are valued equally.
- Add variety to your club's regular routine to keep club members excited and involved. For example, provide extra or more specific training, advice and support for members that want it, at a time that is right for them.
- Focus on lifelong rather than short term involvement and put your members' needs at the heart of your decision making.

Questions to ask

- Do you know how many members you have and how often they row?
- At what age do you typically lose members and do you know why they stop rowing? Could you do more to retain them?
- Have you reviewed your membership options recently? Do they cater for a range of circumstances and provide good value for money?
- What support is available for those individuals that want to progress? Is further training/support available? Can a member who wants to train more frequently do so?
- Have you considered establishing links to other clubs to provide a clear talent pathway for your rowers?
- Do you know why members leave? Do you act on the feedback (even if it's negative or sensitive)?
- Have you got the balance right between 'informal' activities and 'formal' rowing activity?



Further information

More details about managing your membership are covered in [section 2](#) of this guide.

6. Community connections

Rowing clubs provide great opportunities to connect people with their local communities and feel part of the area where they live. Local connections are key when attracting new members, such as links to local schools or community groups.

Having a local presence can also support more 'strategic' connections to help your club develop and thrive. For example, having a local presence is crucial when trying to attract sponsorship, as most community-based sponsors will be interested in your local visibility.

Make sure you:

- Target local activities such as university freshers' fairs, local town events or other community social activities to help with membership growth and club visibility.
- Foster a strong identity and sense of community. It helps to attract and retain members, builds stakeholder support and encourages diversity.
- Promote a diverse club community that accepts and supports cultural and social differences.
- Engage with local or national causes, such as environmental awareness and social responsibility.
- Improve local community relations by getting to know key influencers.
- Collaborate with other clubs in your area.
- Welcome and recognise new ideas and encourage action to see them through.
- Celebrate achievements with the entire club and get everyone involved.
- Invite and listen to feedback – just asking for input goes a long way towards building community spirit and pride.
- Keep in touch with your members – use social media, newsletters and online portals – but don't overdo it!



Questions to ask

- How often is your club in the local media and is it always about racing?
- How does your club engage with the local community? Could you do more?
- Are you politically aware? Do you know key people within your community and what they can do for your club – university vice-chancellors, school heads, local MPs, town councillors, directors of sport, chief leisure officer, school sport managers, etc?
- Can you influence local planning provision to benefit your club?
- Do you have a clear strategy on how to attract sponsorship? Building a strong community presence can help.
- Do your club's demographics reflect your local community?
- Are you aware what opportunities are available to engage the local community and businesses?

Further information

For more information on marketing and communications, along with the benefits of more community connections, see [section 5](#) (Marketing and communications) and [section 2](#) (Managing your membership).

How can British Rowing help?

British Rowing has a range of online resources available to support your club. Your primary contact is your Community Support Manager who can also provide local support and advice to your club. They can be contacted by email at clubsupport@britishrowing.org



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Section 2 - Managing your membership

Introduction

Clubs rely heavily on revenue generated from membership fees but managing your membership can be very time consuming – it makes sense to work as effectively as possible to maximise your efforts.

In this section, we provide information on:

1. Structuring your membership offer
2. Attracting new members
3. Overcoming barriers to membership
4. Retaining members and providing the best possible member experiences
5. Using the British Rowing ClubHub Management system

2.1 Structuring your membership offer

In our busy lives, rowing competes with a range of other leisure, work and family related commitments, so it's important to provide membership packages that suit a range of different circumstances and lifestyles. Flexible membership packages can be great for potential members who are uncertain about making a long term membership commitment.

However, an ever-increasing number of different membership options is not always the answer – there needs to be a balance between the membership categories on offer and your club's ability to provide and service these offers.

Some clubs have up to 30 different memberships to choose from, and whilst these may cover every eventuality, spare a thought for your membership secretary. Has your club got the balance right? Too much choice can also be confusing and may ultimately put some people off joining.

If you offer discounts and concessions, consider how these are structured, managed and advertised, as they can really help to create an inclusive and diverse club, in line with British Rowing's [Inclusive Club Guide](#) principles. Bear in mind that some prospective members may be put off if they can't afford the fees or don't feel comfortable asking for a discount. Also, many grant schemes require your activities to be accessible and for price to not be a barrier to taking part.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Typical membership categories and possible explanations

- **Junior** – can be split into age groups such as Under 14 or Under 16.
- **Adult** – over 18.
- **Student** – can be split into full time or part time categories or for those 'home for the holidays'.
- **Family** – can be for 3 or more family members with 2 adults paying full price and children discounted, free or half price.
- **Recreational** – can be for sessions at certain times or days or specific equipment.
- **Pensioner** – this could be actual retirement age or over 65s.
- **Life** – typically, for services given to the club or occasionally for multi-year 'up front' discounts, although some clubs offer this membership for a monetary donation.
- **Social** – for social access to the club only. These can be voting or non-voting memberships, depending on your club set up. *Please note – social memberships may have a specific impact for [CASC registered clubs](#). See [CASC rule 2.21 Social membership threshold and the meaning of participation](#).*
- **Gym only** – for any time or specific times/days.
- **Learn to Row** – for a fixed period or specified number of introductory sessions.
- **Unemployed or low waged** – for individuals on lower incomes (which may include students) or young people whose families are unable to pay full membership fees.
- **Discretionary concessions** e.g. people with a disability, visitors or temporary/corporate membership.
- **Boat storage only** – indoor and/or outdoor.

Questions to ask

Structuring your membership offer

- Do you have a 'come and try' policy or offer a free taster session?
- Do you know why people join your club and not your competitors?
- Is it clear what your club offer is within each membership category? Does everyone know what this offer is or is there an assumption that because you pay a subscription you get regular coaching, access to certain boats, etc?
- How many categories of membership do you really need?
- Have you analysed your club's membership categories to see if any are underused?
- Can some categories be amalgamated?
- Could the categories be made easier for everyone to understand?
- Have you structured your offer to be totally inclusive regardless of age, gender, sporting standard, background, aspirations or financial circumstances?
- Do you know if anyone has been put off joining or who has joined the wrong membership category because there is so much choice?
- Do your membership categories comply with your constitutional or business set up?



Case Study: Maidenhead Rowing Club

Using the ClubHub Management system to manage your membership

Maidenhead RC operates with two membership years – the 'adult' year runs from June to May and the 'junior' year from September to August. Prior to using ClubHub, different systems were used to manage the junior and senior membership, using emails, spreadsheets and bank statement reconciliation. There was no single, clear picture of club membership. Senior payments were made either by cheque, credit card or via World Pay and each transaction had to be identified and reconciled individually – a time consuming activity.

What was done?

The junior membership was transferred to ClubHub first (in September 2018) and was used as a learning experience for the senior membership, transferred in May 2019. Initially, ClubHub was used to manage the membership transactions, rack fees and Environment Agency payments. It has since been extended to cover registration and payments for junior Learn to Row and subsequently, adult Learn to Row courses.

"The ClubHub system has been really helpful in terms of membership management. We can now easily see membership status and payments, and there's a simplified reconciliation with the bank account. You can also tailor the system to the different categories of membership. This has cut the workload for our membership team significantly."

Jim Hotchin, Boat Manager

Top tips:

- Use several people rather than just one, to build a membership team with good knowledge of your club members and membership types.
- Make sure the membership team are fully conversant with the ClubHub system before going live.
- Hold ClubHub workshops and produce user guides to help people without prior knowledge of the ClubHub system.
- Educate your membership so they get used to using British Rowing login details and avoid pitfalls such as duplicate accounts/lost passwords etc.



Photo credit: Lizzie Sneller



Financial planning and collecting the money

Membership income can often be the primary source of income that keeps a club solvent. As such, managing your membership effectively is crucial to your long term existence and sustainability. Knowing how much income is needed from your membership fees every year and the timings for receipt of this income can be key to managing your finances effectively.

Whilst annual membership subscriptions can help manage your club's cash flow, a one-off payment option doesn't suit everyone. Make sure that:

- You consider payment terms that are easy to manage and understand, with options such as three-month memberships or a one-month rolling membership.
- If you collect subscriptions online, you have very clear explanations and instructions about the offer.
- Your membership systems are well structured and monitored so that payments can be reconciled easily.
- You comply with the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) when storing members' data.

Options for the collection of membership fees could include:

- **Annual payment** – usually on a set date.
- **3-monthly or 6-monthly payments.**
- **Monthly payment** – via standing order (customer sets up) or direct debit (bank/club sets up). This may incur an excess charge. Note. Direct debits often require a vetting process with further investigation or audit of club operations.
- **Pay & row** – paid per session or for a block of sessions, often in cash.
- **Bank transfer** – BACS payments directly into the club's bank account.
- **Cash** – needs meticulous records of who, when and what has been paid and can mean extra administration in terms of cash control and reconciliation, cash storage and handling.
- **ClubHub Management system** – provides a range of benefits to help you manage your membership effectively. See [section 2.4](#) for how this system can help you.



Top tips:

- Have clear membership categories and tariffs.
- Consider discounts for early payments.
- Be strict on the rules for non-payment.
- Use direct debits and bank transfers where possible to minimise cash handling.
- Don't use cash if possible, although some kind of 'pay and row' system can help to promote inclusion.
- Use the British Rowing [ClubHub Management system](#) to help manage your membership.

Questions to ask

Financial planning

- Do you have an annual or quarterly budget?
- When do you need the money in? Do you have an income forecast to help with cashflow planning?
- How is the money collected – is this the best, most efficient system for your club?
- Are payments collected annually or monthly or any variation of these?
- Can you schedule all monthly payments on the same date to ease the burden for your membership secretary?
- Will you accept late payments or offer periods of grace?
- Do you offer discounts for prompt or early payment?
- Is there a discount for paying more than one year's fees upfront?
- How do you communicate payment methods to new members and renewal options to your existing members?
- Do you use a subscription collection service such as the ClubHub Management system?
- Is the membership description on your website sufficiently clear for a non-rower looking to join? Do you avoid rowing jargon?

Further information

Find further guidance on managing memberships and handling money on the [Sport England Club Matters website](#).



2.2 Attracting new members

Attracting new members and retaining them is one of the biggest, ongoing challenges that clubs face, with continual efforts needed to grow or even just stay stable. Most clubs aim for a growth rate that they can manage successfully in terms of both space and activity, with a membership that reflects the diversity of their local community.

Your approach to growing your membership also plays a huge part in making your club accessible and inclusive, and rowing, a sport for all. Having a specific plan for recruiting new members will help to allocate your club resources more effectively.

Here are some top tips to help you grow your membership. Additional ideas to attract members are included in [Appendix A](#).

Know your starting point

By asking yourself some key questions, you'll be well on the way to managing your membership drive effectively:

- How many members leave the club in a typical year and need to be replaced?
- How many new members do you need to grow, or just to remain stable?
- What are your membership demographics e.g. age and gender for each membership category?
- What is your catchment area – where do the majority of your members come from and how far do they travel?
- Does your water usage, time or equipment restrictions limit your capacity to increase membership?
- What are your members' motivations and what keeps them happy?
- Do you have the club infrastructure to support growth? For example, do you know how many extra coaches and helpers you'll need if your membership grows?

What is your 'churn' or annual attrition rate (% dropout):

- For your membership as a whole?
- For specific membership categories?
- From each Learn to Row course?

Use this information to identify target/manageable numbers for each of your membership categories.



Know your club offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you know why new members join your club? For example, is it to get active, make friends or to compete?• Does your club offer match your members' needs in terms of activity level, time of day, length of session, competitiveness, etc?• If members leave, what are their reasons for leaving? Do you ask?• Learn from your mistakes – what issues have you had in the past? How can you avoid the same mistakes in the future?• What's worked well and how can you do it again, but even better? <p>Also, think about any constraints or challenges and how they can be overcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening hours – are they realistic and is there potential to increase them?• What's the capacity of your gym or length of water? Can it cope with more people?• How many boats are available – racing and stable, sweep oar and sculling? Do you have the oars/blades for each boat?• How many ergos do you have and what's their level of usage?• How many coaches and volunteers do you have and how many more do you need to run both recruitment campaigns and retention plans? <p>New members will soon become discouraged if they realise there is limited capacity at the times they want to attend as their club experience will not be delivered.</p>
Devise and implement your 'sales' strategy	<p>Use the information gained on why people joined, stayed or left to devise a 'sales strategy' that highlights the positives of your club and resonates with more people.</p> <p>Just like marketing a small business, a targeted approach helps, with a specific plan for gaining new members rather than an ad hoc reliance on friends or family, people walking past, or occasional open day or Learn to Row courses.</p> <p>Based on analysis of your membership and financial plans, identify some key targets and related initiatives that will help you achieve your membership goals.</p> <p>Remember that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership doesn't always have to mean full members – you could target social or gym membership, daytime only rowers or alumni members.



Devise and implement your 'sales' strategy (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn to row courses provide a great opportunity to attract new members – focus on converting your Learn to Row 'customers' into fully fledged members. You've done the hard work, now try to benefit from it!• If you run corporate events, target the participants as potential members.• It helps to focus on the different types of membership experiences that you provide – grouping people by what they are looking for will help you to meet their expectations. <p>A successful membership drive needs to be backed up with high quality customer service which starts well before people get out on the water. If a potential member's experience is disappointing, they may not return, and may tell others about their negative experience.</p> <p>Further information on marketing and promotion is also provided in section 5 of this guide.</p>
Get the timing right	<p>Plan recruitment drives at specific times of the year (rather than ad hoc). This can help you to engage existing members as helpers, as they'll know what is expected of them and when. It will also help you to provide the best experience for prospective members. For example, avoid promotions during Ramadan if your target is greater diversity, or at times when it's very cold or when your friendliest members are away on holiday.</p> <p>Capitalise on the interest in global televised events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games or events such as the Boat Race, by running promotional sessions to coincide with them.</p>
Be visible	<p>Review where you talk about your club. Choosing the right communications channel is very important.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing in the local press, radio or online.• Word of mouth – a very powerful tool. Consider rewards such as membership discounts for new member introductions.• Advertising banners or hoardings – most boathouses are in highly visible locations, but make sure you check out local restrictions.• Posters or flyers showing the diversity of your membership, in locations where potential members are likely to go such as gyms, leisure centres, community centres, schools or colleges.• Encouraging your contacts in other organisations to help spread the word.• Holding stalls or demonstrations at local events.



Use social media	<p>Develop a great online presence on social media channels such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.</p> <p>Make sure that all content is relevant and is refreshed and updated regularly.</p> <p>Always use a moderator to promote and control content.</p>
Make it easy	<p>Make sure that it's easy to get involved – the fewer steps the better.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online applications.• Easy to navigate websites with clear and up to date information.• Easy payment procedures, with a range of options for those not wishing to make a long term commitment. <p>Don't forget what has or hasn't worked in the past, as well as researching what's worked for other clubs.</p>
Use Open Days and Learn to Row courses effectively	<p>Have a structured annual plan for Open Days and Learn to Row courses, and don't expect to turn everyone into an Olympian in six sessions!</p> <p>Make sure that everyone knows what's going on, including your helpers.</p> <p>Be clear on your goal – is it to boost revenue or membership numbers, or both?</p> <p>Manage the expectations of coaches regarding the conversion rate from Learn to Row courses to membership – turnover can be high for these sessions (over 50%) which can be demoralising if you're not expecting it.</p> <p>Keep in touch with Open Day participants – they've taken the first step and may be encouraged to join the club in the future.</p>



Make a good first impression	<p>Remember, the first few seconds of a prospective member's visit will give them a lasting impression of your club.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does your club look like through the eyes of non-members? Is it well looked after?• Are there dedicated times for potential new members to come to the club?• Do you have someone allocated to greet potential members or is it just whoever they see first?• Are new members made to feel welcome?• Do you encourage existing members to speak to new members?• Do you offer new members a structured introduction? <p>Arrange a free session – this is easy to organise, does not have to take a long time and is safe if you have suitable stable boats.</p> <p>Consider the overall new member experience – from initial search through to arrival at the club, first interaction and follow up.</p> <p>Make sure all enquiries receive a positive, timely response and are given relevant information such as dates, times, who to contact and how.</p>
Use your members	<p>Make sure all your members know what the club is offering, and where to direct new enquires.</p> <p>Remember that some members may be willing to help with occasional Learn to Row or Open Day events, without the commitment to regular coaching.</p> <p>Involve younger members. They can be an important asset. Seek their input to club projects and give them responsibilities. You could assign them a mentor to ensure they feel valued. This will help you recruit the volunteers of the future.</p> <p>Maintain strong relationships with your members – a happy member is both a loyal one and the best free advert for your club!</p>



Case Study: Birmingham Rowing Club

Attracting new members

Like many rowing clubs, Birmingham RC was looking to increase its membership and identified Learn to row (L2R) courses as a way of achieving this by converting participants to new members.

What was done?

Structured L2R courses were promoted on the club's website, with a banner advertisement outside the club. The courses are run by volunteers and no-one is paid to help. From the first day, participants can see what the club is all about. Post L2R, participants are encouraged to move into the Development group for at least one year so they can establish good friendship groups.

L2R courses have seen a 45% retention in year 1, followed by 35% in year 2. This has boosted both club revenue and membership numbers.

"Our structured L2R courses have proven really popular and are a great way to introduce new people to club life. We changed our club structure to include: L2R, Development, Seniors & Masters and daytime rowing so there's a clear pathway on where people go after L2R.

It's important to keep up your quest for volunteers – if L2R courses are successful, more volunteers are needed for the growing Development group."

Mindy Hothi, Captain

Top tips:

- Appoint a co-ordinator to manage your volunteers.
- Encourage WhatsApp groups for L2R participants to help build social circles.
- Learn names to make it personal.
- At the first L2R session, brief all participants on what it's like to join the club and have a clear pathway on how they can join – don't wait until the last session.
- Identify how many new members you can accommodate without putting strain on resources.
- Hold indoor 'theory' sessions.



Photo credit: Aline Heyerick



2.3 Overcoming barriers to membership

There are lots of reasons why people join a club but equally, there are many barriers to stop them. Understanding these barriers and helping to overcome them can be the difference between people joining your club or not.

Research shows that the barriers to taking up rowing fall loosely into the following groups:

- **Personal** – time (balancing work/family/other commitments), motivation, lack of confidence, age, income, stereotypes, personal perceptions, attitudes of others, safety concerns or disability.
- **Logistical** – location, travel time, cost, childcare arrangements, other support needed (parents, carers, etc.), inadequate communication and unsuitable activity.
- **Physical** – length of sessions, commitment needed, health & safety and type of equipment used.

Some barriers may not be obvious. It's easy to overlook issues that are not apparent to you as a fully engaged and active member. Try talking to your new members or to people at open days or those on Learn to Row courses. Most concerns can be addressed, although some require more detailed logistical planning or discussion. Sometimes it's as simple as broadening your offer to accommodate different needs. This can also help to demonstrate that you are part of your community with an 'open door' policy and accessible to everyone – a key criteria when applying for funding or accessing grant opportunities.



