

Annual Report



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Introduction

Professor John Coyne CBE

It has been a very busy year for all the right reasons.

We served record numbers of members. We launched our latest access campaign at the Houses of Parliament. We hosted the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. We took on the role of joint National Governing Body (NGB) for SUP and prepared to reposition the organisation to better serve the paddling community.

All of this was in addition to our 'business as usual' fulfilling the responsibilities of an NGB plus. We have followed our strategic plan and ambitions, guided by our CEO, who is now firmly established at the helm.

However, we have not been a slave to the plan enabling us to react quickly and adapt as circumstances require within the required direction set. This combination of focus and agility has served us well.

We have made progress on all fronts with huge progress in our cross-cutting themes. Great credit is due not just to our excellent staff, but also to the fabulous community of volunteers.

Every day, our volunteers across the country, in clubs and elsewhere, actively animate our grassroots activities.

But let me highlight two broader instances of national significance.

First, the Big Paddle Cleanup engaged record numbers of volunteers and took out a record volume of waste from our rivers, canals and lakes. An activity that serves not just paddlers but all those who enjoy our blue spaces.

Second, the Slalom World Championships, judged a huge success on so many fronts, had at its core over 300 volunteers without whom we could never have delivered such a complex week-long event.

Throughout 2023, our membership grew. We peaked during the year at over 94,000 members. The rather unpredictable weather during the year inhibited many paddling activities and this was reflected in membership, but we still finished the year positively.

We continued to work hard to ensure that our actions were informed by what our community asked of us. That is why we place so much emphasis on delivery and the visibility of benefits.

Our core focus has continued to be on more places to paddle, better, cleaner spaces to paddle and the promotion of safer paddling. Indeed, safety has been a key priority this year and a major safety conference, around SUP, attracted a huge attendance from a wide group of stakeholders.

We had another successful year of competition with 91 medals obtained across all disciplines in World and European

events, with senior World Championship titles won in Freestyle, Paracanoe and Slalom.

We had a record medal haul in the Slalom World Championships and our Olympic competitors were selected for Paris.

The task of huge significance that has been high on our agenda this year, and many of you were involved in the process of consultation, has been to reflect on whether British Canoeing as an overall name continues to reflect the diverse interests of the community we serve.

The conclusion that was drawn is that we would be advised to choose something broader, more inclusive and contemporary. The completion of that repositioning will be a key task for 2024.

Another positive year that leaves our ambition undiminished to work for you and with you to serve you well.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Coyne".

Professor John Coyne CBE
Chair, British Canoeing



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Focus on Sport

World Class Performance

Canoe Sprint

The Canoe Sprint programme has focused resources on achieving Olympic qualification via the European qualification event in May 2024. Women's Kayak, Men's Kayak and Women's Canoe paddlers are identified as having opportunities in Szeged. The key performance focus for the team away from the Olympics will be the senior European Championships, in Szeged, in June.

Two sprint performance academies (Holme Pierrepont and Richmond) are now set up and working well at developing younger paddlers who will be more equipped with the racing skills they need to develop

through the age groups. The U23 and junior sprint team saw medal success at the World and European Championships with Greta Roeser winning gold in the junior 5000m event, whilst Kristina Armstrong won bronze medals at the World and European Championship in the K1 200m and also joined up with Dylan O'Connor for Bronze in the K2 500m.

Canoe Slalom

The slalom programme continues to be in a largely positive place, looking toward the LA Olympic cycle. Work remains to progress athletes towards senior medals and retain our current Paris athletes where possible.

The British team won 35 medals during the international season across the age categories, with the home World Championships, at Lee Valley, the highlight.

Britain won eight medals in front of the home crowd, with three athletes winning four individual world titles. Joe Clarke MBE powered to his first K1 gold medal with a

fantastic performance on his home course. He then became a double World Champion by winning the kayak cross title. This was the third consecutive year he's won the new Olympic discipline making its debut at Paris 2024.

Tokyo silver medallist Mallory Franklin won her second career world title after an impressive performance in the women's C1. Kimberley Woods won her first-ever world title as she secured gold in the women's kayak cross final.

It was an all round successful season for the team with a host of medals across European Games and World Cups. Highlights include

Ryan Westley winning gold at the European Games and the team winning medals at every World Cup in 2023.

There was huge success at an U23 and junior level too, with Sam Leaver winning the U23 kayak cross world title, with Jonny Dickson winning bronze in the same event. Kurts Adams Rozentals won his first individual medal with U23 world silver in the men's C1.

In November, Team GB announced the first four paddlers selected to go to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Joe Clarke MBE, Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods and Adam Burgess are all returning for their second Olympics.

Focus on Sport

Paracanoe

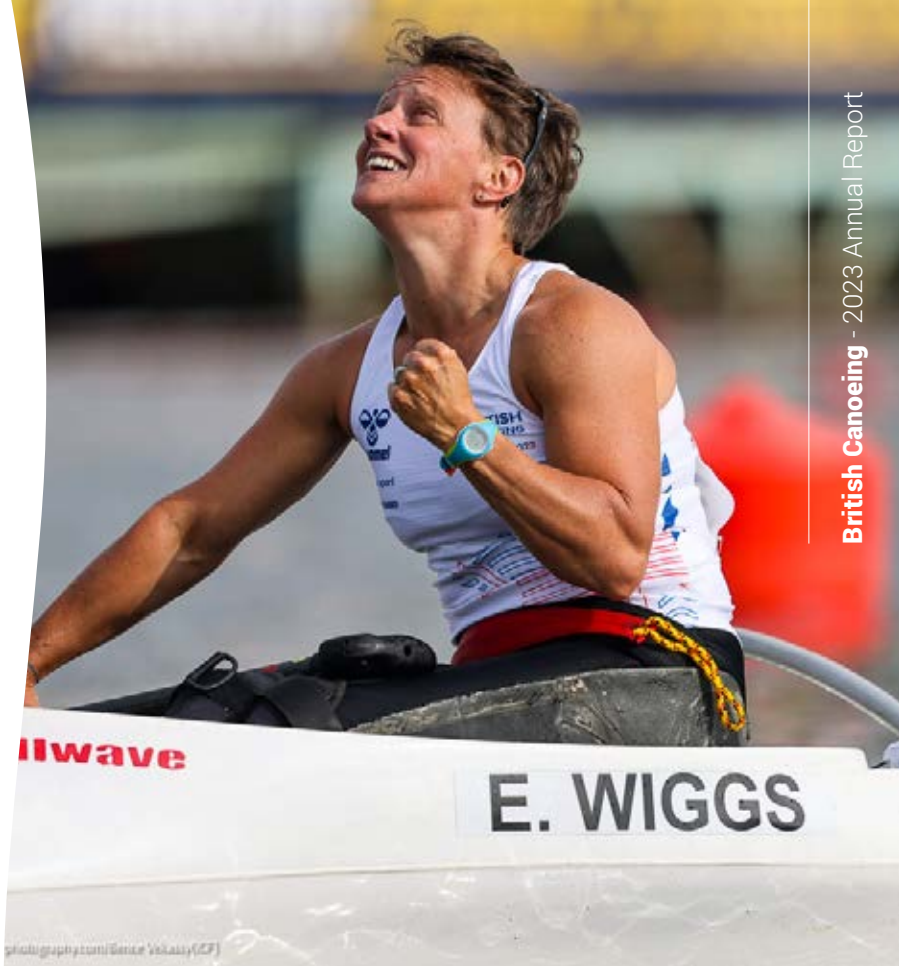
The paracanoe team continued to dominate international competitions, topping the medal table at both World Cups in Szeged & Paris, and the World Championships in Duisburg. The team secured seven boat quota places for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Emma Wiggs MBE (VL2), Charlotte Henshaw MBE (KL2), Laura Sugar MBE (KL3) and Hope Gordon (VL3) all won World Championship gold in Duisburg, as Britain came way with a total of seven medals. Jonny Young (KL3), Jack Evers (VL3) and Emma Wiggs (KL2) all won silver in Germany.

The squad also performed spectacularly at the two World Cups, winning nine medals in Szeged, Hungary, including Stuart Wood (VL3) winning gold on his international return to competition after illness.

The team rounded off the season with another eight medals at the World Cup in Paris.

It has also been promising to see a new generation of Paracanoe athletes coming through with Ellen Field and Lindsay Thorpe each winning silver at the European Championships in the VL2 and KL3 respectively.



Focus on Sport

Disciplines

Canoe Freestyle

Ottillie Robinson-Shaw starred on the international stage once again as a strong British team travelled to Georgia, Columbus, for the Freestyle World Championships.

The triple World Champion retained her world title in the women's canoe, as well as winning silver in the women's kayak and squirt boat to conclude an excellent championships in what was her second senior worlds.

The success continued through the British team. Tamsyn McConchie backed up an excellent 2022 season with another two world medals, winning bronze in both the women's squirt boat and women's canoe finals. Timmy Hill rounded off the competition for the Brits with a fantastic bronze in the junior men's kayak.

Canoe Marathon

Britain's canoe marathon squad continued to shine internationally winning 12 medals across the season.

Greta Roeser had a standout year. The Wey Kayak Club paddler won four medals across the World and European Championships, adding to her impressive season in canoe sprint.

Greta became junior European Champion after winning women's K1 short course gold in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. She then won silver in the long distance event, as well as combining with Sienna Payne for the first time as a crew to win junior K2 silver.

Sienna was on the podium again with Greta in the K1 short course, winning bronze, while Harry Freeland won junior short course silver in the men's K1.

Greta added a world silver to her accolades in the K1 junior, while the paracanoe team won four medals as they embarked on their second World Championships after making their debut last year. Charlie Knowlden (KL3), Jonathan White (KL2) and Shaun Cook (VL2) won world titles, with Tim Lodge (KL3) winning silver.

Canoe Polo

Great Britain's senior men's and women's teams ended their European Championship campaigns with superb fourth-place finishes in Germany.

The teams took great steps forward in the competition, matching up with the top nations as the men's team lost to a golden goal in the semi-finals against Denmark, while the senior women's team lost to eventual winners Germany.

The women's U21 team lost out in quarter-finals to Netherlands and finished sixth overall, whilst the men's U21 team also finished sixth after losing to Spain.

Elsewhere, Friends of Allonby men's team claimed a fantastic silver medal at the ECA European Club Championships in Spain.



Focus on Sport

Stand Up Paddling

Marie Buchanan became a double World Champion as she won gold in the Master 50+ Technical final and Long Distance final at the ICF Stand Up Paddling World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand.

With over 900 paddlers battling it out across the week, Verity Thomas rounded off a strong week for the British team as she finished with bronze in the masters 40+ Technical final.

Ocean Racing

The Great Britain team won a silver medal and a host of top-10 finishes at the ICF Canoe Ocean Racing World Championships in Australia. Jon White won silver overall in the para singles class and gold in the KL2 class.

Rafting

There were a flurry of medals for the British rafters racing in the Czech Republic, with four bronze medals won throughout the week. The R6 Open Women, R4 Open Women, the R6 U19 Men and R6 U23 Men all secured third place overall in their competitions to win bronze.

Surf Kayak

After a fantastic 2022 hosting the World Championships in Bude, the team's attention has turned to the World Championships in May 2024, which takes place in Argentina.

A team is being put together to compete in Mar Del Plata and will be announced ahead of the World Championships after some great interest.



Focus on Sport

Wild Water Racing

It was an amazing week for the Brits at the ICF Junior and U23 Wildwater Canoeing World Championships, as the team came away with six medals in total.

Kerry Christie became a double World Champion as the 20-year-old took the U23 women's K1 classic gold medal in the Czech Republic, before claiming a second gold with the help of her sister Emma in the U23 women's canoe double.

Lucy Guest also picked up the bronze in the K1 for her first international medal.

An U23 women's K1 team gold for Kerry Christie, Lucy Guest and Molly Sandercock, was followed by a sprint C2 silver for sisters Kerry and Emma.

Kerry also claimed an incredible fifth medal in winning bronze alongside Lucy Guest and Laura Milne in the U23 women's K1 team final.

The Christie sisters claimed two world silver medals as they finished second in the women's C2 in Ceske Budejovice.



International Events

2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships

The Slalom World Championships took place at Lee Valley White Water Centre, in September. More than 300 athletes, from 56 nations, competed.

The event would not have been possible without the phenomenal support of 300 volunteers who between them worked 12,500 hours across the event.

