



Rowing Ireland Board Bulletin

April 2016

This Bulletin summarises some of the items discussed and decisions made at the Rowing Ireland Board meetings held between January and April 2016.

1 Strategy

- The 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan will be updated for the period 2017 – 2021. Given the continued relevance of the themes and targets of the current plan it is not anticipated that much will change. The focus will be on delivery rather than on changes in direction or priorities.
- Consideration was given as to how the resources of the Board and staff could be better utilised to achieve more progress on delivering the strategy. Maximising the contribution of staff, the Board, clubs and volunteers is vital if we are to deliver on key strategy areas such as Club Development, Participation, Commercial Funding, Retention, HP Development.

2 Governance

- Following the Rule changes at the 2015 AGM, Mike Heskin was appointed to the Board as an independent director.
- Neville Maxwell joined the Board on his appointment as Connacht Representative
- The Audit Committee Terms of Reference were revised and updated.
- RI's degree of compliance with the Sport Ireland Governance Code will be considered at the May Board meeting.
- A Masters Rowing subcommittee is being established
- The CEO's 2016 KPIs were approved.

3 Club Development

- Club Development was identified once again as a priority for the coming year
- We need to find volunteers to support the club development programme. These volunteers will be trained in club development techniques.
- It is intended that the club mark template - refined for rowing club use - be piloted over 4 or 5 clubs in 2016.
- We need to plan for supporting clubs in a recruitment campaign to maximise the benefits of exposure during the Olympics.

4 Coach Development

- A Coach registration and licensing system was published

5 High Performance

- Equipment
 - The following purchases were approved: eight C2 ergometers, a portable coaching launch, blades and the sale of excess equipment was agreed.
- Squads in Training
 - Pre-season training has gone well and all crews benefited from the Seville training camp.
 - Results in World Cup 1 were considered generally to be very satisfactory
- The Olympics
 - There is reasonable confidence that at least one further crew will be qualified for Rio at Lucerne.
 - Discussions are ongoing with the IOC regarding travelling reserves for both Olympic boats.
- High Performance Working Group
 - The Board has set up a working group consisting of N Maxwell, M Heskin and the CEO to produce a full report and recommendation by June on HP structures post Rio.

6 Irish Rowing Championships (IRC)

- Both the current HPD and the Lead Coach as well as the previous HPD had requested that the IRC be rescheduled to a later date. The main reasons for the request were:
 - to allow relevant senior rowers to concentrate on training for, and participating in, the High Performance Programme from October through to August
 - to provide home based competition for HP rowers
 - to extend the active rowing season for all senior rowers through the summer months.
- It was proposed that the 14 Senior Championships be moved to September and structured on a heats, repechage, semi final, final basis. This would help to comprehensively establish senior rankings.
- It was agreed that if this were to happen it was essential that regattas be held between mid July and mid September.
- Club forums were organised to communicate this proposal and to seek feedback before finalising the details for submission to the April EGM for approval.

- The feedback from the forums made it clear that there were significant concerns regarding the proposal and it was decided that the proposal would be put to the EGM for implementation in 2018.

7 International Competition

- Home International funding would be maintained at current levels for 2016 and 2017 but individual contributions would be increased by €100 pp thereafter.
- The Coupe Committee propose to extend the number of countries participating in the Coupe de la Jeunesse
- The Commonwealth Games which will be held in Belfast in 2021 will probably include a junior rowing programme and this will have implications for RI

8 Domestic Competition

- The Board will underwrite, through a loan, the cost of the 2016 Lough Rynn regatta in the event of cancellation. The Board will also host a VIP lunch at the regatta to reflect our appreciation of the initiative taken by Leitrim County Council in developing the course.

9 Branches

- 2016 Branch Development plans are being drafted

10 Finance

- The 2015 Core accounts showed a deficit of €20k giving an overall negative variance vs budget of €20k.
- The 2015 HP accounts showed a surplus of €13k giving an overall positive variance vs budget of €12k.
- The 2016 budget was approved by the Board. The Core and HP operations are budgeted to breakeven.
- We are targeting securing up to €20,000 in commercial sponsorship for the Olympic crews from potential sponsors and supporters.

11 Communications

- It was agreed to organise a RI conference on the 15th October in the Red Cow Hotel, Dublin.

12 NRC

- The NRC course needs to be upgraded. The options are being considered.

13 FISA

- The Board forwarded their opinions re the proposals following the National Rowing Federations Conference held by FISA. A major issue is the proposal to drop the LM4- from the Olympics, a proposal which RI opposes.
- The proposal by British Rowing to FISA that *“young people with dual nationalities growing up in countries such as Northern Ireland can choose which nation they represent once they have left school and are no longer dependent on their parent’s place of residence”* was felt to be unclear in its reference to the difference between junior and senior rowers. Rowing Ireland would support a proposal which stated that *“young people with dual nationalities growing up in countries such as Northern Ireland can choose which nation they represent once they have left the junior rowing grade.”*

14 Irish Coastal Rowing Federation (ICRF)

- The rapid development of coastal rowing in NI was noted. RI intends to establish greater clarity regarding the relationship between RI and the ICRF. A meeting was held with the ICRF to explore issues of common interest. The ICRF made some suggestions following the meeting and these were considered by the Board.

F Coghlan
Secretary
Rowing Ireland
April 2016