Photo credit: Jo Atkinson



Some typical barriers/concerns

Barrier/ concern	Solution
I can't afford it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider funding applications to help promote activities for specific groups. For example, many women and girls only sessions were funded successfully by the 'This Girl Can' Sport England campaign.• Hold subsidised or free 'come and try' sessions to allow a trial before joining.• Emphasise that you don't need your own equipment and don't be too fussy about clothing (not everyone owns lycra).• Set up a fund, via club fundraising, to support new members for whom fees are a barrier to participation.• Identify grant funding to support targeted community activity – contact your local British Rowing Community Support Manager at communitysupport@britishrowing.org• Accept monthly, session or stage payments.
I can't swim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your club have a policy for this, or could you make everyone wear the appropriate personal protection or life saving devices so no one feels as if they stand out?• Could you team up with your local swimming club to provide or signpost members to lessons?
I don't have childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider providing or hosting a crèche or partner with a local childcare provider and offer daytime sessions where the cost of childcare is included.• Provide activities for older children at the same time as adult sessions – a great way to capture the next generation!• Stagger activities for families to enable both parents to try rowing (one parent on the water, one 'child minding', then swap so that they aren't on the water at the same time).
I want to bring my family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer family sessions to run concurrently or in the same boat.• Provide family membership fees or subsidies.• Promote your non-rowing facilities, for example, use of the clubhouse where partners can sit and watch if they want to.



Some typical barriers/concerns

Barrier/ concern	Solution
I don't know anyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sessions for those living alone or feeling socially isolated. • Promote the social side of the club and provide opportunities for members to get to know each other. How about new member sessions or social groups? • Include time within Learn to Row sessions to build relationships and encourage social interaction e.g. coffee and cake after training sessions.
I don't want to compete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer short or introductory sessions. • Designate specific times/days or equipment for daytime or recreational rowing. • Continue to provide coaching and challenges – recreational rowers still want to improve.
I can't train every day/I have limited time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide shorter sessions for those with time pressures – not all sessions have to be 2 hours long. • Manage the timings for sessions more efficiently. • Emphasise that it's not essential to train 6 days a week.
I'm too old to try something new/I'm not confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that your coaches are aware of the circumstances or concerns of new rowers. • Run sessions for specific age groups or genders to help build confidence and overcome concerns.
I have a disability and I'm not sure if I can take part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adaptations or changes to provision. • Refer to the British Rowing Inclusive Club Guide. • Refer to British Rowing Club Guide on Adaptive Rowing.

Further information

Find further guidance on overcoming barriers to participation on the following websites:

[Equality in Sport](#)

[Age UK](#)

[Sporting Equals](#)

[Pride Sports](#)

[Women in Sport](#)

[University of the 3rd Age](#)



2.4 Retaining members

Understanding the reasons why members join (and leave) your club is fundamental to effective club development. In theory, it should be much easier to retain existing members than it is to attract new ones, however, this is not always the case.

The best way to retain members is to focus on delivering the very best experiences.

For every club, there comes a point when members leave and there are many reasons why. In simple terms, members are more likely to stay if their overall club experience is a positive one. Many people join a club and stay for years for reasons including exercise, competition, friends and a social life, but one thing is certain – if the member experience fails to match their expectations and their needs are not met, they will go elsewhere.

The expectations of club members may not always be apparent and new members may not always share their aspirations. By engaging with your membership you'll also show that you care about them. Everyone enjoys feeling part of their chosen community. Try some of these 'top tips' to deliver the best club member experiences and see the change in attitudes.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Top tips for retaining members

1. Do your research

- Understand your members and give them what they want – this is not always easy but the closer you get, the more chances you have of retaining them. Do you know for certain that your members are happy?

2. First impressions count

- Talk to new members – make them feel welcome and involve them in club activities.
- Encourage your members to welcome new starters.
- Discourage existing members from telling nightmare 'winter training' stories – they can be very off-putting for new members!

6. Keep in touch

- Poor communication is often quoted as a reason for leaving. Make sure that everyone knows what is going on at your club.
- Personalise communications (with names) as an easy 'feel good' membership tool.
- Promote a 'hotline' to the committee or name a specific committee liaison person to ensure effective communication.
- Have a Club Handbook covering topics from rules and committee member profiles to common terminology – these are best kept and updated online.
- Maintain relationships – when members leave, continue to communicate with them as they might want to come back. You can also, for example, advertise opportunities for students to take part during holidays.
- Find out why members leave – it can be uncomfortable but it's incredibly valuable and can help to identify problems that might not otherwise be apparent. Not all problems can be solved but make sure you act on anything you can to avoid making the same mistakes again.

3. Meet expectations

- Find out what members want – membership surveys can be useful but be clear what you can and cannot act on.
- Don't forget to tell everyone the results and don't use them too often – they can be like nuisance calls.
- An online search will highlight several free survey tools that are available to use.

Delivering the best club member experiences

5. Build community spirit

- Use meetings or feedback sessions to find out more about what members like or want. By just asking them to suggest small changes that would make them happier, you're making them feel part of the club community. Try to act on suggestions quickly to show your intentions.
- Recognise the achievements of your members, coaches and volunteers – it shows that you value them:
 - Publicise the successes of everyone, not just the performance crews.
 - Publicise the hard work of your coaches and volunteers.
 - Have a hashtag for your club – it's a great way to connect your club and community.
 - Use a Facebook closed page to allow members to communicate and spread news.
 - Add value to the membership experience through indoor leagues, rowing ladders, indoor coaching or 'happy hour' at the bar!

4. Make it fun and enjoyable

- Get families involved – it can widen your potential pool of members and helpers.
- Establish a recreational section if you don't already have one – not everyone wants to be an Olympian or compete at Henley Royal Regatta.
- Arrange 'follow on' activities for those completing Learn to Row courses, such as skills courses or pathways to other groups – it shows that you've thought about progression for everyone.
- Provide a full social calendar of activity – it will help to develop a stronger club community and not everything has to take place at the club.
- Provide challenges for everyone – these can be run online and don't always have to be rowing related.



2.5 British Rowing ClubHub Management system

British Rowing recognises that the vast majority of community clubs are run by a core of dedicated and passionate volunteer administrators and coaches, for free, in their spare time. Yet, running a rowing club these days is increasingly like managing a small business.

To help you manage your club's membership more effectively, British Rowing has developed the [ClubHub Management system](#).

It's freely available to all clubs as a British Rowing affiliation benefit. The online club member management portal helps to streamline your membership management processes including financial transactions, so you can manage new members more easily and provide current members with the best possible support.

ClubHub was developed by clubs for clubs in order to:

- Save volunteer time.
- Streamline financial processes.
- Provide easy access to club insights.
- Help communications with club members.
- Help clubs comply with GDPR data regulations.
- Provide up-to-date business knowledge and best practice.
- Streamline the affiliation process.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Case Study – Norwich Rowing Club

Use of ClubHub

Norwich Rowing Club conducted a review of its existing club membership CRM software and identified challenges with reporting, poor integration with online payments, and an inability to provide a single customer view.

What was done?

The club switched to the ClubHub Management System to help streamline the membership process for both existing and new members, with enhanced functionality around the payment process, viewing membership status (e.g. club roles, renewals, etc.)

ClubHub provides easy to access real-time reports and insight on aspects such as club finances, membership numbers, squads, etc which has helped the club plan its future membership strategy. The automated CRM processes, such as welcome and renewal emails, are useful for tracking new members and payments.

Current members now have more control of their account and the club can focus on recruitment and a better onboarding experience for new members.

“We were looking for a CRM system which was intuitive, easy to use (for members and administrators), where members could manage their own account, could renew club memberships, pay online via various payment options as well as an enhanced reporting function. ClubHub has met all our expectations and beyond.

It’s also reassuring to know that ClubHub is compliant with data regulations (GDPR) and safeguarding requirements, by storing members’ personal details safely, including emergency contacts and medical details.”

Katie Stoner, ClubHub Administrator



Photo credit: David Ashcroft



ClubHub Management system core functions

Member management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage memberships online – add, view, update and renew club members.• Set up bespoke membership categories and fees.• Set your own membership year with separate renewal periods and rules.• Take secure online membership payments.• Take secure online payments for one-off items such as Learn to Row courses, racking fees, annual dinners, etc.• Store members' personal details securely, including emergency contacts and medical details to help you comply with GDPR.• Integrate acceptance of club rules as well as membership terms and conditions into your purchase process.• Record and administer member credentials e.g. swim and capsized tests.• Bulk import of non-British Rowing members from Excel.• Set roles for club members e.g. Treasurer and Club Welfare Officer.• Set up, manage and administer mailing lists e.g. all members, all junior members and all committee members etc.• Semi-automate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) processes e.g. welcome and renewal emails.• Manage permissions for members and access to associated online systems e.g. BROE2.• Book members onto British Rowing courses, individually or as a group.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standard club reports for your club membership.• Easily access real time reports and insight on key metrics e.g. club finances, membership numbers, etc.• On screen searching of member information, filtering, views, etc.• Communicate directly with members through the system via email.



ClubHub Management system core functions

Club & Team Management

- Create and modify club profiles e.g. club address, club committee members and club blades.
- Club affiliation and renewal to British Rowing.
- Keep important club information up to date e.g. club constitutions, club rules, etc.
- Add your club to the British Rowing website club finder.
- Keep a register of your club's fleet (i.e. boats and launches), linked to the ability to purchase Environment Agency (EA) boat licences.

Online payments

- Set up a merchant account to manage all finances.
- Allow your members to sign-up and pay online.
- Purchase and payment facility for members e.g. to purchase boat racking and membership.
- Provide multiple payment options including credit & debit card, Direct Debit and 'pay by invoice'*

* Pay by invoice is available for clubs and schools only.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Section 3 - Financial management

Introduction

Financial management, effective financial planning and focused efforts on funding and fundraising are key to the long term survival and sustainability of your club.

In this section we provide information on:

1. Financial management, including the importance of budgeting, day to day financial planning and managing your money effectively
2. Business planning
3. Fundraising and funding applications, including grants and other funding sources
4. Alternative income streams
5. Sponsorship
6. Sharing club facilities

Make sure that all your committee members understand your club budget – this helps to secure their ‘buy in’ and ensures transparency.

3.1 Financial management

Strong and sustainable rowing clubs are built on sound financial planning. Your club's financial plan (which might also be known as your club budget or financial forecast), underpins all of your club's activities and future plans, for both the short and long term.

Having a sound financial plan is essential to help manage your club's money and plan for a sustainable future. It doesn't have to be complex – what's most important is that **it's appropriate for your club** and that **you review it regularly**.

Take a look at your short term and long term financial plans – how do they shape up?

- Your annual or short term financial plan looks at your expected income and costs for the next year.
Income minus expenditure = Surplus/(Deficit).
This will keep you focused on your everyday finances. You may find it useful to compile a quarterly or monthly budget to help you keep track throughout the year.
- A long term financial plan or financial forecast looks at your income and costs over a longer period, often up to 10 years. This will help you plan for any future projects such as facility developments or equipment purchases. Financial forecasting is an essential tool to help with club development, ensuring you make more informed long term decisions.



The responsibility for setting and monitoring your club's financial plan usually falls to the Club Treasurer, reporting directly to your club committee. Further details on this important role, along with financial accountability and legal status, are set out in the British Rowing [Club Governance Guide](#).

Depending on your club's size, you may also choose to establish a Finance Sub Committee, or similar, to support your Club Treasurer with financial related tasks and responsibilities.

Typical Finance Sub-Committee responsibilities

- Determine the most appropriate start and end dates for the club's financial year.
- Conduct appropriate background checks for anyone authorised to administer the club's finances, including members of any relevant sub-committees.
- Ensure that accounting and book-keeping records are kept for the minimum period required by law and that no records are destroyed without the express authorisation of the club committee.
- Ensure that personnel managing the club's financial affairs have the skills necessary to carry out their duties successfully.
- Assess and advise the main club committee on specific aspects of club business that may be affected by financial decisions, such as registration or continued registration as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) or charity. Remember to always take advice on these matters from a qualified professional.

Questions to ask

- Do you have the right processes and practices in place to help you monitor your club's finances?
- Do you prepare an annual club budget to help plan your financial performance? Is this broken down into quarterly or monthly time periods?
- Have you considered a long term financial forecast to help plan for longer term club projects and development plans?
- How do you control costs?
- Have you thought about any tax or legal implications affecting your club, for example CASC rules?
- Do your club funds come from different sources to help spread the risk if one source of income dries up?
- Do you have a sinking fund for emergencies?



Budgeting

An example annual budget for a small club is shown in Figure 3.1. You may also find it useful to set budgets for events or smaller scale projects. Further details on what a typical quarterly and monthly budget look like can be found on the [Sport England ClubMatters website](#), under Club Finances.

Figure 3.1 – Example annual budget

[XYZ] ROWING CLUB ANNUAL BUDGET, FINANCIAL YEAR 20XX/YY	BUDGET	ACTUAL
INCOME	£	£
Membership fees	25,000	
Fundraising activities	2,000	
Events	10,000	
Grants	5,000	
Sponsorship	5,000	
Bar	30,000	
Merchandise	500	
Total income	77,500	
EXPENDITURE		
Rent and service charges	8,000	
Utilities	7,000	
Insurance	5,000	
Repairs	7,000	
Marketing	500	
Travel and fuel	2,500	
Events	8,000	
Bar & merchandise costs	20,000	
Sinking Fund	5,000	
Total expenditure	63,000	
Surplus/(deficit)	14,500	

Always aim for a budget that will at least break even and build in a contingency for unexpected items that may crop up during the year, such as unplanned maintenance projects. It's not a good idea to set a budget with a deficit in the hope that the funds will be generated from somewhere.



Top tips for budgeting

- Keep it simple – use budgeting templates to help get you started.
- Keep it realistic – an unrealistic budget can demotivate people and is less likely to be actively used. Don't overestimate your income or underestimate costs as you can quickly get into financial trouble.
- Use previous years' actual income and expenditure figures to help set your budget for the next year – work out what's changed and what's new.
- Monitor regularly – compare your actual income and costs to your budget figures on a regular monthly basis. By keeping consistent records of your club finances from month to month, year to year, it's much easier to make comparisons.
- Connect your budget to your club development plan – the documents should work in parallel, with longer term financial information to match longer term plans. Together, these documents help to shape your club and its financial future.
- Take action – if it looks as if you're heading for a deficit, take action early to look at ways to cut spending or review opportunities to generate more income.

Managing cash flow

Cash flow forecasts are also important. There will be periods when your income drops or you have particularly large expenditures. Make sure you plan for these times so you can identify any deficit quickly and plan to deliver a surplus year on year.

Further information is available in the [Sport England ClubMatters](#) Online module 'Get your Cash Flowing'.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Quick checks to improve cashflow

- Ensure member subscriptions are paid promptly, or regularly if by direct debit.
- If you are VAT registered, remember to include VAT figures within the cash flow, showing when VAT is to be paid or refunded.
- Always have at least two people involved so that you can ensure cash is banked quickly, decisions are verified and the chance of malpractice is reduced.
- Put accurate accounting systems in place to record all financial transactions and make sure accounts are accessible and transparent for auditing purposes.
- Make sure you pay any surplus cash into the bank promptly.
- Clear cash handling policies are crucial, not only for audit purposes but to keep financial control.

In simple terms, there are two ways to help manage your money as you strive to generate a healthy surplus year on year:

1. **Increase your income.** Your club's largest income stream is likely to be membership fees. More details on how to manage your membership effectively are provided in [section 2](#) of this guide, with further information on funding, fundraising and other income streams in [sections 3.3-3.5](#).
2. **Manage your costs.** Some ideas to help monitor and manage your costs are set out below.

Managing costs

How can your club save money? Clubs with their own facilities have the most scope for savings but everyone can usually save on something. Research has shown that up to 20% of a club's annual energy costs are wasted through energy inefficiency. Energy bills are a great place to start then when looking to reduce your costs.

Business rates can also be another large expense. Some local authorities offer discretionary relief. If business rates are a significant expense for your club, you could consider changing your club structure but it's always advisable to take professional advice before taking this step.



Top tips for managing costs

- Look at what you spend – work out your club's biggest costs or overheads and look at these first.
- Energy bills – how much energy are you using and what are you paying for it? Keep track of your bills so you can highlight any sudden rises or changes.
- Water bills – many clubs are on water metres and this fact can get forgotten. Leaving hosepipes on when washing boats uses a lot of water.
- Banking – are you on the best deal/account at your bank? How long has it been since you had a banking review or discussion?
- Insurance costs can be significant – do you know if you are on the best deal or have you asked for different quotes recently from other companies?
- Ask yourself and your members, could we do this differently? Just because you have always done something the same way doesn't mean you can't change. Think about your expenditure, do you really need to spend on specific items?
- Ask for a discount – asking for a discount can work surprisingly well. Politely enquiring as to whether you have the best price can see your club save on a range of goods and services.
- Use free services – many online resources offer free simple services but charge if you want more support. Make sure you know what services are free and the cost implications for paid services to avoid getting caught out.
- Consider bartering – is there something your club can offer in return for goods and services?
- Plan your actions within your club budget – these could be quick fixes (e.g. energy saving lightbulbs) or long term solutions (e.g. sensor activated lighting).
- Ask your members – can they provide services or skills for free or at a discount (e.g. website design) or do they know someone who can help? Just make sure you are clear on the club's requirements and expectations and manage this accordingly to avoid any disputes. You will also need to make sure there are no conflicts of interest if you are engaging members, friends or family to do work at your club.
- Ask around – there may be other clubs happy to share where they have found good deals.
- The [Sustainable Clubs website](#) also has lots more information and ideas.



Financial controls

Keeping control of your club's financial situation is crucial to its long term survival. There are a number of common practices and processes that will help you keep control.

Regular monitoring – Establish a regular monthly routine to keep control of your club funds. For example, check your club bank accounts at the end of every month to review expected payments in and out. If there are any differences make sure you understand why. If you have stock (e.g. club kit, refreshments or bar stock), make sure you keep detailed stock records and do regular stock takes. Keep receipts for all expenses and make sure these are in line with your club's policy on expenses.

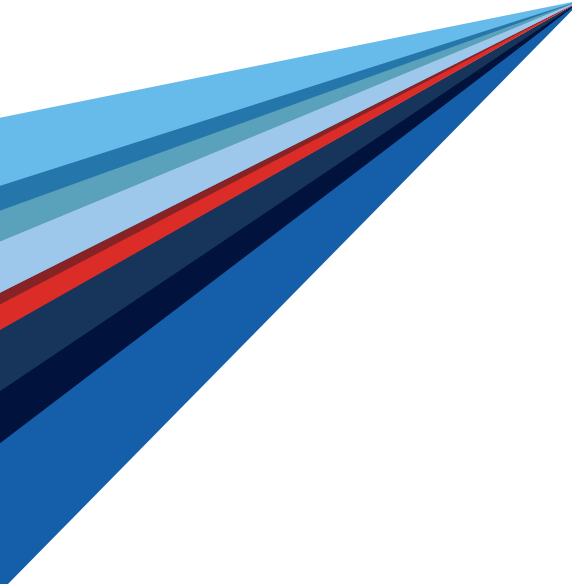
Bank account – It's important to have a separate bank account for your club and not use an individual's personal account. This promotes independence and transparency. Ideally, your account should have at least two signatories for making payments. This 'dual authorisation' reduces the risk of mistakes being made and prevents fraudulent activity. Getting the best banking deal possible can also save you money.