Key objectives were achieved including:

- > Over 8,000 tickets sold with a post-event satisfaction survey showing 98% of spectators rated the event 'very good' or 'excellent'



- > Great Britain won eight medals, including five in Olympic events, and secured the maximum number of quota places (four) for the Paris Olympic Games
- > The event saw the installation of a permanent kayak cross ramp at Lee Valley, which enhanced the event and the daily training environment
- > Positive feedback was received from ICF and visiting nations
- > A sustainability strategy minimised the environmental impact of the event. This included working with partners to calculate the carbon footprint for the event and identifying areas to consider for future events
- > A social impact programme saw a multi-sport women and girls festival offer paddling activities and follow-up opportunities
- > Five women trained as paddlesport instructors
- > 842 school children attended and 516 took part in the on the water activity
- > About 20 tonnes of invasive non-native species removed from the River Lee and a new paddle trail for the River Lee was created
- > £98k commercial income secured and partnerships developed with sponsors to support the wider work of British Canoeing
- > A conferencing facility was provided to host partner engagement opportunities including an ICF Sustainability Forum, Team GB partners day, UK Sport staff day and an event observer programme.

2024 and Beyond

Following a busy calendar of international events, 2024 will provide an opportunity to utilise some of the learnings from these events to support domestic events.

There will also be two Wild Water Racing ECA Cups taking place, which as well as providing competition opportunities for top British athletes, will also see some cross discipline activity taking place with rafting and freestyle both engaging in the events.

A number of future international events are currently being scoped and will be bid for throughout the year.



Focus on Sport

Talent

English athletes have achieved 17 Junior World and European Championship finals and won four individual medals across the Olympic disciplines.

Alongside supporting the Junior/U23 World and European Championships, England Talent staff have supported 32 days of international coaching, supporting training and race camps in Portugal, Neerpelt, L'Argentiere, Prague and Bratislava.

The programme has secured over £33,000 in external funding to support the cost of four slalom coaching roles within the pathway.

Two roles are supporting Nottingham University student athletes which is providing more support for U23 athletes within the pathway.

The two other roles are supporting slalom school training and race day provision alongside club support.



Focus on Sport

Key objectives were achieved including:

- > The first two sets of the slalom technical videos have received over 13,000 views
- > Continued to support the development and publication of parent educational resources and support documents
- > Podcasts and webinars have been viewed over 3,000 times
- > Developed and piloted a Physical Preparation for Paddlesport award with 14 club coaches working through it to achieve it.
- > Facilitated the delivery of three Club Coaching conferences (150 coaches attended)
- > Launched the Slalom and Flatwater Club Support Scheme and the Paracanoe Athlete Support Scheme - a total of £22,000 has been made available to support development across Olympic and Paralympic Disciplines.
- > The money has been spent by clubs on purchasing junior-sized kit, kayak cross boats, coaching qualifications, trailers, running recruitment campaigns, gym equipment and computer equipment to support the running of events
- > Delivered eight junior development squad days, including a four-day camp and 15 slalom school events increasing accessible provision at the foundation of the pathway. Over 100 junior paddlers have taken part.
- > The GB junior training squad in conjunction with the Sprint Racing Committee and home nations was established. In 2023, three weekends were delivered to support the development of the fastest junior paddlers in the UK
- > Scott Hynds was appointed as a full-time Coach Developer in Flatwater and Alan Edge was contracted in Slalom, both are supporting the learning, development and qualification of club coaches and have worked with over 50 club coaches in the 2023 season.











Focus on Sport

Medal Highlights 2023

Canoe Slalom

World Championships

19th – 24th September | Lee Valley, England

-  **Mallory Franklin**
C1 Women's
-  **Joe Clarke**
K1 Men's
-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's Kayak Cross
-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's Kayak Cross
-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's C1
-  **Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods, Ellis Miller**
Women's C1 Team
-  **Adam Burgess, Ryan Westley, James Kettle**
Men's C1 Team
-  **Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods, Phoebe Spicer**
Women's K1 Team

European Games

29th June – 2nd July | Krakow, Poland

-  **Ryan Westley**
Men's C1
-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's K1
-  **Mallory Franklin**
Women's C1
-  **Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods, Sophie Ogilvie**
Women's C1 Team
-  **Adam Burgess, Ryan Westley, James Kettle**
Men's C1 Men's Team

World Cup 1

1st – 4th June | Augsburg, Germany

-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's K1
-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's Kayak Cross


World Cup 2

8th – 11th June | Prague, Czech Republic

-  **Mallory Franklin**
Women's K1
-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's Kayak Cross




World Cup 3

15th – 18th June | Tacen, Slovenia

-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's Kayak Cross

World Cup 4

31st August – 3rd September | La Seu, Spain

-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's C1
-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's Kayak Cross
-  **Joe Clarke**
Men's Kayak Cross






World Cup 5

5th – 8th October | Paris, France

-  **Kimberley Woods**
Women's Kayak Cross
-  **Jonny Dickson**
Men's K1
-  **Mallory Franklin**
Women's C1

Jnr & U23 World Championships

15th – 20th August | Krakow, Poland

-  **Sam Leaver**
U23 Men's Kayak Cross
-  **Kurts Adams Rozentals**
U23 Men's C1
-  **Jonny Dickson**
U23 Men's Kayak Cross
-  **Phoebe Spicer, Ellis Miller, Lois Leaver**
U23 Women's C1 Team
-  **Kurts Adams Rozentals, Peter Linksted, James Kettle**
U23 Men's C1 Team

Jnr & U23 European Championships








20th – 23rd July | Bratislava, Slovakia

-  **Sam Leaver**
U23 Men's Kayak Cross
-  **Peter Linksted**
U23 Men's C1
-  **Hannah Rhodes**
Jnr Women's Kayak Cross
-  **Kurts Adams Rozentals, Peter Linksted, James Kettle**
U23 Men's C1 Team
-  **Arina Kontchakov, Zoe Blythe-Shields, Aimee Collins**
Jnr Women's C1 Team
-  **Sam Leaver, Ben Haylett, David Paterson**
U23 Men's K1 Team

Paracanoe

World Championships

23rd – 26th August | Duisburg, Germany

-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's VL2
-  **Hope Gordon**
Women's VL3
-  **Charlotte Henshaw**
Women's KL2
-  **Laura Sugar**
Women's KL3
-  **Jonny Young**
Men's KL3
-  **Jack Evers**
Men's VL3
-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's KL2










European Championships

26th July – 30th July | Montemor-o-Velho, Portugal

-  **Lindsey Thorpe**
Women's KL3
-  **Ellen Field**
Women's VL2









World Cup 1

11th – 14th May | Szeged, Hungary

-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's VL2
-  **Charlotte Henshaw**
Women's KL2
-  **Charlotte Henshaw**
Women's VL3
-  **Jonny Young**
Men's KL3
-  **Stuart Wood**
Men's VL3
-  **Hope Gordon**
Women's VL3
-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's KL2
-  **Laura Sugar**
Women's KL3
-  **Jeanette Chippington**
Women's VL2

World Cup 3

30th August – 1st September | Paris, France

-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's VL2
-  **Charlotte Henshaw**
Women's KL2
-  **Hope Gordon**
Women's VL3
-  **Laura Sugar**
Women's KL3
-  **Stuart Wood**
Men's VL3
-  **Jonny Young**
Men's KL3
-  **Charlotte Henshaw**
Women's VL3
-  **Emma Wiggs**
Women's KL2





Focus on Sport

Medal Highlights 2023

Sprint

Jnr & U23 World Championships

5th – 9th July | Auronzo, Italy

-  **Greta Roeser**
Jnr Women's K1 5000m
-  **Greta Roeser/Harry Freeland**
Jnr Mixed K2 5000m Relay
-  **Kristina Armstrong**
Jnr Women's K1 200m
-  **Kristina Armstrong/Dylan O'Connor**
Jnr Mixed K2 500m

Jnr & U23 European Championships

26th – 30th July | Montemor-o-Velho, Portugal

-  **Kristina Armstrong**
Jnr Women's K1 200m






Canoe Marathon World Cup

3th – 4th June | Ruse, Bulgaria

-  **Melissa Johnson**
Women's K1 Short Course






ECA Canoe Marathon European Championships

13th – 16th July | Slavonski, Brod, Croatia

-  **Greta Roeser**
Jnr Women's K1 Short Course
-  **Greta Roeser**
Jnr Women's K1 Long Course
-  **Greta Roeser & Sienna Payne**
Jnr Women's K2 Long Course
-  **Sienna Payne**
Jnr Women's K1 Short Course
-  **Harry Freeland**
Jnr Men's K1 Short Course

Canoe Marathon World Championships







31st August – 3rd September | Vejen, Denmark

-  **Greta Roeser**
Jnr Women's K1
-  **Charlie Knowlden**
Men's KL3
-  **Timothy Lodge**
Men's KL3
-  **Jonathan White**
Men's KL2
-  **Shaun Cook**
Men's VL2

Wild Water Racing

Junior & U23 World Championships

5th – 9th July | Roundnice Nad Labem, Czechia

-  **Kerry Christie**
U23 Women's K1 Classic
-  **Lucy Guest**
U23 Women's K1 Classic
-  **Kerry Christie & Emma Christie**
U23 Women's C2 Classic
-  **Emma Christie & Kerry Christie**
U23 Women's C2 Sprint
-  **Kerry Christie, Lucy Guest & Molly Sandercock**
U23 Women's K1 Team Classic
-  **Kerry Christie, Laura Milne & Lucy Guest**
U23 Women's K1 Team Sprint

World Cup

30th – 31st August | Ceske Budejovice, Czechia

-  **Emma Christie & Kerry Christie**
Women's C2
-  **Emma Christie & Kerry Christie**
Women's C2 Sp

Rafting

European Championships







21st – 27th August | Czechia

-  **R6 Open Women**
-  **R4 Open Women**
-  **R6 U19 Men**
-  **R6 U23 Men**

Freestyle

World Championships

9th – 14th October | Columbus - Georgia, USA

-  **Otilie Robinson-Shaw**
Women's Squirt
-  **Tamsyn McConchie**
Women's Squirt
-  **Otilie Robinson-Shaw**
Women's Canoe Decked Surface
-  **Tamsyn McConchie**
Women's Canoe Decked Surface
-  **Timmy Hill**
Men's Kayak Surface Junior
-  **Otilie Robinson-Shaw**
Women's Kayak Surface

Canoe Polo

European Club Championships




7th – 8th October | Arcos de la Frontera, Spain

-  **FOA Liverpool**
Men's Team

Stand Up Paddleboarding

World Championships

15th – 19th November | Pattaya, Thailand

-  **Marie Buchanan**
Women's 50+ Distance
-  **Marie Buchanan**
Women's 50+ Technical
-  **Verity Thomas**
Women's 40+ Technical

Ocean Racing

World Championships

30th November - 3rd December | Perth, Australia

-  **Jon White**
Para Overall

Focus on Sport

International Relations

British Canoeing continues to play an active role in the international arena.

With the support of UK Sport through their international relations strategy, we have supported British ICF Board and Committee members in their roles through attendance at meetings and events.

In addition, we have continued to strengthen our relationship with other National Federations, particularly through the CEO/ Secretary General network which met twice in 2023 and has seen growth in attendance.

In January 2023, we hosted the ICF Canoe Slalom Committee in London. It coincided with an official ICF venue inspection visit to the Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley and we hosted committee members again during the event in September.

British Canoeing met with the French Federation in Paris, in February, to share best practice, views and knowledge and also to discuss the future of the sport within Europe.

The European Canoe Association (ECA) Congress was held in Crete, Greece, in March, with representation from Ashley Metcalfe and Gemma Wiggs which saw the election of Jean Zoungrana as the new ECA President.

In addition, former ICF Board member Albert Woods OBE was also in attendance. Congratulations to Albert who was appointed Honorary Life President of the ECA.

With the election of Jean Zoungrana as the new ECA President, British Canoeing particularly welcomes the new focus that he has promised in a number of areas.

He wants to make the ECA fit for the future including good governance, ensuring greater National Federation engagement, and some short-term commissions to explore the challenges and opportunities for the organisation.



Focus on Sport

British Canoeing continues to work with the ECA and strives to ensure that National Federations can provide support and guidance, in order to support changes and improve representation in this new era for the organisation.

A number of British representatives have been appointed to ECA Working Groups which will support the development of the ECA Strategy ahead of the 2025 ECA Congress.

British Canoeing continues to nurture a positive relationship with ICF President, Thomas Konietzko, and the ICF Secretary General, Richard Pettit, as well as Jean Zoungrana, the newly elected President of the ECA.

The British Canoeing International Relations working group, comprising British representatives on ICF/ ECA Board and Committees, met once in 2023 to discuss delivery of the 2021- 25 International Relations Strategy and support within the network.

The past year has also seen support for two new British Paracanoe International Classifiers, Dr Julia Lawley and Jon Schofield, who will support the existing classifier network in England and Scotland.

Ashley Metcalfe, CEO of British Canoeing, has attended several international events to engage with the ICF and national federation representatives including the European Games, Krakow, Poland, the Sprint & Paracanoe World Championships, Duisburg, Germany, and the Canoe Slalom World Cup in Paris, France.

