



Oxford Paddlers For Life
Annual report and financial statements for the year
ending 31 March 2023
Registered Charity no 1178628

Contents:

Charity details, structure, governance and management

Charity overview

Achievements

Social Media

Membership

Finance Review

Giving Thanks

Looking Ahead

AOB

Charity Details and Structure

Charity Name: Oxford Paddlers For Life

Charity registration number: 1178628

Company registration number: 1032145

Website: www.oxfordpfl.org

Registered Office: 56 Coniston Avenue, Headington, Oxford, OX3 0AW

Structure, governance and management

Trustees:

Sonia Ambrose - Chair
Susan Renn - Treasurer
Alison Muldal - Trustee

Trustees are voted from within the club. The management structure comprises 3 trustees, with preferably at least 2 of whom should have had cancer. This is to perpetuate the ethos of meeting the needs of a club for those with a lived experience of cancer. As per the constitution and as recommended by the Charity Commission, at every AGM one trustee is elected or re-elected. This year we will be electing Pete H

As a club we need to have a recognised structure to enable us to apply for grants and for safeguarding reasons. We have formal roles for:

Chair – Vacant going forward
Trustees x 2 - Vacant
Head coach - Esmee Haigh
Membership secretary - Sally Crowe
Secretary – **Vacant**
Safeguarding officer – Sarah Croft and Esmee Haigh
Quartermaster - Simon Haigh
Welfare officer – **Vacant**
Social secretary - **Vacant**
Social media - Sam Evans - we'd like more help with Facebook and Instagram
IT/Web and general technology - Toby Shephard with support from Michelle Nunn on the website

To share the workload within the club and enable the development of our skills personally and as a group we have separate informal committees/ groups which look at fundraising and other topics/issues depending on current needs.

We hold committee meetings, in a combination of zoom and in person to enable inclusion, every few months which are minuted. These meetings are open to everyone within the club to create an environment where individuals feel they can contribute, the club benefits from everyone's skills and experience. However, if needed, the ultimate decisions are made by the trustees.

A charity requires an absolute minimum of 3 trustees and is recommended to have 5.

A charity does not absolutely require a Chair although it is highly recommended.

We ideally would like to have a total of 4 Trustees and one Chair. If you think you would like to understand any of the roles in more detail, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alison, Susan or Sonia.

As you are aware, our Chair, Sonia Ambrose, is now stepping down from the position following this meeting. Sonia has been a Trustee since February 2020 and took over the role of Chair from Anne-Marie last May. Anyone who is interested in the position of Chair in particular, please do not hesitate to reach out to Sonia to learn more.

It is with gratitude that we announce that Pete Panagi has volunteered to support the club in the role of Trustee. Please read below a little about Pete's time with the club to date. We will vote at the AGM to elect Pete.

"I would like to become a trustee of the Oxford Paddlers For Life group. I have some experience years ago of chairing an after school primary school club, funded by the national lottery. I have been retired 3 years, am nearly 66 years of age and participate as much as I can in paddling activities. I would like to become involved more with the group as my late wife Sophie was a keen supporter and introduced me to the sport. I am a former teacher and

know how to organise my time as well as getting things done quickly as possible. I have previously been involved at making some leaflets for the group".

2. Charity Overview

Our aims and objectives have remained the same as last year.

We are a dragon boat paddling team, set up to promote and support the good physical and mental health of people who have been affected by cancer, in particular but not exclusively breast cancer, and their friends and family by providing facilities and training in dragon boating in Oxfordshire. The aim is to keep things fun, full of camaraderie and mutual support.

3. Achievements and Celebrations (SA)

June 2022: We had the privilege to support Odyssey Cancer charity: **Odyssey.org.uk**. In many ways, we owe our existence to this charity which was Anne-Marie's (our Founder's)

inspiration to start Oxford Paddlers for Life.

June 2022: Julie and Anne-Marie joined Wave Walkers Dragonboat Club based in London at the **Vogalonga**.

July 2022: In support of the **Dorchester Sailing Club Fun Day**, we took out Kintsugi and offered club members and visitors a brief spin on the lake. This was supported from our side by Anne-Marie, Simon, Joel, Esmee, Lewis, Pete and Stephanie, Michelle, Lesley, Jennie - please forgive me if there are other members whose names have been omitted here.

