



This is the Commodores report for our financial year 2023 January 1st to December 31st with a follow on for Jan 2024 to the present.

The year 2023 showed renewed activity on and off the water.

Firstly Finance

Our accounts show a significant increase in turnover from £99.8k to £157k. We made an accounting deficit of £10.1K. However, with depreciation removed we had a cash surplus of £4.8K which gives us the wherewithal to carry on. This would have been £2.3k higher as a grant relating to 2023 expenditure didn't come in until 2024.

- Membership fees up from £29.3 k to £35.4k
- Sailing courses up from £4,4k to £10.6k
- Powerboat courses up from £3.9k to £8.6k
- Bar sales were up substantially on 2022 figures at £65K compared to £36.8k and with increased gross margin. Opening times and less use of volunteers our wage expenses are substantially up £18K versus £6.4k. "The Bars never open" moan by members is no longer the case helping to produce increased social Membership income. Thanks to "Team Strange " for making it work.
- As with 2022 funds raised in 2023 seem to have met the needs of rising costs. As seen globally, the energy crisis has placed its demands on DYC. We fortunately have a reasonable tariff, but some inefficient systems are putting pressure on the coffers. As reported previously we are ideally situated for photo voltaic panels. We obtained quotes and did the maths. The indication is that a 8-10KW capacity should handle the baseload of ventilation and cooling needs with ease over the summer months. We have applied to Sport Wales for grant assistance for the installation of solar panels we should hear back late summer early autumn. I am of the opinion that, even with no grant funding we should aim to go ahead and install for spring 2025.
- In 2023 we had some large maintenance expenses £19.5K compared to 2022 £6.4K . This included balcony repairs of over £8k and Polycarbonate panels £2.5k All essential but not appearing increased benefit.

Grants

We have had substantial grant and donation support in 2023 .

- £4648 Gwynedd Council Harbour project funded the new shed (Grandly named as Malayan Garage in our accounts)
- £20,570 "Be Active Wales Fund "Big Thanks to Huw Jones Williams project managing year 2 of our Sport Wales Project funding the Xs rib purchase and Senior instructor training . The grant is monetised over the life of the assets so doesn't show up as a single payment.
- £2400 Junior sailing Grant for local children sailing sessions

2023 Activities.- There are many to thank sorry if I miss some. Big thankyou's go to:-

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- As there still being no takers to be an official traditional Sailing secretary role for much of the year, the spreadsheet king was hard at work cajoling scheduling publishing our active programme of events then making sure they happen both on and off the water. So a big thank you to Steve Bedder and other members of the "on the water team" for keeping the ship afloat.
- In full support of all things DYC, Huw Jones Williams along with securing a large capital grant for new sailing boats last year secured a substantial grant to buy a new Rib and pay for some coaching training. He was consistently there race officering sorting securing saving bringing policies up to date so big thanks to him.
- David Mason yet again needs special mention for his continued efficient processing all things membership.
- Chelmarsh friends returned in good numbers. Many thanks to Robin Druett for fronting this in 2023 and again 2024 and the many helpers who make it a great event.
- The Police bike ride returned in reduced numbers but still substantial volume. Many thanks to Bar helpers bottle collectors and others who helped especially Dan Stevens Terry Loftus and Kate & Phil Knight. Big thanks to Team Green who did all the catering and a big thanks to the Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee who donated £2500 towards our new cooker. We now have a well-equipped galley making meals easier to cater for.
- Team Parker Caldwell Crossley need numerous big thanks for Easter/Fortnight/ Topper week events and training. Plus sorting the logoed clothing.
- Big thanks to John Tildesley for fronting the RS 300 nationals which was a great event and contributed substantially to our coffers
- Karen Lloyd's Social media has continued under the leadership of Lisa Gardener taken a leap into the 21st Century Big thanks for her time on the board to Karren Lloyd.
- All the many club trophies are under new curatorship. So big thanks to Team Fisher/Hickson for taking this on.
- The initiative instigated by Huw Jones Williams, Steve Bedder Jo Hickson, Karen Babington and others, the broader based "team based" structure was developed to support the traditional roles of Commodore Treasurer etc. continues. As reported previously this wasn't designed to replace our constituted structure but supports it. It relies of substantial volunteer time. Some give a lot, some do not.
- The harbour wall :- This was an interesting time with a few dramatic moments. It was the biggest project Aberdyfi has had for many years. Overall, it has been a great success. We have to report that Gwynedd Council was very supportive towards us throughout the process. A full dilapidation report on our building was done at both the start and end of the construction process. Monitoring will continue over the next year or so as the structure settles. At no cost to us we had a new entrance ramp and steps. Our old rickety shed was replaced at Gwynedd CC cost with something resembling a Swiss chalet. In the accounts as the "Malayan Garage" Structural issues were revealed with movement of the building. This has been addressed with injection of structural foam. We have now have benefits of improved facilities. Work outlined from the dilapidation report is now scheduled for Autumn 2024
- One disappointment is that slipway was not rebuilt due to finance constraints and the issue of sand buildup is an ongoing pain. With £1000 assistance from Aberdyfi Advertising and improvements Committee we tested the use of a high volume pump to clear the sand. The concept worked but needs to be an ongoing funded project to have any chance of being a solution.
- 2023 was not an easy year for the "On the water" management of the club. Significant differences of opinion existed as to how things should /could be done. Considerable inequalities existed as to the balance of volunteering time. Underlining all activity is the principle that whatever we host/ put on/