As part of the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, in Lee Valley, British Canoeing hosted 13 ICF Board members and through the ICF Development Programme, 16 athletes from 14 developing nations (including one refugee athlete).

Over 60 nations were in attendance at the event, either as competing athletes, or as President/Secretary General of National Federations. Conferences and meetings hosted at the Canoe Slalom World Championships included the ICF International Sustainability Forum. We supported the ICF, as part of BC International Relations programme, in the delivery of their sustainability strategy. This helped create conversation with other National Federations about their role in this space.

We also hosted the ICF Observer Programme and three dinners were organised including attendees from the National Federations, ICF Board, ICF Executive, committees and staff.

In addition, we hosted ICF Secretary General Richard Pettit at the Clear Access, Clear Waters Parliamentary Reception in June.



Focus on Sport

Performance Wellbeing

The PWG met twice in 2023. It continued input into important policies and procedures that affect our athletes' journeys towards their athletic goals.

The group consulted and provided feedback and recommendations on grant funding resources for athletes on: selection appeal procedures, terms of reference for the group, communication channels between the PWG and performance directors, the Olympic qualification systems, the formation of the Performance Sub Committee and British Canoeing, UK Sport and Sport England's responses to the Whyte Review and British Canoeing's strategic plan for safeguarding, safety and welfare and performance wellbeing.

In 2024, the focus of the Performance Wellbeing Group will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose in supporting and driving wellbeing across the high performance programme.

Culture

The Canoe Slalom WCP and the combined Sprint and Paracanoe WCPs have made progress in relation to a number of items aimed at influencing culture and collective wellbeing.

This includes providing more informal opportunities to come together as a team, and providing semi-structured opportunities to discuss culture, performance behaviours, and the athlete voice - including athlete representation. Find out more about our Athlete Rep Group [here](#).

The Slalom team has been through the annual culture feedback survey, commissioned by UK Sport. Overall, the results are positive, but there are always improvements that can be made and the team are looking at interventions to ensure that both staff and athletes feel that they contribute to and benefit from the culture.

The Paracanoe and Sprint programmes will go through their culture feedback survey over the coming weeks. The athlete voice sessions will be used as an ongoing opportunity to discuss the culture health check survey results, encouraging and keeping open conversations about the high performance culture.

The composition of the Performance Wellbeing Group (PWG) can be found on our webpage [here](#).



Focus on Sport

Mental Health

Our internal mental health team facilitates a multidisciplinary approach to supporting our athletes' mental health and wellbeing. The mental health team continues to meet quarterly and mental health is a key topic at regular medical meetings. Mental health awareness training for programme athletes and coaches was delivered this year.

Care plans continue to be put in place for both staff and programme athletes and mental health screening is rolled out across the programme annually. We have supported and promoted mental health campaigns and supported athletes to share their stories to raise awareness.

Selection and Transitions

Towards the end of 2023, and early in 2024, athletes transitioned off from our World Class Programme. This group benefited from a period of transitional funding, athlete medical scheme cover, access to gyms and coaching support. The transitioning athletes also benefit from up to two years' access to Performance Lifestyle support.





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Focus on Recreation

Coaching and Qualifications

In 2023, we continued to develop our full suite of practical safety training awards, offer pathway choices for slalom and racing coaches, as well as extend our digital resource library to support the paddling community.

Safety Training

A full range of practical safety awards was developed specifically aimed at the recreational paddler. The awards include sea, surf, inland, white water and sheltered water environments, which focuses on keeping safe, looking after yourself and others.

Pathway Choices

Both slalom and race qualifications now provide the opportunity to choose the appropriate environment determined by where the coach operates.

The new pathways better reflect the environments that slalom and racing coaches operate in. It enables those who have already attended a training course, to choose the environment they are assessed in, as well as providing choice to those at the start of their coaching journey.

Podcast Winners

At the 2023 UK Coaching Awards, the British Canoeing Awarding Body Coaching Podcast was recognised and awarded Podcast of the Year. There are 85 episodes available, covering a diverse range of subjects involving discussion with a variety of specialists and experts.

Digital Resources

British Canoeing Awarding Body have continued to develop resources aimed at supporting coaches and leaders as well as the paddling community.

Added resources to the digital library and our new eLearning store, includes:

- > Safety and Rescue guidance documents
- > Safety videos
- > Infographics
- > Safer Recruitment
- > Safeguarding and Tutoring eLearning
- > New Learning Management System (introduced in May 2023).

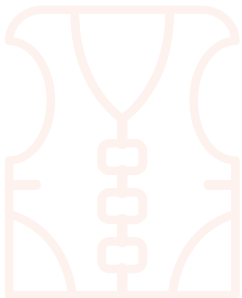
Technical and Skills Videos

Specific focus has been on developing resources to support the technical aspect of our sport.

A series of slalom videos have been produced with the talent team aimed at supporting coaches and athletes.

Research and Insight

Two commissioned research projects have been published. They focus on looking into the effects of offshore winds on Stand Up Paddleboarding and the use of leashes within white water and flow environments.



Focus on Recreation

Statistics



Qualification and Award Certifications for 2023

2,397

Level 1 Paddlesport
Instructor Award

371

Level 1 SUP
Instructor Award

323

Level 3
Coach Award

9

Level 4
Performance Coach

1,103

Leadership
Awards

27,858

Personal
Performance
Awards

9,777

Safety
Awards



Digital Learning engagements for 2023

15,442

eLearning

8,106

Listeners of the
Coaching Podcast

2,957

Self-analysis tools use

Focus on Recreation

Go Paddling

Go Paddling includes the digital platforms and programmes developed and owned by British Canoeing to engage recreational and new paddlers. It is supported by Gill.

Presenting safety to this audience is a priority and Go Paddling became the hub of content for a nationwide safety campaign in partnership with the RNLI in 2023.

SUP safety point of sale stickers were provided to 20 major retailers and manufacturers, including Tesco, Aldi, Lidl and Wilton Bradley, with a QR code to drive people to the Go Paddling site for further safety information.

A wider campaign with five key safety messages relevant to all forms of paddling and levels was promoted through industry partners,

clubs and centres on social media, leaflets and posters.

A media day in partnership with the RNLI resulted in over 900 pieces of media including features on ITV and BBC. Two types of safety pages ranked at number two and 12 on the Go Paddling website in 2023.

PaddlePoints remains the most popular destination on the Go Paddling website. This shows an appetite for discovering places to paddle. An increase in EDI and community-led content was added in 2023 with a new feature (Stories from the Water).

Membership related content also had high visits including the river licence page and rapid join sign-up page. Rapid Join is one way that website users are directed to purchase British Canoeing membership and there were almost 18,000 clicks to join. Content was created and updated based on keyword research.

There was an increase in followers on the Go Paddling social media channels. Initiatives to support recreational paddlers such as AquaPaddle were shared alongside places to paddle content including the updated Wye Guide.

The Go Paddling social channels overall have a higher proportion of females following.

Email newsletter subscribers reached 20,000 and promotions to sign up were present at both the National Outdoor Expo in March and Canoe Slalom World Championships in September, gaining 1,400 new subscribers.



1,311,466 Page views

No.1 Viewed page

168,072 PaddlePoints page views

Focus on Recreation

Affiliated Clubs (England)

In 2023, there was a small drop from the record number of affiliations from 2022. Clubs report the cost of living crisis and lack of volunteers as the reasons behind them folding.

However, there was a growth of new clubs affiliating for the first time and the number of club members has risen, with the number of large clubs (101-250 members) rising by 30%.

We introduced a process where clubs can book a club chat directly into the support officers diaries and this has led to an increase in clubs booking catch-up sessions.

It was especially welcome to see the Community Paddling Hubs affiliating with ten community groups coming onboard: Birmingham (seven hubs), London (one hub), Manchester (one hub) and Keighley (one hub).

Project insight from these hubs shows that they have reached communities vastly under-represented elsewhere in paddling, and impact local communities with a wide range of ethnic and social diversity. People who otherwise would not be accessing the water are now taking up paddling for the first time.

In Birmingham, for example, working closely with StreetGames and Canal and River Trust to support the hubs, our collaboration and access to our Stronger Together funding has enabled rapid development across the seven locations.

This helped them to purchase equipment and qualify 26 community activators to be able to lead activity. This has resulted in 3,487 people across the city engaging in paddlesport.

The Birmingham hubs, supported by StreetGames, also participated in the Bring it on Brum Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF). This was a resounding success, with 811 young people engaged in bell boat activity across the summer.

The majority of the participants, 76% coming from either Asian (38%), Black (31%) or Mixed (7%) backgrounds. Additionally, 81% of attendees lived in an area within the top three most deprived deciles.

Alongside the city of Birmingham, plans are in progress to replicate this work across the hubs in London and Manchester.

British Canoeing, through the Club Coaching and Leadership Bursary, invested £99,000 into the 78 clubs who applied in 2022. This has run 80 courses and led to 614 additional qualifications. There will be a new round of applications to the bursary in 2024.

During 2021 the clubs team started a project to sample a risk assessment from all affiliated clubs over a four year period. At time of writing, 288 clubs have had an assessment sampled and given feedback, with several clubs coming back for a second opportunity. We are currently on track to complete the project towards the end of 2024.



Focus on Recreation

Over 2023 **satisfaction** with the **club support team** rose as illustrated by the quotes here:

“Thank you for the feedback and information around Risk Assessments, it’s very much appreciated.” – Chris Wright, Safety Officer, Roker Canoe Club

“Thanks for your help and hopefully we will be able to improve our best practice and look forward to receiving the talent award accreditation” - Addlestone CC

“This is exciting news and has gone down very well with the team that led the Talent Champion Club programme.” - Devizes CC.

The Quality Club accreditation continues to improve in both the number of clubs involved in the programme and its ease of use. The move to using a new online assessment system for accreditation has been really well received by clubs involved in the programme.

By the end of 2023 we had 46 clubs fully accredited and a further 30 working towards accreditation. Feedback from almost all the clubs involved in the programme has been excellent.

Cheltenham Canoe Club commented: *“The process of re-accreditation was easier with the online toolkit and having a generated report with the outcomes and links for future use was very helpful though it was quite a long report!*

“It was useful to have a meeting with the Club Support Officer to clarify certain issues or discuss ways to improve particular areas with the Club.”

The Champion Club accreditation offers the chance for clubs to specialise in a development area of their interest, currently focused around Junior, Clear Access, Clear Waters, She Paddles and Talent. Interest and accreditations continue to increase and are enabling clubs with similar interests to work together.

Over the winter we again hosted a series of club-focused winter webinars to help clubs consider and discuss their development, feedback showed that the clubs found the sessions really useful.

Focus on Recreation

Delivery Partner Scheme

The Delivery Partner Scheme is aimed at both promoting and providing first class paddling experiences.

The scheme represents a mutual undertaking between British Canoeing and partners; how they will work together to achieve the appropriate high quality standards and for improved access to safe, high quality paddlesport experiences.

While it is very different from other schemes, particularly the British Canoeing Quality Mark it replaces, they are the main source of comparison in the market place.

At its height, the Quality Mark Scheme had 180 organisations involved and the scheme was inconsistent with UK National Associations having regional differences in structure and approach.

Number of Engaged Organisations

In 2023, the scheme surpassed the target of 475 partners, ending the year at 496.

Partners are based throughout the UK, receiving support from all four UK national associations, giving us a reach to over 2.3m people who took part in paddling activity with a partner in 2023.

A small number of partners are based outside of the UK receiving direct support from British Canoeing.

Delivery Partner Annual Conference

In January 2023, the second Delivery Partner conference was held, with over 300 delegates from partners across the UK and further afield coming together to share learning.

As the conference is virtual, this was all achieved with little impact to work, home and the environment.

The event was a huge success with delegates reporting: 100% satisfaction with the event overall, 98% satisfaction with the event content and 94% ease of use.

Delivery Partner Annual Survey

The Delivery Partner annual survey reported the biggest challenges they faced were:

- > Cost of living
- > Utilities costs
- > Recruiting staff
- > Cost of training staff
- > Time and work/life balance.

In 2023, we provided further training opportunities at discounted rates or free for Delivery Partners. We developed this through British Canoeing commercial partners to reduce utility costs and insurance products.

We worked with TLC Marketing to increase footfall at partner locations through a marketing campaign with Aldi.

Delivery Partner Dashboard Developments

Further developments were taken through testing and deployment in 2023, including streamlined certification process and staffing checks and PDF downloadable invoicing.

Public Recognition

The Delivery Partner Scheme has been promoted digitally and at face to face events, such as the National Outdoor Expo and the Paddlesports Show. Also, through our work with Aldi and with local authorities.



Safety

Significant progress has been made in the area of safety in 2023. We launched our first major safety campaign, with the RNLI, highlighting five key paddlesport safety messages.

Our first safety campaign focused on Stand Up Paddleboarding, and progressed with point of sale safety messaging, shared safety alerts, and commissioned key research projects.