July 2022: Our club was represented at the **Donegal Dragonboat Festival** by Anne-Marie, Simon, Joel and Esmee when they paddled with Pink Royals. This composite team comprised paddlers from Cork, Brussels, Canada, Australia, Bournemouth, Liverpool, Loughborough and London.

August 2022: 4 OPFL paddlers took part in two Outriggers for Life exhibition races during the International Va'a Federations World Championships at Dorney Lake. We were supported by paddlers from other dragonboat teams. Most of us had never paddled an outrigger canoe before, but after a very brief training session under the tutelage of Uncle from Hawaii our team Mana Wahine came second out of a field for four V12 outriggers in both races we competed in, being pipped to the finish line by a team of very experienced outrigger paddlers. And it was one of the hottest days in the hottest years the UK has ever experienced!

In early September 2022, members supported the **Against Breast Cancer Breast Walk** in Abingdon which is held annually at this time. Prompted by Jennie Taylor, the opportunity to build relations with the National Events Manager for Against Breast Cancer, led to a subsequent collaborative conversation with Sonia and Anne-Marie along with Wendy Grose, Dan Windsor, John Galt and Richard from Against Breast Cancer to seek out mutual collaborative opportunities.

In late September 2022, we welcomed some fellow paddlers from Pink Royals team (from Wave Walkers and Hurricane paddlers clubs) with whom we had paddled at the Vogalonga and Donegal.

In early October 2022, Esmee provided O1 training to Michelle, Jennie and Candice on a beautiful sunny day.

In late October 2022, we were very excited to share that one of our founding members, chief helm and coach, safeguarding officer, Esmee Haigh, got engaged to Lewis Wells.

In November, we were delighted to hear of the birth of Baby Hampson to Candice and family.

In December, 12 members enjoyed the Mamma Mia musical at the New Theatre Oxford. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

In January 2023, 14 members enjoyed Christmas lunch arranged by Jennie. This was an eventful gathering given when we arrived at the planned location, they were closed to service due to a burst pipe. Luckily they were able to find us a table at another restaurant on the High Street. Crisis averted. This was a truly joyous occasion when we had the opportunity for cuddles with Baby Hampson.

In April, 22 members completed a survey of 7 questions, which helped trustees and organisers understand members' preferences with regards to paddle times and days; any issues relating to location and travel to the location and members' intentions to paddle in 2023. The key insights gained from the survey were shared on Friday, 28th April from Oxford Paddlers for Life email.

Through the WhatsApp group, we communicated occasional opportunities to participate at events with other clubs here and abroad eg Barcelona, Vogalonga, Donegal,

4. Social Media (SA)

We continue to grow our following through the use of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. We have posted on various topics including Breast Cancer month, World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness week, International Women's Day, International Men's Day and supported the Metup organisation and other relevant and fun campaigns eg World Pasta Day to raise awareness of these issues and foster camaraderie.

We also sadly marked the death of Jane Frost who was a visionary and activist for the past 27 years as an original member of Abreast in a Boat, the world's first cancer survivor dragonboat team which started in Vancouver, Canada.

We will continue to do so and encourage all members to comment on, like and share postings when they can

5. Membership (SC)

Membership on our database currently stands at;

- 35 people directly affected by Breast Cancer
- 28 people who are 'Friends and Family' of above or affected by another type of Cancer
- 60 people from other paddling clubs
- 6 people who signed up for the newsletter (which Sally then follows up, some are bots), that have yet to be attributed to a category
- The official OxPFL email address (which is also Sally!)
- Total 130 contacts

We have *28 paddlers that are active in some capacity*, several have joined but are unable to paddle yet due to treatments, surgery or ill health, or have paddled in the past but are taking a break for similar reasons.

Personal recommendation still seems to be the most effective route for new members, with others finding us via poster and adverts.

There is some work to develop new members, see item 9.

6. Financial review (SR)

Income and expenses

Our bank balance at the end of March 2023 was £5842.

During 2022-23 OPFL received £1272 income mainly via membership (approx £400), paddling fees/donations (approx £400), donations (approx £500) plus a small amount from Amazon.

Our total outgoing costs during the year totalled £1,165. Principal items were a boat cover (£390), insurance costs (£540) and berth fees to Dorchester Sailing Club (£120).

In addition, we owe Dorchester approx £300 for paddles during 2022-23 plus a further amount for the two training days in 2021-22. (They had not invoiced us and we had not kept clear paddling records.) Going forward, I will maintain a record of paddles and payments on a regular basis.

