



## **WEYBRIDGE ROWING CLUB**

# **DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2014**

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**Author: Ashley Tilling**

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## 1 Introduction

### Purpose

This document aims to provide a set of high level, strategic aims designed to guide decisions on the way the club is developed over the next five years.

### Scope

In order to achieve a baseline from which to build these aims, the previous Development Plan, 2004 to 2009, has been reviewed and the statistics provided in that Plan are compared with those available for the year 2008. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has then been compiled in order to inform a set of development aims for the next five years. These aims should provide guidance to assist with determining the areas in which effort and funding should be focused over this period.

## 2 Background

The 2004-09 Development Plan summarised the membership, the numbers and levels of coaches, activities, equipment and wins. These tables have been updated in order to show a direct comparison with the situation as it pertained in June 2009 with that of the start of year 2004.

### Membership

Category	Age	Male	Female
Non-rowing	Any	37 (28)	3 (6)
Junior	J13 and under	1 (4)	0 (0)
	J14-J15	18 (6)	13 (0)
	J16-J18	17 (2)	12 (1)
Student	19-23	1 (2)	2 (2)
Senior, including Veteran		38 (47)	19 (22)
<b>Total</b>		<b>112 (89)</b>	<b>49 (31)</b>

Figures in brackets are from the 2004-09 Development Plan.

Comments:

- The total number of members has increased;
- Junior membership has expanded with significantly more boys and girls rowing than in 2004;
- Senior membership, particularly male, has continued to fall from its already low position in 2004;
- The majority of senior men training in 2008 were veterans with only a small, irregular number of beginners.

### Coaches (active)

Qualification	Male	Female
Level 2 / IA	10 (1)	0 (1)
Level 3 / Bronze	2 (4)	1 (1)
Unqualified	2 (1)	0 (1)

Figures in brackets are from the 2004-09 Development Plan.

Comments:

- Several coaching courses have been run from the club, organised by a club coach who became an ARA accredited coaching tutor;
- The number of qualified coaches has increased, the majority of whom coach the juniors;
- For two years the club paid for a junior squad coach;
- The senior women's squad benefited in 2008 from an active coach, but this reduced in 2009 to occasional volunteer coaching;
- In 2008/9 the club has made use of a regional coach who has been available for adult beginners twice a week – this will continue for a further two years;
- In 2007 to 2009 the HSCT provided a part-time coach for juniors.

## Activities (winter)

Day	Activity	Average attendance
Monday	Weight-lifting / ergos	8 (6)
Tuesday	Ergos / rowing	16 (8)
Wednesday	Circuits	10 (30) (inc. non members)
Thursday	Ergos/ rowing	16 (12)
Saturday	Rowing	40 (28)
Sunday	Rowing	40 (32)

Figures in brackets are from the 2004-09 Development Plan.

### Comments:

- Training has fallen into a pattern of different sections of the club training on particular evenings: Monday for senior/veteran women, Tuesday and Thursday for juniors;
- Although the club has secured the use of an excellent gym at Heathside School, circuits on Wednesdays are poorly supported by club members, and only through the support of non-members is it a barely viable enterprise;
- Some weight training equipment was moved for use in the Men's Changing Rooms in 2008 by removing a bench along one wall;
- Weekend rowing flourishes but, with Weyfarers sharing the landing stage, the numbers boating in the summer months can reach over-crowding levels.

## Equipment

Boats in **blue** have been added to the fleet since the last report; boats in **red** were on the last report but have since been sold or scrapped.

