

Q1 What was/is the aim of the project/ timescale?

Late in 2016 early 2017 the Breadalbane Canoe Club (BCC) was approached by the local Additional Support Needs (ASN) group asking if the club could offer kayak sessions to their youngsters. The club felt this was something that they could do, and would work well as the ASN group met at Breadalbane Community Campus at same place and time as the canoe club runs it's Thursday night pool sessions through the winter.

Q2 Who was involved e.g. other partners involved?

This project is largely possible because of the support of several different groups and individuals such as the SCA, Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), Castle Semple, PGL, Dave Rossetter from Glenmore Lodge and Willie McLeod.

I joined the SCA as Regional Development Manager in late 2014, but am also the recreational officer for BCC. In early 2015 I attended the Foundation Paddle Ability module run by Willie McLeod on behalf of the SCA and found this inspiring and informative. Later that year as part of my role I was involved in helping to organise an event with SDS Celebrating Para Sport and Para Cycling at Strathclyde Park. This has since evolved into an annual event Wheels to Water based at Castle Semple which has been supported each year by Dave Rossetter, Dave Hill and other Castle Semple coaches. During these events headed by SDS canoe / kayak club coaches and volunteers from all over the country including BCC have been introduced to working with people with a disability. This practical application alongside the Foundation and Intermediate Paddle Ability courses that myself and fellow club members Joanne MacEachen and Fred Cochrane have attended has been invaluable.

Scottish Disability Sport secured Big Lottery Funding and with a partnership approach with the SCA and other governing bodies delivered the Wheels to Water event, supported Disability Awareness Training and the purchase of specialist adaptive equipment. The combination of the Wheels to Water event and the Disability Awareness Training has resulted in a greater number of clubs feeling confident and capable of supporting paddlers with a disability. The adaptive equipment the SCA has purchased is available to all

clubs wishing to borrow it and was used at several of the ASN sessions. Prior to this equipment being purchased by the SCA, Alfie who has complex disabilities required an Aquabac which is an adaptive seat. The club kindly managed to borrow this at different times from Castle Semple and a local PGL centre at which several BCC members work.

Q3 How was it delivered/achieved?

BCC runs three blocks of six-week pool sessions, with three 1 hour sessions taking place each Thursday evening through the winter months. The middle one of these 1 hour sessions was booked out exclusively for the ASN group for one of these blocks.

In discussion with the parents and organisers of the ASN group it was decided that we would split the youngsters into two groups of 6-7 youngsters. This meant each individual would have 3 weeks of paddling within the six-week block. The club is limited to 12 boats in the pool at once so this meant all participants could paddle at the same time, and by splitting the group it helped the club allocate coaches with many participants requiring 1:1 support.

The actual delivery of the sessions varied very much depending on the individual paddlers needs. With most paddlers having a 1:1 sessions we have been able to offer anything from water confidence and capsizing to paddling skills.

Q4 How was it funded?

The ASN group applied and received funding that covered the hire cost of the pool for the session. The club included club membership for the participants and were registered as such with the SCA so that they were insured.



Q5 What are the lessons to help others?

This project really started in the winter/spring pool session of 2016/2017 however it has been built on and hopefully been improved ready for the autumn sessions of 2017.

The main lesson we learnt was that having plenty of volunteers and coaches available to assist with the sessions. Following the first block of sessions we decided that it would be good idea to increase our available workforce. As a club BCC has a strong slalom section, so we have a large number of very competent youngsters many of whom are or will become coaches. With this in mind we felt it appropriate to give them some training, so with support of the SCA we had 8 youngsters attend the foundation Paddle Ability module that was run by Dave Rossetter. It was also attended by members of other clubs which is something the SCA is happy to arrange for any club. Dave has also assisted in the final selection of adaptive equipment that has been purchased.



Q6 Where can others find out more information?

Clubs can contact me on the email below if they are interested in how we ran the ASN group sessions or would like to borrow some of the Adaptive equipment the SCA has purchased.

[Roger Holmes – roger.holmes@canoescotland.org](mailto:roger.holmes@canoescotland.org)

The equipment the SCA has purchased and is available to clubs is;

2 x Aquabac seat (Adult and Youth) - The Aquabac is a postural support system that is designed specifically for people who require assistance with seated balance.

2 x Paddle Wraps (selection of sizes) - The Paddle Wraps are soft wraps to facilitate the comfortable gripping of paddles.

2 Fist (Adult and Youth) - The Fist is an aid to gripping any implement with a shaft or handle.

1 x Flying Fish - Flying Fish are designed to be attached to buoyancy aids in order to provide greater paddle control. This allows the participant to utilise their arm function for propulsion, by taking the weight of the paddle.

Q7 What impact do you feel this will have on the club going forward?

I feel the impact on the club is that we can continue to become an even more inclusive by offering further opportunities. Hopefully we can extend these opportunities beyond the swimming pool to the outdoors. I also think that we are helping to develop young coaches that will be able to assist either with BCC or other clubs in the future.

The impact on the youngsters from the ASN group taking part is probably best summed by Emma, mum of Alfie and Jane who helped organise the sessions and mum of Dylan;

Emma

"Alfie has complex disabilities so outdoor activities are a challenge. The kayak sessions run by Breadalbane Canoe Club were fantastic for him. All we had to do was turn up and have fun. Alfie loved being part of the group and he loved paddling around the pool. It was great for core strength and balance for him. Very grateful to the club "

Jane

"All the parents have fed back how beneficial the ASN canoeing has been and how each year the children look forward to it. From my side for Dylan is has been wonderful in that he gets to work in a group and for a child who is currently not in school this is really beneficial. He really enjoys it and it has boosted his confidence. The other parents have said that their children really look forward to it and it challenges the children in a safe environment".