For more information on online bank accounts, refer to the [Sport England Club Matters](#) factsheet.

Bookkeeping – Your Club Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that day to day bookkeeping is recorded in line with HMRC requirements. This includes making sure that bookkeeping records are up to date and checked regularly.

Bookkeeping entries should include:

- ✓ Date of entry.
- ✓ Reference number for each entry that should be cross-referenced with invoices and receipts.
- ✓ Name of supplier/person that the club is paying or receiving from.
- ✓ Cheque/debit number for payments made.
- ✓ Receipt number for payments received.
- ✓ Details of the transaction i.e. what it was for.
- ✓ VAT element (if VAT registered).



Annual accounts – At the end of your club's financial year, you'll need to prepare your annual accounts. This is typically done by your Club Treasurer, compiled from the records of all income and expenditure over a set financial year. The preparation of annual accounts is particularly important if your club is set-up as a limited company or charity, as there are legal requirements.

- For limited companies where a registered auditor may be required, visit the [Companies House](#) website.
- Or, for charities, visit [here](#).

Depending on the legal structure and set up of your club, once you have prepared the accounts, as a minimum they should be independently verified (i.e. by someone other than the person who prepared them). The person verifying them should also have the financial knowledge and experience to do this properly.

Communication and transparency – It's important to keep everyone up to date with the club's financial position. A shortened version or summary will help to keep the information simple so everyone can understand it. Make sure that your club committee is seen by all members to be managing the club's finances carefully, honestly and sensitively.

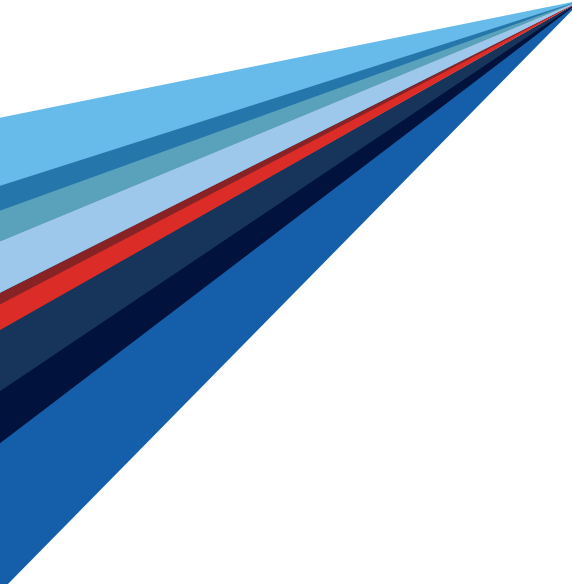
Managing larger expenditures – Ensure that all major expenditure is approved by your club committee and minuted as such, in accordance with any expenditure limits specified in your club rules. Do you use purchase orders for any goods/services that exceed a specified and agreed limit? The purchase order should include the price agreed and any relevant terms and conditions. The expenditure limits should also state the threshold where committee approval is needed and also where a set number of tenders for specific items or services are needed.

When managing tenders, your committee will be responsible for:

- Drawing up the tender specifications.
- Obtaining a minimum number of quotations for the proposed services.
- Deciding the winner of the tendering process.

It is important that any committee members with a financial interest, or those directly or indirectly related to any persons tendering for the proposed goods/services, are not involved in any decision-making processes.

Keep your club members informed about financial issues – this can help encourage them to assist with fundraising activity and also reassures them that their club funds are in good hands.



3.2 Business planning

There may be times when you need to produce a more detailed business plan, for example, for a grant funding application or to help plan long term club improvements. Your business plan should include a more detailed, longer term financial plan and, if it's specifically for a funding application, you will need further information on the project rationale, its connection to your Club Development Plan and how the project will be delivered, managed and reviewed.

There is a wealth of advice on business planning available, not to be confused with the regular annual financial planning and budgeting process described above in [section 3.1](#). More details are provided in the British Rowing [Club Development Guide](#).

Further information

The Princes Trust provides some useful guidance and templates to help you develop a business plan for an external funding source [here](#).

The [Sport England Club Matters website](#) also has more information on business planning included in its workshop programme 'Planning for your Future'.

Assess your current and future funding needs carefully and plan your funding to be as diverse as possible.

3.3 Funding and fundraising

Introduction

For many clubs, it is an ongoing struggle to raise funds, often requiring many hours of work from a small group of people. Every club is different, not only in terms of its organisational set up, but in relation to its facilities and the amount of income needed to sustain it year on year. Whilst some clubs have no or limited facilities, some have shared facilities and others have large facilities with gyms, activity spaces and function rooms. The 'what', 'where' and 'how' of accessing funds differs and there is no single solution.

In this section, we explore the different types of funding that typically include grant funding and fundraising. Whilst both have their place, it's important not to over rely on grant funding as it is becoming increasingly difficult to access.

We've included some suggestions to help you search or apply for external funding along with some other fundraising ideas. There's also some general information about the benefits and potential drawbacks of grant funding and links to useful websites.



Typical funding sources

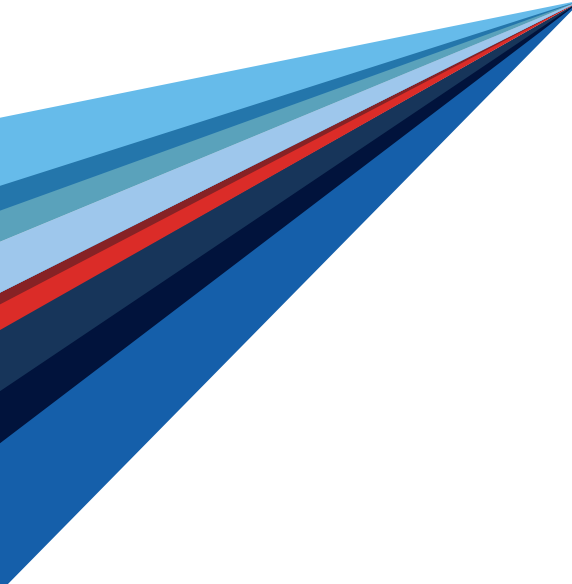
- **Grant funding** involves applying for money from external organisations, usually through an application and based on assessment against specific criteria. This includes:
 - Grants from bodies such as Sport England.
 - Business and organisational grants.
 - Online funding sites such as Go Fund Me or Crowd Funding.
 - Grant finder schemes.
- **Fundraising** tends to be small scale, often for a specific project. It's primarily performed by club members and includes:
 - Traditional fundraising activities such as sponsored rows.
 - Donations.
 - Gift Aid: a tax relief for CASC Clubs and charities on donations. As it is an HMRC scheme, make sure you check the regulations [here](#).
- **Finance or investments**, often for the longer term, including:
 - Repayable loans or money raised against property, usually with interest.
 - Investment of surplus club funds to provide an income.
- **Alternative income streams**, such as merchandising, facility hire to external groups e.g. team building events for local businesses, club website advertising sales, etc. See [section 3.4](#).
- **Sponsorship**, can apply to a single boat or your whole fleet, a specific crew or a squad, fixed-frontage advertising or movable advertising such as your trailer or towing vehicle. See [section 3.5](#).
- **Club sharing** can be useful, particularly if you can develop good partner relationships with mutual benefits. See [section 3.6](#).

Remember that the generation of any commercial income may have implications for your club insurance, tax or legal structure, especially if you are CASC registered.

Grant funding and other funding sources

A grant is a non-repayable amount of money to a club from an external organisation, often in exchange for meeting specific criteria. The scale of grant funding varies widely from international grant bodies such as the European Fund to small grants from your local authority.

Whilst a grant may seem like the answer to your desire for a new boat or even a new boathouse, make sure you think of it as part of your club's overall funding mix, not as your sole source of funding. An over-reliance on grant funding (which is often seen as easy money) can reduce the enthusiasm of members to help with other fundraising efforts. Remember to seek specialist advice if you need it and always check what your club structure allows, as some clubs are not eligible for certain forms of grants or funding.



Focus on grant funding opportunities that really match your club ethos and align with your club development plans to maximise your chances of success.

The number and availability of grant funding sources is diminishing and criteria are becoming increasingly strict. There is fierce competition for grants and they can require a lot of work with no guarantee of success – so they may not be the 'first choice' funding option that they once were.

An over-reliance on grant funding schemes in the past has seen some clubs chasing grants and developing schemes to fit the grant. This often leads to programmes having to stop when the funds dry up, with a negative impact on member retention and membership income, as well as club morale. Funding bodies may also be sceptical of organisations that do not deliver or demonstrate a sustainable project or programme after the funding has ceased. This can jeopardise future applications, both from your club and potentially from the sport of rowing as whole.

Grants should be viewed as an extra boost or short term kickstart for a programme or project that your club really wants to try, with most funding bodies requiring some form of match funding. If you've relied on the funding too heavily and have not budgeted for its replacement, your programmes could be at risk.

Grant applications

Your first grant application is often the hardest, but once you know the information required and have been through the process, future applications can be much quicker and easier.

Successful grant applications are those that are well researched and planned and deliver projects that meet the funding objectives. The best applications are those where the outcomes are positive for both sides. For example, receiving funding under the #ThisGirlCan campaign and doubling the size of your female membership by using it to pay for a coach for the recreational women.

Funding providers want to know that your club is well governed and that any project they are going to support is part of a wider strategic plan and that you have the capacity to deliver on your promises.

If your club does not have a club development plan, then you'll need to prepare one before you start any grant application – see the British Rowing [Club Development Guide](#). You will often need a business plan as well, especially if you are seeking a large grant. You should also check that your club meets the [Sport England Code for Sports Governance](#) (Tier 1 requirements) as a minimum, which represent the first step towards good governance.



Grants follow similar processes and often have opening and closing dates for application. Before you consider applying, make sure you **check the funding criteria carefully** to see if your project meets the objectives.

Pre-application (larger funders)

If this is required, it is a short statement of what you want to achieve. This phase can save you time as you will only need to submit a full application if your project matches the criteria.

Application

This may involve either an initial or final application or could be an invitation to a second submission which often comes with support from the funding body.

Award decision

Grant spend

There is often a requirement to spend your grant within a certain timescale.

Award monitoring & final exit monitoring

Grant funders will expect you to monitor your progress and measure the impact of the award.



Preparing your application

Each application will be different, but most require the following considerations:

- What do you want and why?
- Have you done your research? British Rowing, local authorities and Active Partnerships (formerly County Sports Partnerships) can all provide useful information.
- Is your project part of your overall club plan? Do you have a clear and well documented Club Development Plan?
- What are the aims and objectives of the funding body? The closer you align your project with their goals, the greater the chance of success.
- Delivery – What will be delivered? By who, when and how? Do you have a contingency plan of phased delivery just in case your funder changes the scale of funding available or you only receive part of the funding applied for?
- Impact – Can you measure the impact of your project? Consider ‘who’ will be affected and ‘how’ and make sure these measures match the funding criteria.
- Project monitoring – What is required, when is it due, how is it done and who is going to do it?
- Partnership funding – Many grant funders expect to see some form of matched funding such as club savings, other grants or donations. Providing evidence of the other funding already committed to your project will strengthen your case.
- Sustainability – Demonstrating how your project will continue after the funding runs out can be a powerful tool.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Top tips for funding applications

- **Check the funding criteria** – Make sure you read the funding criteria and application notes carefully. Contact the funders for any clarifications.
- **Phasing** – A phased plan will allow you to run a smaller scheme or apply to multiple funding bodies if necessary and ensure that at least some of the work gets done, as opposed to none of it if a single large grant application fails.
- **Partnerships** – Applications are viewed more favourably if you demonstrate strong community links, partnerships or join forces with other groups.
- **Timing is key** – Planning permission, consultation and surveys can be very costly and many are time limited. They may have to be repeated if your plans don't come to fruition at the right time. Plan carefully.
- **Count your words** – Funders have many applications to read and if you exceed the word count, your application may be discarded. Write concisely, using bullet points.
- **Don't use jargon** – Did you always know what an ergo was? Make sure anyone can understand what your application is for.
- **Mind your language** – Match your written style to the grant provider's language. Check out their website.
- **Keep to the point** – If the funder wants to get inactive people active, don't write about competition. Keep your words relevant to the main goal at all times.
- **Be clear and precise** about what the funding will deliver and double check your figures.

Other funding sources

There are thousands of smaller grant giving bodies or funders in the UK. These range from charities with specific aims to individuals with a philanthropic personal interest, local authorities and larger funding bodies such as Sport England.

Every funder will have its own criteria and searching through websites can be very time consuming. If you prefer, there are many free or paid subscription websites which can help. They allow you to set your own criteria or even combine searches. A web search of 'searching for grants UK' will list many of these 'grant finder' schemes.

Help and support

Your local Active Partnership or Regional Rowing Council may also be aware of local funding sources and be able to provide support. You can also contact your British Rowing Club Support Manager at clubsupport@britishrowing.org for further advice.



Further useful information may be found on the following websites:

[Sport England](#)

[My Community Grants and Funding](#)

[Funding Central](#)

[Sport England Club Matters](#), Funding Advice

[Grants Online](#)

[Active Partnerships](#)

Fundraising

Fundraising typically relates to the efforts of your members and supporters to raise funds for a specific, usually smaller scale project.

Fundraising can be a very time-consuming task. You can make it easier by hiring a professional fundraiser, which may cost money but could be worth it if you don't know where to start or have limited time.

You can also seek free advice by attending workshops run by organisations such as [Sport England Club Matters](#).

Questions to ask – getting started

- What are you raising money for?
- How much do you need to raise? Is this amount fixed or flexible?
- Do you have 'must haves' and 'nice to haves'?
- When are the funds needed?
- How wide is your network of contacts?
- Who is going to lead on the fundraiser? Who can provide support?
- Have you considered a professional fundraiser?
- Do you need specialist advice?

Your 'wish list'

Do you have a 'wish list' of your club's needs? Are the items on the list essential, renewals or replacements, or are they items to be used as development tools? To help plan your fundraising programme, divide your list into 'needed' and 'nice to have'. Start small and grow your ideas, but don't be afraid to aim high!

Planning and publicity

Any fundraising campaign needs careful planning, just asking someone to 'give us some money' will probably not work, whereas 'can you help us by donating £20 towards the cost of our new safety launch which will ensure our disability group is safe on the water' just might work.



Make sure you:

- Have a clear goal/target.
- Are clear about the length of your fundraising campaign and the commitment needed from your helpers.
- If there are expenses associated with the fundraising, know your break-even figure and make sure this is part of your overall budget.

You will already have members passionate about rowing who want to help, so encourage them to tell their stories as part of your fundraising efforts – this will help potential donors ‘feel the passion’ for your cause. If you have a good video story and images, use these in your campaign to help bring it to life.

Any fundraising publicity needs to clearly show the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘when’ you need something – the more specific the better. Things to consider include:

- Describe what it is you are raising the money for.
- How much it will cost – for example if it’s a large fundraiser, offer a range of amounts e.g. “we need £10,000 to purchase a coxed quad for our adult daytime health group, so we are looking for 5 donations of £1,000, 4 donations of £500, 10 donations of £100 and 40 donations of £50.”
- State why you need it, what a difference it will make and to whom.

Finding the people to donate is the next step. Starting close to home might seem the easiest way but you could also consider:

- Local radio or TV.
- Advertising e.g. posters, mailshots.
- Social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter.
- Gift Aid if you are [CASC registered](#).

Make sure you understand any insurance (public liability) or health and safety implications, as well as any fundraising laws or local authority licences you may need to purchase and comply with if you are street collecting or visiting any external premises.



Fundraising ideas

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Ask your members about events they would like to attend – better still, get them to organise them!
- Commercial activity – hire out your facilities or part of them.
- Raffles – small or large, with local donations or a huge prize – the options are limitless, but there may be implications for licences under your local authority rules.
- Quizzes – get prizes donated from local organisations.
- Cake sales or use your facilities to host an afternoon tea event by the river.
- Marathon ergo or row that is sponsored.
- Car washes on a Sunday or at your regatta.
- “100” Club – members purchase a number for a monthly draw.

Many more fundraising ideas are set out in [Appendix A](#) or try searching online for ‘A-Z of club fundraising’.

If you have any new and successful ideas, please let us know at #YourStories <https://www.britishrowing.org/news/yourstories/>

Online fundraising

Online platforms such as [Go Fund Me](#), [Crowdfunder](#), [Just Giving](#), or [Kick Starter](#) are very popular and can be a great way of fundraising if you find the idea of asking strangers for money face to face daunting.

Make sure you consider the following:

- Have a good story to tell – make it personal and something that people can relate to.
- Know the rules – make sure your appeal is suitable.
- Timescales – be clear on how long your appeal will be open.
- Remember to factor in any platform charges and card fees.
- Know exactly what you are asking for, how much you need and why – it is difficult to come back and ask again.
- Use all the media you can – a good quality campaign video can be invaluable.
- Promote your campaign widely – not everyone knows about donating money through these platforms. They allow you to appeal to complete strangers that may be interested in your fundraising or activity.



Free fundraising ideas and value in kind

When someone donates something to your club, this 'value in kind' releases funds to be spent elsewhere. Value in kind offers can include:

- Hanging baskets for your club – ask your local garden centre to donate some (they get a free advert!).
- Seating – most breweries will donate free tables or umbrellas.
- Food – ask supermarkets or your local shops to donate food for events.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes – many large companies have a CSR programme and may provide volunteers for in-kind work.
- Host an auction – and get a % of the profit or a one-off donation.
- Free Wi-Fi – encourage parents to stay during the junior sessions and sell tea and coffee to them – it's easy to organise, they can make it themselves and you might pick up some volunteers when they see how hard the coaches work. Have honesty payments to cut down the need for someone to be there.

Fundraising tips

- Don't be afraid to ask for money.
- Get people to help – a team approach is best.
- Call in favours – chances are that one of your members may already know a 'star' who could 'do a turn' at an event.
- The Bank Manager – they may have small pots of money or staff to offer as volunteers.
- Get your local Mayor, Councillor or MP involved as they often have small funds available.
- Check out the Fundraising Regulator for [Fundraising Rules and Codes](#).
- Don't forget to say 'thank you'.



3.4 Alternative income streams

Introduction

With grant funding becoming rarer and harder to access, clubs are having to look beyond the traditional 'rowing only' model of club survival and explore new ways of income generation. An increase in membership fees will only go so far in raising income and you will risk losing members.

Make sure you consider sourcing external or alternative income streams carefully and balance them with the interests of your club's members. Future members may not be able (or willing) to commit to the repayments on an expensive loan! As with any decisions regarding your finances, it's often useful to seek specialist advice. Sport England also has some useful information on sources of income generation [here](#).

Consider your club's financial agreements, long term commitments and any changes of use carefully and seek professional advice as appropriate.

