

'Dragon Boats on Loch Ken'

Paddlers for Life Scotland South West

LEADER Project 2011

Project Ref no: DG149 Applicant ref : 50

Year end Report 2011

The beginning

The charity, Paddlers for Life Scotland South West, was formed in March 2010 with the express aim of providing regular Dragon Boat paddling sessions on Loch Ken for people wishing to take up a recreational sport to help rebuild their health after illness. Having been set up by three women who had themselves recovered from breast cancer, the charity was set up specifically to ensure that the offer of Dragon Boating was available to people in the locality recovering from cancer, but also to extend the offer of Dragon Boating to local people who might enjoy it whilst supporting the charity's aims. The aim is to encourage anyone interested in improving their health and trying a new physical activity.

Dragon Boat paddling has become increasingly popular as a global sport in recent years. The sport has also been adopted by Breast Cancer Charities / Support Groups as a medium for delivering both beneficial physical therapy as well as a support network for people recovering from cancer, particularly breast cancer. Studies have shown that the physical actions involved in paddling are beneficial to those who experience Lymphoedema as a secondary effect of either the breast cancer itself or removal or damage to lymph nodes / vessels as an outcome of surgery.

Two of the Trustees were familiar with Dragon Boating from trips home to Australia and New Zealand where it is already an extremely popular sport.

The Project : Dragon Boats on Loch Ken

Funding Applications

In July 2010 the charity, Paddlers for Life Scotland South West, held an open day at the Galloway Activity Centre on Loch Ken as an introduction for local people to try out Dragon Boat paddling. The day was very successful with 2 boats supplied by a DB team from Durham and approx. 60 people attending; due to the interest generated the trustees decided to press ahead with the idea of getting a permanent Dragon Boat on Loch Ken.

In September 2010 an application was put to LEADER requesting grant funding to run a pilot project to establish Dragon Boats on Loch Ken to assess their viability as a means for people in the community to get fitter and healthier in a supportive group environment.

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Funding was requested to purchase a Dragon Boat and the necessary equipment, training and publicity

In talks with LEADER it was suggested that funding for a Project Co- Ordinator post should also be included in order to have sufficient support to get the project up and running .

Funding applications were successful with match funding received from

The Robertson Trust (Project Co-Ordinator Post) **£3500**

Awards for All **£9485**

In Kind donation **£8268**

LEADER providing **44.37% or £16,951**

a total project budget of £38,204. Confirmation received in December 2010

See original application for budget breakdown and recent claim forms for amended budgets.

Commencement of Project April 2011

- The Project Development Post was advertised in March 2011 and Lindsay Baillie was appointed as Project Co-ordinator commencing work 18th April 2011(This was later than intended due to delivery time of boat; the original start date was to be January 2011) Terms : approx 12 hours per week Salary £12 per hour
- The Dragon Boat was ordered from suppliers in Poland (there are no manufacturers in GB) and delivered 21st April. Equipment , paddles and buoyancy aids also delivered 15/4/11.
- Extra launch and storage equipment was been made by a volunteer member

Role of Project Co-ordinator

The Project Development post was advertised in March 2011, a 12 hour a week position, with the following remit

- co-ordinating individuals and groups in the use of the Dragon Boat , collecting and processing participants details and information via registration forms.
- arranging meetings
- organizing paddling and helm training sessions and fitness sessions including links with local swimming pools to organize extra instruction and training
- raising awareness about the sport and the project through publicity and marketing and promote the project to the public.
- liaising with the NHS and other bodies including Macmillan, age related organizations, to inform them of project and approach people who may be interested in participating
- networking with local and national government initiatives that are geared to promoting healthy life styles and increasing physical activity such as D&G Councils health and fitness initiatives (Building Healthy Communities , Sport and Recreation local plan etc.)

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- networking with other Dragon Boat organizations such as Paddlers for Life Cumbria, British Dragon Boat Association, and international teams in Italy, Canada, Australia etc. to find out about events and joint campaigns that PFLS can participate in.
- liaising with British Dragon Boat Association, Paddlers for Life Cumbria and Durham River Serpents re delivering training programmes and other assistance.

Project Co-ordinator Outcomes 2011:

- Project Co-ordinator has processed and collated data from new members
- Organized
 - i. weekly training sessions
 - ii. regular press releases posters, postcards and flyers + (see: <http://www.paddlersforlifescotlandsw.co.uk/news/news01.htm>)
 - iii. Specialised Coaching/Helming and Water Safety with instruction from trainers
- Networked and liaised with D&G Infirmary Macmillan Ward staff, Maggie's Centre Edinburgh and Glasgow, D&G Council fitness initiatives amongst others. . People have begun to join the group as a result of these contacts being made.
- Liaised with other Dragon Boat groups

Targets for Project

Initial targets included:.

