**Carlisle Canoe Club Cumbria Canoeists AGM 2023**

Looking back to the end of last year the Club renewed its affiliation to British Canoeing with 131 members comprising a good mix of youth, senior and families. During the summer months our club evenings were well attended with a constant stream of people looking to see if they would enjoy the sport. A number of these people subsequently joined the club.

I am pleased to announce that the Club has been successful in retaining Quality Club Status again this year having completed the new online format which is user friendly and intuitive. Thanks go to everyone who has worked to help us achieve this status.

**Training:**

Building on last year’s skills development, we have taken further action to develop the general paddling skill base in the Club and are working to develop a structure for delivery of white-water skills sessions working with Cumbria Canoeists as well as Antony at Border Kayaks to run a series of sessions through the winter that fit in with our members paddling requirements.

Now that we are in our winter season the evening pool sessions are progressing well with a good turnout of individuals wanting to progress paddling skills and who want to learn how to roll.

We have continued to provide support to members who want to progress their leadership and coaching qualifications within the club – we would like to recognise and thank the regional team (Cumbria Canoeists) for their continued support and assistance in this area, in particular their assistance with funding. Congratulations are extended to Norrie Brown in the club for passing the Paddle Sport Touring Leader Assessment which means we can further add to the schedule of events that members can participate in.

Other formal training that members have taken part in this year includes the British Canoeing Training CPD Event at Bendrigg Trust (Killington Reservoir) as well as the Paddlesport Instructor Course, Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Training and White Water Safety and Rescue courses.

**Events:**

The annual sponsored roll took place in March raising £467 to help two charities nominated by our members. These were North Cumbria Search and Rescue (charity which supports the emergency services by providing a search and rescue service for those in need in the North Cumbria area, or further afield if requested - <https://www.ncsar.uk/>), and the Jubilee Trust (charity which provides tall ship sailing experiences to truly mixed ability crews - <https://jst.org.uk/>)

As part of our winter pool sessions we ran a fun session for the kids supported swim group who use the pool before us. As was the case last year they loved it! We have organised paddling taster sessions for the local cadets/scouts/guides aimed at introducing them to the sport. Again they were enjoyed by all who took part.

In May we teamed up with the Eden Rivers Trust to do a litter pick and Balsam Bash (a non-native invasive weed) from the Sands Rapid up to the Memorial Bridge. 30 volunteers turned out with a significant amount of litter collected from the banks and the water. This was undertaken as part of British Canoeing’s #BigPaddleCleanUp which aims to make our waterways a better place to paddle.

We also fielded two excellent teams to the annual Tiger Boat Race organised by Cumbria Canoeists at Derwentwater. Whilst no trophies were won, we all had an excellent evening and are looking forward to the 2024 event.

Towards the end of the summer we held a Family Paddle and Fun day on Ullswater which saw a number of members enjoying the last of the summer sun (and wind) in and on a variety of craft. Our last night on the river was celebrated in style with a BBQ – forecast heavy rain and high river levels meant that the time of this was brought forward giving us more time to enjoy good food and great chat.

**Trips:**

Weather has played a significant role in our paddling this year – on some occasion’s river levels were too low whereas on others they were too high for training evenings to take place. We have reminded paddlers to check water levels before paddling and to discuss the necessary skills on moving water. High levels prompted us to introduce river level go/no go gauge to help coaches decide if river is ok for session to continue to ensure the safety of our members. In addition we have also introduced a pre-paddle safety brief prompt card which is used by the trip/event leader(s)/coaches as an aide-memoire of discussion points/safety checks required before going on the water.

The weather also played a role on some of our lake paddles, and I would like to extend the club’s thanks to John Roelich and Steve Martin for their guidance and for leading the Jim Wilson Memorial Paddle in September on what was a pretty windy/blustery day.

Thanks are also extended to Cumbria Canoeists for supplying qualified leaders to run trips aimed at building paddlers skills. We have a series of these in the calendar for the winter season and feedback from participants has been excellent. We’ve also had a number of members taking part in peer paddles with paddling taking place both locally and further afield and this pattern will continue in the future.

Looking ahead to 2023/24 we have also mapped out dates for our recurring events (e.g. Christmas Paddles, Sponsored Roll, Easter Paddle, Family Fun Day, Jim Wilson Memorial Paddle) to assist our members with planning ahead – fingers crossed for good weather and great paddling!

**Bridget Ennini, Chairperson Carlisle Canoe Club, November 2023**