

### The Project

After many years and much effort Edinburgh Kayak Club (EKC) is pleased to announce that it finally has its own purpose built boat shed adjacent to Craiglockhart Tennis and Leisure Centre, Edinburgh (Craiglockhart). We wish through this article to share with you the challenges we faced, the lessons learned, and the benefits of the project.

The aim of the project was to build a new, fit for purpose, boat storage shed owned and solely occupied by EKC. Back around 2000 EKC had obtained shared use from & with Edinburgh Leisure of an old wooden shed at Craiglockhart. Even at that time there was awareness in the club that the shed was in poor condition and nearing the end of its useable life. EKC quickly found that having part use of a space 6m x 4m was too small for our needs and that this also posed security difficulties. It became clear that the constraints of the shed were hindering EKC's development. Accordingly shortly after moving into that shed EKC started saving for a more permanent solution. Having saved some funds EKC began proactively seeking a location for a new shed around 2005. However this proved very challenging due to the combination of Edinburgh land values and the need for a site that was accessible both for our summer evening sessions east of the city at Musselburgh lagoons and for our river trips to the north, south and west of the city. The Craiglockhart location of the old shed was good in terms of accessibility but did not at first appear to be an option for a new EKC shed. After several years and various options being ruled out, an opportunity arose during the redevelopment of Craiglockhart by Edinburgh Leisure for EKC to build a new shed at that location.

The next stage involved deciding what our needs were and engaging an engineering firm regarding a design and plan. The plan for the new shed was 10m x 6m of steel construction set on a concrete plinth. We wanted it to be large enough to accommodate a loaded trailer and to allow us to significantly expand our club fleet, including

providing storage for canoes. Planning permission was first obtained from the Council in 2011.

The project moved fairly slowly for several years, due to problems with retaining professionals to prepare the detailed plans necessary for a building warrant. In late 2013, due to the increasing concern about the dilapidated and insecure state of the old boat shed, and a proactive new committee, the project began to take on some momentum.

By early 2014 the planning permission had been renewed, the building warrant applied for and the (Commonwealth Games) Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund identified as an appropriate and promising source of funding. The requirements for this funding appeared quite extensive and exacting and a great deal of hard work and commitment from the committee was required in order to get the club into a position, and the project to a stage, where a funding application that was likely to be successful could be made.

The club drew up its first Strategic Development Plan and even just the process of doing this had a very positive effect on the nature of the club, making it much more dynamic and involving of its membership.

In addition to demonstrating that we were an active, developing club, we needed to provide evidence of having a lease for the land where the shed would be erected. Gaining this lease proved to be one of the most difficult and onerous tasks of the project, despite the assistance of a paid lawyer acting for EKC. The other most demanding task was obtaining the building warrant as there just seemed to be one issue after another to address before it was finally agreed to.

We managed to get the funding application in to Legacy 2014 just in time for the final round on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015. The award, if successful, would fund 50% of the project. The club had managed to save enough over the years to contribute 25% to the project but we still had a

## Edinburgh Kayak Club New Boat Shed Project

25% shortfall and an application for this was made to Awards for All.

We were very pleased to hear about three months later that our funding application to Legacy 2014 had been successful. There were still several requirements that we needed to meet in order to get permission to commence the project and we were aware that the project had to be complete, with all invoices claimed for, by the end of March 2016.

Changes required to our constitution were agreed at a well-attended Extraordinary General Meeting convened in June 2015. The other main outstanding issues were the lease, the building warrant, and obtaining the remaining 25% of funding. Unknown to us at the time of our application to Awards for All, this fund is also provided through Sportscotland, and we were eventually informed that we could not get money from both funds for the same project.

Many possibilities for other grant applications and fundraising were discussed and investigated, including an application being made for the full 25% required to the Edinburgh Airport Communities Fund. We waited a long time to hear back from them and were not very hopeful but towards the end of 2015 the news came through that we had been awarded the full amount of our application.

As the March 2016 deadline drew near it became clear that progress on the lease and the building warrant, both fraught with difficulties, was proceeding at too slow a pace, despite the best efforts of the committee members pursuing these matters. It was therefore a great relief when we were finally informed that the Legacy 2014 funding was to be held over for another year until the end of March 2017.

Eventually, by November 2016, armed with everything we needed, including a financial plan and a tendering report, we were at last able to get formal authorisation from Legacy 2014 to commence the building of the shed. The contractor engaged was able to start work in December which gave us time to move the contents of the old shed into storage and demolish

it. This was one of the most fun parts of the whole project!

