



Board Report

To

2017 Annual General Meeting





Board Report to 56th (2017) Annual General Meeting

Dear members

Welcome to the 56th AGM of Canoeing Ireland. The following is the Board Report for 2016/17.

BOARD COMPOSITION

Following the last AGM in October 2016, the elected Board consisted of nine members:

- President: Paul Donnelly
- Four Executive members: Colm Slevin, Adrian Shanahan, Brian Ogilvie and Ike Jacob
- Leinster Representative: Frank Murphy,
- Connaught/Ulster Representative: Paul Pierce,
- Dublin Representative, Brendan O’Brien
- Munster Representative: Evan Roberts.

The positions of Olympic Discipline Representative, Non-Olympic Discipline Representative and Training & Accreditation Representative were unfilled.

The Executive at their first meeting agreed to the appointment of Brian Ogilvie as Hon Secretary and of Adrian Shanahan as Hon Treasurer. At the first Board meeting, Neil Fleming was co-opted as Olympic Discipline Representative. Frank Murphy, Brendan O’Brien and Neil Fleming resigned from the Board in February 2017.

BOARD AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

DATE	VENUE	DESCRIPTION
08/10/2016	Sport HQ	ADM
12/10/2016	Sport HQ	Executive Committee
26/10/2016	Sport HQ	Board of Management
19/11/2016	CI Training Centre	Board & Technical Committees
23/11/2016	Sport HQ	Board of Management
14/12/2016	Sport HQ	Board of Management
02/01/2017	Durrow	Executive Committee
28/01/2017	CI Training Centre	Board & Technical Committees
01/02/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management
01/02/2017	Sport HQ	Executive Committee
22/02/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management
08/03/2017	Sport HQ	Executive Committee
25/03/2017	CI Training Centre	EGM Marathon Committee – called by BoM
29/03/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management & Sport Ireland
10/04/2017	Salmon Leap CC	Executive Committee meeting with Canoe Marathon Ireland
19/04/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management
17/05/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management
14/06/2017	Sport HQ	Board of Management
24/10/2017	Sport HQ	Annual General Meeting

STAFFING

Members will be aware of the staffing difficulties we have faced as an organisation since the 2016 ADM. At the end of October, our Training and Development Officer resigned to take up a position with Waterways Ireland and from that time, CI has operated on a skeleton staff of two members, which reduced to 1.4 from the end of December. From the end of January 2017, we employed a Hub-coordinator / Project Officer working in Clonmel, in conjunction with the Tipperary Sports Partnership working for CI on a 0.4-week basis. Our former CEO resigned in mid-February 2017 and in March, we employed a former member of staff to manage the reorganisation of our Training Centre at Strawberry Beds, Chaplizzod, on a 0.5-week, 6-month basis.

Great credit is due to our staff for their hard work and dedication to keeping the organisation running during this very challenging period. The Board is very conscious of the need to provide an adequate staffing level to support the development and growth of our sport and our new Interim CEO is focussed on this task bearing in mind the necessity of navigating our way out of our difficult financial position which is outlined elsewhere in this report.

COMPANY AUDITOR AND SOLICITOR

Company Auditor OSK, East Point Plaza, East Point, Dublin 3
Company Solicitor Philip Lee Solicitors, 7/8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

On the International front, we are affiliated to the International Canoe Federation and the European Canoe Association. On the national front, we are members of the Federation of Irish Sport, the Olympic Council of Ireland and Paralympics Ireland and are recognised as the NGB for canoeing in Ireland by Sport Ireland. We maintain close relationships with key personnel in these bodies.

Canoeing Ireland has had a successful partnership with Sport Ireland, Waterways Ireland and other NGB's in the development and promotion of the Blueway Trails. We have also partnered with Waterways Ireland in the development last year of the Blueway 10k Programme which is a high-quality, 12 week training programme based on three hours of activity per week, supported by training videos on paddling technique which have proved to be a valuable resource for all members of Canoeing Ireland. The programme will not run this year but will be organised in 2018.

Over the last 18 months, Canoeing Ireland has forged a close partnership with the Tipperary Sports Partnership resulting in the construction of the Clonmel White Water course and the development of the Clonmel Hub. This partnership has enabled us to employ a Clonmel Hub-Coordinator / CI Project Officer for the region in association with TSP; our first fixed presence outside Dublin. It is hoped that the arrangement can and will be repeated with other Sport Partnerships in the future.

Local authority, watersports facilities such as that proposed by Kilkenny Co Co show the value of close co-operation with statutory and other locally-based agencies in facility developments which benefit our sport.

BOARD STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Following a difficult period of seven months, the following statement of our position was made by the Board to the membership on 14 May 2017:

“Over the recent months, the Board of Management has continued to focus on restructuring and strengthening Canoeing Ireland for future development and growth. This challenge has come at a time of particular flux and partial uncertainty as both internal and external changes have visibly impacted the organisation and the paddling community.”

Progress though is being made. Following consultation with key stakeholders and members, the new Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was adopted and published earlier this year. The plan is ambitious and provides an embedded foundation for the growth and expansion of our sport over the coming four years. It defines our vision, objectives and goals and forms the basis for operational programmes which will be implemented over this period. It is also in line with the expectations of Sport Ireland who co-ordinate the sustainable development of competitive and recreational sport in Ireland.

Fundamental to the success of this new direction is having the appropriate framework for governance and regulatory compliance required as a corporate entity and National Governing Body (NGB). Considerable improvements have been made in these areas with the introduction of the new constitution and rule book. Terms of references have been brought in for all technical committees together with a memorandum of understanding between the board and those committees to improve the connection between these various layers of governance. Importantly, it sets out a two-way support mechanism for the benefit of our members. Work is also ongoing to review and update the organisation's policy documents.

A new initiative will see the introduction of a pioneering Child-friendly Award Syllabus and a Club Leader qualification which will facilitate the long-term development of young paddlers within our clubs and across all disciplines. The development of a provider registration arrangement is close to completion and will enable partner clubs and commercial providers promote and implement our Award Scheme to endorse canoeing in all its forms under set criteria to ensure consistently high-quality standards.