Safety remains a fundamental theme flowing through the organisation's strategy.

Safety Success - 2023 Highlights

Strategic Work

- > Attendance of the Drowning Prevention Week Reception, hosted by the Royal Life Saving Society, at the Thames Pavilion, House of Commons
- > Attendance of the National Water Safety Conference, hosted by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, in Cardiff
- > Working with the Office for Product Safety and Standards to ensure appropriate reach and targeted audience to paddlesport activity recalls.

Safety Campaign

In June 2023, British Canoeing and the RNLI launched a joint safety campaign based on five key safety messages to raise awareness of safety among newer paddlers.

The campaign was supported by a range of organisations who shared the messages via social media or "on the ground" via volunteers.

British Canoeing also worked with **Wilton Bradley**, a key manufacturer, on a short video sharing the five key messages from the campaign.

The first year of the campaign received a good level of engagement and generated positive media coverage on **ITV News** and with local **BBC stations**.

Point of Sale

British Canoeing has engaged with and supported over 10 non-specialist retailers. These include: major manufacturers, distributors, trade associations, and retailers, both in store and online, by providing its safety information free of charge for use at the point of sale.

This has included, safety infographics and unique QR codes linked to the Go Paddling website, and tracked website links to safety information, as well as additional support through online meetings and answering safety questions.

Collaboration is key to sharing and promoting clear, accurate, consistent safety advice and raising awareness of safety among new and novice paddlers.

Safety Conference

British Canoeing hosted its first in-person safety conference in November 2023. The main focus of the day was Stand-Up Paddleboard (SUP) safety in light of the rapid increase in participation and rise in SUP related events and incidents.

The conference brought together a variety of key stakeholders. It provided a valuable opportunity for delegates to hear from a range of speakers on the broader context of SUP, research commissioned by British Canoeing, and discuss how we can all raise awareness of safety to the SUP community.

Focus on Recreation

Safety Alerts

Quick Release Leash Systems in a White-Water Environment

Unregistered Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs)

Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Safety - Choosing the Right Leash (2023)

Offshore Winds and their Effects on Stand Up Paddleboards

Shoulder Dislocation and Injury



Case Studies:

- > Commercial Stand Up Paddleboarding Accident, Haverfordwest: **Lessons Learnt from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch Report**
- > Competitions and Events: **Craft Floatation**
- > **Coasteering Fatality** Dorset
- > 3 January 23 - **Lifejacket 150N** - 33,763 reach, 17 likes, 98 shares
- > 24 May 23 - **Fox and Fox lifejackets** - 6,770 reach, 14 likes, 44 shares
- > 10 November 23 - **Swimbubs Float Jacket Buoyancy Aid** - 11,300 reach, 16 likes, 61 shares

Product recalls

- > **Lifejacket Recall Notice** - 3 January 2023
- > **Lifejacket Recall Notice** - 24 May 2023
- > **Children's Buoyancy Aid Recall Notice** - 27 July 2023
- > **Children's Buoyancy Aid Recall Notice** - 10 November 2023
- > **Life Jacket Recall Notice** - 20 November 2023

Incident Reports

The number of incidents reported through British Canoeing's Incident Reporting Online Form in 2023 was similar to 2022.

In addition, these reported incidents have involved a variety of craft, disciplines, and scenarios in contrast to previous years.

The amount and range of incident reports demonstrates that a more positive attitude around incident reporting is evolving.

British Canoeing will continue to encourage incident reporting to help develop our understanding of incidents and identify any themes.

Statistics

76

Number of strategic delegates attending the safety conference

13,388

Number of leaflets distributed for the safety campaign

5

Number of product recalls shared

334

Number of weir webinar attendees

727

Number of individuals who have completed new manual handling for paddlesport eLearning



Focus on Campaigns

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Focus on Campaigns

Membership (England)

A priority for 2023 was growth and retention of membership and it reached an all-time high of 94,730 in June 2023. However, it subsequently dropped in July and August, particularly with a dip in new members joining.

Retention was steady throughout the year and overall membership was holding at over 87,500 by the end of the summer.

Across the 12 months, we had 30,685 new members, with 38% average retention for new renewals.

Challenges faced in 2023 were the cost of living crisis and unseasonably poor weather in July and August. We had the wettest summer since 2006.

- > Growth in recreation and SUP paddlers
- > Increase in female members (37% of membership)
- > Increase in younger members
- > 21% are Go Green members
- > A high proportion of members live in the South and East



Customer Services

During 2023 we combined the Membership and Coaching advisors into a single Customer Services Team. This helped us to better cover the volume of enquiries during the summer months, to provide better customer services to all and to reduce the need to transfer calls between teams.

We expanded how we work with Aquaplanet too, enabling them to sell membership online as one of their products. This meant new paddlers, coming into the activity via Aquaplanet were given information about British Canoeing membership and the opportunity to purchase it.

Membership Survey 2023

- > 5,466 responses
- > Highest ever Net Promoter Score of 53

Top membership benefit and reason to join:
Waterways licence

The benefits that members were less aware of included eLearning, environmental kits, and Places to Paddle sites

Preferred social media: Facebook
Preferred source of information: British Canoeing website (followed by Go Paddling website)
Preferred content: Where to paddle

Paddling aspirations:

- > To paddle more often (70%)
- > To paddle in new places (70%)
- > To improve skills and technique (53%)

Non-members who completed the survey were predominately paddleboarders and recreational paddlers.

Reasons for not having membership:

- > No requirement for licence, or not going out much
- > Some said they may join with an incentive such as discounted membership or prizes resources, social opportunities, refresher courses
- > Some felt it could be advertised better.

Focus on Campaigns

Clear Access Clear Waters

The Clear Access, Clear Waters (CACW) campaign went from strength to strength in 2023. There was much to celebrate and progress is clear.

We relaunched our **Access & Environment Charter** at a special event in Westminster, in June.



**Clear Access
Clear Waters**

At the heart of the document were our priorities for action:

- > Expand our freedom to enjoy more of our inland waters
- > Go further, faster to recover our blue spaces from pollution
- > Educate, inspire and inform responsible, sustainable behaviour

Our event was hosted by Pauline Latham OBE MP and Kim Leadbeater MP, who both spoke at the event in support of our priorities for action.

Jim McMahon, the former Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, also made a speech in which he expressed support for British Canoeing's vision.

The Clear Access, Clear Waters team have done some great work in championing the case for change and to make a difference in protecting our blue spaces.

The new charter reaffirmed those commitments set out in 2018. We will tirelessly push for the policy changes we desire.

We know we have public support. About 62% of people support a Scottish-style right to roam in England and Wales, according to a YouGov poll.



Focus on Campaigns

Blue Space Matters The Big Paddle Cleanup

We made five powerful films about Why Blue Space Matters. One of which featured the broadcaster and paddler, Miranda Krestovnikoff. Subjects covered in the other films concern mental health, access, pollution and the overall natural benefits of paddling.

The Big Paddle Cleanup returned in 2023 for two weeks of action, continuing the mission to improve our precious blue places.

Including those two weeks, across the whole year, 2,601 paddlers took part in a bid to clear their local waterways of junk and plastic pollution, while raising more public awareness of the issue.

About 1,800 huge sacks were filled containing 6,767 plastic bottles, 2,739 glass bottles, 4,403 cans and 7,682 food packaging items.

Media coverage was achieved locally and nationally. The British Canoeing staff cleanup was featured on East Midlands Today, BBC Radio Nottingham and Notts TV.

Some of our athletes got involved too, including Tom Lusty, who held his own cleanup event in Birmingham. He was also the subject of a BBC Sport feature and appeared on Midlands Today and Five Live.

We continue to play our part in a coalition united by the ambition to End Sewage Pollution and recover the UK's rivers, lakes and seas.



2,601
paddlers

took part in a bid to clear their local waterways



Focus on Campaigns

Invasive Species

A huge amount of effort helped eradicate the invasive and non-native floating pennywort from waterways across the country.

In 2023, 250 volunteers took part in 13 events and removed 24 tonnes of pennywort on the River Lea and Lee Navigation.

The work formed part of the [Lee Valley Social Impact Project](#) centred around the ICF World Slalom Championships, at Lee Valley White Water Centre.

British Canoeing volunteers and partners, corporate and community groups, helped to remove the hard to reach areas of the canal and creeks in kayaks and canoes.

As part of this, British Canoeing was shortlisted at the [Sports Journalism Awards](#) in the Sport for Change category.

In the North West and Yorkshire we hosted 11 events. 80 volunteers contributed their time to remove about 70 tonnes of floating pennywort.

We focused on the River Calder, in West Yorkshire, and the River Weaver, in Cheshire, and covered about four miles.

One of our most notable events of the year saw us host Kim Leadbeater MP for Batley and Spen, in Mirfield, during the Big Paddle Clean Up.

As ever, the message to members and all paddlers is to Check, Clean, Dry boats, clothing, footwear and equipment used. We need to keep water free of invasive non-native species.



More info on Invasive Species [here](#).



Focus on Campaigns

Protecting the Places We Paddle

In Stronger Together, we set out our vision to care and protect our natural environment by setting a clear Environmental Sustainability Strategy towards becoming a low carbon organisation. This was published in January 2023.

In 2023, the collation of baseline data to calculate our carbon footprint commenced, with support from the UK Sport Accelerator programme. The programme will also offer development opportunities to increase our organisational capacity in this area.

Ambition 1 – Controlling our Carbon Footprint

We invested substantially in audio and visual technology at our offices, to reduce business travel between sites and deliver a professional experience for meetings. This has reduced business travel. The British Canoeing AGM was delivered virtually in March 2023, reducing our carbon footprint associated with travel. Our staff expenses policy was reviewed and the passenger rate increased from 2p to 5p per mile to encourage car sharing.

Ambition 2 – Reducing our Use of Natural Resources

Our Go Green digital membership has increased from 15,574 in 2022 to 17,472 (October) in 2023, reducing the membership cards and packs issued.

Ambition 3 – Advocate & Promoting Environmental Protection

Embedding environmental matters within our courses and qualifications continued with an Introduction to Environment e-learning now available. This has been completed by 1,971 learners.

The PPA Refresher e-learning, including a large focus on environmental content including fighting INNS, protecting wildlife, leaving no trace, and access, was completed 2,100 times by providers of BCAB awards.

The Big Paddle Cleanup engaged about 250 clubs, community groups and delivery partners and 153 individuals to take action on junk and plastic pollution.

Ambition 4 - Creating Paddling Competitions and Events which Deliver Positive Environmental Change

The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships included clear targets for minimising or offsetting the impact on the environment. The event outlined a range of projects and steps undertaken by the events team and wider partners to prioritise the protection and impact on the local environment.

With support from UK Sport the events team have used the ISLA Trace platform to capture the carbon impact of the event.

The details will be fed into a centrally held database to provide best practice, data and guidance for future international and domestic events on carbon planning and the minimisation of the impact.

Following the Slalom World Championships the events team are looking to develop a set of sustainable event resources for event organisers and discipline committees, to utilise in the future planning and delivery of sustainable events.

Ambition 5 – Improving our Business Operations

The sustainability of our IT suppliers has gained traction with over 80% of our laptops and IT equipment using refurbished or recycled technology.

Focus on Campaigns

Canoe Foundation

The Canoe Foundation is an independent charity that supports the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign to improve sustainable places to paddle on UK waterways and coastlines.

The charity focuses on improving Places to Paddle. This involves supporting projects to help improve physical access points and infrastructure, protect habitats and support quality experiences on the water for the paddling community, youth and disadvantaged groups.

£39,000 was awarded to eight projects across the UK in grant funding in spring 2023.

Funded projects include the Dee egress point at Llangollen, an access point on the Lliedi reservoir and improvements to a Trent Valley trail.

Over 15 projects are in progress or planned. Over £100,000 of grants from the foundation have been awarded.

Grant funding is available to projects for public paddling benefit across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Trustees would like to thank the significant number of people who have made donations alongside purchase of their British Canoeing membership.

Also those who have made a number of other donations, as a result of their own paddling experiences or in memory of other paddlers and their enjoyment of the water.

In particular we would like to mention the friends and family of Ali Brown, a passionate advocate of the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign and a gifted young kayaker who died in 2023.

The activities of the Canoe Foundation for 2023 can be found on their website. canoefoundation.org.uk



Focus on Campaigns

She Paddles

The She Paddles ambassador programme has continued to see significant positive impact.

#ShePaddles

Seventeen women from across England, Scotland and Wales became She Paddles ambassadors.

We also introduced two international She Paddles ambassadors.

Paddlesports instructor Lisa Dickinson was recognised at the Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year awards.

She trained five women from non-kayaking backgrounds to become instructors. This was part of the [Lee Valley Social Impact Project](#), at the Slalom World Championships.

The women ran sessions throughout the championships, teaching hundreds of children to paddle.

