

## **HELFDORD RIVER SAILING CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

As many of you will be aware, the Committee has been working now for almost twelve months on putting together a Development Plan which sets out the Club's ambitions for the next five years or so. The reason for producing the plan is that the Club, having flourished and grown significantly over the years with nearly 1300 Members and considerable resources, needs to become more structured in its administration, if it is to continue to succeed in the future.

The Development Plan takes into account Members' views on how they would like to see their Club develop. The object is to assist both the current and future Committees in guiding the development of the Club in a planned manner that meets expectations and responds pro-actively to the increasing pressures and changes taking place around us. It has now reached sufficient detail to share the draft with Members and is available on the Club's website for review. We would really appreciate it if you could take some time to read the plan and forward all comments to Penny in the office. We will aim to respond to these and will incorporate key issues into the Plan. Before the Plan is finally approved by the Committee in February 2011, we will present a high level overview to Members at the Annual General Meeting in January 2011.

We have set out below some of the key highlights from the Plan, together with some question and answer material which we hope you will find useful and look forward to hearing from you.

Jane Benney  
Commodore

### **EXTRACTS FROM THE PLAN**

#### Vision For The Future

Like you, we believe the vision for the Club should be around continuing to be a family Club that welcomes Members from all walks of life who want to have fun in boats on the magical Helford River and enjoy the friendly atmosphere that the Club provides. It is paramount that the Club's successful and unique blend is maintained and the founding objective from 1948 remains entirely relevant to the Club as we continue to '*encourage sailing, racing, cruising and generally messing about in boats, in a seamanlike manner*'.

#### Membership Feedback

From the start the Committee wanted to make the compilation of the Development Plan as inclusive as possible. With this in mind a Membership Questionnaire was put together and publicised to help stimulate a good debate about the Club's future and to gain an understanding about what was important to Members. Whilst responses were fewer than hoped, some really useful feedback was obtained and key issues emerged, which the Committee has incorporated into the Development Plan.

### *Reasons for Joining / Continuing Membership*

The key themes emerging were around good sailing, good launching and pontoon provision, family friendly club with good facilities and socialising.

### *Members' Vision for the Club*

Popular thoughts were around the vision of a successful family friendly club with a healthy membership, lots of sailing and water based activities combined with good food and social activities provided in a modern club house. Many pointed out that the Club is thriving at the moment, enjoying a large membership and offering a warm and friendly atmosphere, which was identified as one of the principle reasons for people to continue their membership.

### *Junior Sailing*

The overall aim for juniors is to continue offering sailing tuition for Members' children in a fun and structured environment and to help them attain RYA qualifications. Opportunities will be taken to encourage juniors to step into dinghy racing, keel boats and introduce a 'cadetship' which helps sustain interest amongst older junior members.

### *Yachts*

The overall aim is to continue offering excellent pontoon facilities, increasing the number of finger berths via the sale of 12 debentures, facilitating organised cruising as demand dictates and to continue offering PY, IRC and Gaffer racing, including more junior involvement. The Club would also support the development of an affordable One Design class should sufficient numbers take the lead.

### *Dinghies*

The overall aim is to continue to offer a broad range of activities, including adult sailing, junior sailing, racing and access to recreational dinghy sailing. The enlargement of the dinghy park and improved changing facilities were seen as key areas for development and Cornwall Council has been approached to lease part of the car park for dinghy storage.

### *Club House*

The improvement of the Club house facilities was one of the areas which generated significant feedback. This is not surprising since the facilities were built nearly forty years ago for a membership of around 400. 80% of those responding to the questionnaire agreed that the Club house needed updating and the Committee have commissioned an architect to prepare concept plans, which are now available on the website and address the areas Members identified as needing improving. These include increasing the size of the balcony; improving the changing facilities, creating additional space which can have multiple uses such as training and courses, children, overflow dining for special events etc., improving the wash room facilities, including provision of a disabled toilet and increasing the capacity of the car park.

### *Systems & Processes*

Whilst the Club has recently rolled-out a new website it needs to continue to upgrade its systems and processes in order to make administration of the Club more efficient. It is felt that opportunities exist to strengthen financial planning and the 4 year cash flow budget which underpins the Development Plan starts this process. The plan also identifies that more effort should be put towards securing sponsorship and grant funding opportunities to help deliver elements of the plan.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER**

Question: *Why Produce a Development Plan?*

Answer: Many sailing clubs around the country have embarked on this process and the RYA website sets out the benefits and provides guidance. The Club is now a significant institution with considerable income and expenditure and needs a more formal approach to its management if it is to continue to succeed.

Question: *Who led with the production of the Plan?*

Answer: The whole Committee has been involved and the process commenced with a professionally facilitated workshop back in January 2010 and has benefitted from expert financial support. We have also given Members the opportunity to comment and would very much like their further feedback by the end of December 2010.

Question: *Who owns the Plan?*

Answer: Whilst the current and future Committees will be responsible for implementing the plan, it has been produced taking in account important feedback from Members and therefore needs to be owned by the membership for the benefit of the Club.

Question: *Can the Plan Change?*

Answer: Like any good plan it needs to be reviewed and updated as circumstances change.

Question: *How much are all these proposals going to cost?*

Answer: The Development Plan has a detailed 4 year cash flow forecast, which identifies capital expenditure in the region of £300,000.

Question: *How can the Club afford this?*

Answer: There is a range of income-generating measures identified within the Plan and the budget is available on the website. These measures will generate the necessary additional money to deliver the improvements within a realistic timeframe and we have performed a 'stress test' based on certain income opportunities not being realised.

- Question: *What happens if we don't raise the necessary capital?*  
Answer: The developments identified within the Plan would need to take place over a longer period of time once the Club had the necessary capital reserves to afford them. We do not intend to borrow significant sums of money and decisions will only be taken once we know the capital is in the Club's reserves.
- Question: *When will the Club House improvements start?*  
Answer: The plan is to start the works in October 2011 and to complete them by Easter 2012 in time for the new season.
- Question: *Will the Club need to close whilst the works are underway?*  
Answer: No, the works have been planned in such a way that the Club can continue to operate whilst they are taking place and are timed for the quieter winter period.
- Question: *Why don't you extend the current dinghy park?*  
Answer: The Club submitted a planning application a number of years ago to do exactly this, but it was turned down on environmental grounds associated with loss of foreshore habitat. We don't believe such an application is likely to be successful at this point in time, but will review matters with the planners.
- Question: *Why can't the Council's car park be leased for additional Club car parking?*  
Answer: We did ask the Council if the land could be used for parking but they refused on policy grounds. However, they have agreed to lease a small area for dinghy storage and we are in the process of finalising the terms.