Collaborations with other bodies are also being explored. Canoeing Ireland is in early stage talks with Outdoor Education Ireland, the umbrella organisation for Outdoor Education Centres throughout the country, on developing strategic and operational linkages and programmes aimed at creating further opportunities for paddle-sports to develop through the primary and secondary school network.

The board is currently in negotiations with Sport Ireland who recognise the potential of our sport. Their guidance and support, which is forthcoming, will assist us to set out a sustainable path for the future, but requires demonstration of unity-of-purpose to achieve progress in an agreed project plan that includes:

- A fit-for-purpose governance structure and procedures;*
- A sound long-term strategic plan;*
- Elimination of the financial deficit over an agreed period;*
- Staged introduction of a suitable management and staffing level.*

An important first step in this process has been the recent appointment by the Board of Sport Ireland-nominated Interim CEO, Paddy Boyd, who commences with us on 15 May 2016. Paddy was CEO of Irish Sailing for 16 years up to 2004 and served as Executive Director of Sail Canada for six and a half years until last year. He has a very sound management and financial experience in top sports positions and is an ideal choice to help us on our recovery path.

A membership fee increase will be an important element of this process. Fees have not been altered over a very long period and the changes, to be communicated shortly, will come into effect from 1st July 2017.

These actions and the new direction underway, are positive steps for Canoeing Ireland. This is being driven by a cohesive and committed board of management that will ultimately lead, in time, to the turnaround of the organisation.

The past though has left a legacy where damaging upheavals have resulted in considerable disruption at management and board level. Far too much energy has been devoted to internal disputes and diverted away from important development work for our sport. The reasons for this are many and varied, and little can be gained by replaying history and apportioning blame. That would be a fruitless exercise which would only serve

to divide and weaken the organisation even more than has been done already. That is not to say that the events of the past must be swept under the carpet and ignored. We need to learn from them and put better structures and governance procedures in place to ensure that we move our sport forward to achieve its potential.

Undoubtedly, we are a hurting organisation which needs to be fixed, but that doesn't mean it needs to be abandoned. There are those who are putting forward a radical view that the organisation needs to fold and be rebuilt from scratch. That's an interesting point of view, but not one which we feel stands up to scrutiny.

Building the organisation from the start again would have severe implications and far-reaching consequences for the sport of canoeing and its members. The following practical and important things would be lost if that were to happen:

- *Sport Ireland's preferred engagement with the canoeing community is through the current NGB. The Sport Ireland Recognition process typically takes 3-5 years for a new NGB;*
- *Their current grant-aid to the sport (in 2017: €195k Core Grant; €40k High Performance Grant and €60k Carding to individual athletes) would cease;*
- *Canoeing Ireland would be unable to apply for Sports Capital Grants for equipment and infrastructural works. Between 2006-2012 Canoeing Ireland received special grants of €191,146 and member clubs received €308,498 in 2014-2016;*
- *Recognition and facilitation through the NGB by bodies such as Waterways Ireland, the ESB, Inland Fisheries, Local Authorities and Local Sports Partnerships would cease;*
- *Membership of the International Canoe Federation, European Canoe Association, Olympic Council of Ireland and Paralympics Ireland would end, and with that the ability of our athletes in all disciplines to compete at international level;*
- *Our training and accreditation scheme would no longer be recognised by Sport Ireland Coaching (Coaching Ireland) and no new accreditation could take place through the NGB;*
- *Availability of Garda Vetting, to work with children or vulnerable adults, in a voluntary or paid capacity, within the sport of canoeing would not be available through the NGB;*
- *NGB insurance cover would cease, and any private insurance available to groups or individuals would come at a greatly increased overall cost;*
- *Other membership benefits such as worldwide professional indemnity cover for coaches / instructors, public liability, personal accident, and retailer discounts would no longer apply;*
- *Programmes and events such as the Club Championships, Blueway 10k, Liffey Descent, Junior Liffey, Slalom, Polo, Freestyle, Sprint, Downriver, Marathon and Surf events, Blueway projects and the Clonmel Hub Project, would cease to be covered by membership insurance;*
- *NGB assets would have to be liquidated including the Liffey Training Centre, it's fleet of boats and all company equipment and boats which are spread throughout the country with member clubs.*

In short, the consequences of this scenario would well and truly set back the development of our sport over the coming decade or more. The alternative is for members to recognise that we, as a sports organisation have gone through a difficult period and come through it as a paddling community to reorganise, regenerate and reinvigorate it into a properly functioning National Governing Body.

Heading into perhaps the most critical Annual General Meeting in the recent history of Canoeing Ireland, members need to be clear on our present situation, understand the alternatives, recognise the realities of where this leaves the organisation and determine what we can all contribute as individuals, in whatever form, to bring about a positive outcome.

Canoeing Ireland is dependent on its members and in particular the contribution of volunteers. This is your organisation. It needs to be both member and club-centric. Volunteerism is our keystone. We are reliant on members to engage as board or committee members at discipline or club level.

In recent times, many people who share this vision of a better organisation, and are willing to help, have put themselves forward to assist in the recovery. We want to build on this team, to deliver the service to our membership which it needs and deserves. Now is the time for committed volunteers, with relevant skill sets, to put themselves forward to serve on the board, technical and club committees.

Information which will be circulated in the coming months in the lead up to our AGM, scheduled for 24th June 2017, will provide firmer information on our current financial and staffing plans for recovery and development.

It is up to all of us to put the past behind us, but learn from it and unite to get this organisation moving in the right direction and make it one that we are all proud to be a part of.”

