

Barnstaple Pilot Gig Club

Business Plan February 2010 V6

History of Sport

Demand

Project Proposal (A three year plan)

Operational Considerations

Club Committee

Membership

Proposed Timetable

Expenditure & Projected Funding (A three year plan)



This is a living document and will evolve over time, details of amendments made can be found at the back of the proposal.

History of Sport

The sport of pilot gig racing has evolved from what was once a way of earning a living in hard times. In the days of early sail with few navigation aids and unreliable charts, local pilots were critical for safe navigation in coastal waters. As pilots faces stiff competition for each job so the pilot gig, powered by six stalwart rowers and a Cox evolved into a fast, light and stable seagoing craft. It became a race with the first pilot to reach the craft receiving the commission.

The forbearer of the modern gig is the Pilot Gig Treffry, which was built like so many early gigs at the William Peters yard in 1838. Now seen as the zenith of pilot gig design all modern gigs are built to mirror her exact lines and dimensions from Cornish Elm with a length of 32ft and a beam of 4ft 10in. It is testament to the quality and skill used in the construction of this gig that it remains in use by the Newquay Rowing Club to this day.

Based primarily in the south west of England, but with clubs in Holland, France, American and North Wales, the modern sport is governed by the Cornish Pilot Gig Association (CPGA). There are currently 53 registered clubs sporting some 141 gigs based across South West England.

Demand

Clovelly was the first gig club to be established on the North Devon coast in 2001, this was followed by Appledore (2003), Torrridge (2006) & lastly Ilfracombe in 2007. Each of these clubs now has a thriving membership who participate in CPGA regatta events across the West Country as well as other racing and social events such as the London Great River race.

The Taw estuary at Barnstaple is now the last area of high potential demographic demand without a Pilot Gig Club. Based on the strength of activity at the existing clubs and the interest expressed in founding a Barnstaple based club by a number of parities this business plan has been prepared to plan a way forward.

The purpose of the proposed club is to facilitate and promote the amateur sport of gig rowing in the Taw estuary area, and community participation in the same. In its first years the club has exceeded its target membership level of 40 members and presently has 50 founder members. With its large catchment area this could rise to 100 plus by the end of year three. If membership follows a similar model to other clubs in the area active rowers will consist of a mix of junior, adult and veteran (aged +40) rowers.



The club will set its membership levels so that they do not present a barrier to entry to anyone wishing to participate in the sport.

The strategic objectives of the club are;

- Increase access to a water sports activity in accordance with North Devon District Councils Structure Plan.
- To Create a new sporting opportunity for local people of all ages and disposition, living in the Taw Estuary area.
- Introduce a much needed community sporting activity to the Taw Estuary area which will compliment and enhance the existing provision.
- Together with established clubs, link communities and promote gig racing as a regular sporting activity in the Taw & Torridge Estuary area.

The Project Proposal (A 3 year plan)

It is the aim of Barnstaple PGC to raise sufficient funds over a three year period to provide the members of the club with the equipment required to participate in this exciting sport. This will allow the club to undertake both social community rowing on the River Taw and surrounding area and take part in racing regattas and other events across the region. Where funding targets are achieved earlier than expected the club will bring forward other targets to ensure that it is always moving forward to achieve its objectives.

Year 1

The primary objective in year one is to establish the club as a going concern with its own identity and image. It will then be the responsibility of the enabling committee and founding members to raise sufficient funds for the club to purchase its first racing gig.

Target One; raise sufficient funds to commission a tradition pilot gig, built in accordance with CPGA rules to be used for competitive racing and regatta events across the region. In year one the club will also need to purchase ancillary equipment; oars, road trailer, seats and safety equipment for this gig.

The Club has asked a number of accredited boat builders to tender for this project and received 4 quotes. The committee favoured the quote received from Brian Pomeroy of Dartmouth who has constructed gigs for a both Appledore, Ilfracombe & Dartmouth gig clubs. Based on the support received from one local benefactor Brian has been asked to construct the clubs first wooden gig with delivery due in January 2011 in time for the clubs first anniversary. The price quoted is a very favourable £18,500 based on existing stocks of seasoned elm. If new elm was purchased, it is likely that the price would rise in line with the average quoted by other builders of £22,000.

The committee considered carefully the option of purchasing a second hand gig from another gig club. It was established that a small number of second hand gigs change hands between clubs each year, many never appearing on the open market. Prices ranged from in excess of £12,000 to £8000 depending on age and the level of renovation required. It was also established that the cost of renovation for the lower priced gigs could be substantial. It was concluded that given the one of nature of Brian's offer to build a gig using existing stocks of elm,

the best option for the club would be to commission the construction of a new gig.

The club has been loaned with a purchasing option, an old wooden training gig and oars by a group of benefactors which has enabled it to establish an early semi independent presence. This has allowed it to start training its members in correct technique in anticipation of the arrival of the first race gig. The gig however cannot be used in races due to its non standard construction. It is hoped to purchase this gig and oars should funds allow in year 2.