However much of this £300 is covered by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation grant which we received in December 2021. (Alison is kindly looking into the reporting requirements, and any possible reimbursement requirements for this grant.)

Membership payments

Approximately 14 members have paid either a full or partial membership donation directly into our account. Given Sally's membership figures it seems clear that we need to do a detailed reconciliation of active members and membership payments. Many thanks to two members who have given generous donations, far in excess of the membership amount.

Paddling donations

The plan to have paddlers' names on the Sumup machine payments (enabling us to claim Gift Aid on this income) is in operation. However many of the payments have only been recorded as "paddling fees" so Gift Aid will not be claimable. We will need to revisit this system or use some other method of recording who has given a paddling donation on any given date if we are to claim gift aid.

Gift Aid

I will send out Gift Aid forms in the next month or two for paddlers to complete, if they are able and wish to. We can claim Gift Aid retrospectively, so we can claim for up to the last four years. Once I have received completed Gift Aid forms and rationalised payment records as far as I can, I will submit a claim to HMRC.

Barclays

Despite multiple efforts by Anne-Marie and myself, we have not yet managed to add additional signatories to the bank account. We will continue to pursue this matter.

Looking ahead

As can be seen from the income and expenses figures above, the club has relied significantly on the OCF grant to fund activities in 2022-23.

Assuming OPFL wants to be self-sustaining next year, we will need to take action. Options may include:

- Being more pro-active about collecting paddling and membership donations (where individuals can afford them)
- Ensuring that we maximise our ability to claim Gift Aid by recording paddlers names against paddling donations.
- Prioritise recruitment of more members and/or train more helms so that we can paddle more often
- Apply for grant funding

7. Recognition and Thanks (AM)

- Thanks to Jennie and Lesley for stepping forward to take on the task of arranging paddling sessions - please watch out for their messages on WhatsApp re paddle dates.
- Thanks to Sarah and Esmee for working on a Safeguarding Policy training session to be delivered in the next few months.
- Gratitude to our helms and regular paddlers to keep our sessions running when the weather does not prevent us.
- Huge thanks to Rob from DSC who is a truly appreciated OPFL member often checking on the security of the boats and bailing out water without being asked.
- Thanks to Nikki at DSC and the DSC committee who continue to support our activities and requests when possible. We appreciate our current home at your location.
- Thank you to Sam, Anne-Marie and Esmee who continue to keep up our social media presence.
- Thank you to Michelle for working on our website and making that more current and engaging.
- Thank you to Alison who never disappoints with her yummy home made cakes.
- Thank you to Sarah Croft for organising our participation in the outrigger competition in Dorney Lake, suggesting our team name, and printing our super team t-shirts.
- Thank you to the Trustees who put in time during the year to make sure all club administration activities are covered.

8. Looking ahead and priorities for the coming year (AM)

To continue with our **recruitment efforts**, **Anne-Marie and Alison** will be leading a working group on this topic. If you are interested in getting involved, please reach out to either.

Future Events:

Jennie Taylor will be arranging a **summertime lunch get together** likely for central Oxford. Watch out for those messages via WhatsApp.

We will be confirming a date over the coming months for a learning session with **Sarah Croft** on the topic **Safeguarding** for anyone who is interested in understanding our policy in greater detail. Please watch out for updates on this via the WhatsApp group.

We will also be confirming a date in the next month or so for a **helming training** session with **Esmee Haigh** for those who would like try this out, please contact Esmee direction. To date we have Rob, Alison and Mike who have confirmed their interest. Please watch out for updates on this via the WhatsApp group.

We are awaiting an update from Dan Windsor to understand if he will be arranging a dragaonboat festival in Oxford this year.

9. Any Other Business (SA)

=====

Appendix

Trustee role description

Trustees are the people that share responsibility for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run for the benefit of members and users. They need to act in the charity's best interests and help manage the charity's resources responsibly and in an accountable way. This will mean taking part in meetings (mostly online) about 4 times a year. They will also need to contribute and take responsibility for signing off important documents such as the Annual Report and financial summaries.

Chair role description

The chair helps plan and run trustee and member meetings and takes the lead on ensuring that meetings are properly run and recorded. Ensures that trustees comply with their duties and the charity is well governed. They might have a second or casting vote if a vote on a trustees' decision is tied. They can act as a spokesperson for the charity acting as a link between trustees and members.