

Annual Report

2023-24

RYA
NORTHERN
IRELAND

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CEO report & Navigating the Future

Chair's report

As Chair of RYA Northern Ireland it gives me great pleasure to present this year's annual report and reflect on the achievements of our sport not only during the last year but over the last 50 years as we celebrate RYANI's 50th anniversary year.

I am pleased to report that since the launch of our new strategy "Navigating the Future" in March 2023 this has been a successful first year as we start on our 5 year journey to ensure the delivery of our four strategic aims, with some notable achievements over the last year.

We have been working with clubs to help with volunteer recruitment and engagement and have seen our sailors, clubs and volunteers being recognised for their achievements at the Northern Ireland Sports awards, our own RYANI awards and the national RYA awards and I congratulate them all for their achievement and contribution to our sport. One person in particular cannot go without mention, we were delighted that in June 2023 in the Kings birthday honours Bob Harper was awarded the MBE for his services to sailing for people with disabilities, in particular the development of Sailability in Northern Ireland and we congratulate him.

We continue to be aware of the importance of ensuring a safe and inclusive boating environment for all taking part in our sport and we welcomed the final report on the women's and girls' research that we commissioned last year. While it highlighted barriers for women and girls in boating it also identified areas where we were making good progress such as an increasing representation of women on committees and our women on water programme,

as well as constructive recommendations to take forward to help us continue to further develop new pathways in this area of our sport.

The performance of our athletes is continuing to progress with increasing representation both nationally and internationally including our own board member, the Director of Performance, achieving a podium finish in the ILCA Master's Worlds in Adelaide earlier this year

Our youth squads are also continuing to grow in strength with Northern Ireland youth sailors having a significant representation on the Irish squad and we are also looking at new areas of development within team racing. We look forward to following all their journeys in the forthcoming year.

This year it has been a pleasure to welcome to the Board three new independent members, Gavin Nelson, Owen Waters and Linda McHugh who takes over the role of board treasurer, we also welcomed Colin Leonard, a club nominee, as the new Director of Performance. Stepping down this year were David Williams and Peter Kennedy, we thank them for their years of service and the valuable contribution they have made to the board and the role of the RYA in Northern Ireland

Finally, I would like to thank Greg Yarnall CEO and the RYANI staff for their continuing hard work and dedication to ensuring the ongoing development of our sport in Northern Ireland, the support they give to our sailors and clubs is always above and beyond to ensure success in what they do.

The last 50 years have seen amazing developments in our sport and as we look forward with excitement and anticipation to the next 50 years, I want to thank you all for your continued support.



Susan McKnight
Chair

CEO's report

It has been a busy and exciting year with new programmes being launched and the introduction of two new staff roles, a Marketing and Communications Executive role and a Pathways Officer role.

Thank you to our main funders, Sport NI and RYA for their ongoing support and to the Mary Peters Trust for the financial support they provide to our young sailors, we simply couldn't do the work listed below without them.

It has been fantastic to get to know more people from the Northern Irish sailing community over the last 12 months, it is always uplifting to see the positive difference clubs and individuals are making to people's lives through sailing and boating. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers, coaches, officials and instructors that give countless hours to the sport. Thank you also to the staff team, who are passionate about making a difference and supporting the sport to develop, and to our Board, their support, advice and guidance has been invaluable over the past 12 months.

On a personal note, it has been great to continue to gain new experiences through the sport, having completed the Powerboat Level 2 course with Safer Waters, experienced racing in the River, Sonata and Glen and took part in the Discover Sailing Day with my family.

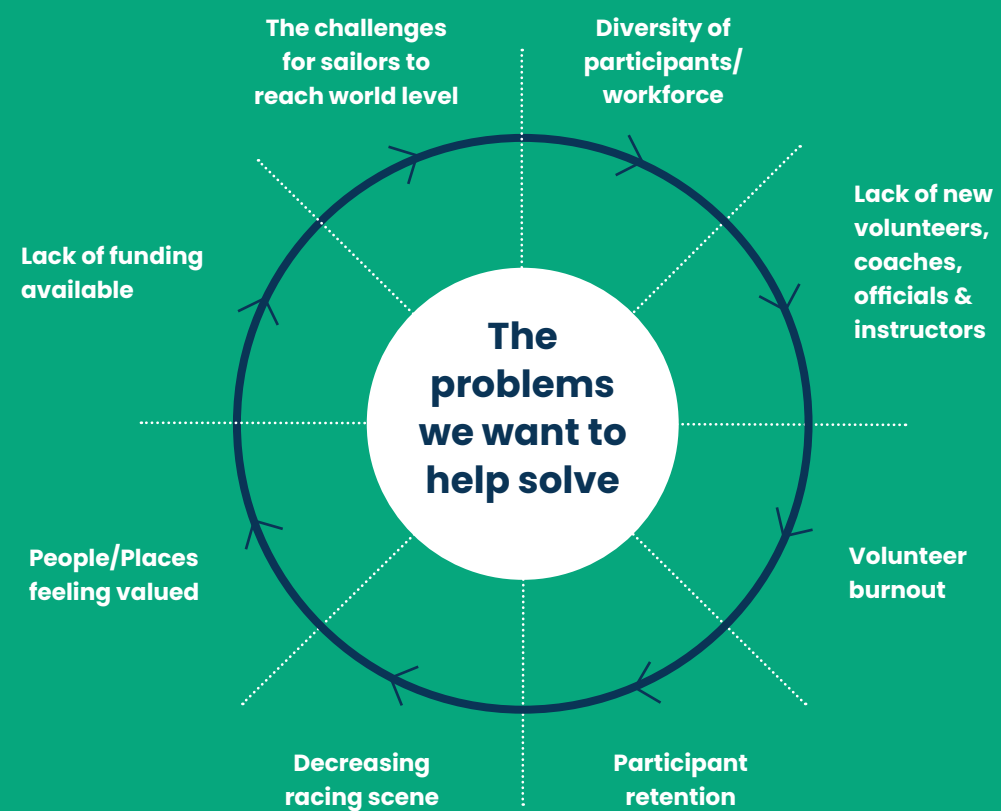
The Navigating the Future strategy was launched in March 2023 with work commencing from April 2023. To monitor progress against the strategy there are a set of medium and long-term goals to which we set an annual delivery plan against. A monitoring tool, Goalscape, is used to map the annual plan against the strategic areas to measure and track progress. This monitoring tool is also used to report to the Board. We have reported our progress against the strategy throughout this annual report and have included a reminder of the problems we were trying to help solve and the strategic aims and foundations on the following page.



