PENTLAND CANOE CLUB

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

1 APRIL 2025 – 31 MARCH 2026









"Promoting participation in paddlesport in the Thurso, West Caithness and North Sutherland area"

DETAILS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Scottish Charity Number:	SC053300
Correspondence Address:	c/o Sandaig, Crescent Street
	Halkirk
	Caithness
	KW12 6XN
Email address	mail@pentlandcanoeclub.org.uk
Website	www.pentlandcanoeclub.org.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com/PentlandCanoeClub
X	@PentlandCanoe

CHARITY TRUSTEES

- Gary Youngson (Chair) (Until 2026)
- Ken Nicol (Secretary) (Until 2027)
- Gary Stronach (Treasurer)* (Until 2028)
- Emily Kearl (Until 2026)
- Yvonne Pollard (Until 2026)
- David Shand (Until 2026)
- David Anderson (Until 2027)
- Leanne Deighan (Until 2027)
- Tracy Mackay (Until 2027)
- John Speirs (Until 2027)
- Nancy Speirs (Until 2027)
- Emma Summers (Until 2027)
- Eilidh Stronach* (Until 2028)
- Iain Baikie* (Until 2028)
- Silvia Bonati* (Until 2028)

* Trustees who were re-elected at the 2025 Annual Members Meeting to Serve on the Board from 1 January 2026

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Club's purposes are to promote the advancement of public participation in paddlesport in the Thurso, West Caithness and North Sutherland area. The key aims and activities are:

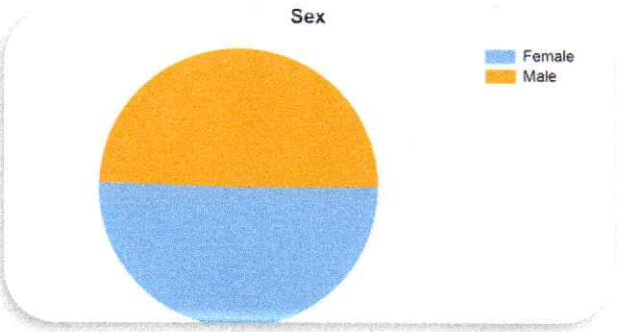
- to provide training and coaching; and paddling trips
- to provide opportunities for Members to try different aspects of paddlesport activities;
- to support club Members to gain paddlesport awards, this may include applying for financial assistance to other organisations;
- to provide information about paddlesport.
- work with other organisations to promote paddlesports and other related activities such as environmental awareness; access and water safety;
- financially assisting Members to attend courses and / or purchase equipment
- to run competitions and events

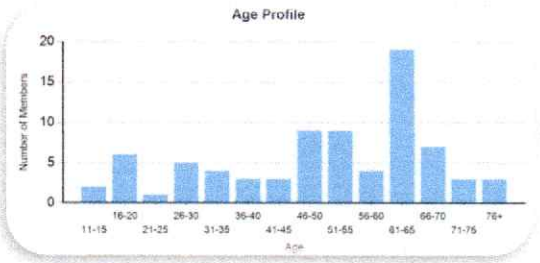
2025 MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Membership: 78

Gender Distribution

Female: 49%

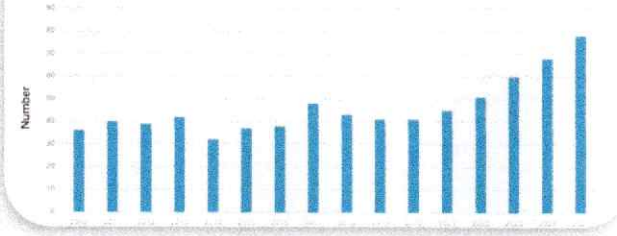




Average Age: 50

Average Membership
(2010 – 2025):
46

Club Membership (2010 – 2025)



THE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

This has been another busy and rewarding year for the Club. Despite facing one of the wettest Summers in recent years. Our sessions remained well attended, and the enthusiasm of our members continues to be the driving force behind our success.