MEMBERSHIP

Current membership numbers with end of year 2016, 2015 and 2014 comparisons are as follows:

CLUB MEMBERS				
Category	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Clubs	62	71	72	66
Male	1390	1936	1,523	1485
Female	557	750	662	675
Total club members	1947	2686	2185	2160
Senior	1461	1700	1,618	1607
Junior	486	988	567	553
Total club members	1947	2688	2185	2160

ALL MEMBERS				
Category	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Male	1949	2105	2043	2277
Female	697	769	818	897
Total	2646	2874	2861	3174
Senior	2416	2257	2260	2430
Junior	270	617	601	744
Total Members	2686	2874	2861	3174

Total Club members	1947	2688	2185	2160
Total individual members	739	186	676	1014
Total Members CI	2686	2874	2861	3174

Following the introduction of our new Rules at the 2016 ADM there is a requirement that all members of Canoeing Ireland-registered clubs must be registered by their clubs as members of Canoeing Ireland. This is necessary to ensure that all club members operate within the scope of our insurance cover and governance structure, particularly in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding, Disciplinary & Appeals issues etc..

Fees have not changed in over eight years despite a reduction in our core grant from Sport Ireland over this period, to the extent that we have become too heavily reliant on funding from this source, which is not sustainable if we are to be in a position to put into effect the service and developmental improvements as set out in the goals and objectives of our Strategic Plan. We have reviewed membership fees and benefits of other NGB's in Ireland and Paddlesport NGB's abroad and have concluded that the following membership fee structure is appropriate. This will be implemented from next month:

Category	Annual fee
Club registration	€150
Senior Club member	€30
Junior Club member	€10
Individual member – non Club	€50

The introduction of a Family membership category is being examined at present which we hope to introduce following consultation with our database developer and a sample of clubs. Plans are also being advanced to introduce a single renewal date for membership from next year, again following consultation with club secretaries.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

It is clear that many members are not aware of the range of benefits which membership bestows. The main ones are:

- Insurance (see below)
- Garda Vetting service
- Voting rights at general meetings
- Campaigning and representation at national and international level.
- Access to the Training Scheme and Awards validation at Level 3 and above
- Access to CPD Workshops and training resource material
- Access to volunteer training programmes
- Discount with partner commercial firms
- Extensive programme of competitive events in all disciplines
- Competition entry through the member database

Insurance for the organisation is provided by Sportscover, a UK based Company through our brokers, O’Driscoll O’Neill (ODON). Worldwide Insurance benefits to the organisation and membership are:

- Public Liability, including indemnity to the owners of venues used e.g. councils etc.
- Employers Liability
- Property Insurance for specified properties
- Motor Cover for specified vehicles
- Professional Indemnity for legal liability to a member of the public following an error or omission in the professional advice or service a member has provided to a client who has a result, suffered a financial loss.
- Personal Accident for accidental injury during participation, including training and travelling to and from events or officially-sanctioned training sessions in Ireland.
- Travel Cover for athletes and teams

The range of benefits represents very good value for the membership fee. The scope of cover is under review with our brokers at present and we hope in the near future to negotiate additional benefits

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020

We now have our Strategic Plan 2017-2020 adopted and our submitted Operational Plan 2017 to Sport Ireland was based on this. Until we can recruit the necessary staff, we will not be able to refocus / reinvigorate / rebuild our organisation nor bring our development plans to fruition to provide the necessary supports to our membership, rebuild reputation and regain credibility with our membership base and strategic partners. Many items contained in our strategy are being actioned despite our current limited staff resources.

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

The Training Centre is based on the banks of the River Liffey at the Strawberry Beds. CI is unique among the smaller NGB’s in that we own and operate our own national training centre. It is a very valuable resource and

has played a key role since it's inception in the delivery of high-quality and innovative training courses.

Over the last few months the Board and management have been reviewing the Training Centre, its function, condition and equipment and are working on drawing up a plan for its refurbishment, equipping and optimum usage for the coming years.

It is clear that it is one of the key sources of revenue for the organisation. Our future financial sustainability is dependant on optimising our self-generated revenue streams and the Training Centre, apart altogether from it's key technical function, is a very important part of this process.

The centre continues to be available to our technical committees, squads and clubs for meeting and training purposes and we are proposing to make it available to commercial providers, on a fee basis, as a base for their activities at times when not in use by the organisation.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Our technical committees do very valuable work in directing and organising competitive canoeing across our seven competitive disciplines, and in overseeing the development and operation of our Training & Awards Scheme. The committees and their chairs are:

<i>Committees</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Training & Development Unit</i>	<i>Patrick McCormack</i>
<i>Canoe Sprint</i>	<i>Dermot Coogan / Tom Egan (joint)</i>
<i>Canoe Slalom</i>	<i>Dermot Morley</i>
<i>Paddle Surf</i>	<i>Darragh Walsh</i>
<i>Downriver</i>	<i>Tom Claffey</i>
<i>Freestyle</i>	<i>Lucien Schreiber</i>
<i>Polo</i>	<i>Mark Cummins</i>
<i>Marathon</i>	<i>Deaglan O'drisceoil</i>

The following progress and activity reports have been supplied by the chairs of each committee:

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

2016/17 has been an interesting one with lots of developments at the high end of the award scheme, a continued and sustained demand for instructor training & assessment and a great uptake of the introductory awards in all disciplines.

It would be wrong if we did not mention one person, in particular, straight away and that is Benny Cullen. Benny left Canoeing Ireland last October and has left a massive void which will be hard to fill. Benny worked very closely with the TDU during his time with CI. We had a great relationship, would regularly bounce ideas off each other and come up with new programs and ideas to help develop paddle sports in Ireland. We would like to take this opportunity to wish Benny well with his new role in Waterways Ireland.

2016 saw a few great events happening namely the establishment of the Blueway 10k program which was launched at last year's TDU AGM and it was great to see so many take part in the program and in the events all around the country. The launch of the Clonmel Slalom course has also been a massive success with it being utilised for competitions, skills and instructor training already.

In October last year Ireland played host to a very successful EPP benchmarking event which saw representatives from many European Canoe Federations come to Ireland and enjoy our waterways and our hospitality. Over the weekend Benchmarking took place for Level 3 Canoe skills / River Kayak Skills / Sea kayak skills, Level 4 Sea kayak skills, Sprint skills and we also ran a SUP assimilation course for some Irish and European delegates, as many of the European federations hope to develop SUP and Canoeing Ireland are one

of the most advanced nations. A great success with Ireland showcasing itself to Europe as a developed federation to be looked up to. I would like to say well done to Benny, Vicki and all the crew in the office for putting the event together.

