

Elcheater Boathouse Partnership

Registered Charity Number 1177129

Trustees' Annual Report 2020



Elcheater Boathouse - 1968

Showing crowds gathered on the Victorian Terraces to watch rowing regatta

Ebchester

Ebchester is a small village on the south-eastern bank of the River Derwent in the county of Durham. The river at Ebchester forms the boundary between the counties of Durham and Northumberland.

Many years ago, probably in the 12th century, a weir was constructed across the river to power a series of water mills. This weir created a quiet stretch of water which is suitable for a variety of water sports.

Ebchester Amateur Rowing Club

Until very recently, mention of '**Ebchester**' to any water-sports enthusiast in the North of England and the chances were they would know something of Ebchester Amateur Rowing Club or the well-known regattas which were held on the River Derwent at regular intervals for almost 100 years. The first boat was kept at Ebchester, under some trees, in 1872. By 1876 others began to take up the sport and soon the Ebchester Rowing Club was formed

Despite two world wars the club continued to thrive. The first season after the 1939-45 war was probably the most hectic in the club's history. Five regattas were held and many new younger members joined the club. At least four regattas were held in each of the following years. Entries for the 1957 regatta were, according to the local paper, the best ever - scullers from Durham, Chester-le-Street, Tynemouth and Hexham all took part.

Regrettably, in the mid-sixties, changing social habits began to affect the interest in and activities of the Club. The decline continued into the 1970s and the Club was dissolved on 12 March 1974.

Ebchester Boathouse

The current boathouse, built in 1960, is the third of three boathouses which have occupied the site continuously since 1876. Shortly after its construction a culvert was constructed by Consett Urban District Council to allow a separate toilet block and shelter to be built over the Ebchester Burn, close to where it joins the river. Sadly, following the demise of the Rowing Club, the toilet block was vandalised and had to be demolished.

The earlier boathouses were constructed entirely of timber whereas the current building has a rendered brickwork boat store with a timber meeting room above. The accommodation is very primitive by modern standards and lacks any basic services such as water and electricity. The building is in reasonably good condition but is somewhat cramped for the demands of modern usage.

Concerned at the prospect of the boathouse being demolished, village residents banded together and shortly afterwards the boathouse became a base for the 5th Tyne Sea Scouts.

By 2010 the weir itself was in need of repair. Again village residents rallied around and were able to persuade Durham County Council and the Environment Agency to carry out repairs and construct a fish pass. This key event ensured the future of the flat water, in its unique environment, for rowing, canoeing and kayaking which have become increasingly popular. The shallow water and sheltered location are well suited to beginners.

Within the region there are very few safe stretches of water which are suitable for these activities. Professional governing bodies associated with water-sports advise that the shortage of boathouse facilities is a barrier to greater participation.

In 2011 various organisations and user groups came together to form the Ebchester Boathouse Development Partnership. The main aim of the partnership is to improve or rebuild the boathouse and to install modern facilities to secure the long-term participation in water-based activities on the river by the community.

Rowing returned to Ebchester in 2018 with the formation of the Ebchester Boat Club and in 2019 the club hosted the first Regatta to be held on the River Derwent for 46 years.

The boathouse and surrounding woodland are owned by the National Trust who offered the 25 year lease necessary to secure funding for the project. A temporary, short-term, lease was granted in October 2020 pending completion of the longer term lease..



During the period from 2011 there was a series of consultations with the community and with statutory bodies which informed the development of detailed proposals. Although the size of the building is constrained by the topography of the site, a sensitively designed building, appropriate to its picturesque location within a Conservation Area, and capable of phased construction, was developed.

A major milestone was achieved in January 2018 when planning consent was granted, meaning we could then move toward detailed design of the building to meet statutory requirements.

The Partnership

The Ebchester Boathouse Development Partnership evolved from a meeting of community organisations who were concerned to see the boathouse restored or rebuilt to encourage greater use of the river for rowing, kayaking and other activities. That partnership was registered with the Charity Commission as a Charity on 30 January 2017.

The Ebchester Boathouse Partnership was established in 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 11 February 2018. The charity has the power to hold the lease which had been granted by the National Trust. It is intended that the business of the Ebchester Boathouse Development Partnership, which has the same objectives as the Ebchester Boathouse Partnership, will be transferred to the CIO, following which the Development Partnership will be wound-up.

The Partnership's financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December. This report is in respect of the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The objects of the Partnership as set out in its governing document are:

- To further or benefit the residents of Ebchester and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance community participation in healthy recreation and education in the interest of social welfare in particular but not exclusively by the provision of facilities for water based activity and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants

Public Benefit

In carrying out their activities, the Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's Guidance on the public benefit requirement (PB1, PB2 & PB3) and have complied with their duty to have due regard to this guidance when exercising their powers and duties.

Achievements and Performance

The charity for virtually all of the reporting period has had to operate in conformity with the Government's public health regulations and guidance arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. This has meant that there have been no face to face meetings of the trustees. Activities focused around making arrangements for the construction of phase one of the project, the changing rooms, however these were hampered by escalating costs and by a blocked culvert. Despite these setbacks efforts to provide essential facilities continue.

Financial Review

The focus of the charity is to build up sufficient reserves to finance construction of the new facilities together with the associated professional fees. Grant income is reserved solely for those purposes.

The principal sources of funds for the development are National Lottery, Trust Funds and local community funds. No funds were received by the CIO during the review period.

It is intended that the assets of the Ebchester Boathouse Development Partnership (EBDP) will be transferred to the Ebchester Boathouse Partnership and that EBDP will then be dissolved. Due to the restrictions imposed in response to the coronavirus pandemic there has been limited progress with this process.

A copy of the annual accounts is attached to this report as Appendix A

Reserves policy

The charity has no employees and the costs of winding up the charity would be nominal. The only need for reserves at present is to cover essential running costs and emergency expenditure for which the trustees consider it prudent to maintain a general reserve representing approximately twelve months' running costs.

Structure, Government and Management

Government

The Partnership is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its governing document is its Constitution, based on the Charity Commission's foundation model.

Its only members are the trustees.

The governing document provides that apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

The charity has no employees.

The Partnership has agreed policies relating to:

Conflicts of Interest	Risk Management
Safeguarding	Financial Controls

Reference and Administrative

The name of the charity is Ebchester Boathouse Partnership. It uses no other name.

The charity is registered in England and Wales (Charity number **1177129**).

The address of the principal office of the charity is 19 Springhouse Lane Ebchester DH8 0QF.

The trustees are:

Iain Alexander Knox (Chairman)

Tim Dillon

John Charles Johnson

Lynn Robson

Geoff Marshall

Approved by the Trustees on: 25 October 2021

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Full Name: Iain Alexander Knox

Position: Chairman

Registered Charity Number 1177129

**Accounts for the period
1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020**

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Grant Income