Alternative income streams

Some ideas to help you get started:

- Could you share your facility and host a school, college or university club?
- Could you run corporate days or courses for GCSE PE or Duke of Edinburgh Award activity schemes?
- Could you hire out your clubhouse for groups, meetings, parties or events?
- Have you considered appointing a bar manager or outside company to maximise bar and/or catering sales?
- Have you tried selling teas and coffees at the weekend?
- Could your club be a music venue or place for clubs, bands or groups to practice?
- Could you hire out your gym or diversify into gym memberships?
- Why not become a [Go Row Indoor Community Club](#) and offer indoor rowing classes to your local community?
- Could you offer your changing rooms to other sports, such as running, cycling or walking groups?
- Have you fully explored the potential uses of your car park? Car parks can be used for parking, car boot sales (might require a licence and consideration for your neighbours) or meeting places for other groups.
- Have you considered solar panels? They can be a long term source of income and savings.
- What about wedding hire? Rowing clubs are often in some of the prettiest locations. Why not investigate the appropriate licences to become a wedding reception venue?
- Is there demand from local companies to host activities such as corporate team building or away days? Or have you approached them for sponsorship, donations of time or goods or staff under their corporate/community legacy schemes?
- Media – Could you source and sell crew, club, individual or event photos for a percentage or donation?

Case Study: Bristol Ariel Rowing Club

Developing a new funding stream through indoor rowing and increasing local community engagement

The Bristol Ariel RC leadership group was looking to extend the club offering and engage more with the local community. The club set up indoor rowing classes, based on the concept of gym 'spinning' classes, as part of Go Row: the British Rowing indoor rowing initiative for community clubs.

Classes are provided for members, including 'walk-in' options and there are five classes per week (pre-Covid) with an average of 8-10 participants per class.

Club benefits include:

- A new revenue stream with around £8,000 additional revenue in 2019/20.
- A cohort of new outdoor rowers, with an understanding of basic rowing technique from their indoor activity.
- A new group of members and potential volunteers, from a different demographic, to help the club flourish.
- A broader focus, promoting conversations around wider health and physical activity.

"Go Row has helped us provide a new exercise option for local community residents as well as much needed additional revenue."

Julien Tavener, Bristol Ariel Rowing Club's Go Row Indoor coordinator and Instructor.

Top tips:

- Ensure that existing members are aware and 'buy-in' to the initiative.
- Develop a sound business plan and strategy to promote indoor rowing, for example, using social media.
- Consider investing in promotion/advertising to gain traction initially and ensure long term returns.



Image credit: Jeni Nott Photography



Case study: Leicester Rowing Club

Developing an alternative income stream: Car parking

The initiative started over 30 years ago when the club started charging Leicester City FC for parking on matchdays. This initiative has grown into a small parking business, with parking now offered to Leicester Tigers rugby fans, local hospital staff who have been members and other local businesses.

What was done?

To maximise the use of club land, the club has offered car parking to a number of local businesses. The number of daytime spaces is limited and an area is kept free for use by members at all times. To help improve security, the club has installed an automatic gate with funding assistance from a local business.

Club squads are asked to provide volunteer car park cover for match days. Over the season, this means just 1-2 sessions per year. It's been easy to find volunteers, with squad members enjoying the experience as a social, bonding activity.

"Our car parking initiative has resulted in many benefits for the club. As well as additional revenue, we have seen much more goodwill in the local community. Local businesses have shown more interest in the club and have supported our fundraising initiatives, with funding donations to help us replace the clubhouse roof and install the car park security gate."

Liz Pulford, President

Top tips:

- Appoint a co-ordinator to manage your volunteers.
- Draw up a parking plan to help maximise the number of spaces (and revenue).
- Speak to local businesses or clubs that may need parking (and can advertise on social media for you).
- Decide whether you are going to pay for parking attendants or use volunteers.
- Explore the need for security guards – it can be challenging to retain guards who are reliable, efficient and cost effective.
- Draw up legal contracts for car park users – this is invaluable should disagreements arise.

Case Study: Molesey Boat Club

Developing an alternative income stream: Café

The club looked to capitalise on its location on a lovely stretch of river, with a busy adjacent footpath, by opening a café on its premises. It was inspired by a nearby cricket club that had opened a café and was doing good business.

What was done?

After some initial research, the club identified a concession arrangement as its preferred route, charging a monthly rent to a commercial operator, along with a profit share over an agreed level of turnover.

The café has seen many benefits for the club, including:

- Additional income stream from non-club members.
- An enhanced club profile in the local area.
- More new members.

Top tips:

- Check with your LA on any local requirements.
- Explain your plans and rationale to club members during the planning stages – this helps to avoid bad feeling amongst members and helps them understand how the club will change.
- Have a contract and take legal advice on the contract content.
- Hold regular meetings with your operator to identify and discuss operational issues.



Photo credit: Eight On The River



Case study: Weybridge Rowing Club

Developing an alternative income stream: Weybridge Community Regatta

Weybridge Rowing Club established the Weybridge Community Regatta in 2014 as a community initiative to give local businesses an opportunity to meet, network and compete in a sporting environment. It was also seen as a good way of fundraising for the club, promoted as 'a great way to help local businesses pull together'.

What was done?

Local businesses were approached to test their interest in becoming involved. A range of sponsors and partners were also secured to support the event.

Format for the day:

- **Welcome:** kick off with breakfast
- **AM:** Every team does a 500m time trial and a 2k indoor ergo relay (500m for each team member)
- **Lunch**
- **PM:** Side-by-side regatta, again 500m. Depending on entries, there may be single gender and mixed gender teams.
- **5pm:** Prize giving with tea by the river.

Entries fees were £600 per crew, with each crew receiving advance training sessions (at least one mandatory session) and a cox for the races. The entries were limited to 24 teams, with plenty of time to network, make friends and connect with other local businesses.

"The Community Regatta has helped us raise monies from sources other than our club members and has significantly raised the profile of Weybridge Rowing Club in the local area. It has gone from strength to strength and is now well established as a regular annual community event."

Rachel Kornberg, Chair of the Organising Committee

Top tips:

- Provide advance training to participants, both on land and on the water, to make sure all crews are safe on the day.
- Getting businesses involved can be a challenge – treat every meeting like a business meeting, explaining the benefits to them and don't rely on emails or unplanned visits.
- Seek sponsors and partners from across your local community.



Photo credit: David Gaylard



3.5 Sponsorship

Introduction

Sponsorship is a commitment by a business or organisation to support your club in exchange for something specific, which could be money, promotion or advertisements.

The main aim of the sponsor is to either reach a new audience or be associated with a good cause. Public image and being seen to support a local cause can be very important for businesses based in local communities.

The benefits of sponsorship are varied and can include a cash injection, staff knowledge and resources or other products or services (such as local builders undertaking work on your boathouse). Having a visible connection to the local community is as important to clubs as it is to local businesses.

Important notice

There are some specific rules regarding sponsorship of rowing and these can be found in the *British Rowing Rules of Racing* and also in British Rowing's [Guidance on Sponsorship](#) (more in depth).

These rules explain the types of organisations not to seek sponsorship from and what you should and shouldn't do with sponsors advertisements and logos on equipment and at events.

Broadly speaking, sponsorship should not be harmful to the image of rowing as a sport and images should not impair the recognition of a crew at events.

It is especially important that sponsorship of anything related to junior rowing and juniors is thought through very carefully.

Sponsorship opportunities

A sponsor's relationship with your club can be short term or long term, and can include:

- Sponsorship of the club as a whole – for an agreed sum per annum.
- A new boat or building (sometimes named after the sponsor or their company).
- 'Lending' staff – e.g. the local hardware store staff come to paint your club with their paint.
- Kit manufacturer sponsors – via logos on your club kit or the whole kit itself.
- Trailer and towing vehicle sponsors – can you get fuel, servicing or tyres from the local garage in return for advertising? Adverts on road vehicles can reach a much wider audience.



How to attract sponsors

Whilst most competitive clubs can attract sponsors for individual events at their regattas, many either find it hard to attract a larger sponsor or haven't tried. Consider the following to help you get started:

- **Start small** – Try approaching local community businesses that you already know. Communicating with people you know is always more comfortable and you can ask them for tips and input even if they aren't able to help.
- **Do your research** – Think about what you are able to offer and not just what you can get. Research their businesses background, people and ethos.
- **Build relationships** – Try inviting potential partners to an event or competition that you host to showcase your club in a good light. Think about their goals. For example:
 - Events held in stable boats help to showcase rowing as a sport for everyone and it will be easier to talk about the health, friendship and community benefits.Or
 - Summer regattas. These might be more appropriate for larger companies where more aspirational, high pressure, exciting racing may be more aligned to their business ideals.
- **What's the attraction** – think about what it is about your club that will be attractive to a potential sponsor. For example:
 - Visibility to the local community – the positioning of many clubs makes them ideal.
 - Media coverage at events, with example(s) if possible.
 - Potential new audiences and customers – include membership numbers, event attendance, etc.
 - Showcase for a sponsor's services – where can they advertise?

Top tips for sponsorship

- Keep up to date statistics about your membership, possible audience and numbers attending your events.
- What assets do you have that could be valuable to a potential sponsor?
- Use your local Chamber of Commerce, as well as the local authority for contacts.
- Be clear on what you are looking for and what a sponsor will get out of the relationship.
- Find out who to contact – do your research.
- Make sure you know if sponsorship is contrary to your club's organisational set up.
- Be open about any sponsorship you obtain.
- Make sure that all terms and conditions are written down and agreed by both parties and take legal advice if necessary.



Remember that sponsors are businesses that will want something in return for their funding. Sponsorship is a two-way relationship that, if nurtured, can be highly beneficial for both parties and can lead to long term support. By being an effective partner and communicating with your sponsor regularly, you'll pave the way for a successful, long term partnership.

Further information

For further information on sponsorship for rowing clubs, visit the [UK Sponsorship](#) website.

3.6 Sharing club facilities

Introduction

If you're looking to improve your club's financial position, then sharing your facilities might be the answer. Establishing the right partnerships can deliver a 'win/win' scenario with many positive benefits for your club. However, make sure you do your research, as the wrong partnerships can have adverse effects such as pressure on club resources, poor communications or disgruntled members.

Questions to ask

- Do you know of another group looking for a new home?
- What facilities could you share? Your clubroom, gym, boathouse, equipment or parking?
- Who else could you share with? Explore the options such as local groups needing a meeting room, local school or college wanting to row, scout or guide groups or local businesses looking for parking.

Here are some top tips for getting it right

Involve the right people – It's important to involve the correct club personnel from the outset. Discussions which start off amicably can often break down if they are made without the proper level of leadership involvement or knowledge. Make sure you understand the implications of any club sharing arrangement on your club's constitution or legal set up. Club sharing may not be possible. Take legal advice if necessary.



Consider the pros and cons – Draw up a list of the benefits of club sharing, along with any negatives or potential issues.

Club sharing pros and cons	
Potential benefits	Potential issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased or potential new regular income. • Potential new pool of members and/or new volunteers. • Heightened local profile and community connections. • New opportunities for both parties, such as access to other equipment, coaches or facilities. • Enhanced club security due to extended usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incompatible partnerships. • Opposition from existing club members (on both sides). • Misconceptions and/or different expectations. • Lack of clarity and unclear aims and objectives. • Legal requirements. • Length of commitments.

Exploring the practicalities – Make sure you fully understand the implications and practical issues to emerge from club sharing:

- **Health & safety** – are the regulations for all parties the same? Who sets these and how? Are they communicated? Is there enough water and land space for everyone?
- **Insurance** – will you take out joint insurance or will this be separate? Make sure your insurer is advised of any change in circumstances.
- **Invoicing** – where will invoices be sent? Generic email addresses rather than named individuals can help you keep track but remember to allocate named individual(s) to monitor the mailbox.
- **Facilities and equipment** – what can be used, when and by whom? Consider a booking system to help allocate user groups and make sure all existing and potential users are clear on the arrangements. How will any damage be reported, managed and paid for?
- **Memberships** – will these be individual, corporate or will new categories be introduced?
- **Replacement Fund** – with increased use of equipment comes increased expenditure on maintenance. Consider a replacement fund calculation exercise. (Web searches can highlight some free calculators.)
- **Managing member expectations** – what are these or is this a money generating exercise only?



Don't just think of the money – Sharing facilities can be a big step so don't just focus on the money. Your club members will want to know that you have their interests at heart and that they're still your priority. Make sure you consider all aspects:

- Is there compatibility between user groups? Are there underused times on the water or in the club that match the needs of your potential partner(s)?
- Will there be a strain on any shared resources?
- How will future growth be managed, both on and off the water?
- How will you operate day to day?
- Are you premises freehold or leasehold? There may be a need for consultation if a change of use takes place.
- How will you deal with any potential issues?

Agree the terms – All parties need to know what they are agreeing to, for how long and at what cost. Set these ground rules out clearly and communicate them well. By spending time developing good communication channels at the outset, you will increase the prospect of delivering long term benefits for all.

Draw up a legal agreement – If the ground rules are clear from the outset, future misunderstanding can often be prevented. Make sure you:

- Draw up a legal contract or agreement so that all parties know their commitment.
- Include any governance policies, procedures or local rules to be followed.
- Ensure that, if payments are to be made, these are transparent and agreed by all parties.

Additional information

The [National Council of Voluntary Organisations](#) (NCVO) has downloadable information to help volunteer-led organisations.



Section 4 - Facilities management

Introduction

Managing and maintaining your facilities will be one of the biggest challenges that your club will face. It requires both:

- Long term strategic planning – to ensure a well maintained, sustainable environment that meets both the existing and future needs of your members.
- Day to day operational planning – to deliver a high quality service to members and visitors, in line with regulatory and legal requirements.

Effective facilities management will ensure that your facilities are operational and ready for use, helping to keep costs down. It is one of the key principles of good club management.

For the purposes of this Club Management Guide, facilities management covers the following areas:

- The physical infrastructure that your club owns or rents such as your clubhouse, boathouse, changing facilities, gymnasium and/or bar and catering areas.
- The physical environment used for rowing activity such as access to waterways.
- The equipment that your club provides for members such as boats, towing and trailering equipment.

In this section, we provide guidance on:

1. Boathouse and facility maintenance
2. Facility tenure and leases
3. Relationships with local authorities
4. Working with your local waterway and navigation authorities
5. Emergency planning
6. Environmental sustainability
7. Transport, trailering and towing



Photo credit: Drew Smith



For further information and guidance on safety and emergency planning, please also see:

- British Rowing's [RowSafe](#) guidance that provides safety advice to rowers, clubs, events and anyone else who takes part in rowing.
- British Rowing's [Safety in Club Premises](#) webpage.
- British Rowing's [Club Governance Guide](#).

British Rowing disclaimer:

This club guide provides general guidance to clubs and their members on facilities management. However, it is the responsibility of each club to maintain up-to-date risk assessments and define and monitor its own safety practices, guidance and procedures specific to its environment and activities. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that all information and guidance in this club guide is accurate and reflective of best practice at the time of publication, it is the user's responsibility to ensure that such information and guidance is up to date before acting upon it. British Rowing accepts no responsibility for the content of third party websites accessed through links in this guide.

4.1 Boathouse/facility maintenance

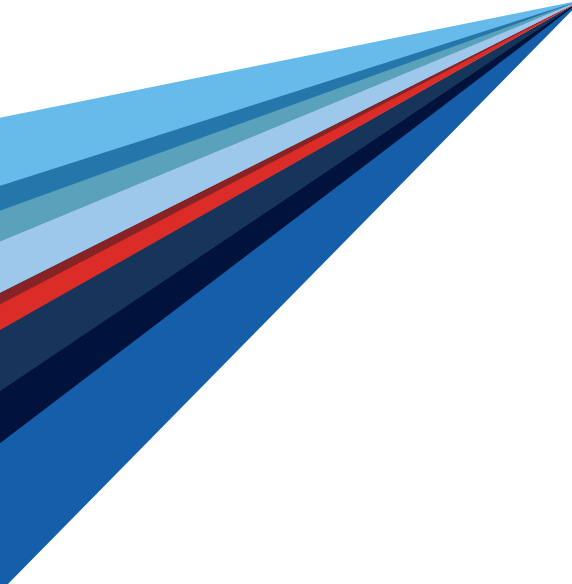
Introduction

Maintenance is a key component of facilities management and covers a wide range of activities. It can be planned or reactive.

Whilst you may service your boats and gym equipment regularly, routine maintenance of your clubhouse or premises can sometimes get overlooked until something goes wrong. This reactive response can be both frustrating and expensive but having a preventative maintenance plan will help to avoid further damage and/or cost. It will also reduce the risks to your members of something going wrong.

Maintenance planning

Having an up to date maintenance plan and records for your club ensures that everyone can see what maintenance actions are due and when. It provides continuity of knowledge about what was done, when and by whom which is particularly useful if club personnel change. Whilst there is specific legislation about safety equipment such as emergency lighting or fire extinguishers, minor jobs can often get overlooked.



Having a maintenance plan can avoid unexpected or unnecessary expenditure and helps to prolong the life of your club's assets.

The typical areas where compliance with legislation or safety concerns arise are:

- Heating and lighting.
- Electrical appliances. Have you had yours tested and certified as safe by a qualified electrician?
- Emergency exit routes.
- Emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets and smoke alarms. Are service plans in place and is all emergency equipment tested as required?
- Trailers and club vehicles:
 - Have you checked all MOTs, licences, insurance and designated drivers?
 - Do you have an annual service plan for the trailer and any vehicles?
- Office spaces. Are they cleared and tidied regularly?
- Rodent or pest control. This can often be a problem near water.

Make sure you:

- Understand the legal or regulatory requirements, such as health and safety legislation or local environmental regulations and comply with them. For example, you will need to carry out additional checks for bars, kitchens or other areas where specific hygiene rules and legislation apply.
- Structure your plan in a simple table format to identify each task, its frequency, when it was last done, by whom and when it is next due.
- Include an inspection plan listing equipment to be checked and the frequency of checks.
- Review your club's expenditure on past repairs and renewals to help highlight the areas that may need attention e.g. where there have been high or repeated costs in one problem area.
- Try to highlight problems that could get worse if not tackled soon such as repairs to roofs, windows, water and heating systems, landing stages and parking areas or even equipment.
- Identify specific safety issues, such as loose wiring or cracked glass.
- Use a 'quarantine system' for anything awaiting repair and make sure that these items are easily identifiable.
- Complete regular cleaning, as well as an annual deep clean of all furnishings – clubrooms get a lot of use!



A well maintained clubhouse shows your members that you care about them and your club environment. In the long term, it will also save you money on unexpected repairs.

Preventative maintenance

There are two ways to approach preventative maintenance:

1. The first, where it is not possible to assess the overall condition of the facility/equipment by other means, takes account of the time or extent to which something has been used.

Make sure that your service plan:

- Includes maintenance at specified intervals or after defined periods of use, often prescribed by the manufacturer.
- Includes all equipment where the consequences of failure can be significant (serious, unsafe or expensive). Examples include:
 - Vehicles (based on mileage).
 - Road trailers (annually) (see the [Safety Alert on Checking your Trailer](#)).
 - Outboard motors on launches (annually).

2. The second form of preventative maintenance is based on condition, as a result of inspection or observation, where checks may highlight the need for maintenance or repair.

Make sure that you:

- Include formal inspections as part of your plan and make informal checks a matter of habit.
- Encourage your members to check equipment before use (for example, electrical equipment, lifejackets or outboard motors) in the same way that they would check boats before launching them.
- Ensure that everyone knows the process to identify and report defects or maintenance issues and encourage your members to do so.