2016/17 has seen a healthy uptake on the variety of courses offered under the award Scheme. The following is a breakdown of the certs issued over that period. We have not included a record of L1 or 2 skills certs in this breakdown but they do number into the thousands.

Canoeing	#	River Kayaking:	#	Sea Kayaking	#
Level 1 Instructor	17	Level 1 Instructor	72	Level 3 Instructor	7
Level 2 Instructor	8	Level 2 Instructor	57	Level 4 Instructor	1
Level 3 Skills	80	Level 3 Instructor	11	Level 5 Instructor	4
River Safety Rescue	#	Level 4 Instructor	2	Level 3 Skills	74
RSR 1	94	Level 5 Instructor	8	Level 4 Skills	3
RSR 2	132	Level 3 Skills	280	Level 5 Skills	4
RSR 3	9	Level 4 Skills	42	Coastal Nav Level 1	15
SUP	#	Level 5 Skills	5	Coastal Nav Level 2	2
Flat Water Instructor	25				

At the start of 2017 the committee took the decision to try to focus its efforts on a few key projects on which it felt it could make some progress. With the absence of a Training & Development Officer on the staff of CI, a lot of the general enquiries and correspondence, that would usually be taken care of by them, fell back on the committee which absorbed a lot of time in and outside of meetings. This informed our decision to focus on some priority projects:

1. Completion of the SUP Instructor training and assessment program which is now fully completed, has been peer-reviewed by Coaching Ireland and other NGBs and adopted onto the Adventure Sports Framework. I would like to thank Shane McElligott, Kipper Maguire and Ronan O'Connor for all the work/input they put into the project which was four years in the making.
2. Development of Kids kayaking awards to break up Level 1-3 skills into more stages to aid junior development. Sue Doyle, Neal Kelly and Benny Cullen worked hard in the last 12 months to develop this award scheme that would help bridge the gap for juniors paddlers as they develop their skills into adulthood. This has been handed over to Ronan O'Connor (Canoeing Ireland's Clonmel Officer) to put the finishing touches and develop the branding around it.
3. Begin the development of a Canoe Club Leader award. This project is in its early stages and its development has been very much welcomed by the paddling community.

Overall it has been a busy year and I would like to thank the members of this year's committee - Kieran, Sue, Liz, Laura, Neil, Paul it has been great working with you over the last year(s) and thank you on behalf of all the members for the hours you have put into the development of the sport. Also thanks to Vicki in the Office who has always been there to help us in any way possible.

I'm looking forward to the next year and hopefully it will see more people out paddling - having fun!

SPRINT

2017, has been a roller coaster of ups and downs. The Junior 5k series, the brainchild of Salmon Leap Junior development coach Jon Simmons was hosted in Salmon Leap and Celbridge Paddlers Canoe Clubs over four weekends in February and March. It was a resounding success in getting our Junior paddlers into the mind set of training and racing. Being held for the last 2 years, the 5k series has proven its worth with improved performances by all paddlers who travelled to two British National Regattas at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham.

On the Senior front Canoe Sprint were extremely disheartened by the decision of Michael Fitzsimon (4th place Under 23 World Championships K1 1000m and one place off qualification for Rio 2016) to hang up his paddles. It is unfortunate that athletes with so much potential don't get the financial support they justifiably need to train at a level that is required to be a world class athlete.

Jenny Egan is progressing well through her training plan having performed excellently in World Cup 1 in Portugal achieving a very respectable 9th place in the 200m A final (Olympic distance), 9th place overall in the K1 500m (Olympic distance) and winning Gold in the 5000m. World Cup 2 saw Jenny race in very difficult weather conditions combined with a shoulder injury where she placed 5th in the C final of the 200m. World Cup 3 in Belgrade saw her place 9th in the B final of the 500m and win Bronze in the 5000m.

Jon Simmons in conjunction with Salmon Leap Canoe Club have proven without any doubt what can be accomplished if we could fund a full time national coach. Jon has worked wonders with Jenny Egan, the under 23's and the junior paddlers in their club on a part time basis. Simmons is a great believer in squad/group training sessions.

Thomastown Paddlers Canoe Club, Kilcullen Canoe Club, Salmon Leap Canoe Club and Celbridge Paddlers Canoe Club all had paddlers at two national regattas in Nottingham (April, May). A big commitment by the clubs and competitors. Each and every one of the competitors did us proud, showing that we are well able to mix it up with the UK. Some notable points: Ryan O'Connor still a junior promoted to Men's A, Ronan Foley promoted to Boy's A, Scott Dignam / Aaron Thorpe / Ronan Slattery and Cormac Slattery all promoted to Boy's B. Mathew McCarthney and Klaidas Butkevicius both got promoted to Boy's C.

Senior results at the April regatta were also very positive, with Tom Brennan placing fourth in the Men's A K1 200m and Barry Watkins fourth in the Men's A K1 1000m.

Our Under 23 squad of athletes namely Brian O'Neill, Craig Cummins, Mark Slattery and Jack O'Hagan have been concentrating on their respective Leaving Certificate and University examinations. But will compete in the July and September regattas at Holme Pierrepont.

The future of Canoe Sprint looks bright if we can give these young athletes the support and coaching that is required to become world class athletes. We expect to send a junior development squad back to the July and September Nottingham regattas subject to funding being available.

The rest of the year is full of local events where we will showcase and promote the sport. Some of the events to look out for are the sprint regatta in Newry, National Championships in Lough Rynn and a 200m Sprint showcase event in the Dublin Docks that we hope to promote in the national media.

On the international front, we have our seniors Jenny Egan, Tom Brennan, Liam Banks, Barry Watkins Peter Egan to name few who will compete at the Senior European and World Championships. Ryan O'Connor will be competing in the Junior and Under 23 European and World Championships.

