

# ‘Dragon Boats on Loch Ken’

Paddlers for Life Scotland South West

LEADER Project commenced 2011

Project Ref no: DG149 Applicant ref : 50

## Final Report end July 2012

### Background

#### Inception of Idea

The charity, Paddlers for Life Scotland South West, was formed in March 2010 with the aim of providing regular Dragon Boat paddling sessions on Loch Ken in Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland thereby establishing the first Scottish Dragon Boat team.

The aim of the charity was to offer a new sport for people to get fit and healthy and have fun in an outdoor environment.

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 sport has also been adopted by Breast Cancer Charities / Support Groups as a medium for delivering both beneficial physical activity to aid recovery and as a preventative measure to maintain health through exercise for people generally.

Dragon Boat paddling has become increasingly popular as a global sport in recent years and is ideal for larger groups as each boat is capable of carrying up to 20 people.

#### Funding Applications

In July 2010 the charity, Paddlers for Life Scotland South West, held an open day at the Galloway Activity Centre (GAC) on Loch Ken as an introduction for local people to try out Dragon Boat paddling. The day was 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 getting a permanent Dragon Boat established 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.

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**

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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 note1 for original application for budget breakdown

## Delivery of Project

It was agreed to take advice from LEADER and appoint a Project Worker to deliver the Project, working alongside the trustees and supporters. This person would co-ordinate the paddling sessions, liaise with various bodies and publicize the project.

The original trustees for the charity Paddlers For Life Scotland South West were

Andrina Gordon – chairperson, (Position taken over by Lucy Carlow Aug 2010 – Oct 2011, + Lorna MacDonald Oct 2011- present); Raewyn Thompson – secretary; Jane Howe – treasurer( March 2010- July 2012)

The charity in South West Scotland adopted the constitution of PFL Windemere, a Dragon Boat / breast cancer group in the Lake District, who supported and gave advice in the initial stages.

Galloway Activity Centre on Loch Ken, although not formally involved, offered valuable support for general advice on water activities, boat storage and launching facilities along with cafe and changing rooms.

The Macmillan Ward at the D&G Infirmary were supportive of the idea of providing physical exercise to people post treatment and as a preventative measure for people generally.

IT support and ongoing website maintenance was also donated to the group.

### 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 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011( This was later than intended due to delivery time of boat; the original start date was to be January 2011) Terms : approx12 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.

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- Extra launch and storage equipment was 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. )
- 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 April 2011 - April 2012**

- Project Co-ordinator processed and collated data from new members
- Organized
  - i. weekly training sessions with uptake of between 15 and 35 people attending
  - 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. Liaised with other Dragon Boat groups

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## 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.

### **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 - see below
- 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.

## Calendar of Events, Training etc

### 2011

- 27<sup>th</sup> January 3 trustees attended a national Conference on Breast Cancer and Paddling held at Lancaster.
- 26<sup>th</sup> March A Helm training day at Windermere 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.*
- 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May training sessions for helming and coaching Lisa Hayes from British Dragon Boat Association & Kenni Mayes from Durham River Serpents Dragon Boat team.
- 13<sup>th</sup> June Pool safety session Kirkcudbright, training by staff at the pool with approx 10 members attending.
- 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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- 20<sup>th</sup> June Training Day- Ian Spence past member of Durham River Serpents Dragon Boat team. A full crew of 20 members attended.
- 10<sup>th</sup> July Coaching session attended by 54 members
- 17<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> Launch Event at the GAC attended by 85 people
- August : Training day with Kenni Mayes, Durham River Serpents Dragon Boat team.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> October Day of the Region – Taster Session held ( 7 new members)
- 19<sup>th</sup> November Pool safety session CD pool, 12 members attended
- Programme of winter fitness ,walks, swimming, gym plus social activities Nov- Mar 2012
- End Jan 2012 6 people attended a course in Liverpool for coaching and helm training
- End Feb 2012 a further 6 people attended further general training in Durham held by coach Kenni Mayes.
- 25<sup>th</sup> March Crossmichael Marathon fundraising sponsorship
- 14<sup>th</sup> April Lisa Hayes from BDA held course at GAC and signed off 6 trained helms + coach
- Fundraising event held 28<sup>th</sup> April Jive Night
- Open Garden held at Barwhillanty Estate, Parton as fundraising event 20<sup>th</sup> May
- January - Production of brochure for publicity
- Regular Sunday morning sessions plus extra Monday and Weds evening sessions for training were organized through the year.
- Boats stored for winter October

### Attendance

Originally it was anticipated that the Project would involve many other local groups and the Target numbers were arrived at by taking into account the fact that each boat holds up to 20 people. With the season lasting 30+ weeks we arrived at the figures below.

However this proved to be an over estimation. Although there has been a lot of interest in the project, original projections of target numbers have not been met as it has taken much longer than originally anticipated to get the level of skills and experience necessary to take larger groups of people out paddling.