There has been significant growth in the She Paddles Champion Club programme. The number of accredited clubs increased by 112% across 2023.

The inaugural She Paddles Conference took place at Lee Valley White Water Centre.

Over 50 attendees discussed barriers to women's participation in paddlesports.

The first networking meetup was held at Lincoln Canoe Club in April 2023. She Paddles Club Champion Claire Lambert organised the event.

It created a supportive networking environment for women in paddling clubs.

They discussed a range of topics including coaching & leadership, providing informal mentoring opportunities.



112%
increase
in accredited clubs



Focus on Campaigns

#WePaddleTogether



In December 2022, British Canoeing launched #WePaddleTogether - A Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

We are pleased to report on good progress against this strategy in its first year.

We have shared some highlights and the full progress report against our actions will be available on the website.

#WePaddleTogether - A Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In 2023, British Canoeing launched the **Stronger Together Fund**, reinvesting over £200,000 back into the paddling community by supporting projects that helped more people paddle more often, and particularly those that targeted underrepresented groups in paddling.

Projects included the **Community Paddling Hubs**, in locations including Birmingham, York Mosque and Islamic Centre and WAVE Adventure, all supporting more people to access paddling opportunities up and down the country.

In 2023, we launched several resources and learning opportunities, including the Inclusive Language eLearning, the Neurodiversity podcast episode, and the Club Inclusion Webinar series, delivered in partnership with Inclusive Employers.

Alongside this, the Coaching Podcast won the UK Coaching Podcast of the Year Award for 2023, with recognition of our inclusion-led episodes.

In We Paddle Together, we recognised the lack of data and insight which would help to target under-representation, as well ongoing under-representation in imagery.

Encouragingly, membership data completion rate has increased fifteen-fold in the last year, giving a more accurate picture of membership demographics.

The Members Survey results showed that a significant proportion of members are satisfied with the work we are delivering on equality, diversity and inclusion, and believe that we are committed to our actions.

We continue to see strides in representation in specific areas, such as the Canoe Crew volunteers who supported the Canoe Slalom World Championships, which was closely representative of the host area of Lee Valley in London.

Our ongoing commitment to improving representation in imagery and story-telling through Paddler Spotlight has been well-received, and we look forward to continuing this into year two of the strategy.

#WePaddle Together



Focus on Campaigns

Inclusion Advisory Group Update

In 2023, the Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) recruited four new members: Amanda Cadden (non-independent), Georgie Cubin (non-independent), Andy Brittles (independent) and Clare Peterson (independent) joined the IAG in September.

We are delighted to be expanding the capacity and insight in a group involved in such a key area of work.

The IAG have had input into a wide range of projects which have been central to the delivery of We Paddle Together.

The IAG reviewed the Paddlers' Code update before its launch in the summer, and reviewed the Staff Equality Policy which underpins our commitment to staff in this area.

More recently, they have supported Senior Leadership Team development and learning, and continue to advise on potential future projects such as a youth forum. Thank you to all members for the investment of their time, energy and expertise on the IAG.

British Canoeing is committed to recruiting and appointing members from a wide range of backgrounds, particularly in the area of disability representation and ethnic diversity, where we feel we have lacked candidates and members from these backgrounds.





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Focus on Operations

Annual Governance Statement

Introduction

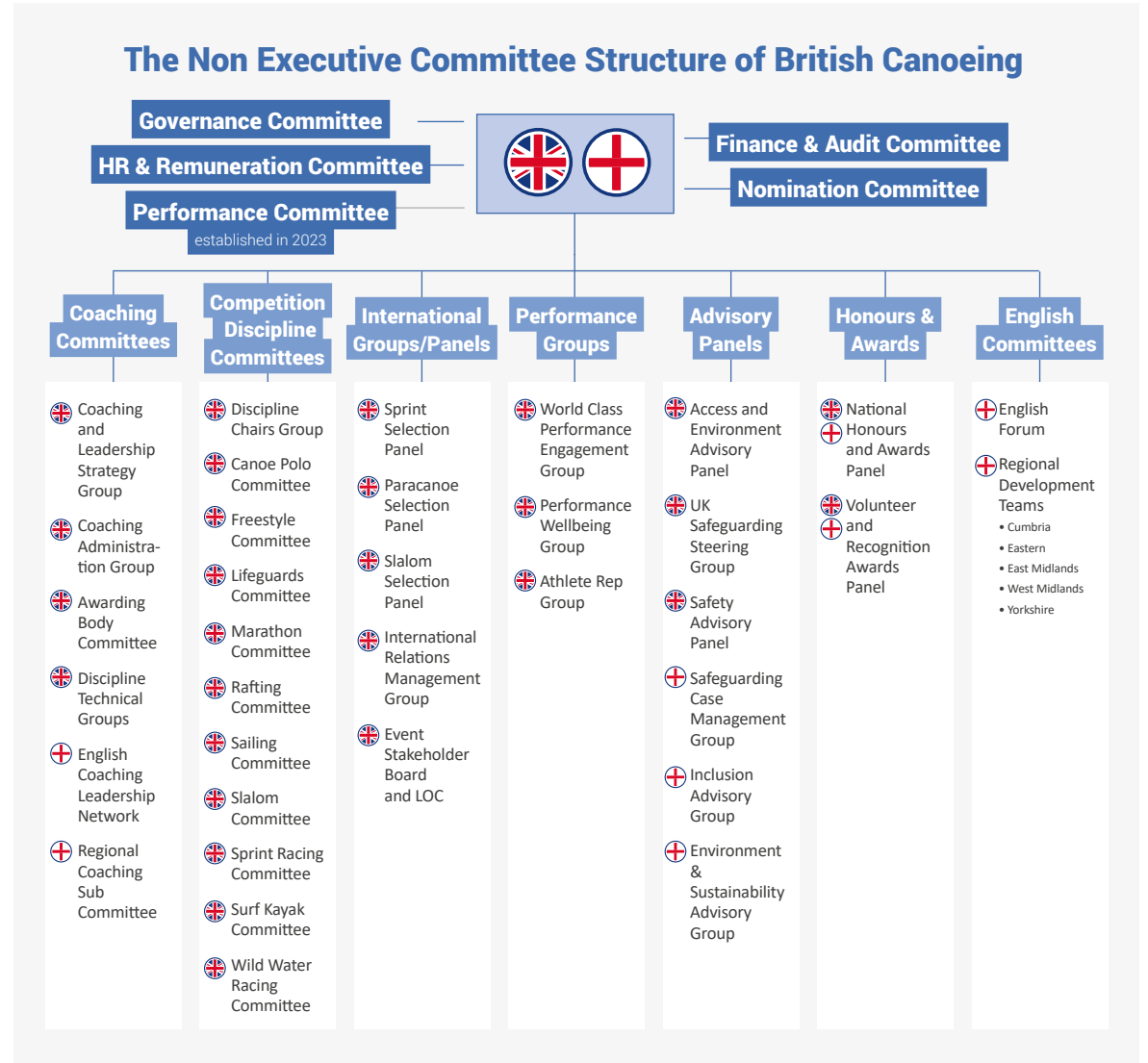
The statement reports publicly on the extent to which British Canoeing is in compliance with the Tier 3 of A Code for Sports Governance. This annual governance statement is prepared as part of the Code requirements and outlines our progress to date.

British Canoeing is fully committed to ensuring good governance throughout the organisation. The Board acknowledges that it has a responsibility to ensure there are sound systems in place, not just because it is a mandatory requirement of our funders UK Sport and Sport England, but because it is in accord with our strategic plan – Stronger Together 2022-26.

Structure

Organisations shall have a clear and appropriate governance structure, led by a Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the organisation and exclusively vested with power to lead it. The Board shall be properly constituted and shall operate effectively.

The governance structure of the organisation is such:



Focus on Operations

Full details of the Board members including a profile and confirmation of their current term of office is available on **our website**.

Full details of the Committees of the Board, their composition and their terms of reference is available on **our website**.

The Governance policy is available on **our website**.



This policy sets out the relationship between the Board and other key constituents within British Canoeing. The policy was reviewed and updated in April 2019 to ensure it was reflected that the Board is comprised of nominated and appointed directors (rather than elected).

British Canoeing established a wholly owned subsidiary company, British Canoeing Events Limited, whose purpose is to run British Canoeing's international events. Compliance with the requirements of the Code for Sports Governance for Tier 2 organisations was confirmed by UK Sport in October 2021 and British Canoeing Events has maintained compliance through 2022 and 2023.

People

Organisations shall recruit and engage people with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that further the organisation's goals. Bronagh Kennedy, independent director, stepped down from her role on the board in December 2022 whilst Stephen Craig and Stephen Linksted, board members nominated by their national associations completed the end of their final term of office in March 2023.

Manpreet Sehmbi, independent director and Gareth Mahood, director nominated by Canoe Association of Northern Ireland, were appointed to the Board for first terms at the AGM in March 2023.

James Miller, director nominated by the Scottish Canoe Association, was appointed by the Board in September 2023.

The office of Gareth Mahood was vacated in December 2023. The target of a minimum 30% of each gender on the board was met in 2023. The Board Skills Matrix was updated in December 2023.



Focus on Operations

Communication

Organisations shall be transparent and accountable engaging effectively with stakeholders and nurturing internal democracy.

In March 2022 British Canoeing launched its strategic plan for 2022-2026, **Stronger Together 2**.

This strategic plan sets out our vision to support, grow and celebrate paddling in England and the UK. It builds on the work and progress of the previous strategy and presents a plan to guide the work of all within British Canoeing and the paddling community.

The Annual Report

contains a full communication to members on the work of the organisation this year and a progress report following the first year of delivery of 'Stronger Together 2'.

The Annual Report contains statutory information such as the annual accounts, and provides details of the work of the board and the committees and attendance of Directors.

In accordance with the Code and in order to ensure engagement with our stakeholders the following surveys were carried out in 2022 and 2023:

- > Staff Survey
- > Member Survey
- > Board Evaluation Survey

In the interests of transparency, summaries of the Board meetings and minutes of each AGM are made available on the website.

British Canoeing has submitted evidence in support of its compliance with the revised Code for Sports Governance and awaits formal confirmation of compliance in early 2024.

The commitment to excellent governance is ongoing and British Canoeing commit to working with UK Sport to ensure we are constantly updating and improving in accordance with best practice and the new requirements of the Code.



Focus on Operations

Standards and Conduct

Organisations shall uphold high standards of integrity and engage in regular and effective evaluation to drive continuous improvement.

British Canoeing remains committed to its values of:

- > Every Person Matters
- > Striving for Excellence
- > Always with Integrity
- > Enjoying the Journey
- > Individually Committed
- > Stronger Together

British Canoeing continued to work collaboratively with the Scottish Canoe Association, Canoe Wales and Canoe Association Northern Ireland, in line with the principles set out in the UK Agreement.

British Canoeing have in place consistent terms of reference for each national and regional committee. The national and regional committee structure can be found on our website where terms of reference for each committee can also be found.

The Board undertook Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Risk Management training in 2023.

The board conducted an annual review of its performance and its own effectiveness in October/November 2023. The findings were reported to and discussed at the Nomination Committee in November 2023 and reported to the full board in December 2023.

In accordance with the requirements of the Code, board appraisals were conducted in October 2023 with the chair appraising the board members and the vice chair appraising the chair. The board has continued to implement recommendations made in the external evaluation of the board, completed in 2022.

In accordance with the requirements of the code a register of conflicts of interest is maintained, a register of gifts is maintained and all directors complete a fit and proper persons declaration upon appointment.



Focus on Operations

Policies and Processes

Organisations shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, undertake responsible financial strategic planning and have appropriate controls and risk management procedures.

The Governance and Risk Committee have approved a policy and procedure checklist which is available on the [British Canoeing website](#).

British Canoeing's Disclosure Policy, Data Protection Policy, Safeguarding Procedure, Anti-Bullying Procedure, Safeguarding Adults and Anti-Bribery Procedure have all been reviewed and updated in 2023.

Financial control, financial strategy and internal control is overseen by the Finance and Audit Committee which reports to the Board. Annual accounts are audited by an external auditor who presents to the whole Board the outcome of the audit.

British Canoeing revised its Risk Management Policy and Procedure in 2023, ensuring a consistent assessment of risk, risk management and mitigation across the organisation is continually undertaken.

This included enhanced sub-committee oversight of risk. The Senior Leadership Team and Board underwent risk management training in 2023.

Conclusion

Governance arrangements have been monitored and evaluated during the year by the Governance Committee which reports to the Board.

The Governance Committee has had reference to and has been involved in assessing the effectiveness of key elements of the code as outlined above. The director of governance has responsibility for development and maintenance of code compliance and good governance overall.

In 2024, besides confirming compliance with the new code for sports governance, the organisation will continue to develop and improve policy and practice, in particular, reviewing the Governance Policy for the organisation.