SLALOM

The slalom committee are responsible for the Olympic discipline of Canoe Slalom for Ireland, both domestically and internationally. The domestic focus is on encouraging participation and the development of athletes that enjoy the sport so that they can reach their full potential. The future of our sport is dependent on encouraging new participants and these new entrants have the potential to become our future Olympians.

The past 12 months have seen over 130 participants race at events across the three divisions. These range from the Irish Open and the various national Division 1 races to the flatwater Division 3 events. We have been fortunate to benefit from the recent investments in infrastructure. The opening of the Clonmel course has

provided the opportunity to hold racing and training on the new facility that is of benefit nationally and regionally. The holding of the club championship for 2017 saw a great turnout and was a great opportunity to promote our sport.

In the coming summer months there are a series of Division 3 races and coaching events planned so that people can come and enjoy the benefit of coaching and racing in the (hopefully,) warmer weather. Those that are interested can then try the moving water races when they happen later in the year.

On the international side of things we have seen a number of changes in our team and selections over the past few years. After two years of holding selections at the newly redeveloped Sluice course we returned to an international course for part of the selection process again this year. With over 30 athletes going for selection in 2017, almost exclusively made up of those still racing at under 23 class, the standard of athlete presenting for selection continues to impress. The competition in the Mens K1 and C1 classes, particularly, is very strong and is a testament to the work put in by all involved over the past few years.

The committee continue to support a squad-based system of training and feel that it is an important factor in the continued growth in numbers and quality of the pool of potential Irish athletes. The economies of scale offered and the support of likeminded individuals are of as much benefit to those competing at the highest level in our national squad and team as they are to those who are just coming in to our junior development squad program.

The progression of the athletes and the results achieved to date highlight the work and potential of the current pool of athletes and the committee look forward to the next few years and a return to the Olympics at Tokyo 2020.

PADDLESURF

Over the last year, Paddlesurf Ireland have organised a number of “Come and try it” days for beginners as well as development days for intermediate and advanced kayakers in Clare, Cork and Kerry. This has seen the numbers involved in Paddlesurf grow.

Paddlesurf Ireland hosted a number of ranking competitions including the Irish Open in Easky (Oct 2016) with over 60 competitors, competitions in Clare (Nov 2016 and Feb 2017), in Kerry (May 2017) and a successful competition in Tramore as part of this year’s Club Championships in April.

A full team attended the World Surf Kayaking Championships in Spain in 2015 (finishing 4th in team event) and a full team to the Home Internationals in Portrush in Oct 2016 (finishing 2nd in team event). A team also travelled to the World Waveski Championships in Portugal in 2016.

Paddlesurf will be sending a full team to the World Surf Kayaking Championships in Portrush in Oct 2017 and will be focusing on developing their surfing skills in preparation for this competition.

WILDWATER RACING

Wildwater paddling has been declining over the past three years, with the number of paddlers competing in racing events falling from 40 down to as low as 15 at some races this year. Further evidence of decline was the low number of persons attending our AGM in September 2016, which resulted in failure to elect a committee. It took a further two EGMs before a committee was elected. The committee elected, consists of five non-paddlers and two senior paddlers who gave a commitment to assist the committee in technical matters. The new committee arrangement has worked well and a racing calendar for 2016/2017 was produced thanks to the support and co-operation of the many kayak clubs around the country.

Reasons for decline include:

- The loss of junior paddlers to other disciplines.
- Lack of funding for coaching and training.
- Lack of instructors and coaches - many former instructors and coaches have left the sport.
- Previous committees have had to handle many complaints and disputes, which resulted in paddlers leaving the sport and reluctance from people to join the committee and run the sport.
- Races being cancelled due to dry weather

The racing calendar was run despite numerous races having to be cancelled or rescheduled due to dry weather between December 2016 and end of February 2017, which resulted in rivers not having enough water to race on.

National team selection races (both senior and junior) for sprint and classic were held on the river Liffey at Sluice and on the Inny at Ballymahon. The committee received and vetted the applications for selection for the national team, places were offered to 3 Juniors and 3 U23 paddlers. One junior and one U23 paddler have taken up the offer and will travel to the ICF Wildwater Canoeing Junior & U23 World Championship at Murau, Austria in July. The same U23 paddler will compete in the ICF Wildwater Canoeing World Championship at Pau France at the end of September. The committee has every confidence that these paddlers will represent their discipline and country very well.

Going forward, the focus for the committee will be to create a healthy and enjoyable atmosphere within the discipline; this in turn should entice paddlers to take up the sport of wildwater racing. In the near future the committee are planning on hosting a development workshop with a number of current and former wwr participants with a view to getting their assistance to revitalise the exciting sport of wildwater racing.

FREESTYLE

The Annual Clifden Competition was held on the 16th & 17th July 2016 at the tidal freestyle feature in Clifden, Co Galway. Kayakers of all skill levels from all over the country took part in the two day event. Participation was the main focus of the event with past and present members of the Irish freestyle team providing coaching and encouragement on the day. This year to expand on the success of the Clifden Competition, there will be a series of competitions and coaching days at Clifden.

The committee have been making efforts to get involved in the improvement and addition of freestyle features throughout the country including consultation on Corks Ballincollig weir project.

On the International scene, the European Freestyle Championships took place in Plattling Germany in May 2016, We sent an impressive four teams to compete in Mens K1, Mens C1, Womens K1 and Junior Mens K1. Competition was fierce and the Irish representatives paddled very well with Dave McClure ranking 13th in the Mens finals. Preparations have begun for ICF World Championships in San Juan, Argentina in November 2017 with trials to be held in Nottingham in July.

The Committee have put Lots of emphasis on the younger generation of up and coming Freestyle paddlers this year, we had a increase in junior competitors at competitions this year including Club Championships 2017 and Galwayfest. The Committee hope to increase on these participation levels in the coming year.

MARATHON

The current Marathon Committee were elected at an EGM arising from the failure of the initial AGM to produce a committee. The incoming members undertook to compile a calendar of ranking races, record results and facilitate the selection of international teams.