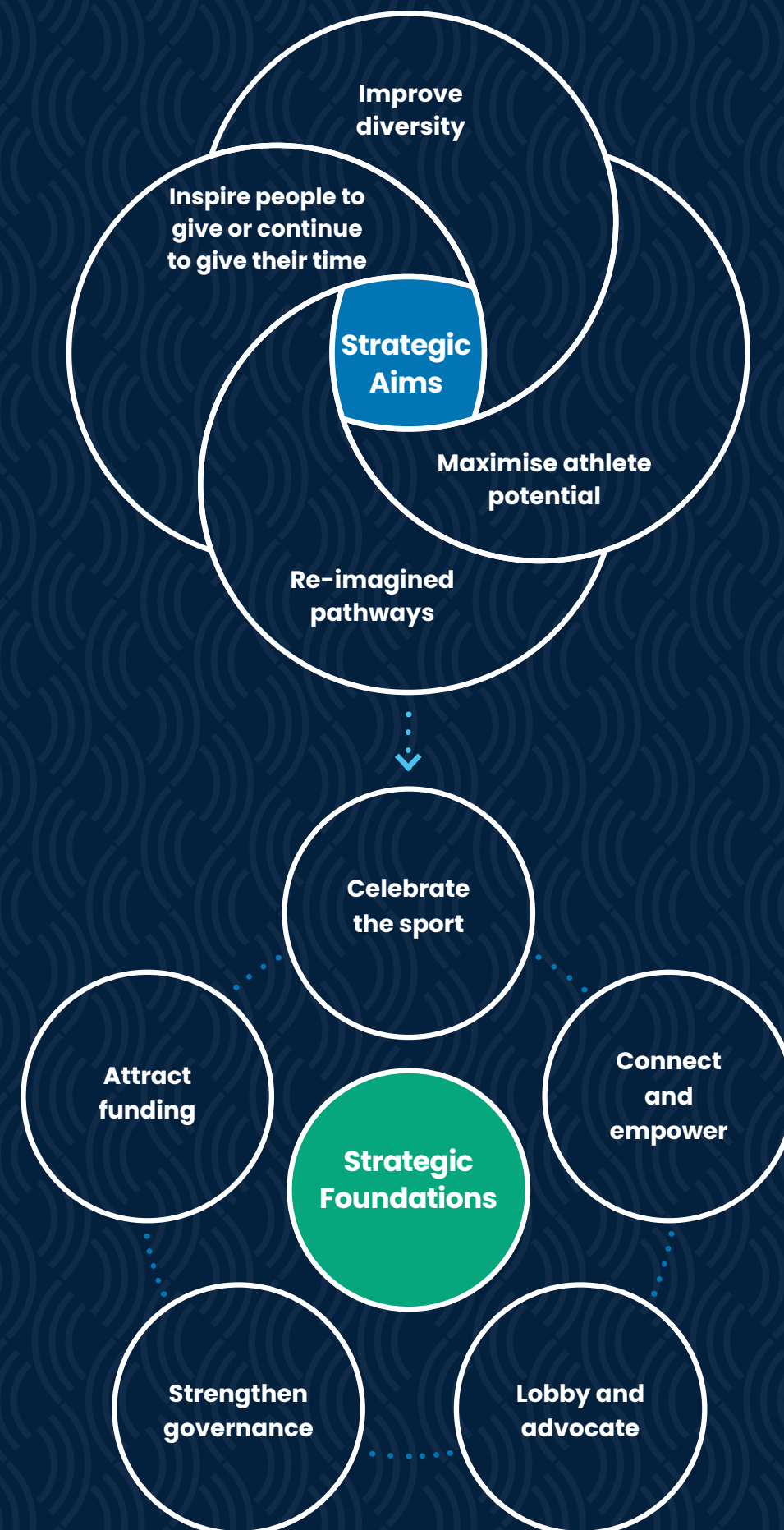
Greg Yarnall
CEO



The most common challenges across these groups are:



The five year strategic plan for sailing, windsurfing and boating in Northern Ireland



Inspiring people to give their time

Inspiring people to give their time was one of the strategic aims of the Navigating the Future strategy, as clubs were reporting volunteer burnout and an increasingly challenging environment post COVID to engage new volunteers.

This year, programmes have been put into place that aim to support clubs to overcome these challenges, some of which are detailed below.

Volunteering

To support clubs to engage new volunteers a volunteer recruitment programme was developed and launched in November 23, known as 'We're all in'. In its pilot year there was funding to support four clubs, though six clubs applied.

The programme supported clubs to run volunteering engagement events, either woven into club calendar events or generating a new event, as well as the costs of new volunteers gaining qualifications. Most of the club events are to happen in April, so a full report on the successes and challenges of the programme will follow in 24-25.

Officials

New this year was the 'Rules Roadshow' which aimed to deliver rules talks and get people talking about the rules, with a view to introducing people to officiating qualifications. There were over 100 attendees across four workshops.

Alongside these workshops, there was also support for officials who had started their qualifications with a CV Builder opportunity for Race Officers, supported by BYC. Race Officers who had completed their Race Officer course and exam were given the chance to take over the reins at the Ballyholme Yacht Club Icebreaker series, with the support of National Race Officer, Aidan Pounder. Following the programme, there are now two fully-fledged female Regional Race Officers.

Race Coaching & Instructor Programme

January saw the launch of the RYANI Coach development programme, which aimed to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of Level Two Race Coaches. There were 25 coaches join the programme, which supported them to grow their confidence in developing their own club race training sessions and grow the number of coaches at the level to support NI Performance squads. Attendees on the programme were also connected to other work opportunities within RYA NI. By the end of March there were four webinars and two face to face development days held. The webinars were supported by performance coaches, with in person days offering the opportunity to connect and develop new relationships so coaches can support each other.

A key part of this programme will be delivering mentoring to the coaches while they are coaching, the majority of this coming in 2024-25. Some feedback from a mentoring session at CAYC in summer 2023 read:

// I found the mentoring very helpful, James asked questions about the exercises we were using with our level of sailor that could cause problems and I wouldn't have thought of myself, it has helped me to develop the skill to ask myself similar questions while running a session to ensure they are successful and useful for the students. //



The difference the programme has already made to coaches can be shown by...



Instructor course programme

The Instructor programme aims to deliver enough DI & SI courses to service clubs and prospective DI and SI's. Work continues to find and develop candidates to become RYA Trainers across the various schemes.

This year also faced challenges with the inspection process, where the inspection target was not reached. This is compounded by a reduction in the number of centre inspectors, who must first become RYA Trainers.

There were 60 attendees across the RYA Training Day & Windsurf Clinic Day (run with the support of Strangford Lough Yacht Club and Newtownards Sailing Club). The days target RYA small boat scheme instructors, aiming to upskill and dust off any cobweb's pre-season. This year we were only hampered by too much wind on Saturday and none at all on the Sunday!