Year 2

In year two the club will be looking to participate fully in the regatta racing season. This will be the first season that the club will be competing in there own gig and learning the necessary skills to handle the gig in race situations. The club will also be looking to increase the skill levels of all its rowers in training sessions. Once the cub has sufficient skills in depth it will look to open a junior section, to help insure the long term future of the club.

Target 2; raise funds to purchase the clubs loan gig and a new GRP training gig and associated equipment including new race specific oars. By purchasing a GRP training gig the club will be following a tried and tested model of development that has been used successfully by a number of clubs. Although these gigs cannot be raced in CPGA events they have many benefits as at £8200 they are substantially cheaper to purchase than a wooden gig and are significantly more resilient to wear and tear. The purchase of both a GRP gig and the loan gig will ensure that the wooden racing gig can be preserved for racing purposes ensuring it remains competitive and reducing the need for costly maintenance.

Year 3

By year three the club should be well established on the gig rowing circuit and looking to build on their initial achievements by fielding competitive race crews. The training of such crews would be aided by the purchase of a second GRP training gig which would allow more training crews access to the water at the same time in identical gigs.

Target 3; raise funds for a second GRP training gig and associated equipment including new race specific oars. As an alternative depending on the number of club members looking to compete in local regattas the club may consider the purchase of a second race gig. The determining factor over which option to take will be the availability of a suitable second hand gig from an existing club. The committee will make the decision regarding this matter based on the needs of the club membership.

Year 4 Onward

Based on the size of the catchment area there is the potential for Barnstaple Pilot Gig Club to grow into one of the largest in the area with in excess of 100 members. Based on the experience of other gig clubs this may necessitate the purchase of a second and even a third race gig over a period of time to allow more crews to race at local regattas. This will of course be dependant on members raising sufficient funds to finance and maintain these gigs.



Operational Considerations

Support has been pledged from adjoining clubs to assist Barnstaple PGC where possible until it has the necessary equipment and experience to achieve independent operation. In particular Barnstaple PGC members have been offered support, assistance and storage space by Torridge Pilot Gig Club. This means that members will have an opportunity to learn to row with an established club. Offers of support and practical advice have also been received from Ilfracombe, Dartmouth, Cattewater and Weymouth pilot gig clubs.

Support, advice and encouragement for this new community sports club has also been received from; British Rowing, The Cornish Pilot Gig Association, The Mayor of Barnstaple, Barnstaple Town Council, North Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Local Councillors, Barnstaple Lions and an increasing number of companies and individuals. Active Devon and North Devon District Councils Sports Development Officer have also given valuable advice.

It is the intention of the club to establish a junior section when the club has gained sufficient experience in the sport. The club is committed to exploring opportunities with Devon School Sports Partnership and North Devon District Councils Sports Unlimited Project. Preliminary discussions have already been held with representatives of Pilton School as well as Barnstaple Sea Cadets.

Having examined the tidal conditions in the Taw estuary in detail the enabling committee consider that rowing can take place at Barnstaple's Castle Quay for approximately 2 hours each side of high water on most tides. If the tides are not suitable the club will row from either Instow or Ilfracombe. This will also give club members the necessary experience of rowing in more challenging sea conditions which are not present at Barnstaple. The village of Instow in particular gives easy access to the open sea and both the Taw and Torridge estuary should conditions dictate that more sheltered training water is required. With 5 other clubs regularly using the area for training the potential exists for creating informal gig races similar to those run every Friday night in the isles of Scilly which have become a popular tourist attraction.

It is critical to the success of the project that a secure storage site is found for the clubs equipment in Barnstaple. Ideally this should be located close enough to

the waters edge that the gigs can be transported on purpose built trolleys rather than having to hitch up the trailer. The space required for a gig on a trailer is approximately 40ft x 8ft or the size of the largest shipping container. The club is in discussions with a number of other sports clubs, companies and private individuals to secure storage facilities which will meet their needs. At present the club has been offered ideal temporary storage facilities in Barnstaple close to the river Taw at minimal cost thanks to the support of a local benefactor.

The goal of all community clubs is to have their own facilities from which to base their operations, carry out repairs, hold events and function and act as a meeting point for all members. The enabling committee will continue to examine all possible options in this area including the shared use of facilities with other sports providers and businesses in the Barnstaple and surrounding area.

The Enabling Committee

Following a meeting of interested parties on 24th February 2010 the club was formally constituted and an enabling committee established to drive the project forward.

The Committee at present consists of;

Jon Ellwood	Chairperson
Kay Denham	Secretary
Robert Huskisson	Treasurer
Carl Williamson	Welfare
Andy Denham	Safety
Hazel Morgan	Junior Rowers
John Popham	Maintenance
Bob Weller	Fundraising

This enabling committee is supported by 42 founder members who have joined the club to help bring the project to fruition. It is hope that the number of founder members will grow rapidly as news of the new club spreads. As required the enabling committee may co-opt members on to the committee to help promote the club and assist in fundraising.

