



Gairloch Boat Club

Newsletter July 2025

Chairs view of the first three months in post.

When I took over the role of Chair in March, one of my main concerns was whether we would find new Trustees to step into the roles left by the departure of Phil, Alistair, Fiona and Janet D. The four of them, along with Janet and Morven have been stalwarts of the club since way before I arrived in the area. I always knew they would be a hard act to follow.

My fears were groundless as fortunately a number of people stepped forward and have proved over the last three months to be equally enthusiastic and capable. As a club we are lucky to have three new Trustees: Clare as Secretary, Mike as Treasurer and Bruce as a Trustee. Janet and Morven bring their years of knowledge to the Trustee team. Joan is not a Trustee but is proving to be a very able membership secretary. Thank you all.

The success of the club hangs on its members and volunteers. One of Clare's initial tasks was to establish who does what, what they actually do and whether they were happy to continue doing what they do. The Trustees almost have a clear understanding of how the multitude of tasks required to keep the club functioning (grass cutting, boat maintenance, catering, etc, etc) are done and by whom. We are still trying to pin down a few tasks to people.

The club has been running successfully for many years, and the demographic of the membership seems to change over the years. For some reason rural sailing clubs in general seem to struggle to attract junior members. We had a meeting with Brian Pahlmann the RYA regional development officer recently and he noted we were not alone in this issue. He even mentioned that the RYA has seen a decrease in membership over the last few years. Janet and Fiona have done a sterling job at encouraging new juniors into the club, but we still only stand at three regulars and two more occasional junior sailors. Somehow, we need to attract more junior and family groups into the club and then keep them. I don't think there is a quick way of doing this, but something we need to gradually chip away at. Equally, anything we can do to encourage other local people to try sailing and hopefully develop a life-long passion for it must be good. There are several articles in the newsletter indicating events that have already been run to this effect.

As Chair, one of my responsibilities is to look into, chase, and apply for funding/grants with a view to upgrading our aged fleet of Toppers. As many of you will be aware, identifying potential funding opportunities and then applying for them is a time consuming and often thankless task. We have been successful in having a Tesco Stronger Starts token collection in Ullapool Tesco. We were unsuccessful this time in gaining funding from the Postcode Lottery, Mowi, Community Regeneration Fund and the Weir Charitable Trust. However, as funding opportunities appear and if they seem to have potential we will continue to apply. A number of grants require match funding,

but currently we do not have the funds to consider this for high value purchases, but if there is interest to do some specific fund raising, this could be a possibility. At some point we will be successful, and we will be able to purchase some new boats. In the meantime, if anyone becomes aware of people or organisations who might be able to help us, point them my way.

Finally, Janet and Duncan continue to do an incredible amount for the club both behind the scenes and in person and without their ongoing commitment there would be a lot less going on. Thank you to both. However, we do need to have other people stepping forward to begin taking on some of their roles as I'm sure they would like to ultimately step back in the future. Any volunteers, please get in touch.

Junior Sessions



Four juniors – Ashliegh, Charlie M., Finlay and Olivia attended the first session. The conditions were challenging after a break of seven months!

Unfortunately, due to chicken pox or prior engagements only Olivia managed to come along to our second session. Well done to Olivia for braving the strong winds and choppy waters.



At our last session Charlie showed just how confident he has become by sailing a Feva singlehanded.

Level 2 Course



A huge thanks to Ric, Alistair, Bruce, Cameron, Colin, Duncan, John M., Peter and Zoe who all helped in various ways to prepare, rig and finally tow the Wayfarer to the pontoon for the start of the course.

Saturday proved to be a day to do theory work as the winds were too strong to sail. Fortunately, Sunday was a much better day and all the students managed time on the water.



Congratulations to Christian and Rachel on achieving their GBC Level 2 Certificates. Sorry to say that, due to a knee injury, Kevin was unable to complete the course. Many thanks to Ori from Lochcarron Sailing Club for leading the course.



Instructor led sailing sessions with Roger



Christian, Rachel and Zoe have enjoyed a couple of sessions with Roger sailing a single-handed dinghy. A few more sessions and they should feel confident enough to join in the regular Sunday sessions.

Challenge Regatta 2025

Congratulations to first local Bruce McLean. The full report on the regatta can be found on our website <https://www.gairlochboatclub.org.uk/challenge-regatta-2025>

Lochcarron Sailing Club Regatta

The regatta is the weekend of 23-24 August. Our club is always well supported by Lochcarron sailors, it would be great if we could return the support by attending their regatta. They have a number of dinghies available, if you don't fancy taking your own. Please contact Angela to find out more and to book a dinghy lochcarronsc@gmail.com

Thursday Race Sessions

The next practice racing session is on Thursday 7th August. Ric will run an additional clubhouse session on Thursday 28th August.

Sailing Skill and Safety Skill Sessions

Many thanks to Ric for running two safety skill sessions in May. The Challenge Regatta proved that the drivers and crew were up to the job of keeping everyone safe.

Don't miss the next sailing skill session on Sunday 7th September.



Website Calendar

Please remember to sign up for events and sailing sessions on the website calendar. By doing so this will give us a clearer picture of numbers planning to attend. This information will also help inform safety crews of expected turn out and cancel sessions if there is a lack of interest.

The Board of Trustees