The Numbers

25	60
Coaches signed up to the coach development programme	Attendees at the Training Day
6	6
Attended the RCL2 course	Attended a SI course
2	25
New female RROs through the CV Builder programme	Members of the RYANI Coach Development Programme
4	24
Clubs at the RYA Training Day & Windsurf clinic	Attended a DI course
4	60
Clubs supported through We're all in	Attendees at the RYA Training Day & Windsurf clinic
60	
Attendees at the RYA NI Training Day	

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO GIVE THEIR TIME



Improve Diversity

There has been a focus in year one on Women and Girls programmes but we will increasingly look to engage with work around disability representation in the sport into 24-25.

Women and Girls

On the 6th March 2023 a survey was launched to better understand the lived experiences of women and girls and how we can further support them into the sport. The Women and Girls research was conducted by Dr Emma Vickers, an ex-England International athlete and Head of Insight at TASS, the research results were key for us moving forwards in supporting the progression of women and girls across all pathways in the sport. In addition to the survey there were five focus groups and five independent interviews.

“I didn’t grow up sailing, so I was still trying to learn, and I find it very difficult on the big boats during a race trying to learn stuff because you don’t have the opportunity [outside of racing]. It’s like, move I’ll do this, you’re not going fast enough, you just don’t have time to take anything in.”

- Social/club racing sailor

The findings from the research have been shared online by Dr Emma Vickers on a webinar for clubs to be able to ask more questions and develop a stronger understanding of the research. This webinar took place on the 26th July 2023, which had 37 attendees and 20 clubs represented. Moving forwards, a club guidance document that draws upon the findings and recommendations of the guidance for clubs and centers is being developed.

Further action was taken at the RYA Connected event 11th November 2023, where there were discussions about the next steps for RYANI and clubs to support

the development and participation of women and girls in the sport. There was also a diversity and inclusion workshop delivered at the RYA NI Connected event in November 23. A few comments from the RYA Connected event included; “Hearing opportunities for diversity and inclusion, I hadn’t previously considered”.



“It was good to see how WOW has helped clubs after a few years, the EDI talk was interesting”.

A few examples of NI clubs delivering programmes or implementing positive change to support a diversity of membership and a progression pathway for women and girls included, Ballyholme Yacht Club (WOW), Donaghadee Sailing Club (WOWEE), County Antrim Yacht Club (WOW), East Antrim Boat Club (Ladies that Launch), and Strangford Lough Yacht Club (WOW). Across these clubs around 132 participants were involved in a variety of pathways, with the addition of 250 female participants benefitting from the Active Clubs funding. As a follow on from the research and the Women on Water Programme, RYA Northern Ireland has implemented the Women on Water Development Programme as part of the pathways pilot project, “Project Theia”.

The Women on Water Development Programme will create a learning environment that is safe, supportive and enables women, aged eighteen and over, to progress their skills led by an Ambassador within the program. It is hoped that by running training and skills development opportunities there will be a higher rate in participation within clubs, as women gain more confidence across their chosen pathway area. The training for the first year will focus on four key areas in the sport which include Race Officiating, Team Racing, Dinghy Skills and Powerboating.

Additionally, as this program is specific to over eighteens, a Female Focused Camp which targets the junior to youth categories from 12 years to 21 years old will be held. This will be specific for performance pathway girls, providing more education around menstrual cycles in the sport, nutrition, exercise, race training, transitioning classes and inspirational people in the sport. This weekend will be in collaboration with workforce and performance.





WOW Festival

Donaghadee Sailing Club hosted the 2023 WOW Festival. 46 participants came together on the water, some for their first time sailing, with others being regular club members who all wanted to meet and have fun. A range of activities were on offer for the day including big boat sailing, powerboating, dinghy sailing and more. This festival is growing from strength to strength and with the help of our WOW Leader group and volunteers at the host club it is becoming a valuable and solid fixture in the calendar.

'A big thank you to Kate and team for a fabulous day! Such a great opportunity to try out a vast range of water based activities in a really safe and supportive environment. I had such fun, met loads of new people and took away memories of experiences I never thought I would get the chance to try.'

- /// A big thank you to Kate and team for a fabulous day! Such a great opportunity to try out a vast range of water based activities in a really safe and supportive environment. I had such fun, met loads of new people and took away memories of experiences I never thought I would get the chance to try. //
- /// A great day mentally and physically. Gave me confidence that I wasn't too old to return to some sports and start others. //

Sailability

As part of the pathways pilot project, "Project Theia", three sailability hubs, Lough Erne Yacht Club, Foyle Sailability and Belfast Lough Sailability were supported to run their own regatta each year to support sailability participation and competition within Northern Ireland. Traditionally our sailability clubs would travel down to Kinsale to compete in the Presidents Cup, however this has been challenging for our sailors logistically and has been costly to participate. By supporting the three sailability hubs in NI with funding to run their own regatta, we hope that this will encourage higher participation and support skills development for sailor to become more confident to compete.

In 2023 Belfast Lough Sailability hosted a regatta in which the three sailability hubs took part, there was a total of 64 participants involved in a great day of racing in the Hawks and Hansa 303s.

Introducing the new EDI committee has enabled us to work closer with our sailability coordinator, Ken Curry and collaborate with our EDI Club representatives to support salability & women and girls participation in the sport, as well as understand lived experience in the sport.

Both Belfast Lough Sailability and Foyle Sailability were supported through the Active Clubs programmes aiming to increase participation for people with a disability. This support provided the clubs with the opportunity to run programmes that helped around 30 disabled people to get out on the water.

The partnership with Disability Sport NI has continued with the Inclusive Sports Award action plan being re-written with aims to increase opportunities for Disabled people to participate in sailing and boating.

The numbers

100

Women and girls completed the Women and Girls Research survey

30

Participants took part in the Disability Tri Racing Series

46

Participants took part in the WOW festival

132

Participants engaged through four WOW programmes

2

New Women and Girls programmes ready to go for 2024-25



Belfast Lough Sailability Club



Re-imagined Pathways



Re-imagining pathways across the sport is vitally important to ensure the sport adapts to the way in which people want to consume sailing and boating.

One of the recent projects being introduced is Team Racing, which has consisted of five open training sessions, one selection weekend and five training weekends for a selected team. Offering more opportunities for double handed pathways will support the development of sailors wishing to compete in a double handed pathway class, as well as support sailors who wish to progress on to gain instructor qualifications.

The first Team Racing session was held at Strangford Lough Yacht Club with twelve sailors, supported by head coach Emily Hill and assistant coach Joseph Karauzum. There has also been Team racing training held at Ballyholme Yacht Club, with the support of Queens University Belfast Sailing Club, lending use of their fireflies.