For further information, see British Rowing's [Safety in Club Premises](#) webpage and [Safety Alerts](#) archive.



Photo credit: John Stead



A suggested inspection schedule				
Maintenance checks	Frequency	Responsibility	Date complete	Date due next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas installation system and appliance inspection Fixed electrical installation inspection <p>Make sure you keep records of these inspections, as well as those on Lifting equipment (see below).</p>	Every five years ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas Safe Qualified Technician Qualified electrician 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical appliances Gas appliances and their flues Lifejackets (see Safety Alert on Check your Lifejacket) Lifting equipment that does not carry people² 	Annually			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifting equipment that carries people² 	Every six months			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roofs Windows Rainwater gutters and downpipes Lights, both indoors and outdoors Water and heating supplies Toilets and showers Boat racking integrity Landing stages and pontoons Launches and their steering systems Throwlines (see the Safety Alert on Throwlines) Parking areas Security fences and gates Outdoor storage Outdoor tables and chairs 	Quarterly			

¹ Based on the legal requirements for residential lettings.

² As defined in the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.



A suggested inspection schedule				
Maintenance checks	Frequency	Responsibility	Date complete	Date due next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid kits • Defibrillators • Other safety equipment • Rodent and pest control equipment 	Monthly			
General housekeeping – check for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstructed fire exits and fire evacuation routes • Trip hazards • Slip hazards e.g. wet floors • Outside areas that can become slippery • Ventilation of areas with gas appliances • General cleanliness and tidiness, including toilets, showers and changing rooms 	Weekly			

¹ Based on the legal requirements for residential lettings.

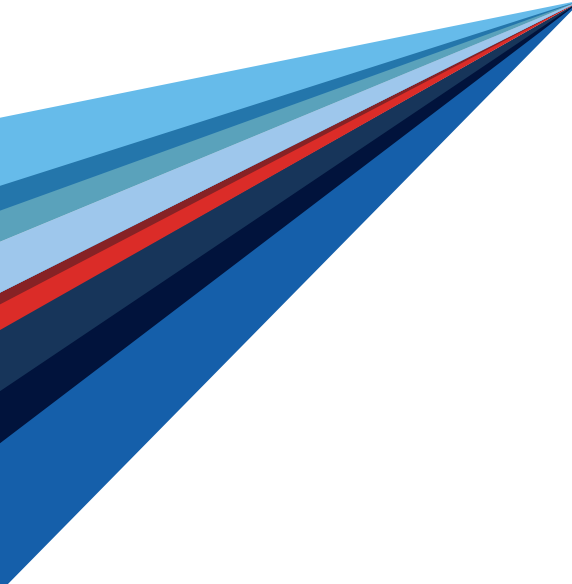
² As defined in the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

Cleaning is often forgotten but can make a huge difference to the way members feel about your club. Set up a cleaning rota or employ a cleaner to ensure regular cleaning.

Some additional checks on fire arrangements:

- Are fire extinguishers in the correct place?
- Are fire extinguishers unused/full (check the pressure gauge, if fitted, or check the weight)?
- Are fire blankets in the right place?
- Are smoke alarms and rate of heat rise alarms functioning correctly?
- Are carbon monoxide detectors functioning correctly?

For more information on fire arrangements, refer to British Rowing's [Safety in Club Premises](#) page.



Use of contractors versus club/committee members

Many clubs rely on their members to complete repairs and maintenance, rather than contracting with a specialist company. Some simple maintenance tasks can be undertaken by people who are competent but not qualified e.g. painting, cleaning, etc. Parents and friends can also be invited to help.

Your club may also have members with the appropriate skills to help with facility maintenance work and in some cases, they are professionally qualified to do so. Some may work in the building trade and others may have acquired skills and experience through their professional or volunteer work. Try to identify members with relevant skills and invite them to volunteer for the benefit of your club. Remember that not everyone will want to volunteer as their membership may be an important escape from their day to day job.

Some club constitutions do not allow members to do paid work for their club, so check this before proceeding with a project. Also, consider your club insurance and what happens if things go wrong – you don't want issues with any work undertaken to adversely impact on your membership.

Finally, make sure you have a clear list of the maintenance tasks that require competent or qualified people. For example, any work involving gas must be undertaken by someone on the [Gas Safe Register](#).

The pros and cons of using contractors versus club/committee members are explored in Table 4.1.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Table 4.1 Using contractors versus club/committee members

Factors	Contractors	Club/committee members	Consider
Risk	Often less risky as will provide insurance cover, risk assessment, warranties, etc.	May not tick all compliance boxes and leave your club open to legal issues if they are not professional, registered tradespeople.	Will the work require any form of compliance such as working with gas and electricity?
Cost	Potentially more expensive for the specific job but may help to save costs in the long run.	Potentially cheaper but may involve paying more costs over a longer period if not completed correctly.	How important are costs versus value and reliability?
Quality of work	The experts should do the job well and have some form of warranty.	May not necessarily be experts unless they are in the appropriate profession.	Does the job need to be specified and completed to the highest quality?
Speed	Depends on how quickly they can respond and their existing involvement.	More likely to be regularly on site so can identify problems and solutions as they arise.	How quickly does the job need doing?
Options	Options of who you can choose to do the work and therefore open market competition.	May be limited to who can do the work and who is available.	How skilled does the person need to be to do the work?
Equipment	Should have the right tools and equipment to do the job.	May have to buy or rent tools if they are not self-employed.	Does your club have the required tools or can you obtain them easily?

Source: Sport England ClubMatters



Top tips: Equipment maintenance

Ergometers

- Get members into the habit of wiping your ergo's down after use, storing the handle correctly in the flywheel housing. Complete a monthly deep clean and oil where necessary. Regular servicing can prolong the life of your equipment and help prevent accidents.

Boats, oars/blades and associated rowing equipment

- Give the entire boat fleet a deep clean, inside and out, including oar handles.
- Make a log of all boats and include rigging notes of all measurements. This information can be stored in the boat register section of ClubHub.
- Note any minor boat repairs needed and if they can be done in-house.
- Check all moving parts – slides or slide stoppers/ends often get overlooked.
- Check steering wires are not frayed and shoes have all the fixing screws.
- Re-paint oars where necessary – minor repairs to spoons can often be done in-house.
- Refer to the advice in RowSafe to check your boats, including a useful [video](#).
- Every crew member should know what to check – including steering and communication systems.

Launches and safety equipment

- Use the guidance in RowSafe to look after your launches and other safety equipment.
- Ensure that all throw lines, lifejackets and buoyancy aids are regularly checked for integrity and are in good working order.
- Ensure that any land-based safety lines or lifebuoys are checked and in place.

For further information, see [RowSafe](#).

Gas and asbestos safety

Take particular care when dealing with:

- **Asbestos** – this is particularly important when planning any building work/repairs to ensure that nobody is exposed to damaged asbestos in the building structure. Exposure to asbestos dust still kills about 5,000 people each year in the UK.
- **Gas** – ensure the gas installation and appliances remain safe, particularly if buildings are left unoccupied. Make sure that all rooms where gas appliances are fitted are well ventilated. The installation of Carbon Monoxide detectors in these rooms is also recommended.

Further information on Asbestos and Gas Safety is provided on the British Rowing [Safety in Club Premises](#) webpage.



4.2 Facilities: tenure and leases

Introduction

When looking to secure either the use or occupation of premises, some options for your club to consider include freehold or leasehold tenure, club sharing or community asset transfer.

Tenure is an umbrella term for whether your club operates under **freehold** (where your club owns the buildings and land) or **leasehold** (where your club either leases the buildings or land, or a combination of both).

If your club wants to acquire land or buildings, the options will depend on your facility requirements. For example:

- If you operate on just one day a week, you may only need to rent space or access to premises and have a simple User Agreement that can be extended or renewed from time to time.
- If your club has more regular activity and requires sole use of the premises, it may be more appropriate to seek a lease or purchase a freehold.

Always seek qualified legal advice and, if necessary, advice from a Chartered Surveyor, before any formal tenure negotiations. Ideally, your advisor should be knowledgeable about your club's current and future facility requirements.

Freehold/Ownership

The ideal scenario for many clubs is to own their own property on a freehold basis, as this not only helps to secure the club's future, but also avoids future landlord negotiations or other leasehold issues.

As a freeholder you will have total control (within your permitted activities and the law) over your club's activities, with the potential to support your existence through activities such as hiring out any clubroom to other local groups. However, owning a freehold will incur insurance, maintenance and running costs, so make sure you build these into your financial plans. Freehold ownership may not be the best option for every club, particularly if you are newly formed with limited financial resources.

Make sure you:

- Carefully consider your club's legal structure.
- Refer to British Rowing's [club governance](#) information.



Leasehold

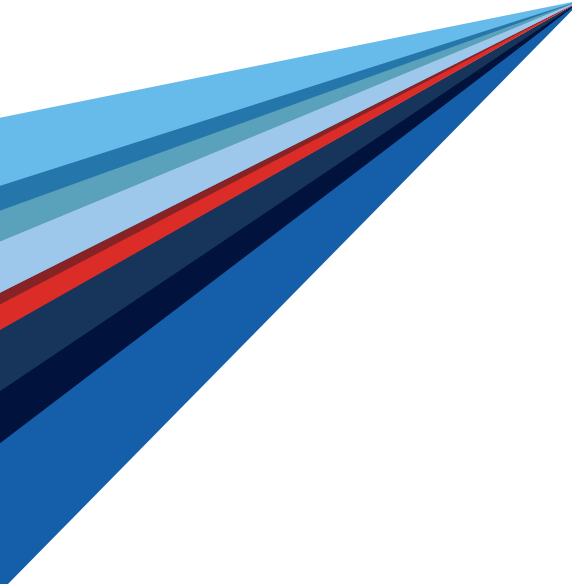
Another option to consider is to obtain a 'ground lease' for ground on which to build your premises, where the rent can be negotiated. You may also be able to negotiate a nominal or peppercorn rent – a token charge to create a contract.

Whether you are taking on a lease for just the land, or the land and an existing building, it is likely that you will be required to insure, maintain and provide for the upkeep of the premises. Occasionally, the maintenance of the structure can be the responsibility of the landlord, but this is unusual.

For leasehold ownership, make sure you:

- Have a Schedule of Dilapidations with photographs. Your club is then only obligated to hand back the premises in the same condition as at the start of the lease. This is very important.
- Try to secure a 'ground lease' of 99 years or more where possible, especially as your building should last for much longer than this. Where this is not possible, your term should not be for less than 33 years, ideally with an option to extend for another 33 years. This provides you with security of tenure.
- Remember that the length of your lease is important, particularly if you are hoping to apply for external funding/grant aid or access loans, both now and in the future. Having a sufficient length of tenure is often one of the key assessment criteria for funding bodies.
- Consider your options carefully:
 - If a long lease is not available or your club isn't ready to make a long term commitment, you may want to consider a short term lease.
 - Take extra care to ensure that you have reasonable terms regarding rent reviews and lease extensions or rights to renew. For example, make sure that rent reviews are at more than five yearly intervals, with reviews capped to price indices if possible.
 - Consider leasing land, or land and buildings, from various sources such as private landlords, local authorities, charitable organisations such as The National Trust, or a commercial organisation. Note that in these cases, rent negotiations are often based not on the 'open market' value but on the tenant's ability to pay (often supported by audited accounts).
- Always seek specialist legal advice before agreeing to any lease or rental terms.
- Consider lease renewals well in advance of expiry:
 - Start negotiations early, in some cases years before, as there are many issues that can cause negotiations to stall.
 - Any changes to the length or terms of the lease, or the rental, must be mutually agreed and cannot be changed unilaterally.

Always take professional advice at the earliest opportunity when considering any lease options/negotiations.



Any negotiations regarding your club's lease are very important as this is the legal document that binds your club (and its officers/trustees) for the full term. You may be tempted to sign, in the hope that your successors will somehow be able to manage rental increases in the future. If there is any doubt, DO NOT SIGN.

There is further government advice on leases available [here](#).

Club sharing

There are many examples of more informal tenure arrangements which can help your committee manage a 'leaner' club. For example, finding a club to host your activities, renting the village hall for your activities and meetings, or parking a gig in the pub car park. A club sharing approach can be particularly useful if you operate across multiple sites.

Alternatively, you could consider leasing space from a 'host' club that provides access to its facilities for a fee, with a formal agreement, or you may agree for your members to join the 'host' club, rather than paying rent.

As with all tenure scenarios, consider your options carefully.

Community Asset Transfer

Asset transfer involves the transfer of the ownership of land or buildings from government organisations such as local authorities to community groups like local sports clubs and trusts. This can happen at a significantly discounted price if there is a benefit to the local community.

If a community building or piece of land in public ownership near to where you row becomes available, you may be able to bid to transfer the ownership or management of the site to your club, either via a lease or purchase. This can occur when a building is unused or needs an injection of life. If you initiate a Right to Bid, it may give you some time to develop your bid further. To be a suitable candidate for Community Asset Transfer, you will need to demonstrate that your club will provide social, economic and environmental benefits for the local community.

Take a look at the [Sport England](#) website if your club is considering this option.

Make sure you review and evaluate your club's activities regularly to see how you are doing, both as a club and as an amenity for your local community. By being on top of these issues, you will be able to act quickly if opportunities arise.

Further guidance on Community Asset Transfer is also available on the [Sport England Club Matters](#) website, or from your [British Rowing Community Support Manager](#).



Photo credit: Fulham Reach Boat Club



4.3 Relationships with local authorities

Local Authority (LA) facts

- There are 343 LAs in England made up of County, District, Unitary, Metropolitan and Boroughs, with information on how each LA fits within the Government structure available [here](#).
- LAs comprise elected representatives (councillors) and employees tasked with delivering council policy.
- Councillors representing specific wards or areas work within government guidelines to achieve outcomes across a range of areas, including health and physical activity.
- LAs work in tandem with Health Authorities and Active Partnerships (formerly County Sports Partnerships).

How can your LA help you?

- **Funding** – With reductions to government funding and spending cuts in many areas, there are fewer LA grants or funding opportunities available. However, there may be some small, localised pots of funding available that LAs and councillors will know about.
- **Information** – LAs can also provide you with detailed local area information to help with membership campaigns, as well as promotional support and introductions to other groups. For example, there may be population data for your area, with breakdowns for age/gender/socio demographics etc.
- **Mutual relationships** – Some clubs access their club facilities over LA owned/leased land, pay to use LA car parks or operate from an LA site. If this applies to your club, building a mutually beneficial relationship should be a primary goal. Think about what you can do for your LA, such as helping with the upkeep of paths in exchange for cheaper fees or an agreed amount of parking.
- **Making contact** – If you don't have a relationship with your LA, local councillor or local MP, it can be very useful to develop one to gain support for your club's ambitions:
 - Find out the best point of LA contact for sport and leisure and if there is a specific councillor with this remit.
 - When making contact with your local councillor, remember to check both the areas where most of your members come from, as well as the area where your club is based, as they may have different councillors.



How can you help your LA?

- **Promoting physical activity** – LAs, together with Active Partnerships, work to promote and support active, healthy lifestyles within their communities and rowing supports this agenda. Building relationships with your local councillors and policy makers will help them understand what your club brings to the local community.
- **Promoting your local area** – Club publicity, linked for example to competition success and the programmes you run, will raise the profile of both your club and the local area, whilst club events will also attract people to your area.
- **Boosting the local economy** – Work out how much extra revenue your club event brings to your area in terms of extra participants, visitors and the money they spend – you might be surprised at the results. In addition to events, your club may already be benefiting the local economy and its businesses through club members travelling from further afield to use your local facilities.

4.4 Working with your local waterway and navigation authorities

Introduction

What would you do if:

- There was an urgent issue with access to the water?
- The canal you row on was overcome with vegetation?
- The weir near your club started to breakdown?

If key club personnel were unavailable, would your club members know who to contact?

Make sure important information and relevant contact details for your local waterway or navigation authority are easily accessible to all members.

Many, if not most, club members cannot name the waterway or navigation authority responsible for the water that they row on. And many more don't know what the waterway authorities do, or how they can help. With over 60 waterway authorities and navigation groups across the UK, it can be difficult to know where to start.

Who are the waterway authorities?

There are many public and private waterway or navigation authorities and bodies including trusts, councils, harbour authorities and other organisations such as DEFRA or Natural England that have responsibility for our waterways.

Waterway and navigation authorities can either own the land and/or water that you use, or sometimes they own a proportion of the water, such as the top 6cm! There are often other organisations involved in the management of your water, or access to it, or even parts of it, making the process of knowing who is responsible for what even more challenging.



What do they do?

Some waterway and navigation authorities are responsible for the upkeep of the banks and some the fords, weirs, water courses, bridges or any related buildings. Common challenges include knowing where to go if there is a tree down in the river and rowing is dangerous, if debris needs clearing from bridges after a flood or footpaths need to be cleared.

More serious matters that water and navigation authorities can deal with, or help with, include incidents such as discharges into the water courses of oil, poison, farm or factory effluent. All of these can be dangerous to the environment and also pose a risk to the health of your members.

Many water and navigation authorities, but not all, charge a fee for using their water and clubs have to purchase licences for their boats. There are usually discounts for boats such as safety launches or those used by juniors.

British Rowing ClubHub benefits

The purchase of licences can be simplified if they are purchased through British Rowing's [ClubHub Management System](#).

These licence fees contribute to waterway and navigation authorities' activities such as:

- Removing debris.
- Repairing bank erosion.
- Flood damage.
- Removing weeds.
- Dredging.

Know your waterway or navigation authority

Knowing who is responsible for the water that you row on is important as there may be rules, restrictions or licences that you need to know about. Some waterway and navigation authorities hold national and local meetings where interested parties can attend and it's a good idea to make your introductions before you need their help. You may also have a local river user group which can help maintain relationships with other river users and give you a stronger collective voice should issues arise.

Watch out!

Before starting any work on or near any watercourse, make sure you check if any 'consents' are required from the appropriate water or navigation authority. Failure to obtain these could be considered a criminal offence. This is especially important if you are in a flood risk area.

Brushing leaves from the trees on your land into the river can get you into trouble, as can washing boats with certain cleaning agents that drain into the waterways.



How to find your waterway or navigation authority

To help you find out which authority is responsible for the water that you row on, the [Association of Inland Navigation Authorities](#) provides information and links to relevant organisations. Your [Local Authority](#) and [Regional Rowing Council](#) will also be able to help.

For further information, refer to the main waterway authority websites:

- [Environment Agency](#).
- [Canal & River Trust](#) network where you can use an interactive map to help find your local waterways.
- [Port of London Authority](#).
- [Inland Waterways Association](#) which also has an interactive map of all navigable rivers and canals.

4.5 Emergency planning

Introduction

Thankfully, real emergencies and disasters are not common occurrences, but members need guidance on what to do in these circumstances as their ability to respond quickly can help to mitigate any impact.

Weather related emergencies, such as flooding, storms or drought are the most common for rowing clubs. These problems can cause damage to your facilities, as well as having an impact on your members' ability to row.

Having a plan means that everything can be dealt with in a calm and controlled way. Use your club's risk assessment to produce or update a Club Emergency Response Plan.