- i) Hold weekly paddling sessions on the Loch (depending on demand between 1 and 3 sessions may be held)
- ii) Organize Dragon Boat Events for people in the community to have taster sessions and try out paddling.
- iii) Hold charity regattas with sponsorship from Scottish businesses, hiring out the boats for corporate team building events, and general fundraising activities.
- iv) Use the model to encourage the setting up of other groups in Scotland. As it is an international sport, there is the possibility of also taking part in the many Dragon Boating events held world wide.
- v) Social inclusion : as Dragon Boating is a group activity involving up to 20 people at a time, it provides an opportunity to involve communities in an activity that is both enjoyable and healthy, also assisting in the development of communication and co-operation skills.
- vi) **Outcomes:**
 - 2 sessions per week have been held every Sunday am + Weds pm from end April – October with a total of over 240 people trying out the sport
 - Plus : See Calendar of Events
 - A number of people have attended sessions who have had no experience of regular sport and exercise before; they have learnt new skills and are keen to continue training.

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- 4 members attended an international DB event in Rome

Calendar of Events, Training etc 2011

- 27th January 3 trustees attended a national Conference on Breast Cancer and Paddling held at Lancaster.
- 26th March A Helm training day at Windemere was attended by 8 people who all completed the course along with another 9 who had a day of paddling instruction, *helming being a vital ingredient to paddling.*
- 28th – 29th May training sessions for helming and coaching Lisa Hayes & Kenni Mayes
- 13th June Pool safety session Kirkcudbright pool
- 17th -19th June - 4 Members of Paddlers for Life Scotland went to Rome to take part in a Dragon Boat event organized by 'Pink Butterfly' one of the Rome based Dragon Boat teams. Italian team members from Florence and the second team from Rome also attended along with representatives from Canada.
- 20th June Training Day- Ian Spence
- 10th July Coaching session attended by 54 members
- 17th July Outdoor water safety session on Loch Ken run by an instructor from Galloway Activity Centre which included dry land training and a capsized drill. (See article written in D&G Life with photos)
- July 31st Launch Event at the GAC attended by 85 people
- August : Training day with Kenni Mayes
- 2nd October Day of the Region – Taster Session held (7 new members)
- 19th November Pool safety session CD pool
- Programme of winter fitness ,walks, swimming, gym plus social activities Nov- Mar

Attendance

Target Group numbers in initial application were 925 people made up of the following:

Male age under 25	100
Female age under 25	100
Male age 25 and over	225
Female age 25 and over	325
Over age 60	175

Current membership stands at 243 people made up of the following groups

Note this breakdown of figures does not include some recently signed up members and those who are not from D&G

Male age under 25	15
Female age under 25	21
Male age 25 and over	32
Female age 25 and over	115
Over age 60	22

Although there has been a lot of interest in the project, original projections of target numbers were not met within the first year as it has taken longer than originally anticipated to get to the level of skills and experience necessary to take larger groups of people out paddling. (See target iii)

Original Target figures were arrived at with a view to introducing various community groups to Dragon Boating. It is hoped in 2012 to attract more people to the sport.