Boat Name	Type	Comments
Get A Wey	8	
Weyward	8	
Take A Wey	8	
<b>Tossed A Wey</b>	<b>8x/+</b>	
Break A Wey	4x/+	
Wey Hey	4+	
Carried A Wey	4+	Was Weybridge in 2004, now Weyfarers
<b>Andy Ingram</b>	<b>4+</b>	
<b>Barker</b>	<b>4+</b>	
<b>Hands A Wey</b>	<b>4+</b>	
All the Wey	4x/-	
One Wey	4-	
Another Wey	4x-	
<b>100 Weys</b>	<b>4-</b>	
<b>Turn A Wey</b>	<b>4x</b>	
<b>Chocks A Wey</b>	<b>4-</b>	
<b>Thames Wey</b>	<b>4x/+</b>	<b>Owned by C Turnbull. Future use to be decided by Committee</b>
Either Wey	2x/-	
Basil	2x/-	
Cross Weys	2x/-	
Winning Weys	2x/-	
Both Weys	2x/-	
Wey to Go	2x/-	
<b>Milky Wey</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
<b>Our Wey</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
<b>This Wey Up</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
<b>Wey To Do It</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
<b>Other Wey Up</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
<b>LightWeyt</b>	<b>2x/-</b>	
Stow A Wey	1x	
Tear A Wey	1x	
Teresa	1x	
JT	1x	Owned by J Turnbull; licensed as club boat for club use
Norwegians	1x (4 boats)	<i>Two not being used (none being used in 2004)</i>
Hummingbird	1x	Allocated to a junior at Captain's discretion
<b>Run a Wey</b>	<b>1x</b>	
<b>(Aylings)</b>	<b>1x</b>	Donated by C Allaway
<b>Doodlebug</b>	<b>1x</b>	
<b>Urging Amy</b>	<b>1x</b>	
<b>(Janousek)</b>	<b>1x</b>	<b>WEY034</b>

Kurt	1x	
Eton Whiffs	1x	<i>Two serviceable, two undergoing refurbishment</i>
Trimmys	2x+ (2 boats)	
Mondego	1x	<i>To be repaired</i>

Comments:

- The committee has responded to the demands of its active membership and has continued to expand the fleet.
- It has become an expectation that any competitive crew has sole use of an allocated boat, of the correct weight, and blades; this has fuelled the demand for new purchases.
- More scullers have their own boat and expect racking space to be provided.
- Demands on storage space have been met through additional racks being built on the EA site Plot 1.
- Two catamaran coaching launches were purchased in 2008 with a grant made from Surrey County Council.
- Several boats have been unserviceable for a number of years and have taken up valuable racking space.

### Wins (Regattas and Heads)

In the table below, 2008 data is shown as Head wins in **Blue** and Regatta wins, qualifying and non-qualifying, in **Red**.

Boat Type	Senior/ Vet Men	Junior Men	Senior/ Vet Women	Junior Women	Mixed Senior/Vet
8	(1)		<b>1</b> <b>1</b> (2)		
4+	(7)		(3)		
4-	<b>1</b> (2)				
4x		<b>2</b> (3)	<b>2</b> (1)	<b>2</b> <b>1</b>	
2-	(1)		(1)		
2x	(4)	<b>6</b> (8)	<b>6</b> <b>5</b> (2)	<b>1</b> <b>2</b>	<b>2</b> <b>1</b>
1x	<b>1</b> (8)	<b>8</b> (11)	<b>3</b> (3)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b> ( <b>23</b> )	<b>16</b> ( <b>22</b> )	<b>18</b> ( <b>12</b> )	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

Figures in brackets are from the 2004-09 Development Plan.

Comments:

- There was only limited racing from veteran and novice men in 2008.
- The organisation of the senior/veteran women's squad by a dedicated coach paid dividends in terms of competition success.
- A junior section with more girls has yielded additional success for the junior squad.

### 3 Review of Development Plan 2004-09

1. Hire Head Coach

None was appointed despite several overtures being made. Steve Heywood coached the senior women through to 2008. A coach was paid to help coach the juniors from 2006 to 2008.

2. Get coaches qualified

Three members were assisted in paying for coaching courses in 2004 but all three soon left the club after attending the IA course. Courses run from Weybridge and Walton RCs in subsequent years have been well supported by club members leading to healthy numbers of qualified coaches now at the club.

3. Obtain grants for equipment and coaching courses

'Awards for All' funding was requested in 2004 and again in 2007 but rejected on both occasions. Elmbridge Council has granted smaller sums, usually of around £300, each year. A grant of around £8000 was applied for to support junior development in 2008 and this was granted by Surrey County Council to pay for two coaching launches. Rowing Foundation grants of £2500 in 2007 and £2000 in 2008 helped towards the cost of new boats for the junior squad. The River Thames Society donated £1500 towards a junior sculling boat.

4. Produce equipment plan

This was done in 2004 and led to the purchase of a coxed four, but the plan was not subsequently reviewed and updated. However, the committee has agreed to a number of purchases since.