The future for double handed pathways is growing in Northern Ireland, with a strong circuit of RS400s competing at Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club, as well as junior and youth growth in the RS Feva Class across a variety of clubs in NI. With team racing in mind, there is an aspiration to continue developing this for all ages and stages across the sport.

The Development Academy programme planning has been published and opened for clubs to host training to help support and develop junior pathway classes, specifically for Topper and Feva. There has been a total of seven club applications to host. Clubs will be encouraged to bring volunteers/instructors down and see how sessions are delivered so the club can continue their own race training programme and develop an action plan to support their long term development. The Development Academy programme has been put in place to progress the numbers in junior fleets, whilst developing a passion for racing with the support of coaches from our coaching development programme.



Maximise Athlete Potential

RYA and British Youth Sailing carried out an in-depth review of its sailing pathway to enable pathways to be more relevant and attractive in an ever-changing world.

This process has led to an exciting new strategy that sees a renewed focus on closer working relationships with clubs, creating stronger partnerships with Junior and Youth Class Associations, and developing new Regional Academies to support young sailors dreaming of the Olympics.

Youth Performance Programme

12 Toppers were selected and **13 ILCAs** for the 23/24 YPP. The Youth Performance Programme continues to provide scheduled coaching over six weekends a year over the winter months.

This year there have been a number of sailors included in Irish squads that include:

- 9 Sailors in Irish Squad Programmes

Junior

- 1 Female and 1 Male in Irish Topper Squad

Transition/Youth

- 1 Female and 1 Male in ILCA 6 Academy
- 1 x Male in ILCA Standard Development Programme
- 4 x Female in 49er FX Development Programme

The amount of funding secured for NI sailors from various pots of funding has increased this year and includes:

RYANI Athlete Funding

- £15,000 Across 12 sailors

Sport NI Athlete Awards

- £17,500 awarded across 6 Sailors

Mary Peter's

- £9,250 awarded across 10 Sailors

RYA Foundation

- £1,500

It has been fantastic to witness some great results from NI performance squad sailors at home and abroad. Some of the standout results are listed below.

Topper Worlds Cork 2023

- 14 Sailors (Two in the Top 10 Overall)

Irish Youth Nationals 2023

- 30 Sailors

Irish Sailing Youth Nationals Notable Results

Topper

- Tom Driscoll 1st
- Cormac Byrne 2nd
- Emily Macafee 2nd Girl (5th Overall)

ILCA 6

- Tom Coulter 3rd
- Lewis Thompson 5th
- Zoe Whitford 1st Girl (7th Overall)
- Bobby Driscoll 8th

Inclusion of Double Handed classes in YPP Squads

Part of the long-term performance ambitions has been to create sustainable double handed pathways in the sport. This year has seen the support of an NI RS Feva group coordinated by parents, where RYA NI coach, Emily Hill, supported the programme with the aim for there to be a more formal NI squad in 24-25.

Three boats from NI participated in the British FEVA Nationals 2023 with event coaching provided. The top result was 19th in a fleet of over 90 (positive start in a new class).

Valencia New Year Training Camp

From the 27th of December until the 3rd of January, RYA NI Performance Manager, Andrew Baker took two sailors to Sail Coach base Valencia to combine forces with Wales and Scotland among other sailing nations forming an international training camp that included other NI sailors already on site with Irish Sailing. As per last year the camp was a great success and something that will continue to be built upon into the future. A report from the event can be seen [here](#).



Celtic Cup

The 2024 Celtic Cup was hosted in Pwelli, WALES. Team NI came second to Wales by one point despite winning the ILCA Class. Northern Ireland will be hosting this event in 2025, see detailed results from the event [here](#).

Performance challenges

Costs incurred when transitioning, maintaining independent campaigns and inclusion within National Squads can become prohibitive for sailors and their families.

Time commitments continue to be a challenge as many sailors have multiple sports and other extracurricular activities.

Youth Championships 2023

Ballyholme Hosted the 2023 RYANI Youth Championships with Sponsorship from F10 Marine with 130 competitors on the day.

2023 BYC

Class / Gender	Male	Female
REGATTA	10	11
Feva	7	15
Optimist	3	2
Topper	15	22
Topper 4.2	11	5
Junior	46	55
ILCA 4	6	10
ILCA 6	14	7
29er	7	3
Youth	27	20
Overall	73	75

RYA NI Youth Championships 2023

Category / Class	Winner	
RYA NI Youth Champion	Daniel Palmer	
Female Youth Champion	Zoe Whitford	
Male Youth Champion	Daniel Palmer	
Female Junior Champion	Iseult Spiers	
Male Junior Champion	Tom Driscoll	
Northern Ireland Schools Cup	Bangor Grammer	
Northern Ireland Club Trophy	Ballyholme YC	
	Male	Female
Overall ILCA 6	Daniel Palmer	Zoe Whitford
Overall ILCA 4	Freddie Doig	Annika Hunter
Overall Topper	Rory Brennan -Hobbs	Iseult Speirs
Overall Topper 4.2	Adam Green	Poly Robinson
Optimist Fleet	George Doig	Penny Doig
Overall 29er	Oisin Pierse & Fionn Daly	Katie Brow
RS Feva Fleet	Matthew Holden & Peter Ridout	Emily Ridout & Annabel Ridout
Overall Regatta Fleet	Charlie Haslett	Alice Lynn

The Numbers

25

Sailors were part of NI Performance squads

£43k

Funding distributed to support sailors

2nd

Place in the Celtic Cup

30

Sailors competed at the Irish Youth Nationals

130

Competitors took part in the RYA NI Youth Championships

9

Sailors selected for the Irish Sailing squads



Celtic Cup





Strengthen Governance

STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE

Under the Strengthen Governance Strategic Aim, progress has been made in several areas. This included the Board undertaking a review of the Articles of Association and Terms of Reference for the Board Sub-Committees, where the following changes were made:

- The length of the RYA NI Chair term was extended from 3 to 5 years in line with other regions.
- The Articles were rewritten to allow for registration with the Charity Commission.
- Two additional Committees were created – Finance and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- The Income Generation Committee was renamed the Business Development Committee.

The amendments to the Articles were approved by the membership by written resolution in October 2023. The updated Terms of Reference for the committees, provided an opportunity to recruit new members to the existing Committees and through this recruitment we have seen an increase in the number of people under thirty represented and an improved gender split.

- Sub Committees membership is now 43% female, 57% male, up from 25% female, 75% male in 22-23.
- There are now also three young people under 25, where in 22-23 there were 0.

Four new members were welcomed to the Board during the year. In August, applications were opened for three independent directors and through this process, Gavin Nelson, Owen Waters and Linda MacHugh were appointed. Linda has joined as Treasurer to replace David Williams who stepped down after completing his maximum nine year tenure at the AGM in November. At the AGM, Colin Leonard was elected as Chair of the Performance Committee, replacing Peter Kennedy who stepped down.