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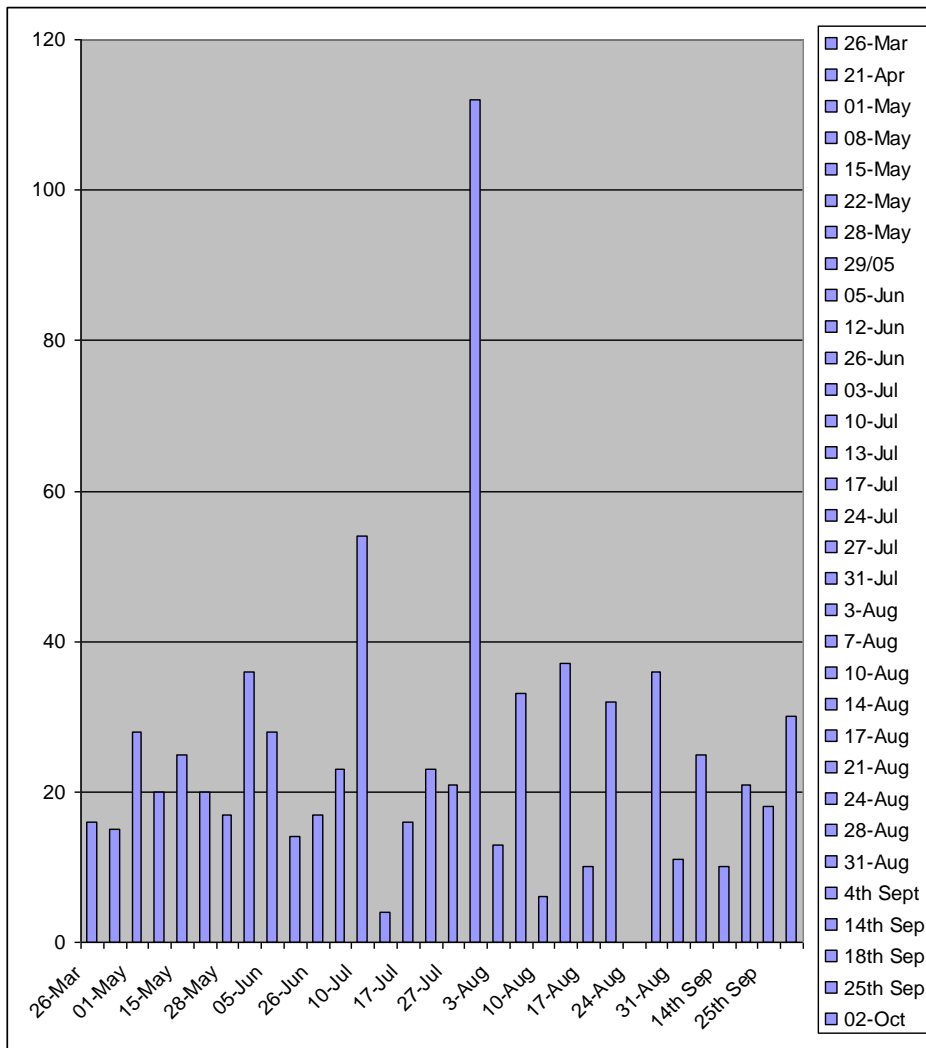


Chart: Attendance at sessions 2011

Regular paddling sessions have been held every Sunday morning at Galloway Activity Centre. Attendance has been good with approx 50 new members signed up in last 3 months. Attendance figures between 18-28 people each week.

Extra sessions held Wednesday evenings for helm and coaching practice. Attendance 10-14 people

D&G Areas

Regular attendance from areas in Dumfries and Galloway DG1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,11. plus a number of people from outwith the region. (Target 15 communities)

It is hoped in 2012 to encourage more people from west of the region to attend some of the Taster days and paddle more regularly.

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The Future

Having neared the end of the original time of 1 year for the duration of the project it has been decided to extend the Project to run until Dec 2012. This will allow the group to get the project on a firm footing for future development.

The funds remaining in the LEADER budgets allocated will allow for the following in 2012:

- i) Further training in coaching, helming and paddling
- ii) Extension of Project coordinators contract for a further year (depending on ongoing funding from the Robertson Trust; otherwise until early 2012)
- iii) Publicity – including production of posters and leaflets
- iv) Promotional Events for the general public

In addition to this it is envisaged that, (**subject to further discussion between two sub-committees and trustees**) the following will be achieved:

- **4 Taster Days** in 2012 for more people in the community to try the sport
- **Racing** - Participation in national racing events for those wishing to race
- **Training** - ongoing training programme for helming, coaching
- 8 specific **coaching days** i.e. 1 per month
- **Publicity**
 - brochure/leaflet and poster
 - press releases - 4 local and 2-3 national press releases
 - Promotion of 'Dragon Boats on Loch Ken' as 1st Scottish Dragon Boat team
- **1-2 Charity Days** Taking groups out eg. Health practitioners, Maggie's Centre staff, Marie Curie staff for them to learn about Dragon Boats as a sport and pass on information to relevant clients; possibly also raising money for their charities at the same time.
- More partnerships built up with health practitioners and social groups, in order to explore ways Dragon Boating can provide a healthy activity accessible to the whole community

The group

There are currently 243 signed up members of Paddlers For Life Scotland SW, most of whom are on a weekly email bulletin circulation list. This allows communication re details of forthcoming paddling sessions, coaching sessions, meetings etc. The members were sent an online survey towards the end of the season to find out their feelings about different aspects of the activity and what changes they thought should be made. Due to points made in this feedback, two sub committees were formed to look into and implement the changes suggested.

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Sub Committees

In October 2011 two sub committees were set up: one to look at the practical and competitive / sporting element of the activity and one to consider the issues of bringing new members into the group such as mentoring, supporting those with physical limitations etc.

This allows the membership greater control over the group's activities since the sub-committees are open to any volunteers and decisions will be taken by vote under the guidance of a Trustee.

Membership

Membership for 2011 has been free of charge since funds raised have paid for the boats, equipment and training costs thus far. Paddlers are asked for a donation each time they paddle. In 2012, it may be necessary to ask members for both an annual subscription and a small "pay to paddle" fee to cover the costs of running the sessions and administration.