5. Organise link with Heathside School

Nothing seemed to develop from an exploratory meeting held in 2003.

6. Set up links with other local clubs for joint activities

An informal invitation regatta for juniors was held with local clubs and proved popular.

7. Revive Weybridge Veterans (and Junior?) Head

The Weybridge Head continued to be organised. The date in March was perceived to be limiting entries due to its proximity to the Women's Head, Schools' Head and clash with Mothers' Day and was moved to January in 2008. Unfortunately it was cancelled due to red warning board conditions, but ran successfully in 2009 with many more entries than hitherto.

8. Re-establish Weybridge Regatta

This never got off the ground. However, a suggestion to recognise the efforts of Weybridge members to help organise the Walton Regatta over the years and to encourage more Weybridge support by changing its name to the Walton & Weybridge Regatta was agreed in 2006.

9. Organise twice yearly sculling clinics

Two Alan Whitwell weekend courses have been organised each year with additional courses held in 2009.

10. Organise annual taster day and rowing course

'Wey To Row' courses for beginners have been regularly run and resulted in some new recruits for Weyfarers and Weybridge. In 2007 some enterprising juniors ran a series of 'Wey To Row' weekly courses for juniors in August and these resulted in an increase in junior membership and the award of ARA Exceptional Team of the Year. Taster days are being held in 2009 for juniors new to the sport.

11. Involve non-rowing members and parents

Parents of juniors have become more involved in supporting the club, providing considerable help with catering and organisation at events and, from Autumn 2008, providing breakfasts. Several also act as coaching assistants.

12. Organise regular social events

It has not always been possible to recruit a Social Secretary, but generally there have been sufficient social events with more being put on for the juniors than in previous years.

13. Look at options for relocation: On going.

14. Organise 125th Anniversary event(s): Completed successfully.

#### 4 Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with sister recreational club (Weyfarers) provides equipment and courses for beginners</li> <li>• Popular junior structure with coaching, assisted by older juniors</li> <li>• Winter circuit training held in local school</li> <li>• Experience of organising rowing events, e.g. Silver Sculls, Weybridge Head, and significant roles within W&amp;W Regatta</li> <li>• Periodic sculling courses with professional coach available to club members</li> <li>• Healthy numbers of qualified umpires</li> <li>• Positive and visible image in the community (participated in 2009 Oatlands Village Fair and planned to set up a stand at Esher College Sports Fair in September 2009)</li> <li>• Social events provide funds, e.g. Pre-Henley Ball, Dinner Dance</li> <li>• Fleet of good condition boats</li> <li>• Strong veteran membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat storage space: limited undercover storage and many boats stored outside</li> <li>• Poor accessibility: small parking area shared with the public</li> <li>• Poor accessibility: limited opportunity for adaptive rowing</li> <li>• Boating through Shepperton weir stream produces greater restrictions than clubs further downstream on the stretch</li> <li>• Trailers parked on Bull Dogs Island courtesy of owner – difficult access and not possible to use when loaded</li> <li>• Frequent vacant Committee posts</li> <li>• No junior Captain or representation on the committee</li> <li>• Club room has to double as social area and fitness training room</li> <li>• Men’s changing room has to double as weights room and is inadequate</li> <li>• Ladies’ changing room too small for female membership levels</li> <li>• Too few regular coaches at senior level</li> <li>• Poor sanitation and showering facilities</li> <li>• Air of dilapidation and neglect</li> <li>• Lack of structure and coaching to take adult beginners to their early races and up to ‘squad’</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in top level coaching for juniors so that we keep our more ambitious and talented junior rowers.</li> <li>• Involve non-rowing members and parents in coaching, organising and social events</li> <li>• Continuing discussions with Elmbridge Council may lead to possibility to relocate</li> <li>• Relocation could tie in with local school seeking to redevelop rowing facilities</li> <li>• Organise, publicise and invest in our veteran squad (male and female) as we have the largest competitive and emerging group on the reach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many other clubs in the area, all chasing members</li> <li>• Walton RC has permission to redevelop and is close to raising funds to make a start on new facilities</li> <li>• Larger clubs can offer high-level coaching and opportunity to row within bigger squads, hence experienced/ambitious rowers defect</li> <li>• NT may force large expenditure on refurbishing facilities</li> </ul>

#### 5 MISSION STATEMENT

Weybridge Rowing Club is a competitive sports club that seeks to provide comprehensive rowing facilities that enable individuals of all ages and abilities to achieve their potential at whatever level of the sport they choose in a safe and secure environment. The Club aims to support this activity through training and qualifying sufficient numbers of coaches and by maintaining a fleet of boats and blades to an appropriate standard commensurate with ambitions of the participant.