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manage must have good practice and safety in mind. A few incidents did focus our minds that safety is not subject to messed with. Good kit, ongoing training and good decision making help to keep it safe but hopefully still fun.

- **Windy Club** Continued to be a great success creating more opportunities for members and potential members to get on the water on a Thursday evening. The attraction of “baked Spuds” and the bar after time on the water led to good level of participation and contributions to our finances. Thanks to Jo Hickson Chris Cook and others for helping
- **Storm Chasers** This was the start of an important initiative to develop local youth participation. This is a sailing program for children in years 5 and 6 in the Aberdyfi area over Summer 2023. £28.00 for 7 sessions, and a free open day! The program is supported by RYA Cymru and the All-Afloat charity. This became affectionally known as “storm Chasers” as the sessions routinely encountered high winds. Thanks to Huw JW, Steve Bedder Kate and Dan Stevens and the team for making it happen.
- **Maintenance** Externally a refurbish and improve the fabric of the clubhouse is still ongoing. Due to Concerns of the safety of the glass panels (a couple of which had shattered) these were replaced with coated Polycarbonate. These might go milky in time but wont shatter with potentially devastating consequences. . Expenditure was up from £6.4k in 2022 to £19.5k in 2023. When funds allow more can be done.
- **Training** With some Club and grant help Congratulations to Dan Stevens and Tom Coombe for becoming Senior instructors Plus Dinghy Instructors Issy Tuthill, Daisy Tuthill and Fred Parker.
- **Courses** More PB2 courses than ever have been run, starting in mid-winter overcoming the restrictions of launching use of the club house due to the harbour project. With team Stevens, not only producing their own sailors of the future, but also being very proactive in scheduling powerboat and sailing courses to meet the growing demand. These activities contribute significantly to our financial viability. They are also critically important in the development of safety cover.

Membership Overview

Our 2023 membership saw the level above the 2022 figure. Members paying boat fees follow a similar trend. This follows an improvement in our structures with better communication channels and specific targeted events to encourage membership. The level of our Social membership continues at approximately 35 to 36% of the total. Big thanks to David Mason for continually having his finger on the membership pulse

Direct debit continues to help with , used by 33% of our membership, has helped the club both in financial and administrative terms. Please consider this alternative to help us further.

