

South West Regional Development Team

Annual Consultative Report for 2018

What is the Regional Development Team?

Perhaps you have never heard of it.

This team is comprised of volunteers from British Canoeing members in the South West Region whose purpose, along with British Canoeing staff, is to encourage the sport of Canoeing in all its aspects. Our geography covers 7 counties from Gloucester in the North to Cornwall in the South and it works closely with the British Canoeing Area Development Officer, James Hinvés.

Many changes have happened in British Canoeing over the last few years and all the revised Regional Development Teams have all broadly the same terms of reference.

Originally the RDTs were all voted for on an annual basis and due to the large geography of this region it inevitably meant that we could not find an easy location for all members to be able to attend an Annual Consultative Meeting so we are trying a new approach this year to try and ensure more people have the opportunity to contribute and hopefully put themselves forward for the various roles available.

The Chairs of the RDT meet as a group along with the CEO and others of British Canoeing senior management 2-3 times a year and also as part of the new English Forum (was English Council) where this group includes all the chairs of the Discipline committees. Although the Coaching forums now are part of the RDTs there is no intention for the discipline committees to be incorporated in this grouping. Both groups are responsible to the board of British Canoeing and so provide a mechanism for members' views to be heard at that level.

How is the Team appointed?

In the new process only 3 roles - that of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, are elected on a biannual basis, which last happened in late 2017 at Exeter and these posts are due for re-election in the autumn of 2019. All other roles are appointed from volunteers. Why not consider volunteering and helping your sport?

Who is on the team now?

The key contacts can be found at [British Canoeing South West Region Key Contacts](#)

Communication has not been good so what are you doing about it?

The geography and size of our region is a challenge. In the past we have issued newsletters on a regular basis but a number of changes have occurred, for example, more information is sent via email direct from HQ these days, and the region has a Facebook group [South West Paddlers](#) where paddling information can be shared. We intend to issue a limited number of region-wide emails through HQ once an improved distribution system comes on stream during 2019.

We now have a regional presence on the British Canoeing website. This is work in progress and good pictures would be very welcome and also more articles for South West News.

What has happened over the year 2018?

South West Regional Development Team has had a large number of changes in personnel over the last 12 months, including the Chair, and is actively working towards better support for paddlers with our Area Development Officer across the South West. The geography of this region presents interesting challenges which we are developing new ways of working to improve visibility of the team and provide better support to paddlers at all levels and centres across the region.

Highlights of 2018

- Ongoing support for the River Dart and access to it
- Maintenance of British Canoeing- owned land. At the river Dart, signs, gate, tree work and fencing, and at Symonds Yat (through Symonds Yat Rapids Management Group) reinstatement of groynes
- Coaching Matters Events repositioned as club and coaches' events
- Awarding of small grants to clubs to promote leadership
- Competitive events in Slalom and Marathon and Polo
- Using video conferencing to allow more inclusive working across the region
- Use of Facebook South West Paddlers group to improve communication
- Initial set up of South West region website
- Increased interest in Open Canoeing
- More Paddle-Ability trainers trained in 2018
- Canoe Lifeguards active and developing

The following is the body of the report we sent to BC HQ for inclusion in the Annual Report for 2018

The region has had a number of personnel changes during the year and recognising the challenges the geography presents are actively looking at better ways of communicating to the 68 clubs and centres across the region in 2019 and further develop Stronger Together.

We have created the South West Paddlers Facebook site to ease communication challenges and also help with mutual support for paddlers across the region. We have both paddlers in the region and a large number of people come to enjoy this area from further afield. They all need information on the paddling opportunities in the region and we will be supporting Paddle points as part of this.

To give greater access to members across the region we are trialing use of video conferencing amongst the South West RDT and have held a few meetings this way as a means of allowing participation across large geographic areas.

Integration of the Regional Waterways Advisors, Region Coaching Reps and Paddle-Ability reps into the RDT will pay dividends in 2019.

Marathon continued to have a full programme, with 8 Hasler races across the region and 5 clubs qualifying for the Hasler Final at Norwich. Other races included the Bath to Bradford, Stour Descent, Poole Harbour Race and the Devizes to Westminster 125 mile race.

Slalom this year has had mixed fortunes within the region. Extreme weather caused the cancellation of the Dulverton div 3 and 4 races at the start of the season and one of the days racing at Symonds Yat in October. As with the majority of the events nationally numbers attending events have dropped slightly with the exception being Langham Farm where there was an increase in div 3 paddlers attending.

The big success for the year was the reintroduction of slalom at the Dart Country Park which even saw some new clubs giving slalom a go. Feedback from this new event was very positive and we would expect it to grow next year especially with a possible div 4 competition alongside it. There has also been a 7% increase in the number of nationally ranked boats from the region with a larger proportion of our paddlers now ranked in div 1.

Symonds Yat rapids have also had attention to misplaced rocks, due to high water levels on the river earlier in the year to ensure they are safe and a good experience for paddlers

Our Regional Waterways Advisor teams have been very busy maintaining our access to the River Dart and also has working well with local councils in the Devon and Cornwall area where a tree was across the centre span at New Bridge for a month or two which has been preventing paddlers getting on the river from the slab. The team in the South West successfully chased the Environment Agency and then Devon County Council who owns the bridge to clear it.

Regional Advisor Wessex is involved in improving the access at Langport where the local council is encouraging canoeists and others to visit the area. A new canoe hire business has started in the area and another on the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal.

Open Canoeing is seeing a resurgence of interest across the region with not only the traditional open canoe but also the OC1. The new personal performance awards should help to encourage more people to take up this aspect of the sport and we get a lot of support from the affiliated organization the Open Canoe Association who can help provide training and coaching in the discipline.

Our Canoe Lifeguard team is looking at developing training events and other activities to encourage further interest in Canoe Lifeguarding in the South West and will be developing this during 2019.

Paddle-Ability has seen an increase in the number of providers and centres of expertise which can provide support in this vital area.

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