



Chair Report October 2022

Introduction

This has been my second year as volunteer chair of Waterski & Wakeboard Scotland. I'm pleased to report that with the stability of our "skills-based" board and the industriousness of Calum Reid, our Chief Operating Officer, the governing body has continued to function smoothly over the last 12 months, attending to tasks and challenges as and when required.

I cannot thank everyone involved (paid and volunteer) enough for their efforts. It has been a pleasure to work with such a committed team.

Sometimes, for those participating in the sport, it is difficult to identify what the governing body actually does. For those individuals I'm happy to list a few of our activities over the last year:

- Creation and update of our vision and strategy for the sport in Scotland & presenting this to **sportscotland** for the continuation of funding.
- Ensuring that the sport is safe for all those that participate.
- Making sure that equality, diversity, and inclusion are always at the forefront of decision-making making and initiatives.
- Accessing funding opportunities for our clubs and individual members.
- Creation of, and adhering to, a financial budget for the year.
- Liaising with BWSW.
- Writing, and updating, all policies and systems around finance, HR, data management etc.
- Liaising with the local council.
- Organising coaching and competitions.
- Development of Advanced Driver Training Modules.
- Overseeing the management of the Town Loch National Training Site.
- Production of regular E-newsletters.
- Creation of new websites and online coaching resources.

After the limited travel possibilities of 2021, (which provided all water ski and wakeboard sites with increased numbers of participants), 2022 was always going to be more settled. Indeed, all sites across Scotland have noticed a settling of members and participants compared to 2021. Despite good spells of warm weather, all sites suffered from particularly windy conditions for much of the summer. Despite these challenges, Waterski & Wakeboard Scotland looks to have managed our budget appropriately and should be in a good position for the 2023 season.

sportscotland Partnership

The governing body-paid positions of Chief Operating Officer (COO), Development Officer (DO) and Development Coach (DC) are only possible through funding from **sportscotland**. At the beginning of the season, we met with **sportscotland** representatives to present our strategy for the next 3-years and the funding which we feel is necessary to allow this. Currently, we have sufficient funds for our full-time COO (Calum Reid) and part-time DO (Ali Brotherton) and DC (recently appointed Chris Heron). We laid out plans and goals which, if we are to achieve them, will require an uplift in funding

to full-time for the DO and DC positions. Meetings at the tail end of 2022 will determine if we have been successful in this bid for additional funding.

Midseason our Partnership Manager (Barry Cook) was moved to other areas and we met with our new Partnership Manager, Andrew Baptie. Andrew has been very supportive of our goals and I'd like to thank him for his help and guidance.

Operational Strategy

Our operational strategy has been refined and published since the AGM last year.

The vision is the same:

“To grow a community of people from all walks of life and backgrounds participating in our sports, having fun, sharing successes and developing into who they want to be”.

Whilst I'm sure this is something that we can agree with it doesn't give clarity for the day-to-day business of building the sport.

To address this, and create a meaningful framework of activity, we have employed a system of “objectives and key results”, essentially creating ideal goals (objectives) in all the areas we are addressing and then looking at the potential results that are required along the way, if we are to achieve these goals (key results). Our COO, DO and DC then have this framework to guide their activities. In addition, this approach now allows for better communication with **sportscotland**. If you are interested in this please speak to Calum, all input and ideas are always welcomed.

Competition and Courses

As a governing body competition and coaching is integral to our activities. Our DC will expand and cover this in his report, suffice it to say that in both waterskiing and wakeboarding, 2022 has seen a significant increase in participation at home and abroad, with representation (and podium positions) on National, European and World stages for the first time in many years. Thank you to everyone who commits to these challenges, and all those parents and volunteers without whom it would be impossible.

Post-Covid, the Scottish Wake Series was able to run again this year. The Backyard Slalom competitions we started in 2021 also ran again and grew to over 25 entries at the last competition of the year which is a fantastic success. Both the Scottish Wake Series and Backyard Slalom Series were sponsored by Scotland Nautique to whom we owe continued and significant thanks.

We have been working hard to help form a structured coaching pathway in wakeboarding and waterskiing. Whilst individual performance funding isn't available at the moment, through our DC and National Coach at Town Loch, we have been able to set up coaching clinics and establish a system of teaching for progression, much now available in video format on our new website.

Last year we looked at the possibility of Advanced Driving Training and, through the skills of Stuart Wood, this came to fruition in 2022. Stuart designed the course to help prospective slalom boat drivers provide the best experience for their skiers, both in and out of the course. This is the first course of its kind in the UK and ran 4 times over the season, with universal approval. Ali Brotherton designed and implemented a wakeboard driving course which was received with similar approval.

One of the great recent successes of BWSW has been the creation of “Friends of Tournament” (FoT). This is essentially a fundraising platform to help find and train future tournament skiers. In addition, they also provide sponsorship in international competitions.

We were very fortunate this year that FoT sent GB team member Glen Campbell for the weekend. Between FoT, and Waterski & Wakeboard Scotland, all those skiing over the weekend received their

sets and coaching at a hugely discounted price. Such was the positive response to the weekend, and the visible uplift in skills, that we hope to not only repeat next year but to encourage these newest competitors to step up to national competitions in 2023.

Town Loch National Training Site

Like all sites, this year's participation was going to be an unknown challenge. For Town Loch, the challenge at the start of the season was significant as we were without a seasonal coach. We were extremely fortunate that Chris Heron was able to step in and provide management, leadership, and guidance to the team. Chris has a degree of enthusiasm and drive that, together with the Management Committee, really helped the team make the most of the season.

Having now travelled to many sites across the UK and internationally, it's very clear that Town Loch is an extremely special place. Somewhere we should all be very proud to be a part of. I have yet to find a centre which is run as efficiently as Town Loch, open for as many hours and with as extensive world-class facilities (on and off the water). It was created as a centre of excellence, and it clearly is. What makes it even more special is that, even though we have seasonal staff, it is only through the goodwill of the members and volunteers that it works as well as it does. Please remember that Town Loch is your site, if you ever have any issues or concerns about how it is running then please step up and get involved either at the Management Committee level or as a volunteer.

Congratulations to all those currently involved in giving their time and energy to keeping Town Loch a world-class facility.

Membership and Adding Value

Membership fees from Affiliated Clubs are collected by BWSW, for now, Waterski & Wakeboard Scotland does not collect a direct membership fee. Instead, we look to the activity at Town Loch to help support our funding from **sportscotland**. As a board, it's part of our goal to build a community across Scotland and add value to being part of that community. This year, as noted above, we have increased our offering of courses, coaching clinics, competitions, new websites, and newsletters. In addition, we also purchased a "Community Boat" to help ensure that sites could stay operational should their boat run into problems mid-season. Our DC Ali Brotherton has been working hard on coaching booklets and videos which are available to all sites and club members.

I would like to thank everyone involved in making 2022 the success it's been and, with your help, look forward to an even better 2023.

Kevin Lochhead – Chair