2024 Going into this year we found ourselves with lots of projects on the go

- Our lease is still being negotiated with Gwynedd Council. We are having very positive discussions with them. We will have to accept a significant increase in charges but considering 30 years have passed since the prices were fixed, I think it fair. There are some fundamental points to be agreed including management of the slip and some aspects of the building itself.
- Better communication is ongoing aim helped with the monthly newsletter and WhatsApp groups. Thanks to Lisa Gardener and others for this. We are aware some folks aren't getting the news and we are working on a solution. Some don't like the risk that the Social Media companies are harvesting their Data. Some have very full inboxes and miss important stuff. Some have criticised the Reliance on Facebook and Messenger. In reply yes, we do have Facebook presence but there is

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no way a "reliance". Most organisations do use this platform and it does create a presence out there in Cyber space. Associated "Messenger" generates some traffic, but most is via our main website. We thank Rupert Tildesley for his ongoing support for Website management.

- The planned management structure of the club, :- spreading the load and getting things done, has been enacted and is an ongoing project. This is not without some difficulty and differences of opinion.
- Building the training section this continues to grow :- More on the water. Fulfilling a need within and outside the club. More PB2 courses than ever have been run starting in mid-winter. These activities continue contribute significantly to our financial viability. They are also critically important in the development of safety cover.
- Acting on guidance from our RYA inspector's we have instigated "Refresher Training " both for safety boat and dinghy instruction. Though there has been some resistance in certain quarters this has proved very beneficial.
- The big long term project of building our local base has continued with help from Gwynedd sports development officer, the Outdoor Partnership, Aberdyfi Advertising and improvements Committee and masses of enthusiasm from Steve Bedder, Huw J Williams, Tom Coombe Dan Stevens and our Chief sailing Instructor Kate Stevens. More local youth training is going ahead with £3300 financial support from the AAI. Have also hosting two schools "away Days" for Craig y Deryn primary school. 22 from Years 3/4 - and 27 from Years 5/6 All having their first experience on the water. Sailing Supping and powerboating. Fantastic feedback , Children, teachers and parents loved it . Many thanks for Kate Stevens Hu JW, Liz & Neil Plater, Mary Bowron , Ian Bayliss and colleagues for making it happen
- Our big events of Chelmarsh and Police Bike ride could not have been so successful with out some splendid volunteers . The Bike ride in particular helps to heighten our profile within the village.
- In an ever litigious world and improving safety and standards we continue to develop our "Standard Operating Procedures and policies" which can all be viewed on line and signed as having been read. It is never easy to achieve a culture shift but these documents are important. If they don't work we can adapt and improve. They are there not to restrict what we do but to support and protect us. Massive thanks to Huw J W for working on this.
- Developing the social base :- More enjoyable events are being planned. We are a volunteer led club and opportunities exist for more involvement here. Bringing village takeaway tucker has become increasingly popular as has the child friendly atmosphere with the stash of toys and games curated by Jo. However It would be good to see us producing our own Pizzas and food and our bins not overflowing with cardboard boxes. The police bike ride showed what is possible with nearly 350 very tasty meals being served in a 4 hour window.
- As more training is taking place the need for teaching space increases. This is for both power and sail and plans for increasing range with the addition of 1st aid, VHF Wing foiling and dare I mention "personal Watercraft" in the pipeline. The "lookout space has had a makeover. Thanks to largely Terry Loftus efforts we have transformed the "look out " into a much more appropriate space
- Managing rising energy and other costs :- Cutting cost saving waste is important and high on our agenda.
- **The Dinghy Park** You may have noticed that it is a lot tidier than previous years. Thanks again to Huw Steve and Others but mainly Neil Plater a bit of a Jack Russel snapping at the heels of errant boat owners filling those idle hours since retirement chopping up dead boats and efficiently managing the space. Thank you to him.

