

Waterlines

Dear Members,

As we face into the winter, we can reflect on a pretty satisfactory sailing season, considering the hand we were dealt.

It's true that so much that had been planned to celebrate the **250th anniversary** of the club had to be abandoned. However, during the depths of the first lockdown, the prospect of getting sailing at all wasn't looking very promising.

The decision to press ahead, to be as active as we were permitted, wasn't taken lightly. It required a fair bit of soul searching and quite a few systems to be put in place before it was deemed sufficiently safe to open. We received enormous support and guidance from **Irish Sailing** to help us with our decision.

I'd like to thank everyone who worked hard to insure that we could operate safely and maintain the good reputation of the club.

I'd especially like to thank all of you for complying with the systems that were put in place and for supporting your club during a difficult year.

Our thanks to **Sean Foley** for all his hard work during these strange times running a very successful and safe Bar, while managing the service of food.

With the extra work foisted upon us this year, we were especially grateful to have the help from **Robert Fox** maintaining the club. He worked tirelessly grass cutting, trimming hedges, painting and now that it's winter, fibre glassing and repairing boats. He has been a great asset.

Though it was as safe as we could make it, there are many members who could not take the risk of visiting the club to meet friends. We hope that 2021 will bring an environment that genuinely is safe enough for us all to get together.

We elected to **postpone** our 250th celebrations until next year. Without wanting to over-do it, we will celebrate the anniversary next year. **Think of it as the 250th + 1.**

Clinkerfest was meant to be one of the highlights. It has been rescheduled for the **June bank holiday weekend 2021.**

We will also plan to hold a celebration

Memento Book

It started out as the 250th anniversary year but it rapidly became a year that will be remembered for very different reasons. We are producing a booklet outlining the major events of the year.

**We've saved all the sailing news for the booklet.
It will closely follow this newsletter.**

Sunday Sailing

As mentioned above, this is going from strength to strength. The Optimist fleet has grown to about 12 boats. They are joined by Mirrors, 420s and the occasional Laser or Pico.



Mirror coaching has even had to be moved to Saturday in order to avoid clashing with the Optimists and 420s.



For anyone interested in **Sunday sailing**, we are there every **Sunday morning from 10:30**, weather permitting.

It's worth dropping down, if only for a chat and to see the activity.

Rowing Club

One of our close neighbours on the river is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The **Athlone Rowing Club** is in the process of building a new clubhouse. There is long association between our two clubs and their members.

Attached is a piece written by **Declan Walsh** outlining the history and many connections between both our clubs. Building is an expensive business, so any assistance would be gratefully accepted and appreciated by the rowing club.

during the **Annual Regatta**.

For obvious reasons, the **Christmas Party** has joined the long list of things that we cannot do this year. However, for the increasing number of sailors who sail each Sunday, it would be a pity to be a complete Scrooge about it. So on **Sunday the 12th of December**, the sailors will decorate their boats, don Christmas jumpers and go for a festive sail. It should be a great sight for anyone who would like to drop down to the club.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very **Happy Christmas** and a much improved 2021.

Stay safe.

John McGonigle
Commodore

Main Jetty

Much of the work of preparing the club for winter has been done. We'd like to thank those who helped with that work.

There remains however essential maintenance work to be done on the main jetty.

I'm sure the number of cracked slabs and worn or missing sections of wooden beams hasn't escaped your attention. Before it becomes a hazard to health and to the boats tied to it, **we must take action.**

We have bought the materials to carry out the repairs. Over the course of the winter we plan to organise **work parties** to bring this important resource back to it's former glory.

Web Talks

We are of course unable to host any winter talks this year. In order to make up for this, we hope to organise a few web talks.

We will let you know as soon as we have more information.

Future Development of the Club

Since it was first presented and discussed at the AGM a number of years ago, the planning of the development of the club has proceeded steadily. Part of the plan has always been to **address the increasing pressure on mooring space**. After considering several different possibilities, it was decided that a jetty to the south of the club would be the most achievable approach given the environmental and navigational constraints. However, we've been advised that any **water based development** is considered more complicated to get through the planning process than land based work. For that reason the committee have decided to submit **two separate planning applications**, in the hope that we could progress with the land based development while the jetty development is still been considered.

A development committee has been set up consisting of Garrett O'Neill, Oonagh Reid and Vincent Rafter. They have done great work to prepare for the planning applications.

Phase 1

The committee have agreed to apply for planning permission to do a number of upgrade works around the club. The works consist of:

1. Lowering the levels in the field behind the club to a level similar to the existing path at the back of the club (approx. 150mm below floor level). This means we will reposition the road behind the club and grass the existing road in front of the club.
2. Piping the surface water drain between the two fields, thus removing the winter lake.
3. Building a new boat shed.
4. Building new stores for the kitchen, furniture storage and a new office.

Phase 2

The planning subcommittee is also working on proposals for a new jetty to the south of the existing floating jetty. The proposed jetty is to be the same length as the existing but in a T format. It is intended that the new jetty will be piled and that the existing jetty will also be piled at this time.

Due to the site being a Special Area of Conversation we are not allowed to form a breakwater as per the North bight. The jetty will be west of the existing four moorings south of the club. Access will be by a bridge from the existing road level to a ramp similar to the existing floating jetty. The jetty will have power and water supply as per existing.

The jetty will be a separate planning application, hopefully before the end of the year and will include the Natura Impact Statement Report.

Members should be aware that no works will take place until existing loans are repaid and permission given by the membership to obtain new funding.