



# STRONGER TOGETHER

Our strategic plan for 2022-2026

# Introduction

Who we are and what we want to do

**We're British Canoeing, the governing body for canoeing, kayaking and other forms of paddling.**

There's so much to love about being out on the water. As well as being great for your health and wellbeing, paddling immerses you in nature, builds your confidence, and gives you the chance to connect with others.

We want even more people, from all backgrounds and abilities, to make the most of what paddling has to offer. And if you're already paddling, we want it to be as fun and rewarding as possible.

**For all of that to happen, we need a plan. We've called ours Stronger Together.**

Stronger Together is our four-year strategy (2022-2026), bringing our members, clubs and partners together, so we have the best team in place to make the best things happen.

It will guide our work over the next few years, so everyone who's part of British Canoeing knows

their role and responsibilities, and can play their part in delivering the many goals within the plan.

Being both volunteer-led and publicly funded, we know it's also important that our members, funders, partners, and the public can see what we have planned and that we're spending our money wisely.

By keeping our values at heart we hope to turn our bold ambitions into a bright future. And whether you're already a member of British Canoeing, or someone interested in paddlesports or our work, we'd love to get you on board.



## Our strategy

Stronger Together is our four-year strategy to support, grow and celebrate paddling activities in England and across the UK.



## Our purpose

Our purpose is to encourage everyone to go paddling; for enjoyment, health, challenge and achievement.

## Our ambitions

We've worked together to create 10 ambitions we can achieve by 2026, which will encourage more people to take part in paddling; better support those who already do; and ensure we play our part in helping to strengthen the delivery of all types of paddling activity throughout the country.

## Our Cross-cutting themes

Weaving through each of those ambitions are our four cross-cutting themes, which are guiding principles for our organisation and our paddlers:



### Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI):

being inclusive helps everyone enjoy paddling, regardless of identity, ability or circumstances



### Environment and sustainability:

caring for our environment protects nature and deepens our experience



### Health, wellbeing and safety:

providing safe environments ensures paddlers feel positive, healthy and safe



### Partnerships:

working together, across organisations and regions, makes our sport the best it can be



## Ambition One

# Engaging recreational paddlers and attracting new paddlers

We want to create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy paddling, and ensure people from all walks of life can get the advice, support and information they need.



### We're setting out to...



**Diversify our sports** across all backgrounds and ethnicities, especially people from under-represented groups. We'll do this by building partnerships, campaigns and programmes.



**Make our sports more accessible**, so anyone — whatever their ability — can take part. We'll start by creating more opportunities for people with a disability to paddle.



**Encourage younger members to sign up**, so young people form positive experiences with sport and feel motivated, confident and active. We'll partner with youth groups, schools, universities and others to make this happen.



**Create better support for paddlers**, focusing on our Go Paddling website, to raise awareness, reach more people, and ensure all paddlers can access the information they need. We'll set aside funding for our website and resources so we can get this right.





## Ambition Two

# Increasing membership and improving member services

We want to grow our membership and attract more people to paddlesports, while helping our current members get the most out of paddling.



### We're setting out to...

-  **Make our membership schemes better**, so that the tiers are relevant to everyone, and the experience reflects members' interests. We'll invest in our Members' Hub to do this, and keep in touch with regular news, promotions and other communications.
-  **Work more closely with partners**, so both members and non-members understand what it means to be part of British Canoeing, and can choose the right membership for them. We'll plan promotions and campaigns around what our members want to see to do this more effectively.
-  **Share our insights**, so we can be accountable for our actions and ambitions, and keep our strategy on track. Collecting and sharing the opinions, demographics and interests of our members (using tracking, data collection and surveys) will point us in the right direction.
-  **Be greener in our communications**, helping us to be a more sustainable organisation and giving our members more choice about how they hear from us. We'll start by promoting our Green Membership, and by reducing the number of printed materials we send to members.





## Ambition Three

# Promoting access, places to paddle and environmental awareness

We want to be a leading, responsible voice on environment and outdoor recreation policy, better educating paddlers on how and where to enjoy being on the water. We also want to reflect advice, recommendations and policy from Government departments.