For guidance on developing your Club Emergency Response Plan, please refer to [RowSafe, chapter 3](#).

There are also more tips and guidance, including some essential downloads such as a risk assessment template on the [Safety page](#) of the British Rowing website.

Specific emergencies

When preparing your Club Emergency Response Plan, make sure that you consider the implications of some of the more serious, specific emergencies carefully.

Further information on planning for emergencies that all clubs are strongly advised to explore is available through:

- British Rowing's [RowSafe](#) guidance.
- British Rowing's [Safety in Club Premises](#) webpage.

Keep a copy of your Club Emergency Response Plan on display and distribute it to key club personnel.



Questions to ask

Fire

Do you have a fire risk assessment and emergency evacuation plan? Is it well publicised so members know what to do in the event of a fire?

Do you have fire extinguishers and fire blankets available in your boathouse, bar, kitchen and other areas where appropriate? Are they inspected and serviced regularly?

Do you check emergency lighting or exit signs and display building layout plans to show exit and escape routes and doors, as well as locations of emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets?

Are emergency telephone numbers publicised clearly?

Do you provide committee members with a list of emergency telephone numbers for each other, not just emails?

Whilst insurance would usually cover the fabric of the building and its contents, do you have a full list of all the things stored at your club? Remember to include club trophies and all equipment such as megaphones, bells, flags and PA systems.

Do you have a back up of your membership or business contacts? Would you be able to contact your brewery, cleaner, refrigerator engineers or boat repairer in an emergency?

Further information

Find more tips and guidance on the British Rowing website [here](#).

British Rowing ClubHub benefits

Do you keep a computer on your club's premises with all your club information on it?

If you don't back up this data off site or to a 'cloud', all it takes is a fire, theft or flood to lose all your important club records.

The British Rowing [ClubHub Management system](#) allows clubs to record and keep all their membership and business contacts in a safe place, fully backed up in case of emergencies.

ClubHub provides the following club benefits:

- Saves you time.
- Streamlines your financial processes.
- Provides easy access to club insights.
- Helps you communicate with your members.
- Helps you comply with data regulations.
- Provides up-to-date business knowledge and best practice.
- Streamlines the affiliation process.



Questions to ask

Flooding

The impacts of flooding should never be underestimated.

Have you thought about how flooding would impact on your club?

Do you use sand bags to help protect your club from flooding?

Do you have a flood alert protocol? Who is the contact on the flood alert message line? Is there more than one? Make sure these contact details are always up to date.

Do you have flood insurance?

Do you know what different flood warnings mean for your club? For example, what does a flood height of 10cm mean for equipment stored on the floor or at low levels? Could it be moved to a safer position to prevent damage?

Do club members know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water?

Do you provide advice to members to avoid walking or driving in or near flood water?

After a flood, make sure that you:

- **Know who to contact at your insurance company.**
- **Take photos for insurance purposes.**
- **Wear protective clothing and gloves when clearing up.**
- **Clean everything thoroughly after contact with flood water.**
- **Get all electrics and services checked.**
- **Use drying out equipment in well ventilated areas.**
- **Take advice on how to reduce damage if another flood should occur (e.g. flood proofing, flood boards and air brick covers, non-return valves, etc.). Further information is available on the Environment Agency website.**
- **Consider changing the height of shelving, storage, cupboards, electricity points or fuse boxes.**

Further information

Sport England has template downloads and flood advice [here](#).

The government's multi-agency strategic approach to flooding is set out in the National Flood Emergency Framework for England (2014), with key roles and responsibilities, [here](#).

Sign up to the Met Office for weather information and advice, including flood warnings [here](#).



Questions to ask

Medical emergencies

How would your members deal with an individual medical emergency at the club or on the riverbank?

Do your members know:

- Who the club first aiders are? Do you publicise their details with names and photos?
- What to do in an emergency? Do you display posters showing emergency contact numbers and procedures?
- Who can operate your defibrillator? Is the list of people publicised?
- The postcode of the club and [3 word](#) location as well as any specific directions for the emergency services?
- Do you display a map of your stretch of water and access points? This will support easier communication with Emergency Services.
- Dialling 999 is the easiest way to contact the emergency services and if it is dusk or night time, to put the outside lights on?
- The location of first aid supplies? Are these checked regularly and kept up to date?

Further information

British Rowing's [Rowsafe](#) guidance has comprehensive information on the procedures to follow for various medical emergencies.

Top tips – Club insurance

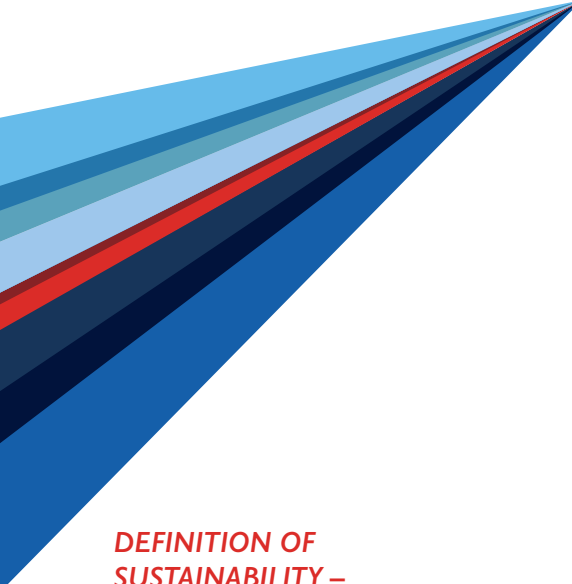
- Make sure you have appropriate types and levels of **insurance cover** for your buildings, contents, boathouses and all equipment.
- Some policies might also include flood damage cover, although this can be limited for clubs that have previously flooded.
- Consider **business interruption insurance** which covers any loss of income if your club is unable to trade following an emergency/disaster.

Further information and guidance for clubs on insurance is available [here](#).

Further information

The Health & Safety Executive has extensive [guidance for sports clubs](#). Whilst not emergency specific, it's a useful resource to help check your plans.

Find more advice on safety and emergencies and what you should do in an emergency involving electricity [here](#).



DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY – ‘THE ABILITY TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY OR ENDURE’

Sign up to your electricity supplier for advance notice of services interruptions or search for [National Grid Distribution Network Operators](#) to identify the electricity supplier for your area.

4.6 Environmental Sustainability

Introduction

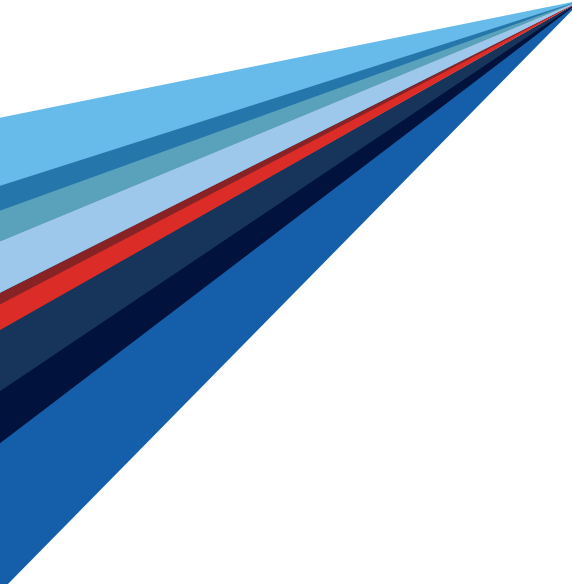
Sport England describes sporting environmental sustainability as **‘the ability to operate with minimal impact on the environment and with the lowest practical running costs for energy, water and waste’**.

Most rowers and clubs are very mindful of their impact on the environment and many clubs are already taking steps to help protect it. Rowing has an opportunity to lead the way and really showcase how we can address environmental issues. From banning single use plastic bottles to installing solar panels to cut down on fuel bills, there are many things that clubs and members can do to help minimise their environmental impact, particularly in areas such as water, energy use and carbon emissions from travel.

The [British Association of Sustainable Sport](#) provides some interesting information on how other sports are trying to reduce their impact on the environment.

Questions to ask

- Do you talk about sustainability and environmental issues and how these affect your club and your members? If you’ve talked about them, do you follow up with action?
- Have you explored the different ways to reduce your environmental impact? These range from low cost ideas such as changing to LED lights to more expensive ones such as installing solar panels.
- Have you considered an Energy Efficiency Report (EER) for your club premises (similar to Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for housing) which will highlight ways to increase energy efficiency and reduce your club’s carbon footprint?
- Is there anything you can do to reduce the environmental impact of any events you run? Think plastic free, sustainably or locally sourced products or catering.



By applying sustainability principles to both our individual lives and our clubs, we can help to protect our natural resources and reduce our impact on the environment.

Policies and guidance

The Environment policies of [FISA](#), the World Governing Body for Rowing and [British Rowing](#) share the same principles of:

- Protecting the habitats of the waterways we row on.
- Conserving resources.
- Reducing all waste and pollutants.
- Recognising the heritage of all sections of the rowing world.
- Promoting the health of all those taking part in rowing.
- Sharing and fostering awareness of environment issues within the rowing community.
- Consulting with the wider community to foster partnerships.

FISA also has a small steps guide, available on its website, that clubs and regattas can use to mitigate their impact on the environment.

Grants

More information about waste regulations can be found on the Environment Agency website [here](#).

Try contacting your local council to see if there are any grants or specific actions you can take to improve recycling and waste management. Whilst some changes can be expensive, there are sometimes energy saving 'green' grants available. Search by post code to see if your area is included [here](#).

Your club may also be able to apply for an Environmental Operations grant. Search all operators [here](#).

Other funding opportunities for sustainable energy include:

- [Community Energy England](#)
- [Centre For Sustainable Energy](#)
- [Sustainable Clubs](#)
- [The Grants Hub](#)
- [Grants Online](#)

What can your club do?

From lighting and heating your premises to washing the boats, there are lots of small, and not so small, steps that your club and members can take to be more environmentally friendly. Whilst some are free or low cost, others may require a more detailed cost/benefit assessment to determine value for money. Here are some ideas:

For buildings

- If you're planning a new build or club redevelopment, further information on energy efficiency regulations is available [here](#). A good architect or designer will also have more ideas.
- For more information on funding, energy legislation and good practice case studies, visit the [Sport England](#) website.
- If your club is located in a conservation area or operates from a listed building, there are more [regulations](#) to follow.



Case Study – Ironbridge RC

Installing solar panels

“After much deliberation and driven by the need to reduce costs, we decided to have solar panels installed in 2014 as electricity was our largest regular expense. As well as saving costs, the fact that the project would reduce the club’s carbon footprint resonated well with members.

Our investment in solar panels was c£14,700 excluding VAT and this was funded entirely by the club as no grants were available for these types of project at the time. We are on track to breakeven in 2020, in line with our original six-year payback estimate. Our average electricity bills have decreased from around £3,500 pa prior to installation to £1,040 pa post installation, including feed-in tariff receipts.”

Catherine Sargent, Chair

Case Study – Bewdley RC

Installing solar panels

Bewdley Rowing Club uses both gas and electricity in its clubhouse, changing rooms and gym. The club’s electricity bills were rising annually to an average of £2,500pa so it decided to install solar panels in order to take advantage of the government ‘feed-in’ tariffs and find a more sustainable and cost-effective way of providing heating and hot water for everyone.

In 2014, solar panels were installed on the clubhouse roof, at a cost of approximately £27,000. The project was funded from club funds and it was anticipated that it would generate enough income to breakeven within 10 years.

“Although the feed-in tariffs were reduced during the installation period, we are still on track to break-even in 2024, just inside our original 10-year forecast. We are now looking at converting our heating system to electricity to help us take full advantage of this investment.”

Kim Martyn-Smith, Captain/Treasurer



Top tips – Environmental sustainability

Save energy:

- Consider extra insulation of walls, roof voids, lofts, etc.
- Consider triple glazing for windows and/or window dressings.
- More natural light means less electricity used.
- Encourage everyone to turn off lights when areas are not in use.
- Replace older style bulbs with more energy efficient LEDs.
- Consider installing time-activated or motion-controlled lighting in areas such as changing rooms, toilets and hallways.
- When replacing boilers, water and heating systems, use energy efficient designs such as biomass, air or ground source heat pumps.
- Consider solar power (PV, thermal) for light, heat, water and feed in tariffs.
- Consider wind turbines or living roofs.
- Use 'green' energy suppliers.
- Set room thermostats to 1° cooler.
- Bars: Are your beer coolers efficient? Does the refrigerator doors close properly? Are the beer cellars running efficiently? Is the ice maker off unless needed?
- Don't leave anything on standby when it's not needed.
- Update electrical appliances – new ones are more efficient than older ones.

Be eco-friendly:

- Only use environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Use eco-friendly paint for any painting jobs.

Save water:

- Minimise water usage – no leaking taps, cisterns, urinals or pipes, fit self-closing valves or timed release buttons, fit water savers in toilets.
- Do you have a water meter? Do your members (or the committee) know how much it costs in £££ and water to run a hosepipe to wash a single boat?
- Install water efficient showers with water savers & valves or push-button controls.

Minimise waste:

- Consider having a water filter fitted.
- Use recycled products – Bradford RC has a landing stage made of recycled bags!
- Run a zero-waste scheme – use recycling bins for different types of recyclable waste and separate general waste if your local authority collects it. Use posters to remind members of what to recycle where.

Remember to educate your members about what your club is trying to do and why.



For boats and equipment

- Minimise water usage when cleaning boats. Ban hose pipes and use buckets instead, or try rainwater harvesting.
- Don't discard anything into the watercourse:
 - Use electric outboard motors for launches to avoid the risk of fuel in the water.
 - Store fuel correctly – floods can carry this into the watercourse.
 - Ensure petrol engines are well maintained, efficient and don't leak fuel.
 - Use biodegradable cleaning solutions – many boat cleaning areas soak into or run off into the local water course.
 - If you see or suspect any pollution, call the [Environment Agency](#) on 0800 807060.
- Minimise or ban the use of single use plastic water bottles.
- Clean ergo's with rags not disposable paper towels.

For the surrounding environment

- Hold a riverbank 'clean-up' either as a club, squad or join with another club.
- Team up with a local litter picking group. More information is available [here](#).
- Don't disturb the wildlife and educate your members to be aware of nesting sites and swan sanctuaries. Be considerate if there are nesting birds in old boats – they can often be found in the shoes of boats that aren't moved.
- Don't run events when wildlife is nesting.
- If you have any free green space, consider offsetting boat purchases with plant a tree (carbon off set v reset) or plant wildflower seeds to support biodiversity.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Check, Clean, Dry campaign

British Rowing has partnered with [GB Non-native Species Secretariat](#) (NNSS) to support the **Check, Clean, Dry campaign**. When you visit a different river, lake or body of water to race or row, you risk transporting harmful organisms back to your water if you don't follow good cleaning procedures and practice.

An invasion of a non-native species such as floating pennywort forms large mats on the top of water and can have a significant impact for you, both on rowing activity and the environment. With a growth of up to **20cm per day**, it can quickly cause a drop in oxygen levels in the water, killing off plants and fish, as well as making rowing virtually impossible.

Educate your members about the Check, Clean and Dry campaign by:

- Downloading and displaying 'Check, Clean, Dry' posters and species guide.
- Incorporating Check, Clean, Dry into your club procedures.
- Taking extra care if you visit a site where an invasive non-native species is known to be present. Failure to do so risks prosecution under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981.

STOP THE SPREAD

STOP THE SPREAD
INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES
CHECK-CLEAN-DRY

Are you unknowingly spreading invasive species on your water sports equipment and clothing?

Invasive species can affect fish and other wildlife, restrict navigation, clog up propellers and be costly to manage. You can help protect the water sports you love by following three simple steps when you leave the water.

CHECK Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particular in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

CLEAN Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. Use hot water where possible. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

DRY Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

For more information go to www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry



Events

Of all club activities, events can have the greatest potential environmental impact. This provides not only a threat, but an opportunity! Events mean more people visiting your club, so your environmental initiatives will not only be seen by more people but will have a greater impact.

Try some of the following ideas at your events:

- Ban single use cups, food containers or glasses – either re-use or use biodegradable.
- Encourage car sharing or trailer sharing with other local clubs, particularly for events located further away.
- Consider using ‘committee’ (supplied) boats for races.
- Arrange a Park and Ride at your event.
- Hold your rowing camps in the UK or carbon offset non-UK camps.
- Hold ‘plastic free’ events – don’t stock bottled water, use tap water instead.

How can your club members be ‘greener’?

If you talk to your members, you may find that many are already taking action to reduce their own environmental impact but may not have thought about how they can do this at your club.

Top tips: some things to try

- Encourage members to try cycling, walking or using public transport.
- Run a club steps/miles challenge using distance travelled to the club without a car.
- Don’t purchase bottled water, use recyclable bottles.
- Encourage your members to switch off the club lights when areas are not in use.
- Purchase sustainable sports clothing.
- Recycle clothing – hold a second hand sale or give it away.
- Get your juniors involved with ‘green’ initiatives – they are often the most vocal and supportive.
- If you’re in a city or large town and suffer the blight of trollies in the water, download the App ‘Trolleywise’ to report abandoned trollies, with a tree planted for each one rescued.
- Check out the [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#).
- Support [Rowers Against Rubbish](#) with local community action.



Sustainability examples and good ideas

A Pengwern Shrewsbury Rowing Club member and environmental scientist set up the 'Shrewsbury Cup' scheme with a friend, to hire or sell affordable reusable cups suitable for hot drinks. The scheme was trialled at the 2018 Hay Festival where visitors paid a £1 deposit and could either return the cup to retrieve their deposit or keep it and reuse it. The Shrewsbury Cup scheme was also used at local regattas such as Shrewsbury and Chester and is now a Community Interest Company.

Find out more [here](#).

Christchurch Rowing Club

celebrated its 70th anniversary by giving a reusable bottle with the club colours and logo to each member. As a result, the use of single-use bottles has decreased dramatically.



Save water!

Lea Rowing Club has banned the use of hosepipes for washing boats.

Taunton Rowing Club have taken it further by using rainwater collected from water butts.

The club refurbishment at **Kings School Worcester** provided a great opportunity to introduce energy-saving practices. Sustainability was a central consideration for the design brief and the new boathouse includes state-of-the-art eco features such as triple glazing, rainwater harvesting and solar panels. These initiatives have resulted in environmental performance to EPC A standard, approaching zero carbon standards. There is also a ban on single use plastics and the club has even awarded medals made from sustainable timber!

The development has *"inspired a new, more environmentally-conscious mentality among the students"* stated Head of Rowing, Jim Chalmers.

Ross Rowing Club Juniors highlighted how climate change is resulting in more extreme rainfall events, storms, floods and droughts:

"We won't be able to row some summers as there won't be enough water, we won't be able to row some winters as there will be too much water, the club will be flooded with increasing regularity and there will be more severe storms year round."

They calculated that 4000 miles a year travelling to events = 500kgs of carbon per year = 20 trees to be planted each year to offset these carbon emissions.

They called on their club committee to take action against climate change by offsetting the carbon emissions produced by travelling to rowing events.