The building work took place in stages over the next few months and by March 2017 we were installing the storage racks, with the interior being ready for the boats getting moved in by the end of the month. Since then some remaining work has been done to install the electrics and to complete the ground work outside the building. We are very pleased with the final result. All we are waiting for now is the building warrant to be signed off and then we will be ready for the **GRAND OPENING!**



The new shed project has already had a tremendous impact on EKC by motivating us to look at the aims, goals and development of the club in a way that we never have before. This in turn has led to an increase in the amount and range of club activities, the involvement of members and the actual number of members, even before the new shed was actually built.

Now that the shed has been built we have a greatly increased storage capacity in a building that is structurally safe and secure, is owned by the club and is built on land that we have a long-term lease for. We can store the trailer in the shed which makes it much easier and less onerous for the volunteers who help with getting boats and equipment down to the Musselburgh Lagoon for our weekly summer sessions.

## Edinburgh Kayak Club New Boat Shed Project

We have already purchased 3 second-hand canoes which we now have room to store. This has expanded the range of craft that can be used by club members. Having more canoes will particularly help to encourage the involvement in paddling of families with young children and others who may have difficulty in getting into a kayak but can get into a canoe.



We have also made, and are preparing, funding applications for SUPs and for a new fleet of kayaks including boats suitable for larger/less flexible adults, kids' boats and some playboats, which will be a particular attraction for the more experienced paddlers in the club. We now have room to store all this equipment which we believe will help us to retain members and attract new members. Because of our new shed we expect to be able to introduce more people to the pleasures of paddle sports and to further increase our club membership in terms of numbers and diversity.

While this project has been challenging it has also been hugely beneficial to EKC and we hope the lessons learned below can assist other clubs with similar projects:

### Lesson 1 – Plan

Try to plan clearly at an early stage all that will need to be done if you are to build a storage facility. Work out a provisional budget of costs involved, including 20% contingency, which you can fine tune as you get more information.

### Lesson 2 – Team

Our experience is that a project such as ours will be time consuming and will require a team of dedicated volunteers to bring it to fruition. It is a real advantage if there are committee or club members with relevant experience/ knowledge/ skills that can be brought to the project, especially lawyers and engineers!

### Lesson 3 – Location

Points to consider are:

- Accessibility of location in relation to public transport and club activities.
- Will the site be easy to develop or will additional costs be incurred in order to prepare the site for development? In the case of the EKC project, an expensive concrete plinth had to be laid underneath the shed due to the location of the site on “made up” ground. Advisable to seek pre-planning advice early on from the Council to clarify if planning permission is likely to be agreed to for the chosen location.
- Is the site overlooked by housing? If so, there will be more stringent planning permission requirements on how the building should look.

### Lesson 4 – Funding & Development Plan

Provision of funding for facilities is relatively limited versus funding for equipment. Having a strong club development plan that links into how the storage facility will help the club prosper can enhance chances of success in funding applications. Important that development plan is well thought out with input from whole club and that objectives are achievable. If you don't have a development plan, then you need to start thinking about it early. Some funders will make funding conditional on the club providing proof that goals are being met after the construction of the storage facility.

### Lesson 5 – Planning Permission

Planning permission likely to be required for most shed projects. This need not be difficult to obtain if you start liaising with the planning authority at

early stage and seek pre-application advice before putting together your proposals. Professional advice may be needed.

### **Lesson 6 – Lease / ownership of land**

Critical issue to resolve before you can build anything. Can take time and landlords may want terms that are unacceptable from a club perspective. Seek professional advice. Ideally ascertain whether this can be resolved before you formally apply for planning permission or seek funding.

### **Lesson 7 – Building Warrant**

Linking planning permission drawing and the detail required for a building warrant can be complex and is likely to require professional engineer input. Allow time and budget for the costs of doing this.

### **Lesson 8 – Contractors & Project Management**

Funders are likely to require you to engage professional builders rather than self-build. It is

important to have a nominated committee member who can be on site regularly to project manage the build.

### **Lesson 9 – Support from Sportscotland and Scottish Canoe Association**

Although Sportscotland have stringent regulations for funding projects such as ours, we found that they have tried to be as supportive as possible and have acknowledged that we are a club run by volunteers with no previous experience in this type of funding application and the building of a facility. We also got a lot of support as an SCA Focus Club from Roger Holmes, Regional Development Manager. We would encourage any other clubs considering a project similar to ours to get in touch early on to discuss their project with Sportscotland and the SCA and seek advice and support. We were only aware of the support that was out there during the latter stages of our project, whereas we probably could have been benefitting from this support and advice at a much earlier stage.

Finally on behalf of EKC we would like to thank all the many people who have contributed over the years with making this project a success. We would also like to thank our funders Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund / Sportscotland and Edinburgh Airport Communities Fund.

Graham Nelson, Chair & Mags Elliot, Secretary of EKC

31/05/17