### We're setting out to...

-  **Create a better paddling environment**, starting by updating the Clear Access, Clear Waters charter and campaigning for open yet sustainable access on inland waterways. We'll also team up with the Canoe Foundation and other partners to improve facilities across the UK, and continue maintaining our Places to Paddle sites.
-  **Improve access for paddlers**, opening up more ways and locations for people to enjoy our sport. We'll strengthen our network of campaigners and advisors to champion the right to paddle and lend support in local disputes, and we'll develop and promote our PaddlePoints and Paddle Trails websites to educate members on places to paddle.
-  **Make paddling more sustainable** and kinder to the environment. We'll also seek ways to improve water quality and tackle the spread of invasive species through our Check Clean Dry campaign.
-  **Invest in paddling facilities**, making them better at national and regional levels through a new facility strategy.



## Ambition Four

# Supporting clubs and delivery partners

We want to increase the number of clubs involved with British Canoeing and help them offer a safe, sustainable and inclusive space to members, so everyone can enjoy paddlesports — whether for recreation or competition. We also want to work better with more delivery partners, which will help us reach more people and improve our services.



### We're setting out to...

- 
**Make room for more members**, so even more paddlers can benefit from our sports. We'll encourage diversity and accessibility in our clubs, and help them to better serve people in their local communities.
- 
**Support clubs to improve**, so there's more for paddlers to enjoy, better governance, support for coaches and leaders, and the right support for members. Among other things, that means investing in our Clubhouse digital platform, our club programmes and our safety and welfare networks.
- 
**Better attract and train coaches and leaders** by developing and promoting resources and services that will support clubs in attracting, supporting and deploying coaches and volunteers.
- 
**Support exciting community activities** through helping promote events and activities, educating on the health benefits of paddlesports, and reaching out to under-represented groups through clubs and delivery partners.





## Ambition Five

# Developing and supporting coaches, leaders, instructors and guides

We want more people to train for, and achieve, British Canoeing Awarding Body Qualifications, especially those from under-represented backgrounds. We also want to maintain or improve our high satisfaction scores, so British Canoeing courses offer paddlers the results and achievement they deserve.



### We're setting out to...

-  **Create and promote our qualifications**, so paddlers from all backgrounds can become instructors, coaches and leaders. We'll do this through investing in our eLearning and digital resource platform, and by making it easier to choose and navigate our courses.
-  **Raise awareness around key safety and environmental concerns**, to help our leaders support paddlers on the water and protect our environment. We'll review, develop and promote educational programmes in safety, wellbeing, sustainability and the environment, and we'll ensure these threads also run through our other courses.
-  **Help our paddling communities thrive** with specific resources for coaches and leaders in recreational, adventure and competition areas.
-  **Improve programme benefits**, so we're first choice for paddlers seeking qualifications, and can offer the best services and activities to members along the way. By improving our courses, we'll help to boost results and satisfaction scores, too.



## Ambition Six





# Developing and supporting volunteers

We want our volunteers to feel engaged with our work and supported by our organisation. We also want our opportunities to be welcoming, positive and inclusive for all, and recognise and reward our volunteers for the huge contribution they make to paddlesports in the UK.



Picture credit - Save our Rivers

### We're setting out to...

- 
**Diversify our volunteer programmes** to better shape and reflect local communities. We'll develop and promote resources and services for clubs to attract, train and retain volunteers from all backgrounds.
- 
**Recognise and reward our volunteers** and acknowledge their contributions by encouraging and promoting special initiatives at local, regional, and national levels.
- 
**Focus on volunteer training and support**, working with clubs and discipline committees to help volunteers feel confident and knowledgeable of anti-doping regulations, safeguarding, governance and more.
- 
**Ensure satisfaction rates stay high**, and volunteers feel they're making a difference to our paddlesports. We'll put a new volunteer strategy in place to do this at national, regional and club levels.

## Ambition Seven

# Developing talent and achieving international success

We want to raise the profile and reputation of British Canoeing nationally and internationally, and achieve our performance targets at the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024 and in the annual European and World Championships for all of our competition disciplines. We also want to support clubs, coaches and athletes through clear talent pathways, welfare and support programmes, within an inclusive atmosphere.