## 6 ANALYSIS AND AIMS

### Analysis

It was commented in 2004 that the Club could not compete with the much larger local clubs, such as Molesey, which regularly produces top level crews for Henley and the National Championships. In common with other neighbouring smaller clubs, Walton, Staines, Burway and WLARC, and others further afield, the decline in the numbers of senior oarsmen and, to a slightly lesser extent, oarswomen has continued. However, there has been a compensatory rise in the numbers of juniors wanting to try the sport and of veterans returning to, or taking up, rowing.

The comment in the 2004 Plan that Weybridge could not hope to match the numbers of juniors at Walton, with their access to an octuple and several quad sculls, has proved to be unfounded as these boats have since been provided at Weybridge and are in regular use by a growing number of juniors. And whilst it was the case in 2004 that junior girls preferred to join WLARC, this is no longer the case; a large number of girls and their coach defected from WLARC to Walton two years ago, acting to jump start their provision of rowing to this sector, and Weybridge has been successful in attracting junior girls, numbers being boosted by the successful Wey to Row summer courses in 2007.

The profile of the Club in rowing circles is probably higher than its membership might indicate; this is achieved through the continued success of the Weybridge Silver Sculls, the revived Weybridge Head and Walton & Weybridge Regatta, through having five active umpires and through its support and senior representation at ARA level and event organisation of recreational rowing through the Weyfarers.

The weaknesses identified in the SWOT table above need to be tackled if the club is not to lose membership and become merely a niche facility for a declining number of participants. Neighbouring club, Walton, has been granted planning permission for vastly improved facilities and it is anticipated that building works will start in late 2009 - when completed this will provide a significant threat.

### Aims

This Plan should not aim to provide specific competition targets for sections of the Club as over a five-year period it is inevitable that membership will change and aspirations will need to be tailored accordingly. It should, however, provide the direction that the Club hopes to follow in order to meet its mission statement.

1. To reach a conclusion on moving to a new site with better access, more convenient parking, space adjacent to the boat-house for trailers to be parked, improved training, changing and sanitation facilities and downstream of Shepperton weir.
2. Given the likelihood of a long and uncertain timescale to the first aim, the second is to undertake reasonable repairs to the current facility, including renewed and certificated electrical cabling, repairs to the boathouse extension roofing, new flooring in the clubhouse, mains sewage connection and disposal of old asbestos sheeting.
3. For the committee to investigate grants to assist with the funding of aim two and to help with boat purchases.
4. To provide appropriate coaching to meet the aspirations of competitive members.
5. To continue to introduce beginners, both junior and adult, to the sport by running courses at the Club.
6. To ensure beginners are guided safely and correctly through the introductory stages of the sport.
7. By recognising the Club's main strength of appealing to juniors and veterans, to continue to support and, if appropriate, expand these groups in a way that promotes high performance across all sections.
8. To aim to attract, and then to retain through active intervention and organisation, more senior members.
9. As a relatively small rowing club, to look to supporting the aspirations of members through forming composite crews and exploring beneficial arrangements with local clubs.

10. For the committee to operate to an annual budget of expenditure within income, recognising that money needs to be set aside for either major refurbishment of existing facilities or a move to a new site within the five-year period of this plan.
11. For the committee to give adequate support to all sections through a rolling five-year boat procurement plan.
12. To continue to run the Weybridge Silver Sculls and the Weybridge Head, and to support the Walton & Weybridge Regatta.
13. Non-rowing members and parents of juniors to be encouraged to participate in club activities, thereby increasing the pool of volunteers to help with events and providing extra income through social events; regular communication with rowing and non-rowing members and supporters should be maintained through a regularly updated website and via a newsletter.
14. To formalise the arrangements with Weyfarers Rowing Club on storage of boats on the island plot, payment of the EA license and sharing of boats between the two clubs.