The **National Schools Regatta (NSR)** is the largest rowing event for juniors in the UK, with the potential to inspire and influence the 5,000 young rowers from 350 schools and clubs that attend each year. NSR 2018 had a 'sustainability' focus and aimed to be the country's first single-use plastic bottle-free sports event.

Environmentally friendly initiatives included:

- Fresh drinking water tanks and reusable, aluminium water bottles, provided by sponsor, Charles Stanley.
- Mixed recycling provision, with bins specifically designed to attract attention and encourage everyone to 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'.

The initiatives were communicated by email, via the website and through social media under the hashtag #pushingforacleansweep.

Positive event outcomes:

- Saved the equivalent of 25,000 single-use plastic bottles.
- Total waste reduction (over 3 days) of approximately 33% from 2017.
- Three large skips of rubbish collected for recycling, instead of incineration or landfill.
- Extremely positive commitment and feedback from the NSR community.

Top tips:

- Plan your hydration and nutrition for events – take re-fillable bottles and food in reusable containers.
- Take rubbish home and recycle responsibly.
- Ask event organisers about their water and waste provision to raise awareness.



Photo credit: ADEC Innovations



4.7. Transport, trailering and towing

Introduction

Transporting your boats and equipment on a trailer or car to a local, national or overseas event or training camp, is common practice for most clubs.

Understanding the legal requirements for towing in relation to the driver, the towing vehicle, the trailer, as well as the load itself, is vital.

If an accident or infringement occurs, it is the driver who will have to answer to the authorities.

See further information in [RowSafe](#), chapter 7.2.

Licenses and drivers

It can be hard to find drivers due to driving license restrictions – the number of people that can tow a trailer without a specialised towing license is now age related.

Driving a trailer laden with boats that is over 20 metres long (62 feet) can be very different to towing a horsebox or taking a box trailer to the rubbish tip. Most people will need practice.

Whilst it may be tempting to take someone's word that they are able to drive your trailer, make sure you know that they are experienced and capable and ask for a copy of their drivers licence. Plan their first journey close to home (or even around a nearby field!) accompanied by an experienced driver. Your boats are precious assets and transporting them anywhere safely should be your top priority.

If you have a club vehicle for towing, your club insurance may require specific information on anyone that is going to drive it, such as licence details, including any infringements, some of which may impact on club insurance.

Be aware of any current legislation, full details can be found using the links below. Areas to consider could include:

- **What is your potential driver eligible to tow? Anyone passing their test after 1 January 1997 will have restrictions on their licence. Find the rules on towing [here](#).**
- **Do your drivers need to take a specific trailer test? Find the regulations [here](#).**
- **Check regularly for any changes or updates to legislation on towing and licenses [here](#).**
- **Full details of the legislation in relation to towing is set out in The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 [here](#).**

Driver agreements can be useful as you can make sure that all drivers understand the legislation for towing and the implications of any drink, drug or medication use that may affect their driving.

Make sure that anyone towing is qualified, insured and capable.



Universities

If you are at a university rowing club, finding a driver to tow your trailer can be even harder, as most students are unable to tow and adults who are able to tow without a specialist licence are in short supply.

Make sure you:

- Always consult with your both your club insurers and/or the University Sports Union to check for any restrictions when asking someone to tow for you.
- Consider trailer sharing with other local clubs to save costs.
- Consider hiring someone to tow your vehicle or if it's worth paying for a member of staff or student to do a trailer driving course – this can be cost effective if costs are shared by everyone attending.
- Always discuss who to use and whether you pay them with your relevant University Department and/or your Student Union – there may be implications around paying expenses or paying for courses that impact on their employment situation. Further information is available [here](#).

Transporting by car

Many people transport boats on top of their cars. This is common practice for single sculls that can either be supported in a specialised sculling rack on top of the roof rack bars, or on the roof rack bars itself.

When transporting single sculls (and occasionally double/pair oared boats or sectional boats) by car, make sure you:

- Use a specialised sculling rack if available, as this can distribute the weight and point of balance more evenly and provide extra support for the boat.
- Fit the sculling rack securely and/or ensure your roof rack/bars are firm and secure.
- Have lights/markers for the ends of the boat, especially over the rear of the car, to enable other road users to see any projections.
- Know the weight of your boat as this might exceed the maximum load recommended for the roof bars.
- There are special rules for transporting boats propelled with oars and these are summarised in a leaflet found via [RowSafe](#).
- Check any overhang of the boat at the front and rear of the car, making sure that this complies with the [legal limits](#).
- Check that the straps being used to secure the boat are not frayed and that the boat is secured safely at the ends if needed – some insurance companies insist on boats being secured to the car by the bow-ball or stern, so make sure you check this with your insurance company.
- Adjust your driving style to protect the safety of both yourself and other road users – transporting a boat like this makes your car much longer and potentially wider if you leave the riggers on.



Photo credit: British Rowing



Towing vehicles

Your club may be lucky enough to own a vehicle specifically for towing, but often towing is done using club member's own vehicles or you may hire vehicles. These options all come with their own challenges including insurance implications, knowledge and/or experience of the vehicle being used and any hire company agreements on what can be towed. Many hire companies may have never seen a rowing boat trailer.

When using your towing vehicle, make sure you:

- Check your vehicle is roadworthy, with a current MOT, adequate tyre pressures, coolant and oil levels – towing can increase the load on the engine and transmission. More guidance is available [here](#).
- Know that the vehicle is capable of towing the trailer and its load by referring to the manufacturer's specifications (found in the handbook or on the inside of the driver's door) to check the weight of the vehicle and what it is able to tow/pull – a fully laden vehicle and trailer may exceed the vehicle's legal limits. Ideally, go to a weighbridge and get it weighed accurately.
- Check that you have enough fuel – towing reduces fuel efficiency and filling up with a fully laden trailer can be problematic.
- Ensure that your tow bar is secure and has a fully operational lighting connector.

Trailer weights and loads

Your trailer should comply with the relevant legislation. The Government website also contains key information about the permissible lengths and widths of items being towed.

Make sure you:

- Have a permanent plate stating the maximum authorised mass (trailer + load).
- Are roadworthy. If there are brakes, they must work and have a breakaway connection that should always be used correctly. It's good practice to test this periodically.
- Check that all lights, tyres, spares and number plate boards comply with current legislation. Remember that tyre pressures can diminish and tyres can perish, so check carefully, especially after periods of inactivity.
- Have the correct rear lighting, no more than 1 metre from the rearmost projection of the trailer – if in doubt measure it.
- Comply with night-time trailer driving legislation regarding visibility from the side, rear and front.
- Make sure your jockey wheel is stowed correctly, this can periodically work loose – so if you stop en-route – check it again.
- Check that your fully laden weight does not exceed the limits – remember that the number of passengers, full fuel tanks and/or any luggage being transported will impact on the limits for towing.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



The specific legislation relating to the Transportation of Rowing Boats can be found under [Regulation 82 of the Road Vehicles \(Construction & Use\) Regulations 1986](#).

This includes information on the legal limits for overhangs and boat widths. It's useful to keep a copy in your car or towing vehicle, along with other documents e.g. insurance.

Typical UK Speed limits				
UK National Speed Limits	Built up area	Single Carriageway	Dual Carriageway	Motorway
Towing Vehicle <3500kg	30	60	70	70
Towing Vehicle and trailer	30	50	60	60

Please remember:

- These are LIMITS and not the speeds you have to travel at!
- Never use the third lane in a motorway.

Insurance

Once you have calculated what you are eligible to tow, make sure you are insured under your own policy or as a 'named driver' on someone else's policy such as your clubs. Either way, you will need to contact the insurer to inform them that you will be towing so as not to risk invalidating your insurance policy.

Make sure any insurance extends to the trailer and, if not, consider insuring it separately. It is also a good idea is to get breakdown insurance for both the vehicle and the trailer.

Further information

Further information on towing rowing boats including legal lengths, widths, weights, as well as a handy checklist to carry out before each journey can be found in the British Rowing [RowSafe](#) document under chapter 7 (7.2) Equipment. RowSafe is updated annually, so any guidance contained should always be checked against the current government legislation.



Top Tips for towing trailers

- The load is the responsibility of the driver both in terms of securing it and making sure it is not overloaded. All drivers should complete a final check before setting off and at the first stop en route.
- Do not overload the trailer beyond its legal capacity.
- More guidance on overhangs and what is required for towing can be found [here](#).
- Check that loads on and in the trailer and the towing vehicle are secure – if boats move, either sideways or up and down, damage will occur. A net or cover for any open truck is a good idea to fully protect anything being carried.
- Use good quality straps, no bungees, string or frayed straps.
- Some boats such as single sculls are best transported with supports under the canvas before being tied onto the trailer to prevent damage. This can be specialist ‘V’ shaped ones or even sponge.
- There are tachograph rules that determine if you are considered to be a commercial driver that requires a tachograph [here](#).
- Take regular breaks with rest and refreshments, after continuous or cumulative hours of towing. Consider the hours you have worked before towing or even on the day of towing and consider taking overnight stays or breaks where necessary.
- Make sure that the weight is evenly distributed across the width, length and height of the trailer and that heavier items in the ‘bed’ of the trailer are loaded towards the towing hitch.
- Be aware of how towing affects the vehicle’s performance – particularly braking distances and leave plenty of room when following other vehicles.
- Use extended mirrors if necessary when towing wider trailers, to ensure clear and legal visibility of the trailer and other vehicles on the road.
- Plan your journey carefully – some roads are not suitable for trailers both in width, height and weight size. Don’t rely on the Sat Nav.
- Make sure proper breakdown cover is in place for the trailer as well as the vehicle.
- Take regular rest stops and re-check the load when you do stop.
- Remember many regatta fields are undulating and unless the jockey wheel and stabilisers on trailers are retracted, they may become stuck, or the trailer could become grounded.
- Keep a travel log in the vehicle, along with other essential documents such as copies of MOT, insurance, breakdown certificates, etc. Also, record your mileage, fuel stops (helps to remind you), services, MOT dates, tyres and light reports.

Top Tips for towing trailers

- Take particular care when driving downhill, in windy conditions or when passing large vehicles as all can have an effect on the way the vehicle and trailer will react. If swaying/snaking of the trailer occurs, resist the temptation to brake, take your foot off the accelerator and allow the speed to drop naturally.
- Always have two people in the towing vehicle and carry fluorescent clothing, as well as warning equipment in case of a breakdown. Note: If travelling into Europe, make sure you check out any other legal requirements on what to carry.
- Always carry a spare wheel for the towing vehicle and the trailer.
- Carry traction aids for the wheels and a jack that is capable of jacking up the towing vehicle or the load trailer.
- Take turnings as wide as it is legally safe to do so. Overhangs at either end need to be considered and you may need to increase the turning distance for any corner.
- Consider road widths, bridge heights and weights. Research your route prior to setting off and know the weight and height of your trailer (with boats on a top rack) as well as the height of a car carrying single sculls.
- Re-fuelling – make sure you pick the correct fuel pumps and know which side the fuel cap is on. HGV fuel pumps are often the easiest to access.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Towing in Europe

Please note that the regulations for driving and towing in Europe have changed post Brexit and you are strongly advised to refer to the most up to date guidance on the gov.uk website. See further information sources below.

Occasionally, you may wish to take your trailer and boats to Europe for an event or training camp. There are different requirements for towing trailers in different European countries which can and do change, so please refer to the prevailing requirements at the time of travel. There is specific legislation governing the requirements for tachographs, so make sure you research thoroughly before travelling.

Further information about driving in Europe is available here:

- [UK Government guidance on driving abroad.](#)
- [UK Government guidance on trailer registration.](#)
- [The RAC.](#)
- [The AA.](#)

Remember to check well in advance for up to date information about tolls, toll cards, VISAs and the requirements for on board safety equipment.

Further information

British Rowing's [RowSafe](#) guidance and the following third party websites provide further information on:

[Towing with a car](#)

[Towing basics – Towing with a car or van](#)

[Check your Licence for Towing Rules](#)

[The Basics for Towing Legislation](#)

[Pre-towing Safety Checks \(vehicle\)](#)

[UK Boats – How to tow your boat](#)

[Do I need a tachograph](#)

Enquiries

Contact the Highways Agency Information Line on 0300 123 5000 with any specific enquiries.

Acknowledgments

GB Rowing, Ray Mallett, Stuart Ward and Stephen Worley
(Honorary Rowing Safety Advisor)



Section 5 - Marketing and communications

Successful marketing and promotion is about knowing what your club has to offer and communicating this clearly to existing, new and potential members and visitors. It relates to the ongoing drive to develop your club membership, as well as promoting club events such as open days.

In this section, we provide more information and signposting in relation to:

1. **Branding – Developing your club brand and understanding how this can impact on the way members feel and view your club**
2. **Marketing and promotion – Developing a marketing plan and implementing promotional campaigns for your club**
3. **Media relations – Developing strong media relationships**
4. **Social media management – Using social media to best effect**

5.1 Branding

Developing your club brand

You may not realise it, but much like major companies, your club is a brand. A brand represents an emotional connection that a user has with a product or service. Your brand should reflect the 'personality' of the services that your club offers.

To promote your club well, you need to be consistent in how you portray it. Branding can be displayed through different visual formats, including names, logos and straplines.

When developing your brand:

- Use a colour scheme consistently, to reflect your club colours.
- Select a font to use in all promotional material so people start to recognise it.
- Consider developing your brand further, with a logo or strapline.
- Use your club name. For example, "Snowdon Rowing Club" tells people who and where you are and what you do, whereas "The Snowdownians" is more abstract and doesn't describe what you do, or where you are based.
- Before deciding upon a brand name, make sure it's not already used by another organisation, especially if you are setting up a new club.
- Always check for any negative connotations connected to/or with your brand, for example, the use of abbreviations.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Brand positioning and messaging

Brand positioning is what adds perceived value to new members. Once you have identified prospective new members, you need to create a 'proposition' that appeals to them. This will be the main message in any communication and is based on the following considerations:

- Why should people choose your club?
- Who are you targeting?
- What do you want them to think, feel or do when they see it?
- What are you offering?

When building a new offer, it is important to consider how it fits with your club's current offers. Decide on your club's unique selling points (USPs) which differentiate you from the competition. This can form the basis of your advertising and will reinforce your club's image and identity. Construct a headline that reflects the most important selling point in your offer and sums up the reason why new members will want to join.

Use of British Rowing logo and other logos

British Rowing is happy for affiliated clubs to use its logo on any publicity materials. There are some guidelines to follow to ensure it is used consistently, so please follow the [British Rowing Brand Standards](#). It's important that you do not attempt to change either the logo or the lettering.

Please ask for help if you would like to use the logo within your publicity material. If you need copies of any British Rowing logos please contact brand@britishrowing.org.

Find Sport England logos and branding advice [here](#).

Any branding involving the British Olympic Association (BOA), British Paralympic Association (BPA) and the Olympic or Paralympic movement is protected by an act of Parliament so cannot be used without permission. Further details are available on the websites of these organisations.



Top tips: Club websites

A website can be a really powerful way to communicate what your club has to offer as it can be accessed by anyone, anytime and anywhere. Just like a shop window, your club home page should encourage people to explore more about who you are, what you do and how to get in touch with you.

There are a number of platforms with free of charge options, that can help you build your own club website, for example [wordpress](#), [drupal](#) or [umbraco](#). However, it takes time and effort to keep a website functioning well, with regularly updated and engaging content. Additional costs will be incurred if you need professional website support.

If your club doesn't already have a website, make sure you explore the many digital marketing options such as promoting your club through social media (e.g. Facebook etc.) before you invest your time and energy into developing one.

Content ideas:

- Club news and information, such as fixtures, results, competitions and events.
- An 'About us' section or FAQs including answers to the most common questions that people ask e.g. club's origins, membership options, etc.
- Include great images, videos and other content to enhance the user experience.
- Connect your website with your club's social media channels (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) to help drive engagement.
- An embedded enquiry form makes it easier for people to submit general enquiries or provide feedback.
- Relevant and up to date contact information.

Make sure you:

- Review your website content regularly so users can see that it is current and up-to-date.
- Nominate an individual(s) responsible for updating the website, making improvements and responding to feedback.
- Integrate your club branding (club fonts, logo, etc.) into your website to reinforce the club's identity and image.
- Consider seeking professional advice if you're building a website from scratch – to help maximise appeal and functionality.

Further information on developing a club website is available at [Sport England Club Matters](#).



5.2 Marketing and promotion

Develop a marketing plan

Your marketing activity will be much more successful if you've taken time to plan what you want to do and when you want to do it. Your club's marketing plan sets out how your club is going to promote itself.

Your plan should include:

- Your club's purpose (why your club exists).
- Your club offers and what you want to achieve.
- Who you are targeting.
- How you will reach them.
- How you will measure the effectiveness of your communications.

Top tips: Use the 4Ps of Product, Price, Promotion and Place to help guide you:

- **Product** – What is your offer? What are the unique selling points (USPs) of your club? What makes you different to others?
- **Price** – How much does it cost to join your club? Is this price right for your target audience? Can you offer different prices for different services or memberships?
- **Promotion** – How do potential members find out about you? Is your club well known in the local community? Do your current members promote your club on your behalf?
- **Place** – Are you easy to find? Do your facilities meet the needs of all of your offers?

You may also wish to consider the marketing methods of Simon Sinek, who advocates starting with the following key questions to help guide your marketing plan:

- **WHY** does your club exist? What is its core belief?
- **HOW** does your club fulfil this core belief?
- **WHAT** does your club do to fulfil this core belief?

Most clubs start with their 'what' and then move to the 'how' and often neglect the 'why'. An online search will highlight more information on this innovative marketing principle.

Having a clear marketing plan will help you manage your club more effectively by:

- Understanding what makes your club different.
- Tailoring your club offer to match what existing, new or potential members want.
- Getting the right messages out to the right people.
- Increasing membership income, sponsorship, bar sales, etc.

Further information on marketing your club is available at [Sport England Club Matters](#).



Key steps to delivering your plan

Know your offer



Know your audience

Think about your potential members – the target audience that is most likely to want what you have to offer. You will probably already have existing members from this target audience. Try to understand what they like, what motivates them, where they go and what they are willing to spend etc. Do your market research.

Define your catchment area

A catchment area is fixed by how far someone is willing to travel. Within that radius, certain areas will have more potential members than others. Think about different locations or areas where you might find a higher concentration of potential new members.

Know the catchment areas of your current members.

Understand the customer journey

Potential members will be at different stages in their rowing journey. Some will be keen to join a club; others may be researching their options and need more information; whilst others may not yet know about your club or what you provide.

Don't forget your existing members who still want to feel a valued part of your rowing community. Carry out market research to understand them and what influences them to take part.

Build your marketing plan around potential new members – you'll maximise your budget and have a greater chance of success.

Visit [Sport England Club Matters](#) for more information on market research.

Build your campaign



Identify your key message(s). What's your offer?

Create offers and programmes that your members (or potential members) will find appealing. See [section 2: Managing your membership](#), for the different types of membership options and more details on attracting new members.

Different people will find different offers appealing, so use different approaches for different groups of people. A 25-year-old woman will probably have very different expectations to a 55-year-old man so reflect this in your campaign. Think about whether your target group would be inspired by the materials you are using.