The Board has agreed this annual governance statement and is satisfied that the governance arrangements in place are not only sufficient to ensure Tier 3 Code compliance under the previous code, but are also meeting best practice across the sports sector.



Focus on Operations

British Canoeing Board

Composition of the British Canoeing Board 2022/23

Professor John Coyne CBE

Chair and Independent Director

Richard Boreham

Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director

Kerry Chown

Director nominated by Canoe Wales

Stephen Craig

Director nominated by The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (Retired 11 March 2023)

Clare Dallaway

Director nominated by the English Forum

Nick Donald

Independent Director

Martine Kushner

Independent Director

Steve Linksted

Director nominated by The Scottish Canoe Association (Retired 11 March 2023)

Gareth Mahood

Director nominated by The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (From 11 March - 3 December 2023)

James Miller

Director nominated by The Scottish Canoe Association (From 22 Sep 2023)

Zoey Rowe

Director nominated by the English Forum

Manpreet Sehmbi

Independent Director (From 11 March 2023)

Greg Spencer

Director nominated by the English Forum

Ashley Metcalfe

British Canoeing Chief Executive Officer

British Canoeing President Dee Paterson attended the Board Meetings as an observer in a non-voting capacity.

The Board met five times in 2023:

29 January 2023, Hybrid Meeting, Nottingham

Attendance 92%

Apologies: Clare Dallaway

11 March 2023, Nottingham

Attendance 92%

Apologies: Gareth Mahood

7 June 2023, London

Attendance 83%

Apologies: Nick Donald and Gareth Mahood

22 September 2023, Lee Valley

Attendance 83%

Apologies: Manpreet Sehmbi.

Absent without apologies: Gareth Mahood

3 December 2023, Nottingham

Attendance 92%

Absent without apologies: Gareth Mahood

A summary note of all Board meetings can be found on the [British Canoeing website](#).

Focus on Operations

Safeguarding

Safeguarding

This report provides an update on the safeguarding framework for British Canoeing over the past 12 months.

Safeguarding Team

The structure of the safeguarding team has remained stable over the past year. The safeguarding team consists of the following roles:

Director of Governance

(Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Safeguarding Manager

(Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Performance Wellbeing Coach

(Vacant from November 2023)

Safeguarding Case Manager

Governance Administrator

The creation of an additional role within the safeguarding team to support the raising of safeguarding standards, across clubs and committees, had been planned for 2023 but was not recruited. This role was removed from the budget due to the decline in membership income.

Safeguarding Strategy

British Canoeing launched **#SaferTogether**, a strategy for Safeguarding, Safety and Welfare and Performance Wellbeing, in October 2023.

Safer Together sets out how British Canoeing will reach its vision for a safe, open and inclusive culture. Where poor practice is consistently challenged and deliberate attempts to cause harm are not tolerated.

Where safeguarding, safety and welfare, and performance wellbeing are prioritised and embedded in all that we do.

Safer Together was born out of consultation with key stakeholders, including club and discipline committee representatives, the national associations, our Inclusion Advisory Group and British Canoeing staff and coaches. Safer Together was well received by major stakeholders and members.

CPSU Safeguarding Framework Review

The Child Protection in Sport Unit of the NSPCC (CPSU) undertook its annual audit on British Canoeing's safeguarding framework in November 2023. The organisation was confirmed to have met the CPSU standard (which is the highest possible standard attainable).

A further demonstration of the CPSU's high regard to British Canoeing's safeguarding framework was the highlighting of a number of areas of good practice across the sports sector.

Safeguarding Policies

The following safeguarding policies and procedures were updated in 2023:

- > Safeguarding Children's Policy
- > Whistleblowing Policy
- > Anti-Bullying Policy
- > Disclosure Policy
- > Safer Recruitment Policy
- > Adult Safeguarding Policy
- > Safeguarding Procedure (approved, but not yet published)



Focus on Operations

Safeguarding Training

All those involved in paddlesport activity who regularly work with children are required to refresh their safeguarding qualifications every three years. British Canoeing launched its own Safeguarding Refresher course in Autumn 2020.

This course provides a refresher on core safeguarding training with an additional module on safe social media use. In October 2023, a further Safeguarding Refresher course was launched, including the additional module on embedding a positive safeguarding culture.

In the period 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2023, the Safeguarding Refresher courses have been completed 406 times.

The Introduction to Safeguarding e-learning course launched in 2020 continues to be well used and well received. In the period 1 November 2022-31 October 2023, the course was completed 843 times.

Feedback has been positive and this course is seen as a real asset to the organisation. This course is suitable for those who do not have regular contact with children.

A Safer Recruitment e-learning was launched in September 2023. This resource is designed for any employer or deployer, such as paddlesport clubs and organisations, who provide services to children and/or adults at risk.

Club Welfare Officers continue to have access to Multisport Time to Listen courses, externally delivered as online classrooms. British Canoeing's Performance

Wellbeing Coach has delivered bespoke safeguarding training to World Class Programme and England Talent Programme Coaches to ensure their safeguarding awareness remains current and responsive to emerging learning needs.

Information and resources relating to safeguarding and welfare risk assessments and considerations relating to international trips were distributed to the non-Olympic discipline committees ahead of the competitive season.

Club Welfare Officers

There remains a need to increase the number of Club Welfare Officers (CWO) across clubs in 2024 to ensure that each club has at least two who have undergone appropriate recruitment and training. The format of the club welfare

officer newsletters has been further updated. These are distributed regularly. Work has been done to increase the engagement with and support provided to welfare officers.

This has included safeguarding update webinars and online CWO drop-in sessions used for general queries and/or sharing practice/advice with other CWOs. British Canoeing's Club House is updated with resources for Club Welfare Officers and a forum for discussion. Providing an enhanced support package for club welfare officers is a vital action committed to in Safer Together.



Focus on Operations

Embedding Safeguarding

Considerable further work has been done to embed safeguarding across the organisation through collaborative working. This has included:

- > Development of #SaferTogether
- > Ongoing collaboration with HR to embed safeguarding into recruitment practices
- > Input into Club House
- > Joint club visits with safeguarding/club teams to increase visibility of support from safeguarding team and promote a cohesive BC message
- > Learnings from cases embedded into Talent/WCP practices

- > Leading welfare planning/support for the Slalom World Championships
- > Sharing good practice examples and relevant internal/external safeguarding news and updates via newsletters.

Mental Health

The Mental Health Team within the performance department have continued their work raising awareness of mental health via the roll out of training and engaging athletes and coaches in supporting various mental health campaigns throughout the year.

Information relating to the support available to our athletes and staff is regularly promoted within our communication channels, alongside general signposting information to local services, charities and helplines.

British Canoeing has partnered with Sporting Wellness, a mental health and wellbeing charity. This partnership will mean that any GB athlete aged 16 or over (junior, U23 or senior teams, or who are part of a national association development programme) has guaranteed access to a suite of wellbeing services with no costs, no waiting lists, no minimum illness requirements and 100% confidentiality.

The collaboration demonstrates British Canoeing's commitment to ensuring access to mental health and wellbeing support to our elite athletes.



Focus on Operations

Collaborative Working

British Canoeing continues to work with the Home Nations Safeguarding Steering Group (SSG).

The SSG comprises the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Case Management Group Chairs for each Home Nation (where such role exists). The purpose of the SSG is to encourage aligned safeguarding frameworks across the Home Nations through positive information, policy, guidance and training sharing. The SSG is also helpful in updating members on legislation changes specific to each Home Nation, discussing learnings from cases and managing cross-jurisdictional challenges.

In 2023, the SSG has focused on finalising a process for effective management of cross-jurisdiction cases and embedding a home nation-wide case management software tool.

British Canoeing is also part of a Water Sports Safeguarding Support network, enabling the sharing of best practice and case learnings from other sports.

British Canoeing continues to work with CPSU and Sport England to provide data and insight to better understand the prevalence of safeguarding in sport. British Canoeing actively engages in cross NGB forums where learning and practice is shared between sports, including policy, guidance and procedures, as well as response to safeguarding concerns.

British Canoeing also continues to work with the Performance Wellbeing Group and Athlete Rep Groups to ensure the voice of athletes is heard and that athlete wellbeing is a key element of the decision making within the performance programme.

Governance

The Board undertook bespoke safeguarding training in October 2022 and has committed to further safeguarding training in Autumn 2024.

The Board Champion for Safety and Welfare (including safeguarding) is independent director, Martine Kushner, appointed in 2022. Martine Kushner also chairs the Governance Committee.

The Governance Committee of the Board has safeguarding as a standing agenda item. This includes an overview of open cases, historic case review progress and any emerging concerns or relevant updates.

The Governance Committee also scrutinises and approves all safeguarding policies and procedures updated or developed by the safeguarding team.

The log of open safeguarding cases presented to the Governance Committee shows key information relating to anonymised cases. This includes the category of concern, risk management in place, the number of weeks a case has been open for, the date of last action and a status update.

This allows the Board to have oversight of and scrutinise the progress of cases, provides assurance on risk management action taken (such as interim suspensions), and gives a better understanding of the reasons for some cases being open for a long time.

The Governance Committee presents a report to each following Board meeting to ensure all directors are appropriately appraised of key safeguarding information and are able to provide check and challenge.

Focus on Operations

Safeguarding Case Management

Safeguarding Case Management remains a priority for British Canoeing. The role of Safeguarding Case Manager within the safeguarding team provides dedicated resource to the day-to-day management of safeguarding cases and ensures cases continue to be handled efficiently and robustly.

Communication with all involved parties remains a priority, recognising that these cases are difficult for all involved.

British Canoeing established tiering guidance in 2023 enabling the Safeguarding Team to be able to clearly identify thresholds and escalation processes for safeguarding cases.

British Canoeing continues to be part of the Sport England Safeguarding Case Management Programme to complement internal case management processes. This programme provides access to advice, investigations, first instance and appeal panels.

British Canoeing similarly continues to be part of the UK Sport, Sport Integrity programme, an independent disclosure and investigations process for the high-performance sport system. Information pertaining to this programme is circulated to WCP Athletes periodically.

An historic review of safeguarding cases was completed in May 2022. The review

made some general findings and recommendations as well as specific recommendations for further action in relation to 100 of the 601 cases reviewed.

All general recommendations have been addressed in current case management practice. Specific recommendations in relation to cases have been captured in an ongoing action plan.

The Governance Committee continues to receive updates on the progress of the action plan approved to address these action areas.



Focus on Operations

Case Management Group

British Canoeing benefits from a Case Management Group (CMG) which draws from a wide range of safeguarding backgrounds and experiences including social work, sport, psychiatry, health, care, education and the charity sector.

In line with CPSU guidance and strong recommendations, the group is also independent of the British Canoeing CEO and Board.

Its members are:

- > **Gill Camina**, Chair – experienced safeguarding and governance consultant who has worked at both national and international level within sport as well as having previous experience with NSPCC, CPSU and Ann Craft Trust
 - > **Gemma Roberson** – Head of Safeguarding and SEND for PGL and also a member of the National Autistic Society Independent Safeguarding Board
 - > **Helen Murdock** – Safeguarding Professional worked for CPSU, netball, badminton and other sports
 - > **Helen Weeks** – Sport Governance and Welfare Manager at Swim England, three times Olympic athlete and has been a GB team manager and volunteer for over 15 years, as well as a national level coach
- > **DR Perdita Mousley** – Senior educational leader and designated safeguarding lead within independent specialist schools and colleges, for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
 - > **Claire Parry** – Senior Lawyer in the regulatory team at the British Horseracing Authority, where she leads on safeguarding cases, advises on safeguarding strategy and updates to the BHA’s Safeguarding Regulations and internal case management policy
 - > **Greg Kirk** – Senior leader in education and safeguarding with leadership experience in the mental health sector and case management teams. Greg is also a board member for the Lincolnshire Football Association’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group

- > **Sarah Torkington** – Halstead - Head of Safeguarding with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust and GB Snowsport Safeguarding and Welfare Officer
- > **Nancy Squires** – British Canoeing Director of Governance and designated safeguarding lead, qualified solicitor with extensive safeguarding experience in the sports sector
- > **Adam Leathwood** – British Canoeing Safeguarding Manager, has held safeguarding lead roles across education, care, the charity sector, and sport.

Case Management filing and record keeping

British Canoeing implemented a new case management software platform in Autumn 2022 to support the effective management of cases, improving security, data management and compliance and provides actionable insights through data analysis.

The safeguarding team have fully transitioned to using this software platform for all new safeguarding cases. The team is in the process of migrating all historic case records to the new system and have so far migrated all historic cases where a suspension has been issued.

Focus on Operations

Case Statistics Overview

The cases also reflect a wide geographical spread with the majority coming from the East Midlands, South East and South West, with 10, 11, and 10 cases coming from those regions respectively. This information may indicate the need for further training on safeguarding with our northern and central clubs.