To achieve 'an embedded culture of continuous improvement' work has started on a Board training programme and in 23-24, Directors undertook the following training:

- EDI training
- Board Safeguarding Training
- Roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Code of Good Governance.

In addition, the AGM moved to be included as part of the RYA Connected Conference (formerly the Affiliated Club Conference). This saw an increase in the number of clubs represented rising from 12 to nineteen.

As part of the Strategy, we are working to ensure clubs and centres have a better understanding of the role of the Board and feel that they can ask for support. To deliver on this, the Board attended several sailing events at clubs last summer and are keen to do the same this year.

Safeguarding remains an important area and through the Safeguarding Implementation plan agreed with the CPSU, there has been work undertaken to ensure there is clear messaging around the need to report safeguarding concerns and the mechanisms to do so, in addition to training provided via the Commodore and Vice Commodore evening.



Celebrate the Sport

To support delivery against this area, a Marketing and Communications Executive was recruited in November 23 and there have been a number of improvements across RYA NI channels.

- Social media interaction has increased significantly since the beginning of the year. Since the first of January 24, there has been an increase of 149.3% in Facebook reach and 168.1% in Instagram reach.
- There has been a deliberate move to celebrate the people and places that help make the sport of sailing great here in Northern Ireland. There has been a significant increase in the number of profiles, case studies and news stories shared through our channels, alongside the launch of the Crest of the Wave podcast. This has helped to celebrate individuals succeeding on an international level, such as Chris Lindsay and Matt McGovern, and grassroots sailors such as Jennifer Bryce, Lara Sunday or Marty Ansfield.
- There has been an increase in the number of Youtube videos posted on the [RYA Northern Ireland channel](#) where 13 videos have been posted in 23-24.

Annual Awards

The 2023 Annual Awards were held in April 2024 at Riddel Hall, Queens University with over 90 guests in attendance.

With 18 nominations across the categories, the standard of nominations was very high, more detail can be found [here](#), the winners from the evening were:

- **Male Junior Sailor of The Year** - Luke Simpson
- **Female Junior Sailor of The Year** - Emily Macafee
- **Male Youth Sailor of The Year** - Tom Coulter
- **Female Youth Sailor of The Year** - Erin McIlwaine
- **Volunteer of The Year** - Ellie Young/Marty Ansfield
- **Young Volunteer of The Year** - Isabel Nixon/Emily Dixon
- **Club Race Coach of The Year** - Joseph Karazum
- **Instructor of The Year** - Luke McIlwaine
- **Chair's Award** - County Antrim Volunteers/ Billy Kohner/Gordon Kane
- **Club Project of The Year** - East Down Yacht Club
- **Race Official of The Year** - County Antrim Yacht Club Ladies Race Official Team

- There were seven sailing representatives into the **Sport NI awards** with one overall winner in [Rachel Nixon](#), who was named the SNI Volunteer of the Year winner.
- Five NI clubs were shortlisted for the **RYA Club of the Year awards** with County Antrim making the Active Club of the Year finals.

RYA NI 50th Anniversary

- In the 50th year of RYA NI work has been undertaken to track the history of the sport and ensure that there are records kept of notable moments and achievements in the sport. Lindsay Nolan has been supporting this work, our thanks go to Lindsay for her help with this.
- The story of the inception of RYA Northern Ireland has been told on a range of mediums such as Instagram, Facebook, Youtube and web articles. This was made possible by speaking with Maeve Bell, Adrian Bell and Curly Morris and an article and video can be seen [here](#).
- There will be a celebratory dinner held on Friday 18th October at the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office.

Other notable achievements

There are too many achievements to list them all but congratulations to Lucy Kane who was selected for the [British Keelboat Academy](#) and to Emma McKnight and Daniel Corbett who were selected for the [Griffin Project](#). Northern Ireland had two sailors selected for significant roles in the Clipper Round the World race with [Phil Quinn](#) selected as Skipper and Laura Hampton was selected as First Mate.

Whilst there will be no Northern Irish sailors competing at the Paris 2024 Olympics, it is fantastic to see [Chris Lindsay](#) appointed to the International Jury for the Paris Games, whilst Matt McGovern will be in Paris as the Irish 49er coach. Two amazing achievements.

In Team Racing, two Northern Irish sailors, Emily Hill and Liam Glynn were part of the 'George Jesters' team that won the Irish Team Racing Nationals. Tom Gillard and Andy Thomson of East Antrim Boat Club won the Fireball Worlds.

[Richard Robinson](#) (County Antrim Yacht Club) and [Jack Kennedy](#) (Strangford Lough Yacht Club) won the Outstanding Contribution and Young Volunteer awards respectively at the RYA awards in London, where they were presented their awards by The Princess Royal, President of the RYA.

Colin Leonard came home with a Silver medal in the World ILCA 7 Masters in the Apprentice fleet (age 30 to 44) that took place in Australia.

Please let us know of notable achievements across the sport and we will aim to share these through our communication channels.



Lobby and Advocate

To ensure the organisation can effectively lobby and advocate on behalf of individual and club members, several working groups have been joined, where RYA NI is now represented. These range from the Better Beaches Forum to the Water Safety Forum to the River Basin and Water Management Group.

There has been a commitment to gather feedback from NI Water and DAERA with regards to the action being taken to improve water quality across NI, where poor water quality is affecting clubs and individuals from accessing the water at certain times of the year. An update is requested twice a year and we continue to advocate for more funding to be committed to improving water quality here in NI.

The disposal of flares has been a significant problem in NI due to changes to carriage and storage regulations, as well as the MoD Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Teams routine collection service from HM Coastguard Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC) and other collection points being withdrawn. RYA NI have worked closely with Stephen Dunne, MLA and the PSNI to coordinate a flare disposal day for members, possible long term solutions are being explored. Thank you to PSNI and Stephen Dunne MLA for their ongoing support with this issue.

The Cruising and Environment Committee continue to work through the RYA NI Environmental plan and have agreed to focus work on two areas:

- Reducing the use of single use plastic,
- Working with clubs to put a green/ environmental team or lead person in place.

Through the Cruising and Environment Committee, RYA NI continue to respond to a number of consultation documents and network groups to ensure boaters interests are being considered in any marine licensing or equivalent applications.



Attract Funding

The organisation had an increase in funding from SNI to £274,000 for the year (an increase of just over 40%), which has helped increase the size of the team and the range of the organisations work.

However, there continues to be an over reliance on funding from SNI and RYA, there is an ambition and commitment to diversify and increase the funding the organisation receives. As a result, work has been carried out with RJ Brand Design to develop sponsorship proposals for RYA NI programmes and events.

