

## Expanding clubs workforce

In 2016 British Canoeing launched the pilot for Club Activity Assistant endorsement as a way of supporting clubs to increase their workforce helping to run activities within clubs. Following on from pilot it was renamed the Paddlesport Activity Assistant and opened up to other organisations such as Centres, Scouts, Sea Cadets, Guides, YMCA groups, D of E and others as well as clubs. The age of those eligible to become Paddlesport Activity Assistants was also reduced from 16 to 14 years old. This making it an ideal way for clubs to introduce youngsters to volunteering and even coaching without needing to wait until they are 16 to begin their coaching pathway.

The Paddlesport Activity Assistant Coordinators are trained to write role descriptions that meet the club's requirements, standard operating procedures and risk assessments that must be in place for Paddlesport Activity Assistant to operate within. The roles filled by Paddlesport Activity Assistants will be activities that are repeated such as warm ups, training sessions, timing, getting people ready to go on the water or other activities the organisation feels would be of benefit.

The Paddlesport Activity Assistant Coordinators will then coordinate the training required by the Paddlesport Activity Assistant to fulfil their role, though don't necessarily have to deliver the training themselves. Once the Paddlesport Activity Assistant has been trained the SCA issue a certificate.

The advantages of this endorsement to the club/organisation is that;

- It formalises roles and ensures volunteers are trained to a suitable standard.
- It defines the responsibilities of the volunteer.
- Makes it easier to recruit and train a new volunteer within the same role should this be required.

- It increases workforce within organisations
- Help keep youngsters engaged within an organisation by volunteering.

In Scotland Neil Gibson from Aboyne Canoe Club has become the first person to be endorsed as a Paddlesport Activity Assistant. This is great news and is credit to the Paddlesport Activity Assistant Coordinators Chris Redmond and Jonathan Kitching at the club, who were trained online by Dave Rossetter Head of Paddlesport at Glenmore Lodge.

If you feel this is something your club or organisation would be interested in taking part you can find more information at <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/courses/paddlesport-activity-assistant/> or contact me at [roger.holmes@canoescotland.org](mailto:roger.holmes@canoescotland.org) and we can then help arrange the training of coordinators. Below is an interesting piece by Neil Gibson our first Paddlesport Activity Assistant;

## Scotland's first Paddlesport Activity Assistant

The idea of becoming a Paddlesports Activity Assistant was first proposed to me by our club chairman when he phoned me one evening to explore opportunities within the club.

I had been a member of Aboyne Canoe Club for just over a year and had joined because I had tried kayaking at an open evening and loved it! From that point on I went to every training session I could, and regularly attended river trips. This, inevitably led on to the purchase of my first kayak and since then I spend most of my free time trying to get out onto the river.

I wanted to give something back to the club for all the support and encouragement they had given

## Case Study: Aboyne CC

### Paddlesport Activity Assistant

me, but my paddle skills were nowhere near good enough to look at training to be a leader, let alone a coach! Chris, our chairman, suggested I look at becoming a Paddlesports Activity Assistant for the club so that I could be an extra pair of hands by the poolside, and on club trips.

The training was very interesting and I built up knowledge about inclusivity, empowerment, and team working, whilst also improving my own paddling skills. The highlight for me was obtaining my 3 star white water kayaking certificate, and since then I have embarked on leadership training. I now also have a first aid qualification and feel safer on the water when paddling with the club, or with peers.

I very much view the Paddlesports Activity Assistant qualification as a means of giving back to the club, but also as a stepping stone to other, skill building qualifications.



Me at the start of the Upper Tummel



Helping out with polo practice on Knockburn Loch



Me in the blue and white boat completing FSRT in Stonehaven harbour.