Choose your marketing channels carefully, such as:

- **Email (to current and lapsed members on your database plus non-members who have attended a programme or event (subject to GDPR restrictions)).**



Key steps to delivering your plan

Build your campaign (continued)



- Large posters to display in the local community and at your club.
- Postcards/flyers for a targeted mail drop.
- Large outdoor banners to put up near the club in high traffic areas.
- Website banners/ads to place on websites or use in social media.
- Social media adverts for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (see [section 5.4](#), Social media management).

Make sure you set targets and measures for success against each activity.

Ensure timeframes are realistic and review regularly to make sure you are on track.

Remember, don't be afraid to change tactics if something is not working.

Communicate your message(s)



Impactful marketing doesn't need to be fancy or expensive but as a minimum needs a good headline/strapline (or subject line for an email).

There should be a clear 'call to action' i.e. what to do next?

For example, phone/email the club, click to a webpage (landing page), talk to a committee member or download a form.

The 'call to action' must be obvious and easy. Make sure that:

- **You are ready to respond and act on further requests or applications.**
- **Any contact details are correct and phone numbers have a voicemail that is checked regularly.**
- **Your website/web pages are up to date and fully functional.**

Get social – see [section 5.4](#), Social media management.



Key steps to delivering your plan

Measure how well you've done

How successful was your campaign? How did you match up to the targets, timescales and measures for success identified at the outset?

Digital marketing is easier to measure in terms of clicks and email opens whereas it's difficult to know how many people read an offline (printed) advert.

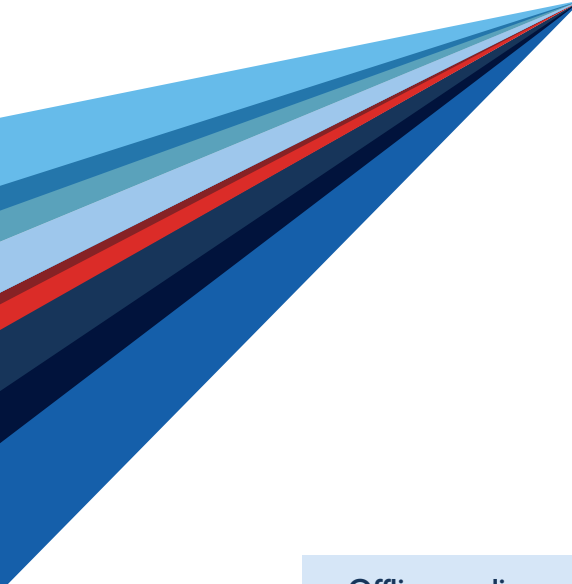
Email platforms usually offer basic metrics. For example, you can measure:

- **Reach** – how many people saw your message.
- **Cost per click for banner ads and Google Ads** (the cost of the ad split by the total clicks).
- **Open rates for email** (the number of recipients who opened the email, expressed as a %).
- **Click through rates for email** (the number of recipients who clicked on a link within the email, expressed as %).
- **Conversion rates** (the percentage of leads who take up an offer).
- **Use this information to help guide your promotional plans next time.**

Here is an example of a Marketing plan that you could use as a template. It is available to download from [Sport England Club Matters](#).

Marketing plan example

SMART objective	What (action, including marketing channel)	Target Group(s)	When	Person responsible	Cost (if any)	Target for success
Objective 1: Increase junior membership by 20% over the next year	Ask existing junior members to introduce a friend to the club (word of mouth).	15-18 year olds		[Name]	N/A	[X] new juniors by [MM/YY].
	Build relationships with local schools and start to deliver taster sessions and events. Communicate to pupils and parents via posters and newsletters.	11-15 year olds		[Name]	£XX (printing costs)	[X] taster sessions at [X] schools.
Objective 2: Increase the number of parents of juniors that join the club by 20% over the next year	Create and promote taster sessions for parents, aligned with junior activities. Schedule Learn To Row courses and communicate via posters, newsletters and word of mouth.	Parents of current juniors		[Name]	£XX (printing costs)	[x] attendances at L2R courses. [X] new adult members. [x%] conversion.



Communication and promotional campaigns

Promoting your club is about telling people what you can offer them. When deciding on the best method of communicating with your potential new members, consider different marketing channels e.g. offline or online (digital) media. Find out which media channels your potential members respond to and select the right mix for your promotion.

Offline media examples:	Online media examples:
Posters	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram)
Local notice boards	Google Ads and banner ads
In-store	Email marketing
Community centres	Website
Household drops	Mobile messaging (SMS)
Events marketing	Video Ads
Press releases (e.g. forthcoming events, positive new stories, facility developments)	Blog or Vlog
Outdoor banners in high traffic areas	
Direct mail	
Personal selling (contacting prospects)	
Magazines and newspaper advertising	

You can use owned media, earned media, paid media or a combination:

- **Owned media** is when you control a channel you create. This could be your club website, Facebook page, Twitter feed, blog or YouTube channel. If you are directing the audience to your website, make sure the website reinforces the tone and content of your offer or promotion and has the information you're signposting.
- **Earned media** is when members, visitors and the general public share your content and speak about your brand via word of mouth or reviews. In other words, the mentions are voluntarily given by others.
- **Paid media** is when you pay to influence a third-party channel, such as sponsorships and advertising. This can be offline, such as newspaper advertising, or online, e.g. Google and Facebook ads.



Questions to ask – promotional campaign checklist

- Have you identified your target audience and do you know your customer journey?
- Is your offer engaging and will your target group be inspired by your promotional materials?
- Is the offer clear, with relevant dates, prices and any terms and conditions, such as limited numbers or deadlines?
- Have you tried to address any barriers that might stop potential members from taking the next step?
- Has the offer or event been communicated to key club and committee members, including coaches?
- Do your social media pages need updating? Have you included any social media links and/or hashtags?
- Is your website visually attractive and functional? Are landing pages ready and up to date with campaign imagery?
- Have you informed your local media contacts to get good media coverage?
- Is there a follow-up communication planned?
- Can you measure the success of your campaign?

Club advertising – effective ‘creative’ and ‘copy’

Make sure you present all club communication in a simple, attractive format. The design and layout are referred to as the ‘creative’ and the words are the ‘copy’.

Remember that people are bombarded with adverts, so your content needs to grab their attention and keep it.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



Top tips for effective 'creative' and 'copy'

- Think about where and how the content will be seen, for example, is it from a distance or one advert amongst other adverts?
- Make the headline large and legible.
- Use the same creative style to show that they are part of the same promotion.
- Don't try to appeal to everyone.
- Don't be too clever, cryptic or creative.
- Talk about benefits...not features.
- Keep it punchy – stick to your key messages.
- Check everything carefully – typos or errors look sloppy and make a poor first impression.
- Use quality imagery or photography – quality imagery adds visual impact and twice as many readers will look at a picture than will read your headline.
- Make the next step easy and obvious: a clear 'call to action' such as ring now, visit now or join now, along with a relevant (and correct!) webpage link or phone number.

5.3 Media relations

Developing effective media relationships and increasing media coverage can significantly raise your club's profile in your local area, helping your fundraising efforts and advertising your club's activities and events.

Top tips for building effective media relations

Get to know your local media – identify the right people and make contact. What are they interested in covering? Who is the sports editor? Who presents the community features?

Take a personal approach – build relationships so you can give your contact a direct call. Always follow calls up with written details or a draft press release.

Try to find out:

- What are their deadlines?
- When do they go to print?
- When do they have a news meeting or conference?

Provide notice of any upcoming event or promotion well in advance (1-2 weeks). Give them a 'story' or human-interest angle that will appeal to readers, listeners or viewers.

Provide written materials or photographs to make it as easy as possible to cover your story.

Reminders are good – journalists are often very busy so provide gentle reminders. Get social – some journalists and media organisations use social media networks to promote community club coverage. Do your local media contacts do this?

See '[Maximising the Media](#)' on the Sport England Club Matters website.



Case study: Stratford Upon Avon Boat Club (SUABC)

Effective media management to heighten club profile

SUABC has developed a strong media presence that has delivered many benefits for the club. As well as a drive to promote membership and core activities, the club also wanted to promote its facilities for external hire to generate additional revenue.

What was done?

- **Website promotion** – A Wordpress website was developed and is used to promote the success of the club at regional, national and international regattas and heads, in addition to internal and external club communications.
- **Facebook** is frequently used to promote club related news. During ‘lockdown’, light-hearted news stories of what each squad was doing to maintain their fitness and morale proved popular with both local newspapers.
- **Twitter** is used for promoting external lettings and for quick and easy communication ‘prompts’ about events/regattas or club updates/floods. There are two sister Twitter accounts for the Junior and Adaptive Rowing sections.
- **Media releases** – An excellent relationship with local and national media including Stratford Herald and Stratford Observer, with a regular club media release issued to meet copy deadlines.

“Our aim was to position Stratford Boat Club as a successful club, knowing that a successful club is a sought after club! By increasing our media activity, we have seen an increase in the reputation and profile of the club, both locally and nationally, with more local people wanting to become involved. Demand for the club as an events venue, for weddings or corporate team building, has also increased, generating an additional club revenue stream.

Although it can be time consuming to collate media releases and regatta reports, we’ve seen really positive ‘knock on’ effects that have also helped us secure sponsorship for regattas and other projects.”

Christopher Best, SUABC

Top tips:

- Use social media analytics to see who is interacting with your club.
- Keep control of passwords so you can always ‘stop/block’ someone if needed.
- Provide the press with ‘oven ready’ news releases, including images.
- Enrol parents with an interest in photography to take action shots and supporting images.
- Ask coaches to provide race results for away regattas, heads and competitions.
- Hold back news items from social media until the local media have released them to avoid ‘stale news’.



Photo credit: Drew Smith



5.4 Social media management

Social media is being used more and more to engage effectively with members. However, it's really important to adhere to some basic rules to ensure that your committee and members follow best practice advice.

Social media can be a relatively cost-effective and targeted way to promote your club. It needn't be daunting, just remember it's about experimenting and learning as you go.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide a great opportunity to engage not only existing members of your club, but potential new ones. Once you have set up a page/profile, your members and visitors can check-in, tag the club in their own posts and promote it on your behalf by sharing content. Content, in marketing terms, is anything you post on your page – a photo, an article or information.

Your club can also 'follow', 'like' and 'share' posts from other influential and interesting profiles such as British Rowing and rowing personalities, as well as those from your own community.

Top tips for using social media

To get the most 'likes', 'comments' and 'shares', make sure your content is relevant, engaging and fits with your club identity.

By signing up with a 'business' rather than 'personal' profile, you can gain access to enhanced features, useful insights and more in depth analysis of targeted advertising campaigns, such as scheduled posts. It also looks more professional.

Draw up a social media policy to ensure all those with the admin rights to your club's social media pages follow a defined protocol for consistency and uphold your club's reputation.

Only use social media platforms if you have someone prepared to regularly update, post content and maintain the platform as a useful and credible marketing and communication tool.

Be aware of British Rowing's [Online Safety and Social Media Policy](#) before publishing content via any media. It provides some useful guidance on how to communicate safely online.

More details and guidance on 'Making the most of Social Media Channels' can be found on the [Sport England's Club Matters](#) website.

British Rowing is always delighted to receive information on any events or activities taking place within rowing clubs. We constantly promote what our clubs do on our website, on Facebook and on Twitter @britishrowing and via #YourStories. This includes events that are not competitions.

Promoting fundraisers, social events and challenges via social media will make your club look more vibrant and active. The [Club Finder tool](#) on the British Rowing website links directly to your club's website.



Facebook

Facebook is a great free platform for sharing visual content such as videos, live feeds and images. You can write long posts, answer comments, receive and send direct (private) messages, create events, invite people to like your page or create offers and discounts.

You can set up a free [Facebook for Business](#) page.

[Facebook Insights](#) will show you how well your page is performing in terms of engagement (likes, reach, comments and shares). By creating an 'event', you can invite your club/community to engage with and share content on a particular activity or event in advance, on the day and afterwards. The RSVP function will give you an indication of interested or confirmed attendees.

[Facebook advertising](#)

Spending a small amount on promoting social media posts can allow you to reach new audiences with a budget as low as £5.00.

Twitter

Twitter is a popular free networking and news platform for signposting people to interesting links and information. Posts are limited to 280 characters (plus photos and videos), which means you need to keep your messaging succinct. This platform is ideal for giving your local community, media and members quick sound bites of information and links.

To set up a Twitter page, go to twitter.com and sign up for a business account. You will need an email address and to think up a unique (relevant) Twitter handle for your club.

Start following other relevant Twitter profiles, posting, liking and sharing content.

[Twitter advertising](#)

It's simple to promote a post on Twitter and it will reach more people. With a business profile, you can access more advertising options including an estimate of the likely results.

Instagram

Instagram provides a simple and creative way to share photos/videos and to caption them using hashtags and short copy. Download the Instagram app for free and assign a handle (profile name) for your club – something that is relevant and easy to find by other users.

[Instagram advertising](#)

You will need a professional (business) Instagram account to advertise or boost posts which can be selected in 'settings'. You will also need a Facebook page that you have admin rights to.



Appendix A – Attracting new members

Here are some more ideas on how to increase your membership – some tried and tested, some off the wall! Have a look and see what appeals to you.

There will be lots of other examples that you may have tried or heard of. If you'd like to share them, please send them to clubsupport@britishrowing.org. The British Rowing [Inclusive Club Guide](#) also has lots of information on encouraging new members from diverse backgrounds.

1. Include membership growth in your development plan.
2. Prepare and use a Club Introduction pack.
3. Talk about how to sell your club at committee meetings.
4. Have incentives for current members to introduce new members and encourage them to bring along a guest, a relative or a friend.
5. Place posters, flyers or club newsletters in waiting rooms, schools, community centres and other organisations local to the club.
6. Advertise in the local press – you may need a secondary story to attract interest.
7. Hold an open day.
8. Hold an indoor rowing taster day or indoor competition and advertise to other local sports clubs or gyms.
9. Run a stall at the local carnival or fair.
10. Take an ergo to the local shopping centre.
11. Ask the local Chamber of Commerce to advertise for you.
12. Have a spouse/partner membership.
13. Place advertising banners on local roundabouts or advertising hoardings.
14. Advertise your Learn to Row courses on the trailer or club vehicle.
15. Consider flexible fees and payments.
16. Have an active social calendar – more people coming to the club may mean more members.
17. Reduce membership fees for signing up on the day.
18. Target daytime rowing and run an open day in the daytime for those that are available.
19. Hold family 'come and try' days and have a family membership deal ready.
20. Get all of your members to share/link to your club social media plans and posters offering opportunities to row.
21. Develop reciprocal arrangements with other sports clubs locally.
22. Attend the local college or university sports fair and have a publicity or ergo stand.



23. Contact your local [Active Partnership](#) (formerly County Sports Partnership) and advertise on their website.
24. Hold 'open-house' quiz nights and talk about membership.
25. Print club 'business' cards and give them to current members to hand out.
26. Get club car stickers and t-shirts printed with web site and telephone number.
27. Make direct contact with specific groups such as [The WI](#) or [University of the 3rd Age](#).
28. If you don't have enough coaches and helpers – encourage more club members to take on these roles. Find [British Rowing Education Courses](#).
29. Don't discriminate on the basis of age – there will soon be more over 40s than under 40s. This can be particularly important when it comes to finding new volunteers.
30. Have an online presence that is fresh, up to date and current – searching for activities online is a common way that many look for a new activity.
31. Look at your local demographics – if your club isn't representative of the local population then contact local community groups or invite them along to the club to discuss how the club can adapt to meet the needs of potential new members.
32. Conduct a survey of your current members asking what is good, not so good or could be better and use it to improve your club and attract new members.



Appendix B – Ideas for fundraising events

There are hundreds of ways to help raise money for your club. Some need very little planning, whilst others involve many months of planning, time and effort. Some also require consultation with your local authority if licences or planning permissions are needed.

Sites such as [Pinterest](#) offer more ideas too.

Why not try some of the following:

1. Sell club merchandise.
2. Hold a themed event party.
3. Challenge a rival club to a quiz night – play on rowers' competitive spirit.
4. Try a different sport – challenge the local cricket club.
5. Sponsor a club team in an event such as Tough Mudder, a marathon or triathlon.
6. Sports day – get together with other clubs or local community clubs for a charity sports day. Pool resources and split the donations.
7. Sell food and drink at your next training day.
8. Charge spectators to have comfy cushions on their seats. Even just 50p a cushion can quickly add up!
9. Sell advertising space on your buildings, grounds or website to local businesses – but check out any local planning restrictions first.
10. Rent out your clubhouse or grounds to other businesses when not in use by your members for parking, meetings groups, etc.
11. Either run a catered café session or franchise your kitchen facilities to a third party.
12. Run a juniors' v adults or parents' sports event – it doesn't have to be rowing!
13. Hold a car wash in your club's car park on event days or at weekends.
14. Hold a car boot sale in the car park (often needs a licence).
15. Organise a movie or sports evening.
16. Run a race, quiz or bingo night in the clubhouse.
17. Host a Black-Tie Ball for the local community. Get local businesses to sponsor specific aspects of the event such as the catering or entertainment in exchange for publicity, get donations for all raffle prizes and sell tickets.
18. Text to Give – sending a text from a mobile is one of the easiest ways to get fast donations. You will need to be signed up with a service provider.
19. Match Your Donation – find a willing donor who has the funds to match whatever you raise through your own contacts. A large corporate organisation or a wealthy celebrity is your best bet – the more well known, the better.



20. Club ball or dinner dance.
21. Educational talks – host anyone from a mountaineer to a sports personality, sell tickets and invite questions afterwards, open the bar, or host it as a coffee morning.
22. Adrenaline and endurance events – sponsorship of members doing sky diving, bungee jumping or marathons.
23. Raffles – ask local businesses for prizes.
24. Gift Aid – if a supporter is a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid will increase the value of their charity donation by 25%. Get the information if you are CASC registered on how to collect. Many clubs forget or don't claim it back.
25. Host a comedy night.
26. Dare or donate night – pick a card from a pack of embarrassing dares. Participants either have to carry out the dare or donate to get out of it!
27. Charge for private rowing lessons – indoor or on the water – some people only want to try it once or undertake a short course at a time that suits them.
28. Charge for daytime rowing and hold 'turn up and row' slots.
29. Supermarket packing – get the juniors to help.
30. Learn to row in a day for corporate away days with a 'competition' at the end.
31. Use an [Easy Fundraising](#) account for orders online – a % goes to the club.
32. If you're a registered charity, try [Amazon Smile](#) – a scheme where Amazon donates a small proportion of sales to charitable organisations.
33. Sell photos from an event.
34. Music nights – one of your members is likely to be a musician – get them to perform for free.
35. Recycling – could be just for your members or host facilities for the local community.
36. Offer your premises for 'cake mornings' with a donation (cover at least the heating and light).
37. Get members to donate a morning of their skills which can be 'bought' or auctioned.
38. Have a 50:50 Club / 100 Club / 50 Club – get members to pay £1 a month and half the money goes in prizes, half to the club fundraiser.
39. Host a workshop – anything from photography to quilting, everyone is looking for a venue.
40. Run a fines system – you decide what someone gets fined for!



Thank you.

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