In addition to the cases considered by the Case Management Group, there have been 30 “advice” cases connected to safeguarding and wellbeing which the Safeguarding Team has supported.

These “advice” cases are those which have not met the threshold for CMG consideration. Of these seven related to minor safeguarding concerns, the remaining were wellbeing and welfare

concerns from within the World Class Programme, Talent and Academy pathways. However, these figures only reflect the proportion of cases which were reported to the BC Safeguarding and Welfare team directly and do not capture the full scope of concerns which would have been dealt with locally by coaches, leaders and doctors. What they do indicate is that athletes and coaches have a wide range of options to report concerns to and access support.

Though there has been a significant number of new cases reported over this period, assessing the significance of the number of cases managed is difficult, as a low number of concerns may in itself be a worry as it may indicate a lack of awareness of/trust in case management processes.

The increase in cases may be a positive reflection of increased reporting rather than increased incidents

of harm. The Safeguarding Team continues to reflect on trends emerging from cases and put positive action plans in place to address potential education or process gaps.

Of the 47 closed cases, the outcomes have been as follows:

- > 15 deployed without restriction/no further action
- > Eight under 18 suspension
- > One under 18 and membership suspension
- > Eight matters resolved at local level
- > 10 referred to other agencies as situation/circumstances outside of BC remit
- > Five training and education
- > 22 on-going case management

Safeguarding processes are designed to promote positive safeguarding practices for all. The British Canoeing Safeguarding Team will work with coaches in an educative way to support them to achieve correct behaviours and to increase safeguarding knowledge.

However, where necessary and proportionate the organisation may look to place restrictions, or in some cases suspensions in place to protect all involved in a safeguarding process.

Timescales for concluding safeguarding cases remain challenging, particularly in ongoing police matters or where complex investigations are required and timescales are not within British Canoeing’s control.

However, the cases will show that delays with cases are not as a result of slow progress by the safeguarding team, with cases being moved on as quickly as possible.

The most challenging cases for the safeguarding team remain those where conduct falls short of that which would require action by the police or other statutory authorities.

These cases often involve wider dispute between individuals and dissatisfaction at the outcomes. These cases are also those which demand the most time of the safeguarding team.

Focus on Operations

DBS checks

In the period 1 November 2022 - 31 October 2023, British Canoeing processed 836 checks which is a slight decrease on last year's figure of 975.

However, we have also processed 94 status checks this year, which is an increase on the 89 completed in 2022 and may be reflective of more members signing up to the DBS Update Service.

Of the total checks, 17 had adverse content which represents 1.82% of all checks. This is broadly in line with the previous year when 1.13% had adverse content. This follows the pattern which we have seen over the last few years of fewer adverse DBS checks coming through.

However, it is unclear as to whether this is due to fewer

people with convictions seeking a role in sport, or the fact that a number of coaches have been risk assessed in previous years.

British Canoeing have continued to offer a basic level check which can be conducted on new staff members who have no contact with children and young people and therefore do not qualify for an enhanced or enhanced with barred list check.

The DBS process continues to work smoothly and the role of the governance administrator has supported the efficient delivery of this service.

A standalone DBS email address has also been created which allows all emails to be monitored and documents no longer need to be updated when there are staffing changes.

The British Canoeing Board has noted and approved the annual Safeguarding Report.

Governance Committee Report

The committee met five times in 2023: February, March, July, September, and November. Attendance was 100%.

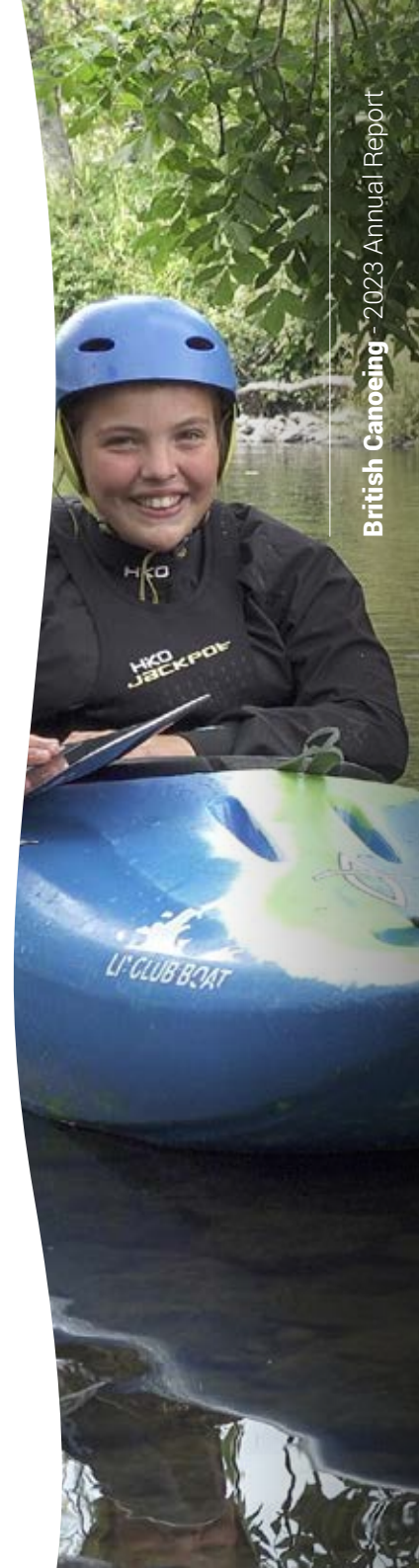
The committee was renamed in 2023 (formerly Governance and Risk Committee). This followed a review and approval of the Board sub-committees' terms of reference ensuring risk is scrutinised and overseen by risk area within each of the sub-committees. The Governance Committee retains responsibility for review of the risk policy itself.

The key areas of work completed by the Governance Committee during 2023 included oversight and approval of updated safeguarding and governance policies and procedures. The committee also approved the British Canoeing's

Safer Together Strategy setting out the direction for improved safeguarding, safety, welfare and wellbeing for all paddling participants.

The committee approved revised selection and qualification policies and agreed following the establishment of the Performance Committee, these would be subject to approval there moving forwards. The Committee also approved the process for and noted the outcome of the 2023 AGM.

The committee received updates on standing items of risk, safeguarding issues and open case reports, disciplinary, appeal and selection cases, complaints, data protection, legal action and health and safety matters and has approved revised terms of reference for numerous committees and groups within British Canoeing.



Focus on Operations

Financial Statements

2022/2023 was another strong year for British Canoeing, despite a drop in membership numbers, our financial reserves increased and the organisation remains financially resilient.

The group surplus for the year after taxation amounted to £179,435, this is made up of a surplus from British Canoeing of £174,343 and a surplus from British Canoeing Events Limited of £5,092.

Member levels fell slightly in the year following the extremely wet period in the peak of summer but did rally towards the year end with the unseasonably warm autumn.

Income has been boosted by high levels of interest income received following the introduction of a cash investment strategy and the upturn in interest rates.

The Stronger Together fund was opened with £265k of grants awarded to support coaching qualifications and underrepresented paddling groups. This fund will continue to build in 2024/2025 and will make further investments for the benefit of members to support the delivery of Stronger Together 2022-2026.

The year has seen greater financial challenges than previous years, including lower membership numbers and the continuing impact of Brexit affecting the movement of teams and equipment around the world.

Rising costs, energy inflation and staff recruitment has been particularly challenging in the year. Pressure on the cost base of the organisation from salary and cost inflation has been absorbed during the year with expenditure continually reviewed to ensure value for money and alignment to the delivery of our strategy.

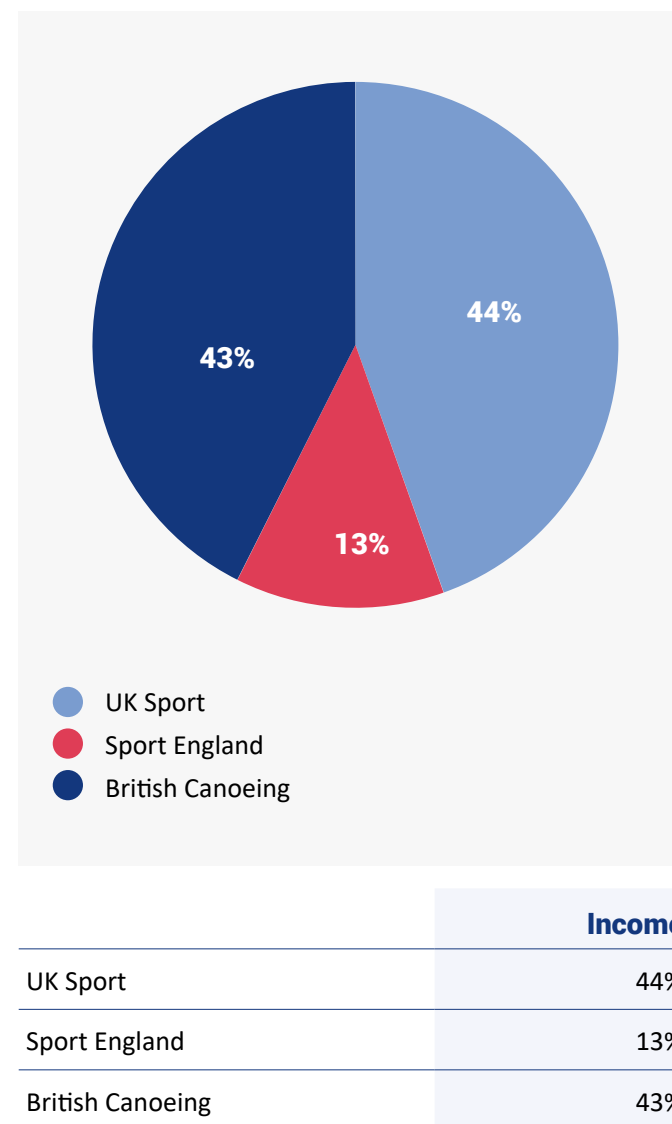
British Canoeing considers it good practice to build financial reserves that will meet the future commitments or unforeseen expenses of the company, without a negative impact on the ability to deliver services or develop the businesses in line with the strategic plan. The delivery of the 2022/2023 surplus has further increased the level of reserves above this level.

The total consolidated reserves of £2,129,533 enable British Canoeing to absorb setbacks and take advantage of change and opportunity, to secure the financial viability beyond the immediate future and provide reliable services over the longer term. It is the intention of British Canoeing to utilise the excess reserves to invest back into the delivery of its strategic plan.

Focus on Operations

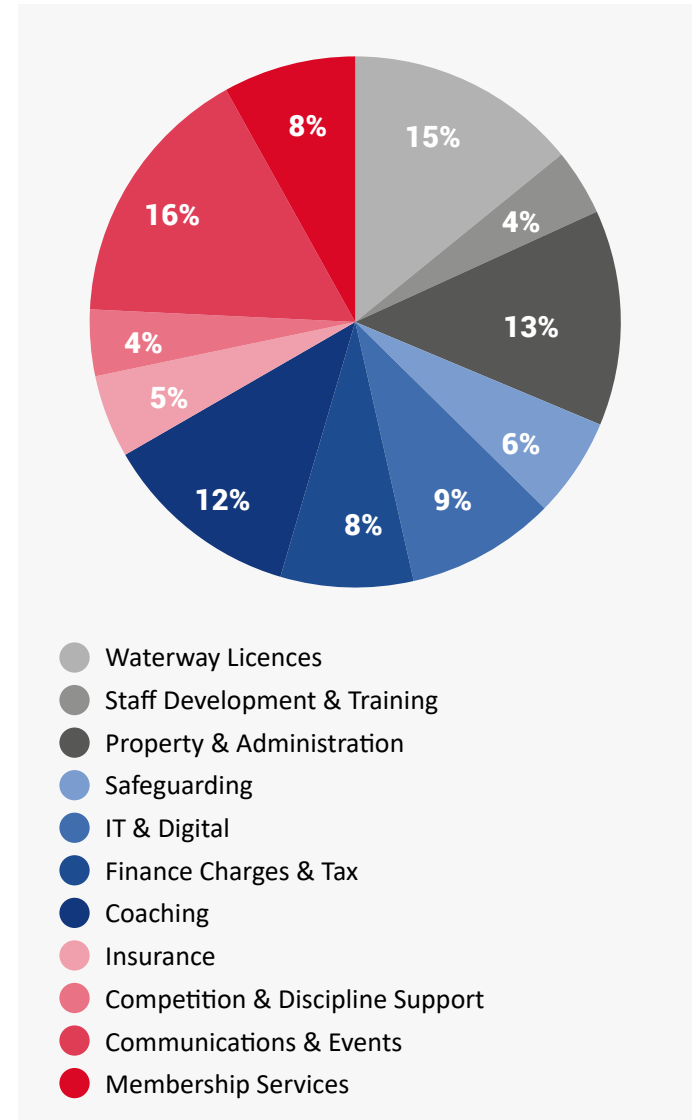
Annual Accounts

	2023	2022
Profit & Loss Account		
Income	12,442,225	10,960,204
Expenditure	(12,482,056)	(10,246,045)
Operating Profit / (Loss)	(39,831)	714,159
Interest Receivable & similar income	233,825	40,022
Taxation on ordinary activities	(14,559)	(12,659)
Profit / (Loss) on activities after interest an tax	179,435	741,522
Balance Sheet		
Fixed Assets	494,701	520,966
Current Assets	8,948,761	9,102,295
Current Liabilities	(7,313,929)	(7,454,789)
Long-term Liabilities	0	(218,374)
Net Assets	2,129,533	1,950,098
Profit & Loss Account	1,925,840	1,725,938
Other Reserves	203,693	224,160
Capital and Reserves	2,129,533	1,950,098



Focus on Operations

	2023	2022
Costs		
UK Sport	45%	37%
Sport England	13%	17%
Membership, Clubs, Coaching & Commercial	43%	46%
Running Costs		
Competition & Discipline Support	4%	6%
Communications & Events	16%	13%
Membership Services	8%	10%
Waterway Licences	15%	15%
Insurance	5%	5%
Coaching	12%	13%
Safeguarding	6%	6%
IT & Digital	9%	7%
Finance Charges & Tax	8%	7%
Property & Administration	13%	13%
Staff Development & Training	4%	5%
	100%	100%



Focus on Operations

British Canoeing Executive Report 2023

- > The number of staff employed by British Canoeing, in January 2023, was 102 (96.5 full-time equivalent)
- > The number of staff employed in December 2023 was 107 (101.9 FTE).
- > In 2023 there were 17 new starters and 12 leavers
- > Labour turnover for the year was 11.5% (19.3% in 2022)

HR and Remuneration Committee

The committee met four times in 2023, in February, May, July and November.