Governance

A new Operating Procedure (Paddlesport Activities) was produced detailing the general operating protocols for the Club's paddlesport activities. Key Club documentation is available on the Club website (www.pentlandcanoeclub.org.uk).

Membership

Membership remained strong at around 78 members, with a healthy balance of male and female paddlers. During the year the Club welcomed several new members, and it's encouraging to see continued interest in paddlesport and the Club.

Training & Development

Training and development of paddlers remains is at the centre of the Club's activities. Activities have included:

- **2025 Club Volunteer Conference:** Organised by Paddle Scotland, this was well attended by our Club volunteers. The event offers valuable opportunities to connect with professional coaches, develop skills and meet other paddlers . 14 Club members attended. This year Club members were able to attend several formal paddling courses
- **2025 Summer evening Training Sessions:** This was our third full year at Scrabster beach. The Club activities are now well established at this venue This



continues to work well. Despite some unfavourable windy weather towards the end of the season, which resulted in some evenings being cancelled the sessions were well attended. On one evening there were 32 paddlers on the water.
The Club is grateful for all the support for Scrabster Harbour Trust during the season



- **2025 Joint Club evening training sessions**: Organised by Iain Baikie and Gary Youngson, with support from Gerald Urquhart and John Speirs, these continue to help paddlers progress toward Sea Kayak and Leadership Awards. Several of our newer paddlers started to attend these sessions which is encouraging.
- **2025 Female Paddler Sessions:** Female paddler sessions organised by Iain Baikie and Gary Youngson with support from John Spiers. The Tuesday night session was for female paddlers only in pursuit of developing their skills towards awards or coaching roles. This was well attended and well received by the group with some great feedback.



- **2025/26 Pool Training Sessions:** The winter pool training sessions continued to be well attended. The warm and safe environment provided an excellent opportunity for individuals to try the sport, while allowing other to maintain and further develop their skills. The Club is sincerely grateful to Highlife Highland and Thurso Leisure Centre for their ongoing support.



- **British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) courses:** Club members actively participated in a range of formal training and assessment courses delivered under the British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) framework. These opportunities supported skill development and progression across multiple disciplines. Courses attended included:
    - Sea Kayak Safety & Rescue Training
    - White Water Safety & Rescue
    - Paddle Sport Safety & Rescue
    - Sea Kayak Leader Training
    - Sea Kayak Leader Assessment
    - Sea Kayak Award
    - Core Coach Training
    - Paddlesport Safety & Rescue Course Moderation



We extend our congratulations to David Shand, who successfully achieved his Sea Kayak Leader Award this year.

Looking ahead, several additional training courses are being planned.

Paddling Activities

Summer 2025 saw Pentland Canoe Club members embark on a series of memorable paddling adventures across the area. Destinations included Scourie, Kyle of Tongue, Stroma, and the East Coast of Caithness. These outings were particularly special as they welcomed participation from several newer members who have developed the skills and confidence to join sea trips, an encouraging sign of growth and progression within the Club.



In addition to these local excursions, the Club also enjoyed several standout events:



- **Freswick Castle** Our annual outing to Freswick Castle was a highlight of the season. We extend heartfelt thanks to Ben MacGregor for organising the event, and to Murray Watts for his generous hospitality. Gathering in such a remarkable setting made the day truly memorable. Joined by paddlers from East Sutherland Canoe Club, we had 30 boats on the water—a fantastic turnout and a celebration of community spirit.
- **Orkney Sea Kayak Symposium** Ten Club members attended the Orkney Symposium, enjoying a mix of coastal paddling and coaching sessions. Looking ahead, the Shetland Sea Kayak Symposium is scheduled for July 2026, and several members are already planning to take part.
- **Greece Expedition** A group of seven members travelled to Greece to explore the waters around Kefalonia and Ithaca. With excellent weather and stunning scenery, the trip offered a chance to paddle in new environments and deepen friendships. Special thanks to John Speirs for organising.
  Plans are already underway for a return visit in June 2026.