It will be the responsibility of the committee to establish the club as a going concern. Their initial duties will include applying to join the CPGA & Registering as a CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club), setting up a website and establishing the identity of the club. They will then be tasked with raising funds, purchasing gigs and associated equipment, finalising storage facilities and establishing club policies and procedures including documents dealing with the following;

- Health & Safety
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Equal opportunities
- Equity & Fair Play

Membership

Founder membership of the club is set at the following levels to attract people who would not normally consider the sport of rowing;

Individual member £16.00

Junior Member £10.00
Family membership £35.00 (2 adults & children in the same household)

Once the club has raised sufficient funds to place the order for its first race gig and the ancillary equipment that will allow independent operation, the club will set a date for its first Annual General Meeting. At this meeting all existing committee members will stand down and a full committee will be voted in by the members to take the club forward.

This committee will consist of;

Chairman
Club Secretary
Treasurer
2 x Rowing Captains

Plus up to 7 other committee members to assist with operation of the club.

The proposed membership fees once the club is capable of independent operation are envisaged to be as follows:

Family membership	£75.00 (2 adults + children in the same household)
Adult	£45.00
Concessions	£30.00 (Students and over 60's)
Junior	£15.00
Social	£10.00

In the first initial year it is proposed to offer a limited number (10) of individual life memberships at £350 in order to provide seed funding. At present 2 life memberships have been offered and accepted.

Proposed Three Year Timetable

Year 1

Raise funds to commission new race gig July 2010 (achieved)
Commission build July 2010 (achieved)
Procurement and build over 3 months to January 2011
Christen & Launch first race gig January 2011

Year 2

Raise funding for GRP training gig & associated equipment, March 2011
Launch & christen GRP training gig, April 2011

Year 3

Raise funds for second GRP training gig & associated equipment, March 2012
Launch & Christen second GRP training gig, April 2012

Expenditure & Projected Funding 2010-2012 (A Three Year Plan)

The following costs are based on best value prices quoted in March 2010. The committee have agreed to try and maintain a reserve fund of £3000 in each year to cover breakage's, unexpected eventualities and cost increases.

Year 1 2010 Expenditure (projected)

Race Gig	£18,500
Trailer	£ 2,674
Cover	£ 500
Oars	£ 2,400
Safety Equipment & Accessories	£ 500
Fixed Costs (insurance etc)	£ 1,000
Variable Costs (maintenance & fuel)	£ 300

Total Funding requirement	£25,874
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Year 1 2010 Income (projected)

Status of Income

Private Sponsor (race gig)	£18,500	£13,500 paid, £5,000 pending
Grant (Bridge Trust)	£ 1,144	Paid
Grant (NDDC)	£ 1,900	confirmed awaiting payment
Grant (Stars in Eyes)	£ 600	Paid
Private Sponsorship	£ 1,360	confirmed, awaiting payment
Grant (Co-OP)	£ 2,000	Awaiting response
Membership Fees	£ 1,468	48 x founder plus 2 life Paid
Fundraising Events	£ 2,000	£1470 raised (£530 to raise)

Total Income Year 1	£28,972	Reserve for year 2 £3,098
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Year 2 2011 Expenditure (projected)

Purchase Loan Gig & Oars	£ 3,500
GRP Training Gig	£ 8,500
Trailer	£ 2,674
Cover	£ 500
Oars	£ 2,400
Safety Equipment & Accessories	£ 500
Fixed Costs (insurance etc)	£ 1,000
Variable Costs (maintenance & fuel)	£ 750

Total Funding requirement	£19,774
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Year 2 2011 Income (projected)

Status of Income

Reserve (BF)	£ 3,098	Income from first year
Grant (Sport England)	£10,000	Application B/F Sept 2010
Grant (DCC)	£ 4,000	can apply Feb 2011
Membership Fees	£ 2,700	based on 60 x £45
Fundraising Events	£ 2,000	Based on last years
Sponsorship fees	£ 1,000	Trailer boards 4 x £250

Total Income Year 2	£22,798	Reserve for year 3 £3,024
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Year 3 2012 Expenditure (projected)

S/h Race Gig or GRP Training Gig	£ 8,500
Cover	£ 500
Oars	£ 2,400
Safety Equipment & Accessories	£ 500
Fixed Costs (insurance etc)	£ 1,000
Variable Costs (maintenance & fuel)	£ 1,000

Total Funding requirement **£13,900**

Year 3 2012 Income (projected)

Status of Income

Reserve (BF)	£ 3,024	Income from second year
Grant (Youth Opportunity)	£ 6,000	Requires a junior section
Membership Fees	£ 3,600	based on 80 x £45
Fundraising Events	£ 2,000	Based on last years
Sponsorship fees	£ 2,000	Trailer boards 8 x £250

Total Income Year 3 **£16,624** Reserve for year 4 £2724

In the view of the committee the above 3 year plan encompasses realistic fundraising targets and the likely price of equipment. The expected increase in VAT and any breakage's of equipment such as oars will be covered by reserve funds.