### We're setting out to...

-  **Make our mark on the international stage** and help our athletes earn the recognition they deserve. We'll deliver the performance strategies for the Paris cycle in Slalom, Sprint and Paracanoe and develop our talent pathways for athletes, create and support plans for each of our national teams and competition disciplines.
-  **Support coach learning and development,** enabling teams and individuals to reach their goals. We'll manage this by looking at all disciplines and encouraging squad coaches to become qualified at Performance Coach level.
-  **Improve athletes' welfare** by developing and delivering a wellbeing strategy, focusing on talent pathways and performance programmes.
-  **Make our sports fairer,** so there's less risk of practices like doping. To do this, we'll deliver anti-doping education to athletes, coaches and support staff across all disciplines, and share good practice between coaches.





## Ambition Eight

# Providing excellent championships, competitions and events

We want more people to enter our competitions, with more entry-level events to support them and more paddlers crossing disciplines. We also want to host more events nationally and internationally, create a bigger event feel around the British Championships, and forge stronger relationships with key federations. Finally, we want people to recognise competition disciplines as being part of British Canoeing.



### We're setting out to...

-  **Deliver brilliant events**, including our national championships and international events on home soil such as the 2022 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships and 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships
-  **Strengthen our teams and athletes** to set our nation up for success on the international stage. We'll encourage more competitors to participate, make competition entry easier, and create clearer talent pathways. Finally, we'll develop four-year plans across lots of disciplines, covering competitions, events, championships and more.
-  **Share and promote our events more widely**, whether for recreation or competition. We'll focus on our British Canoeing Event Entry System and our Go Paddling website, and will improve our media coverage of British Championships.
-  **Boost our international event presence** by building our international relationships, bidding for international events — one Olympic, one non-Olympic — and striving for success in competitions like the ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships and ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships.

## Ambition Nine

# Focused on governance, people, equality and sustainability

We want to be known for our excellent governance and compliance, especially in areas like child protection, sport equality and anti-doping. We also want our board to be more diverse, and for our staff and volunteers to feel valued, supported, developed and satisfied.



### We're setting out to...

- 🏡 **Ensure we're compliant**, so we can protect our people, provide equality, and keep British paddlesports fair for all. We'll do this by working with national associations and governing bodies and regularly reviewing the way we govern ourselves and the procedures we have in place.
- 🏡 **Develop a range of action plans**, which will cover concerns like diversity, welfare, sustainability and more. We'll run this at all levels within British Canoeing, so staff, volunteers and paddlers all benefit.
- 🏡 **Manage our money**, so we can create and deliver the best possible strategies, policies and governance. We'll spend our money wisely, secure funding through partners like UK Sport and Sport England, and will increase our earned income.
- 🏡 **Ensure we create a more inclusive environment**, where our people feel more valued and are supported through personal development.

## Ambition Ten

# Improving digital services and communications

We want everyone who's part of British Canoeing to have access to the information, advice and support they need to fully enjoy their paddling. We also want to ensure people feel happy with our services and for members to be proud to be part of British Canoeing.



### We're setting out to...



**Create a better British Canoeing website**, so we can better represent our organisation and support our members, staff and volunteers. We'll design and relaunch our current website, focusing on personalisation and accessibility.



**Develop and launch a paddler app** to provide advice, support and information for our members. We'll focus on helping paddlers to find services and routes, and log their activity as they go.



**Boost paddling awareness** by running campaigns and promotions around key areas, like our Go Paddling website, Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign, and celebrating our athletes' success within national and international competitions.



**Make our platforms more inclusive**, benefiting everyone involved with British Canoeing. We'll ensure the imagery we use across our platforms, channels and promotional materials is diverse, and that we improve accessibility at the same time.

# Get involved

Have your say and track our progress

We've now come to the end of our strategy, but this is where the journey really begins. We have the right people and plan in place, and the drive and direction needed to deliver it. We're up for the challenge, and to make a difference to all aspects of paddling at all levels — from members and the public, through to our clubs and partners.

But, we also recognise the role you play — whether by helping to spread the word, getting involved, or paddling the waterways of England and the UK. Together, we can make them more diverse, enjoyable and rewarding for all, to 2026 and beyond.

## Share your feedback

We'd love to hear your ideas on how to support the delivery of the strategy. Get in touch with us and check in regularly to see how we're getting on. We truly are Stronger Together.



[strongertogether2.britishcanoeing.org.uk](https://strongertogether2.britishcanoeing.org.uk)