Through the SNI funding received, a series of measures are set with an action plan alongside this, out of these measures 42 out of 48 were rated as green (88%), 4 orange (8%) and 2 red (4%) (where if a measure is 100% complete, it would receive a green, between 75 and 99% an orange and under 75%, a red).

The cost involved in Olympic campaigns remains a significant challenge for young sailors. Work was undertaken with Brand Builders, an organisation that focuses on supporting athletes to build their brand and sponsorship presence. 11 young sailors had access to the programme, which will be completed and evaluated in the 24-25 year.

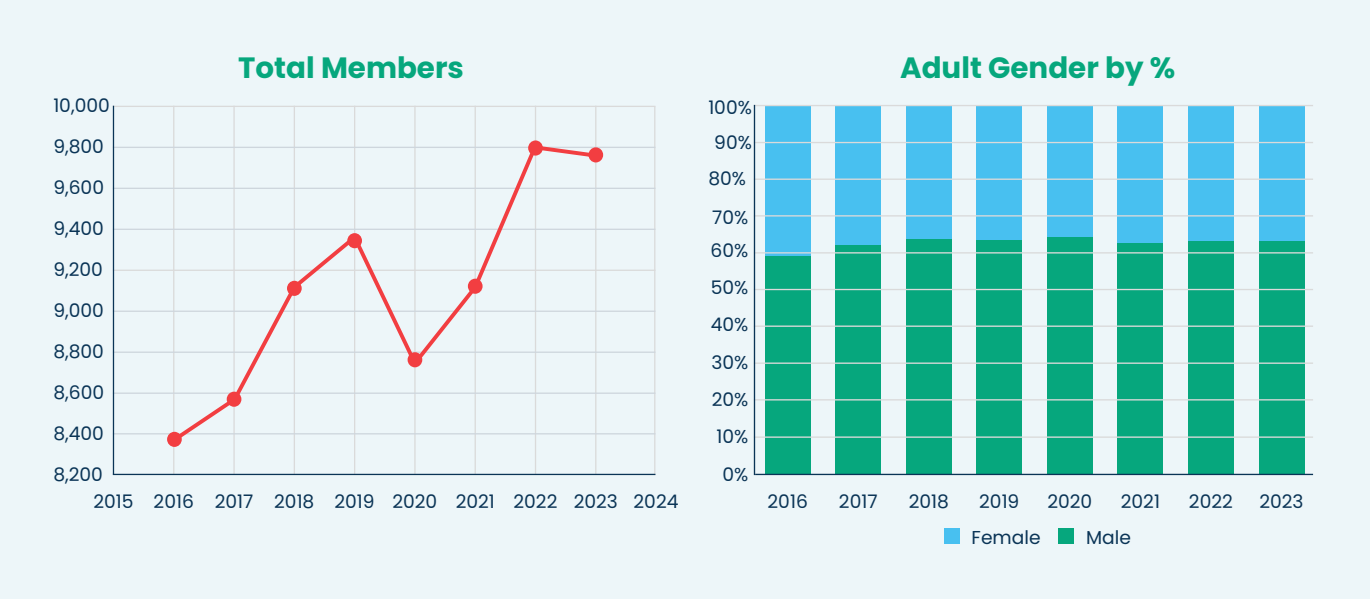


Connect and Empower

By fostering connections and promoting community, we aim to create an environment where people in the sport with shared interests can share experiences, challenges, identify solutions and provide support to each other, empowering people to make a difference in their own clubs, centres or local community.

There is an ambition to ensure that sailing and boating is widely recognised as an accessible sport for all and clubs connect with RYA NI programmes. In the 2023 season the Active Clubs programme supported 19 clubs, supporting them to grow and/or diversify participation. Over 500 participants benefitted from these programmes that included, Discover Sailing, Women on Water, OnBoard, Sailability and others.

Club Membership sits at 9802, down 0.9% from 2022. The number of leavers has increased from 507 in 2022 to 793, with the number of joiners decreasing from 1038 in 2022 to 797. The census submitted each year provides an opportunity to report to funders and engage with future funding opportunities and with a 91% return rate we want to thank all clubs that take the time to submit their census. There is a need to continue to develop existing partnerships and create further ones to support this activity. In 2023 the partnership with Female Sports forum was continued, Kate delivered a talk on the results of the Women and Girls research, focusing on the key barriers and enablers within our sport.



RYA Connected events

We're stronger when we share, learn and grow together and to support connections across the sport, RYA launched RYA Connected in Autumn 2023.

The RYA's series of conferences and development workshops provide opportunities to connect, listen, exchange knowledge and best practice and in 2023/2024 there were 24 engagement events ran in NI with 183 representatives from 62% of affiliated clubs.

The first RYA Connected event in Northern Ireland was the 'Club Conference' held at Carrickfergus Sailing Club in November where over 40 representatives from 10 clubs attended and shared best practice. Workshops included topics on Sailability, women & girls research, volunteering and EDI, where one of the highlights for one attendee included:

Hearing opportunities for diversity and inclusion I hadn't previously considered.

This event was followed by a number of online events and in person events including the reintroduction of the Commodore and Vice Commodore evening in March 2024. 21 representatives from 15 clubs attended the event and gained valuable information on Safeguarding from both Paul Stephenson from CPSU and Katie Loucaides from RYA.

The speakers were clear, concise, informative and I gained valuable knowledge about RYA affiliation 2025 and what we have to do as a club.

I gained a better understanding of Safeguarding, particularly the preventative, pro-active nature of it. I left with more contacts and most importantly a forum for discussion with peers and RYANI staff.





Active Club Grants

There have been 18 Active Club grants provided with projects ranging from the introduction of new Onboard sessions to Women on Water programmes. A list of clubs funded are below:

Ballyronan Boat Club

Equipment/Discover Sailing
45 participants engaged

Ballyholme Yacht Club

Women on Water programme
53 participants engaged

County Antrim Yacht Club

Discover Sailing/Women and Girls work
16 participants engaged

Carlingford Lough Yacht Club

Volunteer Development project
12 participants engaged

Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club

Discover Sailing with St Killians School
29 participants engaged

Coleraine Yacht Club

Equipment
30 participants engaged

Donaghadee Sailing Club

Women on Water
50+ participants engaged

East Antrim Boat Club

Women and Girls and Onboard
30 participants engaged

East Down Yacht Club

Racing programme support
34 participants engaged

Foyle Sailability

Equipment
10 participants engaged

Newcastle Yacht Club

Onboard/Junior Sailing
15 participants engaged

Portrush Yacht Club

Equipment
100 participants engaged

Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club

Volunteer development/coaching support
29 participants engaged

Belfast Lough Sailability

Regatta
64 participants engaged

Ballyronan Boat Club

Easter junior activity
34 participants engaged

Portaferry Sailing Club

Intro to sailing

Donaghadee Sailing Club

Onboard refresher training

East Antrim Boat Club

Onboard refresher training

Carrickfergus Sailing Club

Onboard refresher training



Financial Summary

Included in the annual report is a financial summary, the accounts have not yet been audited so a detailed financial breakdown had not been provided in this document but will be shared with the papers for the RYA NI AGM in November 2024.