The racing season is now well under way with a number of new events appearing on the calendar. The cooperation of clubs and individuals has been most encouraging. While numbers attending events are

relatively low there remains a reasonably healthy level of interest in marathon racing. This is reflected in the fact that two trailers of boats will travel to this years Sella descent in Spain.

Another positive is the growing number of junior paddlers training at a number of clubs. Going forward we need to be better at getting all these youngsters to our domestic events. Careful consideration needs to be given to the planning of events to ensure that there is no overlap. For example, Club Championships has been held the same weekend as the April Regatta in Nottingham. This has been the case for two consecutive years.

On the international front, two Irish paddlers Barry Watkins and Ronan Foley competed in the first World Cup event in Belgium. Both performed extremely well with Barry finishing fifth in the Mens long event and Ronan bringing home a silver and a bronze medal.

Going forward, the committee hope to confirm the location and condition of all boats that have been purchased in recent years. We would like to see more people enjoying our events and are prepared to consider new ideas to freshen things up. We will look at improving event management and hope to make some investment in this regard.

The production of the newsletter has been widely welcomed. We note the growing interest in longer events and would consider establishing a series or league of such events. Another issue to be addressed is the composition of this years Liffey Descent Committee and the future direction of the race.

CANOE POLO

Canoe polo in Ireland is going through a sustained period of regrowth and development. The loss of the Dublin and Galway leagues in recent years due to pool closures and the retiring from international duty for several senior players has left a void with no immediate solutions to fill the gaps.

Ongoing investment in equipment has enabled the national committee to support and encourage new clubs into the our discipline. However, the success for canoe polo has been on the other end of the spectrum with junior canoe polo currently going through its strongest period of development and participation ever. Thanks to the focused and continued work in recent years on prioritising junior development by the national committee and at club level, we are now in very healthy place going forward.

On the competitions front we currently have active leagues running in Limerick and Belfast, while the Dublin League continues to look for a new home. We also have 7 Senior competitions planned this year (Curragh, Longford, Galway, Phibsborough, Killaloe, Canoe Polo Club Champ and Irish Open International)

The Irish Open International will return to Kilcock, this year, with a large focus on rebuilding the event and attracting international teams currently in progress. (<http://www.irishopen-canoepolo.com>).

We also have close to 100 juniors competing from u11 to u19 at each of 4 junior canoe polo events running during the year. A generous and continuing sponsorship deal with Argento has rewarded clubs who have entered junior teams into these events. Clubs are seeing direct financial benefits for their continued hard work to promote and develop junior canoe polo.

This August will see the first Junior World International Canoe Polo Championships happening in Belfast with 50 teams competing from around the world. Our active junior development squads will allow us to enter 10 teams into this event across all categories, an indicator of the current strength in junior canoe polo.

We currently have national coaches and managers appointed for all our national squad teams, with active national squads for Senior Men, U21 Men and Women and junior development squads. These teams are all competing at international events this year with the focus for junior development teams being the Junior

World Championships in Belfast in early August, and then the Europeans in late August, in France the main focus for senior and U21 Teams. The continued development of the national squads, and re-imaging as a single focused group has helped us secure generous and ongoing sponsorship for our senior and U21 squads again from Argento.

FINANCIAL SITUATION

The Reports and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 were circulated with the notice for the AGM and queries received from members were responded to last Friday.

In view of our financial situation, an analysis of income and expenditure from the past six year's annual financial statements was prepared and circulated to give context to how this situation has developed over the past few years. A summary of this analysis follows, with explanatory notes on movements under main headings for the past three years.

The incurring of two successive years of deficits on our operations, totalling €93,700, has had a serious cumulative impact on our cash flow. The practice of purchasing equipment from reserves in the past (€30,000 in the past three years on marathon / sprint equipment) has exacerbated this. Where expensive, equipment purchases are necessary in future, a short-term loan over the useful lifetime of the equipment will be considered to ease the effects on cash flow.

Savings on payroll costs of more than €50,000 together with the additional revenue arising from membership fee increases in the second part of the year will go some way in the current year towards addressing this deficit. Equipment assets on our register are being reviewed and based on their value as training / development resources and the need for retention for a period under SCG rules, some of these will be offered for sale to further help address our deficit. Other actions have and will be taken as outlined below and in the summary financial report, but inevitably, it will be several years before we will be able to work our way back to a surplus.

In Note 18 to the financial statements (Pg.18) our auditors draw attention to the deficit of €77,388 in 2016 and the negative reserves of €5,021 at year end. Reference is made to the difficult economic environment, the outlook presenting significant challenges and the directors having instituted measures to preserve cash. The auditors state that these circumstances create uncertainties over future trading results and cash flows and in the company's ability to continue as a going concern, realise its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of business.

This is a matter which is being urgently addressed by the company. Our new Interim CEO, Paddy Boyd, has been appointed in the past month on the recommendation of Sport Ireland. He is a very experienced and accomplished sports administrator who is well placed to chart a sustainable way forward for Canoeing Ireland in conjunction with the Board.

The following immediate and short-medium term priorities have been identified and are being acted upon:

1. Assess the current financial position of the company and develop a cash flow projection to year-end.
2. Assess the staffing needs of the organization consistent with the projected cash flow and put a plan in place for recruitment.
3. Put in place a fit-for-purpose financial management and reporting system to improve budgetary control, debtor and creditor management.
4. Implement the membership fee increases with effect from 1 July 2017.
5. Put a plan in place to optimise the usage of the National Training Centre to generate additional revenue in 2017 and beyond.
6. Undertake a review of the levels of office costs and overheads to identify areas for savings.

7. Conduct a review of the assets of the company to determine, in consultation with relevant technical committees, those which may be disposed of to improve cash flow in 2017 / 2018.

The Board has concluded that the combination of these management plans will significantly improve the company's ability to continue as a going concern, to realise its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of business.

