

Oxford Paddlers For Life
Annual report and financial statements for the year
ending 31st March 2025
Registered Charity no 1178628

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Charity Details

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

1. Structure, governance and management

Trustees:

Alison Muldal - Trustee and Treasurer

Peter Panagi - Trustee

Esmee Haigh - Trustee and Secretary

Sonia Ambrose - Trustee (to be elected at AGM)

Trustees are voted from within the club. The management structure comprises 4 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.

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**
- Treasurer - Alison Muldal
- Trustees - Esmee Haigh, Peter Panagi, Alison Muldal, Sonia Ambrose (to be elected at AGM)
- Head coach - Esmee Haigh
- Secretary (including membership) – **Vacant**
- Safeguarding officer – Sarah Croft and Esmee Haigh
- Quartermaster - Simon Haigh
- Welfare officer – **Vacant**
- Social secretary - **Vacant**
- Social media - Sam Evans and Anne Marie Haigh - we'd like more help with Facebook and Instagram
- IT/Web and general technology - Toby Shephard with support from Michelle Nunn on the website
- Paddle attendance officers - Jennie Taylor and Lesley Maitland

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, recruitment 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. Some of 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 look at the role descriptions in the Appendix section of this report and do not hesitate to contact Alison, Peter Esmee or Sonia.

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

We have had 24 paddling sessions during the year, most of these have been on Saturday mornings, with a few on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (Spring and Summer). The number of paddlers per session has ranged from 7 up to a maximum of 16 paddlers during the year. New paddlers have joined us, some with relevant experience and some trying out paddling for the first time, all are welcome! We have been able to run sessions with smaller numbers thanks to Sashiko, our 10 person boat.

April 2024: Spring cleaning started e.g., cleaning the boats, bailing out and maintenance as needed, thanks to those that regularly do this less glamorous aspect of Dragon Boating. Esmee also began training some new helms. Congratulations to John, Nicky, Andy, Jenny and Alison who all became OPFL helms! With the addition of so many more helms, we were able to offer consistently regular paddles.

May 2024: Several of our paddlers took part in the GB Outrigger National Sprints competition which Sarah Crofts marshalled and helped organise. The paddlers had an amazing time competing in races, developing their outrigger skills and experiencing the support of all the other paddlers there.

June 2024: Wally joined us for a paddle! It was great to be able to still run an evening paddling session despite only having a few paddlers all thanks to Sashiko.

July 2024: The Olympic torch traveled in a dragon boat on its way to Paris! For the first time, Dragon Boating was a demonstration sport in the Paris 2024 Olympics. We hosted a Didcot scout group for a paddle. They had an amazing time and the scouts kindly donated after their session. Thanks to all those OPFL paddlers that supported this session. Towards the end of the month, several paddlers helped with the DSC maintenance day.

August 2024: We had several lovely summer paddling sessions run by our newly qualified helms. With the warmer water, we took the opportunity to practice some man overboard drills - well done all involved in this very important practice! We had a very lovely but sad goodbye paddle for Sally. We are very grateful for all of her work as membership secretary and will miss her very much.

September 2024: Sylvie organised for a group of medical professionals who had all had a cancer diagnosis to come and paddle with us. It was lovely to meet them all and we had a beautiful paddle on the lake.

October 2024: Sylvie took part in The Big Strong Lasses marathon relay in York. Congratulations Sylvie and team mates! What an amazing thing to be part of.

January 2025: A new years lunch was organised by Jennie and held at the Red Lion in Oxford, with a great turn-out of members!

February 2025: Our not-so-new-anymore helms took part in first aid training at DSC. Thank you very much to Jean from DSC for running an amazing course.

March 2025: We celebrated the life of our friend, OPFL paddler, trustee and treasurer, Susan Renn. We miss her no nonsense approach to life and all its problems and remember fondly all the amazing things she did, not just for OPFL but for the other charities and social groups that she was a part of. Here's to Susan.

March 2025: Esme joined our OPfL team of Trustees.

4. Social Media

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 and International Men's Day. We will continue to do so and encourage all members to comment on, like and share postings when they can.

Through the WhatsApp group, we communicated occasional opportunities to participate at events with other clubs here and abroad e.g. Barcelona, Vogalonga, and Donegal. More locally we keep the club up to date with events e.g. Oxford Breast Buddy Group. Members also share Dragon Boat related trivia and photos - which always go down well.

We also now have a dedicated Whatsapp group for organising paddles and keeping track of paddle attendance. If you are not already on this group then please let Leslie or Jennie know.

5. Membership 162 on database. Im trying to figure out how to email everyone on the list to confirm their email addresses and/or inclusion in the database.

- **WhatsApp Groups** (membership will overlap between groups, depending on roles)
 1. **'Dates' group who are active paddlers or paddle regularly = 39 (34 last year)**
 2. General OxPFL group = 50 (50 last year)
 3. Coaches and Helms group = 16 (18 last year)
 4. Committee = 12 (last correspondence was July 2024)

The 'Dates' WhatsApp group (highlighted) run by Jennie and Leslie *probably reflects our active membership over the last year.*

Several people 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 fewer finding us via posters (Maggie's Centre), and our book-marks.