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

<b>Male age under 25</b>	100
<b>Female age under 25</b>	100
<b>Male age 25 and over</b>	225
<b>Female age 25 and over</b>	325
<b>Over age 60</b>	175

**Current numbers of participants stands at 247 people made up of the following groups**

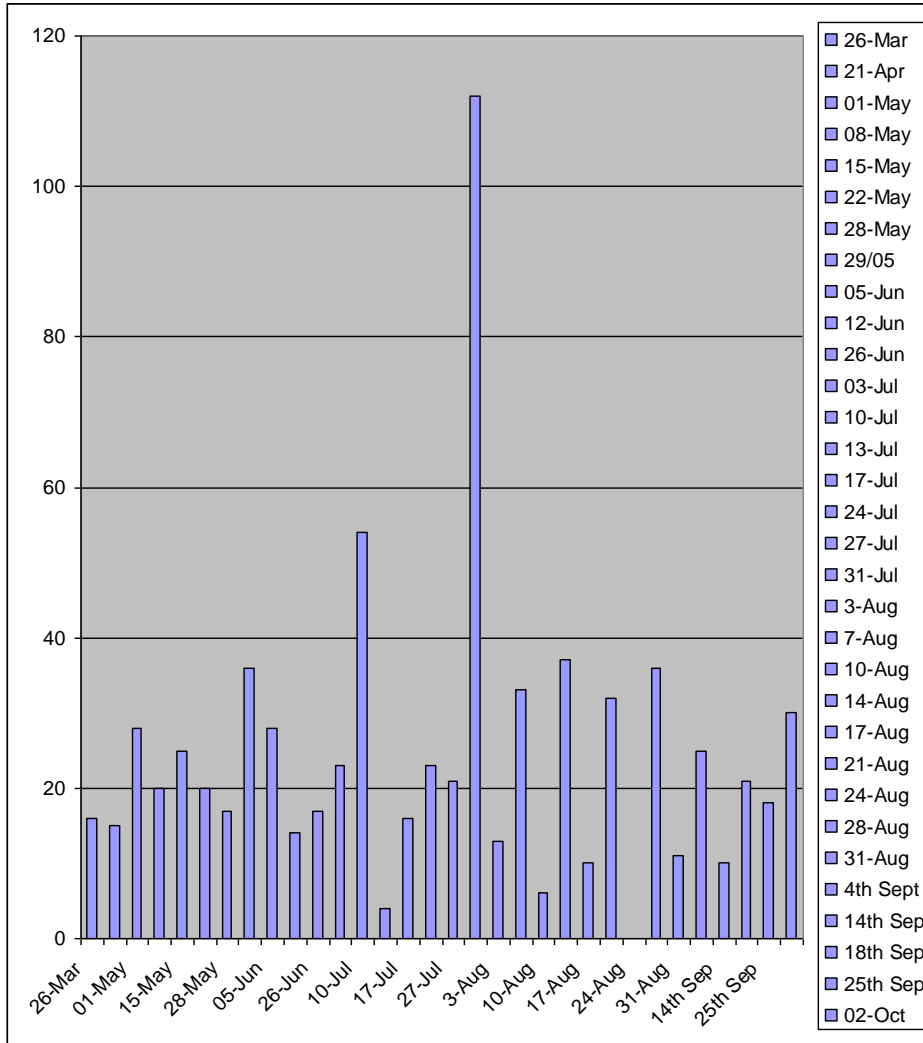
<b>Male age under 25</b>	17
<b>Female age under 25</b>	27
<b>Male age 25 and over</b>	37
<b>Female age 25 and over</b>	145
<b>Over age 60</b>	21

Regular paddling sessions have been held every Sunday morning at Galloway Activity Centre. Attendance figures between 18-28 people each week (2011) 12-18 (2012)

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

2011 Graph of Attendance over year



### 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 out with 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.

### \*\*\*Evidence of target groups

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Data has been collected for all people who have paddled in this pilot project showing postcodes, age group, and sex as required and is shown in table above. Unfortunately as local LEADER office was informed, the forms used stated as data protection that information would not be passed to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and therefore could not be sent to LEADER.

An attempt was made to rectify forms saying information would not be passed to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and only used by Dragon Boats on Loch Ken and its funders, but these forms were not used consistently which was an oversight by those signing in new members. A lack of Project Co-ordinator through summer months of 2012 meant this problem wasn't corrected properly.

### Marketing

Dragon Boats has a regularly updated website

2,500 brochures were produced for local distribution

Posters for Dragon Boat sessions, Open Days, Events, produced and distributed

Press coverage. Local press have been very supportive and have covered or printed all press releases sent to them of activities and events.

D&G Life magazine, distributed throughout region, have run various articles.