CANOEING IRELAND: SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF ANNUAL A/C EXPENSES/BALANCES 2011-2016

ADMINISTRATIVE INCOME/EXPENSES	2016		2015		2014		2013		2012		2011		2014-16
	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses	Balance
OPERATIONS													
Category 1 Training	80,564	48,810	160,069	100,042	141,394	87,294	141,219	73,277	119,329	48,763	143,687	62,591	
Balance:	31,754		60,027		54,100		67,942		70,566		81,096		145,881 NOTE 1
Category 2a Liffey Descent	38,855	40,826	34,323	45,394	34,297	36,605	34,335	37,342	32,143	38,753	29,380	50,221	
Balance:		-1,971		-11,071		-2,308		-3,007		-6,610		-20,841	-15,350 NOTE 2
Category 3 Membership Services	56,541	26,220	50,931	34,282	51,102	28,367	52,294	26,871	51,580	25,003	53,544	22,799	
Balance:	30,321		16,649		22,735		25,423		26,577		30,745		69,705 NOTE 3
Category 3a Staff costs	0	214,675	0	182,306	0	171,819	0	176,798	0	153,737	0	178,766	
Balance:		-214,675		-182,306		-171,819		-176,798		-153,737		-178,766	-568,800 NOTE 4
Category 3b Office costs & overheads	0	64,748	0	62,056	0	51,054	5,831	51,827	0	56,718	0	62,623	
Balance:		-64,748		-62,056		-51,054		-45,996		-56,718		-62,623	-177,858 NOTE 5
Category 3c Board and Executive Expenses		8,174		7,784		10,198							
Balance:		-8,174		-7,784		-10,198		0		0		0	-26,156 NOTE 6
Category 3d Awards and Ceremonies		0		1,381									
Balance:		0		-1,381		0		0		0		0	-1,381 NOTE 7
Category 4a Motor & Travel		9,147		6,175		7,411		9,828		5,349		11,716	
Balance:		-9,147		-6,175		-7,411		-9,828		-5,349		-11,716	-22,733 NOTE 8
Category 5 Legal & Professional		25,628		26,738		30,401		-823		-48,872		17,688	
Balance:		-25,628		-26,738		-30,401		823		48,872		-17,688	-82,767 NOTE 9
Category 7 High Performance	80,000	74,946	65,000	76,103	65,000	70,264	50,000	60,897	61,031	75,138	129,000	123,928	
Balance:	5,054			-11,103		-5,264		-10,897		-14,107	5,072		-11,313 NOTE 10
Category 8 Disciplines	34,388	47,829	45,038	72,167	79,433	95,691	49,353	59,807	18,573	21,505	13,319	17,236	
Balance:		-13,441		-27,129		-16,258		-10,454		-2,932		-3,917	-56,828 NOTE 11
Category 9a Club Championships	4,378	2,404	2,555	4,310	34,134	31,358							
Balance:	1,974			-1,755	2,776			0		0		0	2,995 NOTE 12
Category 10 Projects & Rive trails	21,080	13,528	16,790	3,055	12,383	10,158							
Balance:	7,552		10,735		0,000								22,547 NOTE 13

#	NOTES ON BALANCES
1	<p>TRAINING COURSES: We are fortunate to be one of a small group of NGB's in Ireland which runs its own National Training Centre and we have expanded this reach in the past year with our presence in the Clonmel Hub operated jointly with Tipperary Sports Partnership. Training activities undertaken by CI over the years have pioneered many programmes which are now mainstreamed and being carried on through a vibrant network of commercial providers. Much needs to be and is being done to reinvigorate this programme to achieve its potential for the sport in terms of programmes expanding our women, youth and disability inclusion focus, support for our technical committees in the development of all competitive disciplines, supporting the development of club instructors / coaches and in providing quality CPDs for our network of instructors and coaches. This activity has proven a valuable source of revenue generation in the past and has further potential, which must be developed, to contribute a great deal more to the financial sustainability of our organisation.</p>
2	<p>LIFFEY DESCENT: This is undoubtedly the flagship event for CI over almost 60 years. The event will be run in 2017 but due to recent events, it has not been possible to undertake the level of preparation and planning which is desirable. To develop the event beyond its level of recent years will require a root and branch reevaluation and lead-in preparation and planning from the conclusion of this year's event by our staff, in association with the Canoe Marathon Ireland committee, with a focus on attracting increased commercial sponsorship, a cost-neutral budget and higher levels of national and international participation.</p>
3	<p>MEMBERSHIP: Membership fees have not been increased for many years and fee income has increased only very slightly over the past six years. Fees are being increased from 1/7/17 as already reported. This is an area which has needed review for a considerable time and has the potential to significantly contribute to turning our finances around to a more sustainable state. The revised scale of fees represents very good value for money and is estimated to generate additional revenue of approx. €15,000 in 2017 and €40,000 in a full year. This must be coupled with significantly improved member services ranging across areas such as response times, expanded member benefits, better communication, expansion of web-based member resources, training and supports for volunteers, etc.</p>
4	<p>Staffing: Staffing levels are at an historical low of 2.2 full-time-equivalents since the beginning of 2017, resulting in unacceptable levels of service to members over the past six months. Getting to grips with our management and financial situation has been a key factor in this situation continuing up till now. We now have an Interim CEO in place for the past month and one of his priorities has been to do so, enable the process of determining our required and sustainable staffing level to be determined, and commence recruitment for key roles in the near future. While this situation has been very disruptive internally, for our member clubs and individuals and for our partner agencies, it now presents us with an opportunity to restructure our organisation and re-build from a more solid and sustainable base. The reduced staffing level in the first half of the year will result in a one-off financial saving of more than €50,000 in the current financial year which will be a significant aid to our financial restructuring process.</p>
5	<p>Office costs & overheads: A range of items are covered under this heading as can be seen in the detailed analysis. Some are fixed, such as rent and service charges for our HQ. All headings will be subject to detailed examination and review to identify where savings can be achieved without compromising efficiency.</p>
6	<p>Board & Executive expenses: This relates mainly to travel costs incurred by Board members in attending meetings and undertaking their roles on behalf of the membership.</p>