Figure 1.

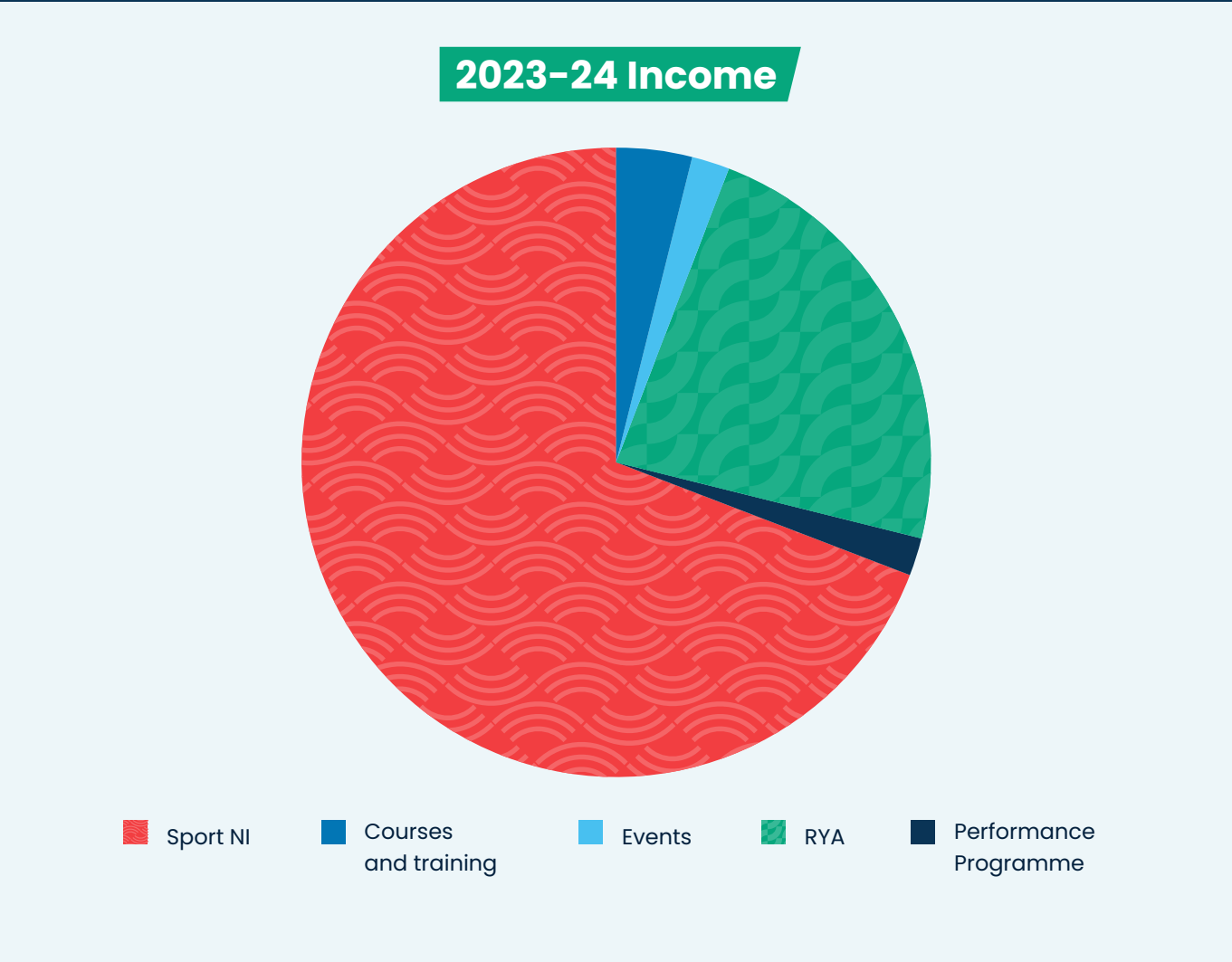


Figure 1 is a breakdown of the income RYA NI receives.
Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the RYA NI expenditure.
Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the areas SNI funding was spent.

Figure 2.