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- At the time of writing we have two grant applications pending. One for putting PV panels on the roof and one for club development . Fingers firmly crossed.
- **Departures from the Board** Massive thanks to Huw Williams Jones service on the board over the last few years, making things happen. Also to Mark Crossley who brought a wide range of skills to the table plus invaluable advice gleaned from the world of elite sailing as he followed his top level competing son James on various circuits.
- **Opening the club up for other community usage.** Funeral Wakes, Weddings merched y wawr coffee mornings and the like. This not only brings some financial rewards but in my mind achieves much greater benefits breaking down the perceptual barriers that Dovey Yacht Club / Clwb Hwyllo Dyfi is an exclusive holiday makers club.
 - **Ongoing to summer 2024**
- A full program of events is planned for the summer and well into the Autumn. Changes to availability of key personal is/has caused some organisational difficulties.
- All is not plain sailing on tranquil waters. Myself and the board are fully aware of tensions that exist within the membership rumblings and mumblings “Why is there so much training going on ?” “what’s all this golden weekends all about” “why do I need to do a powerboat refresher” “ Our articles say we should have a Vice and Rear Commodore why aren’t they in place?”
 - **Specific complaints are:-**
- **Reduced sailing as racing not every weekend.** Historically, other than bank holidays, there were only 2 races on a Saturday afternoon. Now, at the request of many of the sailing membership there are “Golden Weekends “ a whole series usually 6 races sailed on the more favourable neap tides. Numerically more races than in previous years. Empty gaps could be filled thy the disappointed sailors organising events themselves.
- **DYC does not financially benefit from (non-sailing) activities.** This is factually incorrect. Social members (Paying £14k last year) would not be social members without the Bar which generated £6k profit Net gain £20 K. Police Bike ride great PR for Club and village self funding as bar profits. Rowing club pays social membership and event fee. Events made surplus of £6k
- **The amount of sailing too little for the cost of sailing membership.** Sailing membership brought in £20k last year only partially meeting costs.. The full cost of running the sailing is supported by other sectors.
- **Clubs activity is focused on non-sailing activities. (e.g. bicycle race)** Police Bike ride on one non sailing Friday a year. Several years ago we had a review of the Clubs activities and agreed the strapline “watersports for all” with the agreement to open the club up to wider usage.. What we have experienced over the last few years is not isolated from what other clubs are experiencing. “**Adapt or die**”. I repeat we are a members-based club it is up to the membership to organise and make things happen. Those voted into management roles within the club first and foremost are tasked with the financial survival of the club. Without financial sustainability the club will die. If the complaint is “not enough sailing” my reply is, you the members should organise more.
- **A Board member comments** We took a conscious decision a while back to promote all water sports. We simply didn’t have the critical mass of sailors, particularly racing sailors, to justify the Club’s overheads by themselves. Likewise, the social side of the Club is critical to helping cover the Club’s overheads. That said, the aim has always been to get more people sailing and racing, particularly locals. If we can do that there will be more capacity to run more events/racing. Windy Club and Storm Chasers are good examples of where that is working. They didn’t happen by themselves though, so if Members want there to be more racing perhaps that’s where they can help?

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- We are a volunteer led club. We are in a demographic dip for dinghy racing amplified by increased on the water diversity. This is recognised by the RYA with its new strategy. We are not the only sailing club to face this. We are trying to develop a long term sustainable racing solution but there will be a lag time which despite great efforts by all can be frustrating. However as always constructive suggestions and involvement welcome. A lot of this seems to be about communication and who can lead. Last year we acted on discussions at the AGM and following survey instigating a change to the format.
- Time will be made this year , at the AGM and after for further discussion.
- Yes we have been treading water in some areas but a lot of good work being done. These initiatives, we hope, will help us maintain and develop our membership and be a thriving club. Enormous thanks go out to the many volunteers who have supported us. The usual plea is that more are needed to support the key roles.
- **In Conclusion** I repeat my statement in my 2023 AGM report which was:-
 - **At last years AGM(2022) I said that I hoped I would be able to fully hand over the baton of commodore and treasurer. My seven year stint has seen five prime Ministers come and go. Now going into my 8th year this is the longest in DYC history as Commodore and treasurer . More than ever I feel the time has come to hand over but no one has come forward. My commitments here and elsewhere have produced what is more than a full time job. At the AGM in 1993 I got voted on to the committee in my absence. I do not know how it happened. 30 years later I do not know how to be voted off except by someone stepping forward or doing something naughty! There have to be willing volunteers out there...**
 - **We are now in 2024 and six prime Ministers... any ideas?**

Des George July 12th 2024