2 Banners advertising Dragon Boats on Loch Ken produced and used at events

### Assessment of the Project

Establishing Dragon Boats on Loch Ken as a new community sport has been successful. Although Target figures of attendance were not realized for reasons stated above (the amount of training required before being in a position to take out larger groups), the sport proved popular and received much local support. 2012 proved to be a more challenging year with a number of contributing factors which have become issues to focus on for the future.

As with any Project there have also been unexpected outcomes and the challenge for the organization going forward will be to note and adapt to these. The idea of providing a sport to improve health has benefitted a core group of people. Continuing to attract new people and grow the organization, taking it out to community groups will require some changes in direction.

Key facts include:

- i) Project Worker

Lindsay Baillie stepped down from the post in April 2012. There was discussion as to whether it was better to take the Project forward with committee members taking on some of her roles. Members undertook the day to day running of sessions such as signing in using a Google account over the summer of 2012 which was relatively successful. The key issues [Type text]



that were not undertaken were the organizing of Taster Days, PR, ongoing training which all contributed to a falling of attendance numbers.

A new Project Worker has now been appointed and will address these issues

i) Group Organization

Time was spent on extra training in 2012. British Dragonboat Association membership means that training for helms is more structured and will be an ongoing consideration. Helm and coaching training will be undertaken by new Project Coordinator and building a skilled core of paddlers with responsibility for specific areas of organization in the group will be a priority. Creating fuller more structured participation to build on skills achieved will enable the group to encourage new paddlers to join.

ii) A re-evaluation of how to involve community groups in the project.

As mentioned above more initial training was required to learn the art of Dragon Boat paddling and build up a core group of paddlers than was initially anticipated. While this has been achieved, taking the sport to larger groups will require further discussions with those community groups as to what their needs and requirements are. Possible involvement and support from specialist sports practitioners to deliver in this way will need to be investigated. There is real potential to fundraise for the charity and provide ongoing financial sustainability for Dragon Boats on Loch Ken by offering training and development days to other organizations. This issue will be taken up by the new Project Coordinator.

### The Future

The new Project Worker along with the Trustees will be focussing on the overall direction of the group and looking for new ways to open it up to many more individuals and community organizations. The newly appointed worker has a background in personal development and training with community groups and individuals, is experienced in PR and media and is committed to expanding the sport out into the community. Talks with the Galloway Activity Centre will look at ways to combine and progress the skills they can offer with the Dragon Boats Project which is encouraging.

### Financial sustainability and exit strategies

At present there are surplus funds in account £9580 part of which have been allocated to pay Project Worker until end April 2013.

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Fund raising events have been successful raising approx £2000 in 2012.

The concept mentioned above of certain businesses and groups paying for boat use as part of 'Training Days' will be looked at more closely in 2013 as a means of ongoing financial support for Dragon Boats. This will allow us to offer Paddling sessions to individuals and groups who may have financial restrictions.

Sponsorship – i.e. businesses 'sponsoring a paddle each' (there are 18 on each boat) is a strategy that has not yet been pursued. Although the current financial climate may make it difficult for businesses to offer sponsorship, we have already had offers from some local companies. These have not yet been taken up as it was decided to approach sponsorship as part of an overall marketing plan.

### Healthy Outcomes

Feedback from paddlers particularly the main group of users, women over 25 (the majority have been women 40-59) has been positive. Paddlers have been happy to find a sport that was inclusive, didn't require any prior skills and was a team activity which they could do on a regular weekly basis. Many agreed there were few team sports available that fulfilled these needs.

It is hoped Dragon Boats on Loch Ken will continue to provide an opportunity in Dumfries & Galloway for people to get fit and have fun, a sport to be enjoyed by a wide section of the community.

-Lucy Carlow

pp Dragon Boats on Loch Ken

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Additional Notes:

Note 1: Budget for Project

<b>2.1 ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS</b>	
Dragon Boats x1	£7,722.00
Equipment	£900.00
Project worker post approx 12.5 pw	£9,384.00
Volunteer hours (in Kind)	£2,928.00
Insurance public liability	£600.00
Insurance safety boat	£110.00
Helm training	£200.00
Instructors training	£1,200.00
Coaching	£600.00
Venue Hire GAC (in Kind)	£1,750.00
Boat maintenance (in Kind)	£350.00
Use of Safety Boat at GAC (in Kind)	£2,400.00
Pre season water safety instruction	£120.00
Meetings venue hire(In Kind)	£240.00
Office use	£1,300.00
Office materials	£1,200.00
Phone	£420.00
Mileage	£780.00
Publicity	£2,400.00
Web site (In Kind)	£600.00
Event	£3,000.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£38,204.00</b>

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## Actual Spend for Project

Year	Anticipated Spend	Actual Spend
2011-2012	£38,204.00	£30,914.69
<b>Total</b>	£38,204.00	£30,914.69

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