Despite challenging conditions including periods of high wind, snow, and low water levels, the winter months saw our more experienced paddlers continue to get out on the local river and lochs, with several members gaining valuable new experiences.





Club Stores

The Club currently maintains four storage containers, which received seasonal upkeep during the year, including the application of preservative coatings at the start of summer. Sincere thanks to all members who contributed their time and effort to this essential maintenance.

Club Equipment



During the period, the Club was pleased to invest in the purchase of two new sea kayaks, made possible through generous support from Club Sport Caithness (formerly the Caithness Sports Council). Alongside this external contribution, the Club committed £1,800 from its own funds to complete the purchases.

The Club was also fortunate to receive a donated Pyranha Master kayak, which will be used to support training sessions at the local swimming pool, an excellent addition to support our indoor programme.

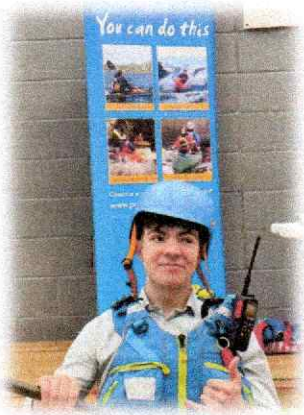
In September 2025, Club has launched a project to expand its fleet of sea kayaks with the goal of making paddlesport more accessible and inclusive for all. The estimated cost of this initiative exceeds a £35,000 investment. This will be the biggest capital project in the Clubs history. To date the Club has nearly 90% of the funding required to make the project a reality. The are grateful for the financial support received from: Get Active Highland; The Highland Council; Stroupster Wind Farm Community Fund; Watten Wind Farm Trust; The National Lottery Community Fund, KP Technology; RDI Renewables and a former club member.

Community Activities

The Club continues to be active in the local community. Events have included:



- **Beach Cleans:** Beach cleans were carried out at Scorrie Island and the Latheron area led by Nancy and John Speirs in collaboration with Caithness Beach Cleans. Thank you to all volunteers who contributed to this important work to look after our coastlines so that these can be enjoyed by all and protect our wildlife.
  In addition to the beach cleans, members supported an event to clean the Thurso Boating Pond.
- **Armed Forces Day:** Club members again supported the Royal British Legion Armed Forces Day. Assistance was provided for their Duck Race.
- **1st Thurso Scouts:** The Club delivered a come & Try session for a number of scouts at the Thurso Leisure Centre.
- **Thurso High School Clubs Fair:** Supported a Thurso High School clubs event, promoting local activity opportunities for S1 and S2 pupils and encouraging participation, confidence, and social development.
- **Caithness International Science Festival:** 7 members supported the event. This allowed the Club to engage with the local community. Many young people played in the kayaks and canoes and hopefully with will encourage to take up the sport at some point.
- **Caithness Club Sport:** Yvonne Pollard and Ken Nicol continue to support the organisation and represent the Club at meetings.









Paddle Scotland



Emma Summers and Nancy Speirs continue to represent the Club on the Paddle Scotland Access & Environmental Group. Their work focuses on promoting environmental awareness among paddlers across Scotland. They have had several of articles in Scottish Paddler.

At the 2025 Club Volunteer Conference, they demonstrated the principles to prevent the spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Ken Nicol continues his work as a Board member with Paddle Scotland.

Thurso Bay Community Watersports Hub

The Club has been actively collaborating with other local watersports organisations to establish the Thurso Bay Community Watersports Hub. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed, marking a significant step forward in this joint initiative.

The Hub aims to serve as a focal point for community engagement and development in the region, with the following key objectives:

- Promoting water safety across all activities
- Encouraging participation in water sports and highlighting their health and wellbeing benefits
- Supporting marine conservation efforts in the local area
- Increasing access to and involvement in water sports within Thurso Bay

This partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and environmentally responsible watersports community.

Acknowledgements

In closing, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to our Board, volunteers, helpers, coaches, and leaders. Your dedication and commitment are the foundation of our Club's continued success. We look forward to another safe, active, and inspiring year ahead.