A nZew recruitment group is in the pipeline for people to be able to share recruitment ideas and help with tasks such as putting up posters, making social media posts etc

6. Financial review

Income

During 2024-25 OxPFL **received £1,157.17** income via membership Standing Orders (£295.00), paddling fees/donations (£817.17), Scouts group paddle donation (£45.00).

Expenses

Our total outgoing costs during the year totalled **£1,456.85**. Principal items were insurance (£636.85), berth fees to Dorchester Sailing Club (£120) and lake use fees (£332.50).

In addition we have paid for a one-day First Aid training course for 5 helms (£210), and for helm training for the 5 new helms (£157.50).

There is a shortfall of £299.68 during the year 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025.

Membership donations

Approximately 10 members have paid either a full or partial membership donation directly into our account. Whilst this is an optional donation at £20 per year, it is very good value for money. Given our membership figures, i.e., 34 people that currently paddle, some more regularly than others, this is not reflected in the number making membership donations.

Paddling session donations

These are to cover the cost of us using the lake. The SumUp card-reader process is running more smoothly than last year, and we agreed not to ask for donations from those trying out OxPFL for the first time. We will take a vote at the AGM about increasing the recommended paddle donations from £3 to £5 per paddle.

Keeping a record of who paddles and when, and reconciling this with payments is an important function.

Looking ahead

In previous years grants have helped to keep us in credit. Assuming OxPFL wants to be self-sustaining in future years we need to take action. Options may include:

- A detailed reconciliation of membership, and make a better 'case' for donations.
- Being more proactive about regular paddlers setting up standing orders for membership donations, currently at £20.00 per year.
- Ensuring that we maximize our ability to claim Gift Aid by recording paddlers' names against paddling donations.
- Paddle more often - thus generating more session donations
- Increase Paddling Session payments - currently at £3.00 per session
- Have an incentive system whereby people that make membership donations have a reduced paddling session payment.
- Apply for grant funding

7. Recognition and thanks

- Thanks to Jennie and Lesley for arranging paddling sessions - please watch out for their messages on the WhatsApp 'dates' thread (not the general info thread).
- Gratitude to our old and new helms and regular paddlers that keep our sessions running, when the weather does not prevent us.
- Huge thanks to Esmee for running helming training for existing, and new helms.
- Thanks to Nicky 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 and Anne-Marie who continue to keep up our social media presence, and to Michelle for working on our website and Toby for troubleshooting this year.
- Thank you to all those with roles mentioned above who put in time during the year to make sure all club administration activities are covered so we can all enjoy being out on the water.
- Thank you to Alison and Peter for their hard work and between the two of them doing the work of 5!
- Lastly thank you to all of the OPFL community for making the club such a welcoming, warm and supportive group to be a part of.

8. Looking ahead and priorities for the coming year

To continue with our recruitment efforts, establish a more secure financial footing and re-supply the committee and roles required to make the club what you would like it to be.

To add a final trustee to make it a team of 5.

Appendix - Charity role descriptions

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.

Secretary role description

The secretary helps keep the administration running for the club. This includes preparing agendas and taking minutes at meetings, helping to prepare the Annual Report, and keeping the membership lists up to date. All of our administration is kept on a secure Google Drive, where we have templates for everything. In addition we run a database (BREVO) for emails and campaigns, again we use templates for emails. Candidates for this role need to be comfortable with administration tasks and using Google Drive (guidance can be given if you are new to this). The 'info@oxfordpfl' email is assigned to the secretary, so that information concerning the charity (requests for info, new members, insurance renewals etc) come into one place. This role would suit someone who has an interest in or experience of administration.

Oxford Paddlers for Life interim financial report for 27May2025 AGM

Barclays bank balance as of 15May2025 = £4690.21

Income 1Apr 2024 to 18 Mar 2025			Outgoings 1 Apr 2024 to 18 Mar 2025			
		Notes				Notes
Quarterly/annual donations via Standing Order	£295.00	From 6 members	Insurance	Circle Marine	£276.73	Paid 12Jun2024
Paddle session donations via SumUp & BACS*	£817.17	For all paddles between 1Apr2024-31Mar2025		Towergate Elite Rowing policy	£360.12	Paid Jan2025
Amazon credits	£0	Amazon Smile	Dorchester Sailing Club	Berthing fees	£120.00	Paid 27Aug2024
Other credits	£45.00.00	Scouts session 6Jul2024		Lake use fees (1Jan2024-30Jun2025)	£105.00	Paid 27Aug2024
				Lake use fees (1Jul2024-1Jan2025)	£227.50	Paid 27Jan2025
*NB an additional 4 members have paid £20 annual membership via SumUp			First Aid training	5 paddlers trained	£210.00	Paid 28Feb2025
			Helm training	5 helms trained	£157.50	Summer 2024
TOTAL INCOME	£1157.17		TOTAL OUTGOINGS		£1456.85	

NOTE: There is therefore a shortfall of £299.68 during the year 1 Apr 2024 up to 31 Mar 2025