The key areas of work completed by the committee during 2023 included the following: salary review 2023, review of the pay framework, staff intranet and learning hub development, staff survey and the compliance training framework.

The terms of reference for the committee were also reviewed and updated.

The committee receives updates on standing items including emerging people issues, risk, progress against the people strategy and the HR dashboard which records the key people metrics.

The committee reviewed and made recommendations to a number of existing organisation policies including the expenses policy and the equality policy and made a number of suggestions to improve the revised pay policy as part of the pay framework project.





Focus on People

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- 59 Staff Health and Wellbeing



People Strategy

We launched our **People Strategy** in January 2023.

‘People are at the heart of British Canoeing and key to delivering our strategy and further improvement to our organisation.’

‘We want to continue to develop, empower and support our staff to help them carry out their roles effectively.’

As part of our strategy, we identified six key themes and we have made good progress in each of these themes in the first year of delivery of the strategy.

Recruitment and Retention

We have reviewed our recruitment practices and refreshed the job pack, to ensure that there are no barriers to selection and that all documentation is developed in an inclusive way.

We have also taken steps to improve the onboarding process to enhance employee engagement and foster a positive culture.

We have identified roles that are critical to our success and are considering plans for succession. This year we have filled 72% of vacancies at the first attempt and staff turnover has reduced from 19.3% in 2022 to 11.5% in 2023.

Culture and Engagement

We refreshed our staff survey this year to provide us with six key themes which we believe gives us a clear picture in each area.

Our staff survey saw an 80% overall score in Our Culture and 80% of staff said they would recommend British Canoeing as a great place to work.

Our work to encourage a culture of collaboration and sharing is progressing with the implementation of the first phase of the Intranet. This platform enables efficient communication, collaboration and information sharing.

Developing People

The implementation of the Learning Management System (LMS) Learning Hub and Toolkit was completed and we continue to add new content to support staff.

Our management development programme was highly valued by staff and improvements in skills and behaviours are evidenced in our Staff Survey responses around leadership and positivity around relationships with line managers.



British Canoeing - 2023 Annual Report

80% recommend working at British Canoeing



Focus on People

Rewarding Our People

We are on track with our review of our pay framework and have focused on non-coaching roles in the first phase.

The implementation of the new competency framework was key to this work and supported the redevelopment of our role descriptions to enable clarity of responsibilities.

We continue to benchmark our staff benefits to ensure they are competitive.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We redeveloped our Equality Policy to ensure that we promote fairness, inclusivity and diversity by establishing guidelines and practices that ensure equal opportunities for all.

Staff Health and Wellbeing

We offered Mental Health Awareness training to all line managers to provide them with the skills to recognise and support individuals should they be experiencing mental health challenges.

Evidence of our progress in this area are seen in our staff survey with an overall score of 78% in the Wellbeing at Work theme.





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STRONGER
TOGETHER



Focus on Strategy

Stronger Together

Stronger Together is our four-year strategy (2022-2026) to support, grow and celebrate paddling in England and the UK.

Launched in March 2022, it builds on the work and progress of the previous strategy and presents a plan to guide the work of all within British Canoeing and the paddling community.

Cross-cutting Themes

There are four cross-cutting themes which run through each of the 10 ambitions of our strategy. These are designed to bring a new focus and positive change in four key areas within the new strategy:



Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)



Health, wellbeing and safety



Environment and sustainability



Partnerships

Our Purpose

To encourage everyone to go paddling; for enjoyment, health, challenge and achievement.

Our Values

To encourage everyone to go paddling; for enjoyment, health, challenge and achievement.

EVERY PERSON MATTERS,
STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE,
ALWAYS WITH INTEGRITY,
ENJOYING THE JOURNEY,
INDIVIDUALLY COMMITTED,
STRONGER TOGETHER

Focus on Strategy

10 Ambitions and 20 KPIs

10 Ambitions and 20 KPIs

Year two progress across the 20 KPIs. Our delivery of the strategic plan is guided by 10 ambitions and measured by 20 key performance indicators.

Ambition One

Engaging recreational paddlers and attracting new paddlers

KPI 1 Annually increase the number of unique visitors to the Go Paddling website from the 2021 baseline of 633,275

The figure for 2023 was 501,629, a -16.9% fall on the previous year. The 2023 user rate was outperforming 2022 from May, but it dropped when the weather turned bad in July & August.

KPI 2 Annually increase the number of members and paddlers from identified under-represented groups, as measured through the membership data collected each year from 2022

Females make up 37% of all active members, it's slightly down on 2022 figures when it was 38.4%. However, of all the new members 43% are female.

Ambition Two

Increasing membership and improving member services

KPI 3 Annually increase the number of paddlers in membership of British Canoeing, reaching at least 120,000 by 2026

By September 2023, British Canoeing had 87,272 members. A 6.7% decrease in September 2022 figures.

KPI 4 Annually maintain or improve member satisfaction scores above 76% with a net promoter score of +44 or greater

Highest ever Net Promoter Score of 53, up from 42 in 2022. Membership satisfaction with fulfilment and membership services was 7.7, (up from 7.59 in 2022).

These figures are taken from the Membership Survey, with 5,466 respondents. Feedback from the survey will be used to guide service improvements.

Ambition Three

Promoting access, places to paddle and environmental awareness

KPI 5 Gain new policy commitments from the Government that improve access to inland water by 2026

In June 2023, British Canoeing launched its new Clear Access, Clear Waters Charter at an event in Westminster, with strong support from MP's and Peers and as well as partner organisations.

In September the Minister for Sport attended the World Championships at Lee Valley, taking the opportunity to get out on the water with local school children. Other significant Government and Shadow Ministers and MP's participated in paddling activity over the year.

At the end of 2023, British Canoeing, along with 40 other organisations, published an Outdoors For All manifesto, calling for an expansion in the freedom to enjoy green and blue spaces. A Westminster reception is planned for March 2024.

Ambition Four

Supporting clubs and delivery partners

KPI 6 Annually maintain or increase the satisfaction scores from clubs for British Canoeing services

Satisfaction with the club support team was judged by positive feedback. See Clubs section.

KPI 7 Annually increase the number of delivery partners registered with British Canoeing from the 2021 baseline

The Delivery Partner Scheme grew from 380 partners in 2022, to 496 in 2023. The 2021 baseline was 275.

Ambition Five

Developing and supporting coaches, leaders, instructors and guides

KPI 8 Annually increase the take-up of British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications from the 2021 baseline

British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications and awards have seen a 29.3% increase from 2022, with a significant uptake in safety courses by 50.4%. Paddlers engaging with Personal Performance Awards throughout 2023 was 27,858.

KPI 9 Annually improve the diversity of those people holding British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications

Paddles Up Training has seen a 28.8% increase in females holding BCAB qualifications, with a modest increase in paddlers who are under 16 holding qualification increasing to 38.2%.

KPI 10 Annually maintain the high levels of satisfaction scores from instructors, coaches, leaders and guides accessing qualifications

Paddles Up Training have worked hard to maintain the outstanding high levels of satisfaction of those engaging with BCAB Qualifications and Awards, with a 99.13% satisfaction score in 2023.

Focus on Strategy

Ambition Six

Developing and supporting volunteers

KPI 11 Annually maintain or increase the volunteer satisfaction score, as measured by the membership survey from 2022

In 2023, about 38% were very satisfied, with 47% satisfied with the volunteer experience.

In 2022, the net promoter score for volunteers was +12 with a satisfaction score of 6.75/10 for customer services and 6.42/10 for communications.

Ambition Seven

Developing talent and achieving international success

KPI 12 Achieve the performance targets at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Four athletes have been selected for the Olympic Games in slalom. They are Mallory Franklin, Adam Burgess, Kimberley Woods and Joe Clarke. There's one further opportunity to qualify a men's kayak cross athlete in 2024.

Seven boats are qualified for the Paralympic Games in paracanoe with individual athletes set to qualify their places in June 2024.

In sprint, the minimum quota places have not yet been achieved but there are further opportunities available in 2024 to qualify boats.

KPI 13 Annually achieve European and World Championship targets in each competition discipline

Paracanoe and slalom medal targets were achieved in 2023. In paracanoe, seven medals were won at the World Championships, including four golds and three silvers. Seven Paralympic quota places were secured.

In slalom, five medals were won at the World Championships with an additional three finals secured.

Senior canoe sprint medal and A final targets were not achieved in 2023. However, The U23 and junior sprint team saw medal success at the World and European Championships.

Ambition Eight

Providing excellent championships, competitions and events

KPI 14 Discipline committees will engage more paddlers in their competitions year on year from the 2022 baseline

A Competition Development Officer is now in post to support Olympic and non-Olympic disciplines in this area.

An audit was conducted to review the competition landscape across each discipline and a plan is now in place to support growth. These plans will focus on supporting new entry level and cross discipline events, as well as providing resources and promotion to enhance existing activity.

The introduction of a Sprint Racing Committee coordinated calendar of local sprint events has been a positive step and work is continuing to support further developments within sprint and across other disciplines.

KPI 15 Deliver the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships in line with event objectives and budgets

A successful Slalom World Championships was delivered with the GB team securing eight medals. More than 800 school children attended the event with 516 taking part in on the water activities.

Focus on Strategy

Ambition Nine

Focused on governance, people, equality and sustainability

KPI 16 Achieve, and annually retain compliance, with the new UK Code for Sports Governance, the Advanced Equality Standard for Sport, CPSU Safeguarding Standards and UK Anti-Doping Assurance Framework

British Canoeing evidenced fully the 24 requirements of the assurance framework (the primary mechanism through which an NGB demonstrates its compliance with the UK National Anti-Doping Policy).

KPI 17 Make annual progress in delivering the actions within the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and welfare strategies

In December 2022, British Canoeing launched **#WePaddleTogether** - A Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

We are pleased to report on good progress against this strategy in its first year. More information on our progress in year one can be found in the *We Paddle Together* section.

KPI 18 Publish the new sustainability strategy and meet the annual targets within the action plan

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy was published in January 2023. Achieved targets were discussed in the *Places We Paddle* section.

Ambition Ten

Maintain member satisfaction in communications above 70% annually from 2022

KPI 19 Maintain member satisfaction in communications above 70% annually from 2022

Satisfaction with communications was 79% in 2023, compared to 78% in 2022.

KPI 20 Annually increase the number of visitors to British Canoeing's websites, digital platforms and social media channels from 2022

In 2023, the number of visits to the British Canoeing website in 2023 was 948,821. For the Go Paddling site it was 1,311,466.

In total, there were 435,900 fewer page views than in 2022. The visitor number trend for both websites were similar, outperforming 2022 for May & June, with a reduction in visitors for July & August.

In 2023, we reached a following of 94,000 across all British Canoeing social media channels.

The British Canoeing Facebook page reached 2.2 million people, marking a 200% increase from the previous year (2022). Content interactions across channels reached 148,000, a 140% increase from the previous year (2022).

Community-led stories and competition highlights were our most engaged content in 2023.



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