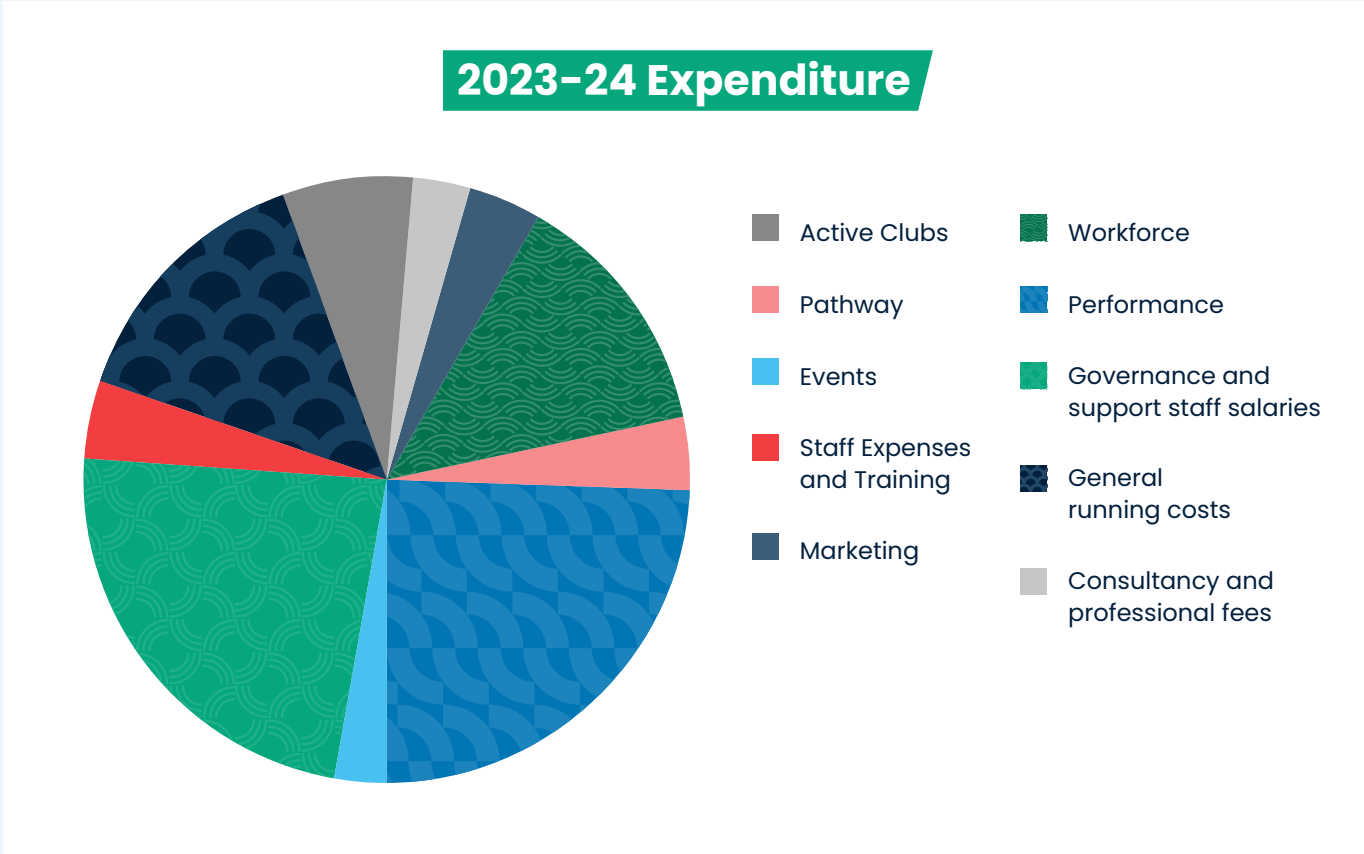
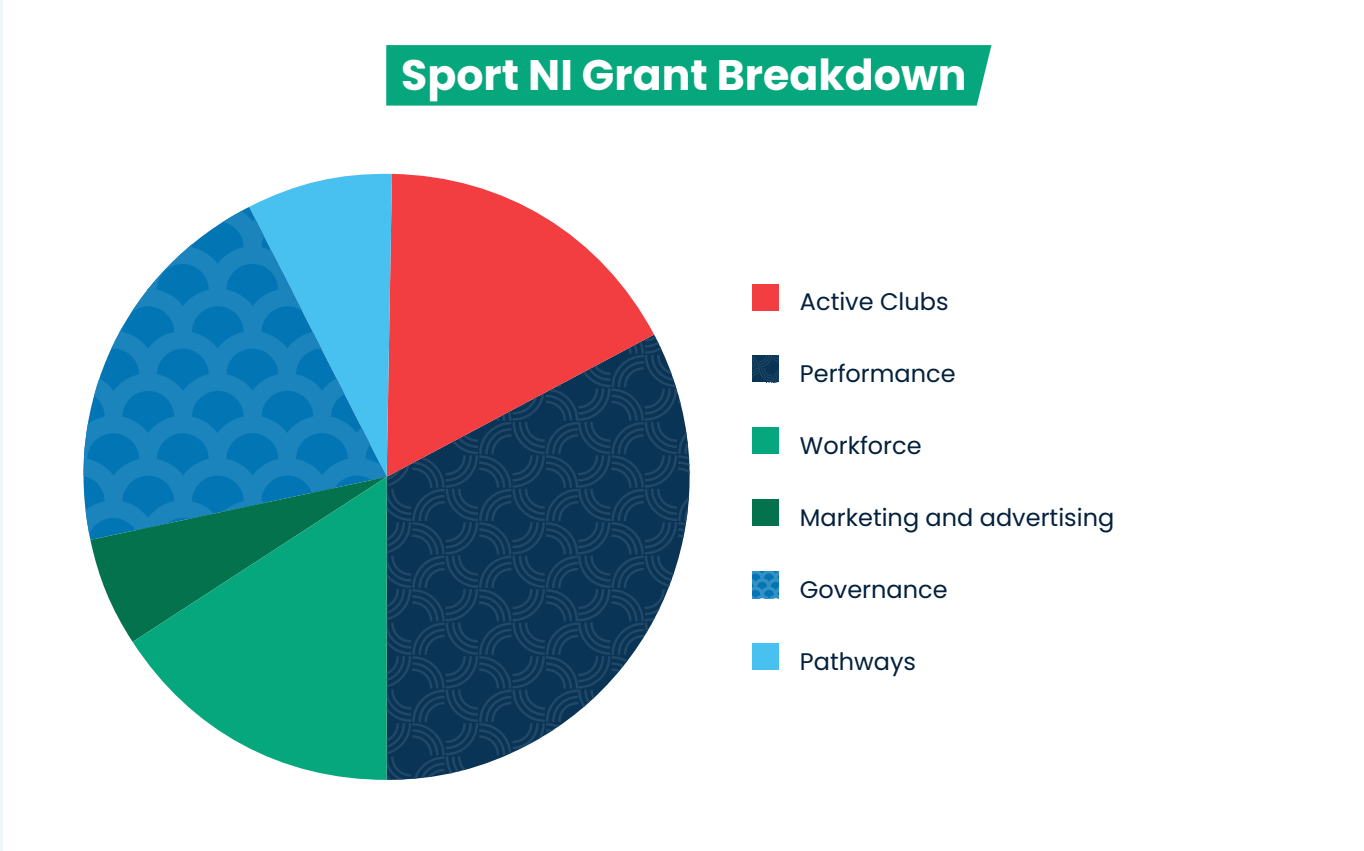


Figure 3.



Thank you

With thanks to the following staff, Board and Board Sub Committee members:

Board

Chair

Susan McKnight

Vice Chair

Gavin Watson

Director of Performance

Colin Leonard

Director of Cruising and Environment

Roy Totten

Safeguarding and EDI Lead

Jill Heron

Director of Development

Liz Baker

Independent Director

Gavin Nelson

Independent Director

Owen Waters

Independent Director/Treasurer

Linda MacHugh

Staff

CEO

Greg Yarnall

Executive Assistant

Gayle Logan

Performance Manager

Andrew (Hammy) Baker

Active Clubs Coordinator

Lisa McCaffrey

Workforce Development Officer

Mary Martin

Pathways Officer

Kate Broderick

Marketing and Communications Executive

Peter Gilmore

Finance Committee

Chair

Linda MacHugh

David Williams

Business Development

Chair

Gavin Watson

Gavin Nelson

Owen Waters

EDI

Chair

Jill Heron

Drew Smiley

Fiona Hicks

Ken Curry

Cruising and Environment

Chair

Roy Totten

David Williams

Jackie Patton

Isabel Hood

Julian Morgan

Development Committee

Liz Baker

Richard Robinson

Mark Mackey

James Ogg

Kaitlyn Eadie

Sophie Killiner

Roger Woodward

Paul Prentice

Heather Lawther

Performance

Colin Leonard

Lucy Kane

Simon McIlwaine

Liam Glynn

Jane Kearney

Our thanks to

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Northern Ireland

 **Mary Peters Trust**

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