Gary Youngson
Chair
Pentland Canoe Cub



2025/2026 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

A summary of Income / Expenditure for the reporting period (1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary on Income and Expenditure for the Reporting Period

Income	£62301.88
Expenditure	£6684.06
Surplus / [Deficit]	**£55617.82**

The income figures include:

- £22837.10 transferred from the Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium. The Club has become the custodian of these funds.
- £25245.00 in grants and donations for the purchase of new sea kayaks. This purchase will be in the period 2026/27.
- £5000 donation to the Club from a past Club member

When these exceptional items are removed, the net surplus was **£2535.72 .**

At 31 March 2026, the Club's total funds amounted to **£80631.03**. These funds are distributed across four designated Funds, as illustrated in Figure 1.

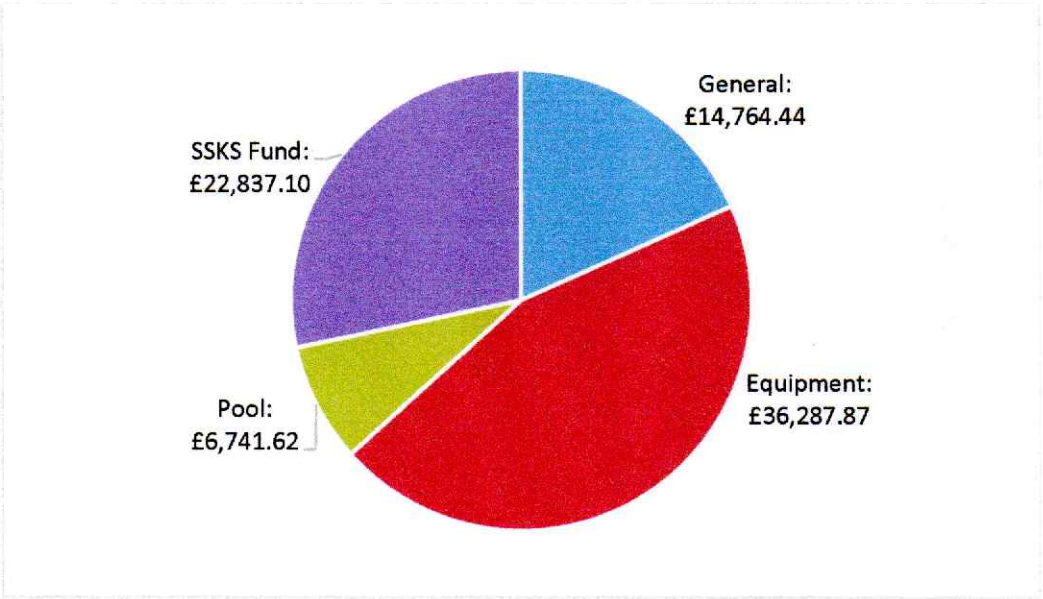


Figure 1: Fund Values at 31 March 2026

- **General:** Income into this fund is mainly from subscription fees. The fund is used to cover the general running expenses of the Club. These include memberships to organisations such Paddle Scotland; insurance and storage maintenance.
- **Equipment [Restricted[1]]:** Income from the members use of equipment is allocated to this fund. The fund is used to assist in purchasing new equipment or maintenance costs for current equipment.
- **Pool [Restricted[2]]:** Income into this fund is generated from the winter swimming pool sessions. The fund is used to offset the costs of purchasing equipment solely for swimming pool training or the running costs of these sessions.
- **Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium [Restricted]:** Through an agreement with the Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium Group, the Club is the custodian of their Funds and can only be released through their written instruction.

Annual Report Signed on behalf of the Trustees,

Signature: 

Name: Gary Youngson

Position: Chair

Date: 23/09/26

[1] These funds are classified as "Restricted" for operational purposes. The Board retains the discretion to reallocate them toward other initiatives that align with the Club's objectives.

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