7	Awards & Ceremonies: This expense relates to a function in January 2015 organised in honour of our 20 Olympians in Sprint and Slalom who have represented Ireland in Olympic teams from 1972 and to mark the retirement of Eoin Rheinisch from international paddling. The event was attended by the OCI President.
8	Motor and travel: This is a combination of staff travel costs and the costs associated with keeping our company minibus on the road. The minibus is now 14 years old and as such, maintenance and running costs are becoming an issue. A cost-benefit evaluation will be carried out to determine what the best option is in relation to maintaining this asset into the future.
9	Legal and Professional: This covers a combination over 2016/2015 of legal costs (€10,038 / €14,856), accounting (€2,706 / €4,338), forensic accounting (€6,150 / €6,150), and a range of other HR / recruitment / strategy / high performance / Garda Vetting services (€6,715 / €1,395). While every effort is made to keep such costs to a minimum, the engagement of a certain level of outside expertise is necessary every year depending on circumstances not always in the control of the organisation.
10	High Performance: This covers a contribution to the training and competitive programme and specialist coaching costs of the Olympic disciplines of Canoe Sprint and Canoe Slalom. The requirement is that the overall annual costs are covered by grant-funding from Sport Ireland and the Olympic Council of Ireland as supplemented by fund-raising activities by the technical committees and athlete contributions. For a number of years, overruns were experienced under this heading which fell to be funded from the general administration a/c. This practice has been eliminated with effect from the 2016 season.
11	Disciplines: This is a combination of movements (on a cash basis) on the separate accounts of the Slalom, Marathon, Sprint, Wildwater, Polo, Surf, Freestyle and TDU technical committees. As detailed in the response to member's queries on the 2016 accounts, grants totaling €12,000 in 2015 and €11,500 in 2016 were advanced to the committees but do not appear as income under this item due to them being Interbank transfers and not treated as receipts in the accounts. Due to the financial situation in the past couple of years, such transfers to committees have been more limited than in the past. A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered between the Board and each technical committee, outlining the terms of the relationship and mutual obligations of both parties which will lead to better levels of communication and support. It is the intention, when our financial situation is stabilised and improved, that a higher level of subvention and support will be made available to technical committees from central funds on a needs basis and subject to the raising of funding by technical committees from their own activities, such as race levies and fund-raising.
12	Events and projects: There has been a great deal of success in recent years in attracting grant-aid and co-funding from grant schemes and statutory agencies to part-fund a series of innovative programmes such as Instructor Training Initiatives, Blueway 10k etc which have been very successful additions to our programme. These have been undertaken at minimal cost to the organisation except for staff resources necessary to organise and implement. Other events such as the highly successful Junior Paddlefest have received a small degree of support in recent years. Canoeing Ireland has had a central role in European PaddlePass programme which is a grouping of European paddlesport NGB's involved in developing standards in coaching and training which also represents a small net cost to the organisation.
13	Bad Debt provision: Debtor control and follow-up is an area which has not been given adequate attention in recent years. The provisions in 2015 and 2016 reflect debts identified as uncollectable for a variety of reasons. This is an area which will be given increased attention when a resource is taken on soon to better manage our financial affairs and provide a better structure for budgeting, financial reporting and follow-up.

14 **Operations deficit & Sport Ireland Core Grant:** The Table above, shows a cumulative deficit of €731,854 on our operations over the three years, 2014-2016, which was offset by cumulative Sport Ireland Core Grants of €638,185, leaving a net deficit of €93,669 over the period. This points to the urgency of taking immediate steps to develop a more sustainable funding model through a combination of cost reduction, generation of additional or increase in existing revenue streams. The Table below charts the Sport Ireland investment in Canoeing Ireland over the nine-year period from 2009-2017. The downward trend in our core funding support reflects several crises and key events at Board and management level over the period from late 2011 which have given rise to a gradual erosion of confidence in CI. The reasons are well understood by the current Board of CI but nonetheless have been a key contributing, but by no means the only, factor in the deterioration of our financial position over this period. Taking 2012 as a base, we have incurred cumulative reductions in Core funding of €159k over the past five years.

Year	Core Grant		HP Grant		Overall	
	€k	+/- %	€k	+/- %	€k	+/- %
2009	267.25		250		517.25	
2010	269.04	15%	190	-24%	459.04	-11.30%
2011	254.51	-5%	129	-32%	383.51	-16.50%
2012	241.79	-5%	50	-61%	291.79	-23.90%
2013	218.04	-10%	50	0%	268.04	-8.10%
2014	227.99	5%	50	0%	277.99	3.70%
2015	205.19	-10%	50	0%	255.19	-8.20%
2016	205	+/-0%	65	30%	270	5.80%
2017	195	-5%	40	-38%	235	-13%
2009-16	-62.25	-27%	-210	-84%	247.25	-55%

15 **Depreciation and deferred capital grant write-off:** This is a non-operational expense associated with capital grants which are released in the profit and loss account over the life of the asset to which they relate, matched with the relevant depreciation charges for the acquired assets.

16	<p>Overall deficit on Administrative Income / Expenses: The total deficit from the two headings above for the three years is €137.149, which when added to interest payable (€5,637) gives a cumulative deficit of €142,786. The cumulative Retained Earnings (reserves) at 1/1/14 were €137,765, which when matched against the cumulative deficit over the past three years produce a negative reserves figure of €5,021 at 31/12/17 which has given rise to an auditor's note to the accounts (Note 18) - <i>"As described in the directors' report, the company made a deficit of €77,388 and has negative reserves of €5,021. The directors consider that the economic environment is difficult and that the outlook presents significant challenges. Whilst the directors have instituted measures to preserve cash, these circumstances create uncertainties over future trading results and cash flows. It also creates uncertainties in the company's ability to continue as a going concern, realise its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of business"</i>. The note outlines management plans to address these events and conditions and concludes <i>"The directors have concluded that the combination of these management plans will significantly improve the company's ability to continue as a going concern, to realise its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of business"</i>. Some of these plans are outlined in Notes above on this report and are covered further under Financial Situation section of this Board report.</p>
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