



Sailability

Writing a Club Development Plan

What is a Development Plan?

The development plan is the business plan for the club. It tells you, your members and those outside the club what you are all about, what your plans are for the future and how you hope to realize those plans.

Good planning encourages a co-ordinated approach to development, enables better use of all resources and it is a positive means of securing the future of the club. Preparing a development plan for a club may at first appear a daunting task. However, as with so many projects, it is getting things together for the first time that is most difficult, especially if you are not sure what is needed.

A plan does not need to be a heavyweight document full of grandiose ideas. It should, however, explain your overall mission statement for the organization, plus be a modest and realistic statement of objectives. Even if your plan is only to continue your present programme, to have it written down lets everyone know where the club stands and the part they can play in the overall running of the club.

The development plan can have all sorts of uses, for example:

- Obtaining new members
- Influencing outside bodies, obtaining sponsorship
- Publicising your activities
- Assisting you in making a case for grant aid.

Ideally, one person alone should not tackle a development plan. It should involve key people who can represent everyone in the club to ensure that it is relevant to each member. The easiest way to make a start is to form a small sub-committee of the general committee. This way the work can be shared out and a number of options and ideas sought. Then to ensure consistency of form it may be that the drafting of the plan is best done by one person.

The contents of the plan will vary from club to club, and the length will vary accordingly. Thought should be given to producing tables and graphs to put across the key points rather than relying on a lengthy narrative. After all, you want people to read and refer to your plan and for the plan to be a useful document. So it pays to keep it as concise as possible.

What the Plan should contain - this should be in three sections

1. This is where we are now
2. This is where we would like to be
3. This is how we are going to get there.

Section 1

A general introduction giving an overview of the current position of the club. This should provide brief background information about the structure of the organization. Reference could be made to the principle aims and functions of the club, its main responsibilities and how it fits into the general picture of the sport both locally and nationally.

It would be useful to carry out a **SWOT** analysis to identify as follows:

Strengths e.g, security of tenure, good access, good training scheme, lots of volunteers, adapted boats etc, number of disabled people in catchment area (potential members)

Weaknesses. e.g., low membership, poor participation by young people, lack of equipment and boats

Opportunities, room for expansion of moorings, possibility of Lottery Sports Fund Grant, membership

Threats to development, e.g. increase in rent, low water levels.

In summary, this analysis would lead into the broad objectives for the club over the next few years in terms of:

- Levels of participation and membership
- Facility needs
- Marketing and Communication
- Training
- Administration.

Section 2

The main body of the plan will outline the objectives for future development. Broad objectives for the total 3-5 year plan should be broken down into specific targets for each year and the methods of achieving them - very much an action plan

The plan may be divided into programmes reflecting the areas identified in Section 1. The structure of each programme should be divided under the following headings.

- Where we are now
- Where we would like to be – objectives
- The steps that need to be taken – targets
- How the targets will be achieved – methods
- How the progress will be evaluated and reviewed
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Do not forget to set deadlines

Levels of Participation and Membership

Consideration should be given to:

- An analysis of recruitment, membership turnover, fees
- Breakdown of members by geographical area and growth targets for the future
- Areas of membership where there are gaps
- School and group membership schemes
- A breakdown of individual members i.e. Balance of men, women, etc

- Numbers of people actively participating
- Activities programme
- Facilities needs

Facilities needs

This should be covered in the light of all the other areas and development and should include consideration of existing facility provision. How many disabled people is it projected will be using these facilities this year and how frequently? How was this calculated? Areas to be considered could be:

- Club boats, training fleet, adapted boats, safety boats
- Clubhouse, changing provisions
- Disabled access
- Accessible slipways, pontoon etc
- Car Parking

Marketing and Communication

Should include a review of:

- Communication with members, local authorities, local and regional news media, schools, voluntary organizations, sponsors
- Promotion / publicity materials
- Sponsorship

Training

Include here a review of training opportunities for members and non-members with the club

- RYA Sailability Awareness and Volunteer Management training
- Use of RYA proficiency award schemes
- Availability of instructors and trainers
- Availability of volunteers
- Courses for target groups
- Talent identification and forwarding into National schemes.

Administration

Include a review of and adjustments to committee structures and responsibilities, volunteers and their responsibilities and the co-ordination of the management resources. It may be necessary to consider ways of recruiting administrative help and sharing responsibilities.

Section 3

Should contain a summary of the priorities identified in Section 2 which would represent the development plan divided into a 3-5 year programme. Reference may need to be made to the resource implications which are needed to implement the plan, including facilities, people and financial resources. Unless the programmes are realistically and fully costed, they may not happen. In this section it is essential that the programmes are costed and a budget proposed.

Before the plan is complete the mechanisms for reviewing its progress should be considered and incorporated with the overall document.

The emphasis within the plan should be on setting realistic, measurable targets and priorities. It should be structured logically with clear headings and a brief text. Any lengthy details, if needed, should be included as an appendix.

The plan is very much the club's plan. Make sure that all members have access to a copy. Send a copy to local authorities and make sure that other relevant agencies know it exists and that they have their own copy. Keep up – to - date copies available when making grant applications and planning events. It will be useful for publicity with local media and especially for showing potential sponsors that you mean business.

Make the plan look attractive, professional and, most importantly, succinct and easy to read.

Key Points for your Plan

- Keep it relevant
- Make it a part of the management of your organization
- Make sure it means something to all your members
- Keep the content accurate and up – to - date
- Make your objectives measurable and achievable and set them to a time scale.