



OULTON BROAD WATER SPORTS CENTRE
Nicholas Everitt Park, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft. Suffolk
Strategy and Business Growth Document

1.0 Overview:

Operating as a not-for-profit CIO, Oulton Broad Water Sports Centre is an established training centre that has, over many years, introduced a range of water sports activities to both adult and children (age 8+) regardless of ability. These include sailing, canoeing, kayaking, wind and wing surfing and powerboat and first aid training, with the majority of on-the-water training running seasonally from March to November.

The Centre is open year round and is an approved training centre with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoeing (BC). The Centre also holds an outdoor activities licence through the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA).

The Centre Manager, REDACTED, (Currently our only Full time employee) has over twenty years experience working full -time in the Water Sports industry (see attached CV) and is supported on site by both part-time qualified assistants and over 50 both qualified and casual Volunteers, either as instructors, safety boat operators or those offering general assistance.

The team includes those that hold National Governing Body qualifications including those trained in the latest safeguarding policies and procedures, risk assessments and safe operating procedures.

Our management committee includes senior and chief instructors who act as Technical Advisors.

The Centre (under its Constitution) is lead by a Management Committee (including a Centre Principal and Finance Officer) and a Board of Trustees.

The Centre is owned by Oulton Broad Parish Council with whom we have a Tenancy Agreement. They share our vision for a vibrant water sports centre that will enhance the local and regional communities of Oulton Broad for many to come.

The Centre situated at Southern Gateway to the Broads National Park and is equipped with changing facilities and a classroom / conference room.

2.0 History:

Having traded under various operators since the construction of the purpose built Centre in 1987, in 2021, with the previous operator having ceased their involvement, a group of local volunteers, determined to keep the Centre running, formed a CIO which has ensured that this valuable local asset continues to offer its important local service. Then, as now, the introduction of young people to water sports was paramount along with opportunity for all age groups to experience a range of water based activities. Many pupils went on to train as Instructors themselves and some still continue to pass on their experience and knowledge to others.

3.0 Our Equipment:

Our Equipment includes 18 single-handed and 7 double-handed sailing dinghies (Bug, Topper, Pico, Feva, Laser Stratos and Wayfarer), a range of 52 paddle sport craft, (Canadian canoe, kayak, sit-on-top kayak, stand-up paddle board) 4 wind-sup's, 2 wing-foil boards, 8 wings and 3 Powered rescue craft.

Our PPE includes a range of buoyancy aids, wet and splash suits and helmets.

4.0 Our Services:

The Water Sports Centre offers affordable access to the following water sports activities and experiences to the local community:

(Users will pay a fee for each activity attended. Our aim is to become financially independent and able to subsidise low-cost activities to those who require some assistance)

Wind sports –

- Taster sessions and Introduction to Sailing, Windsurfing, Wingsurfing / Try Sailing, Windsurfing, Wingsurfing
- RYA accredited courses, Junior Stages 1-5 and Adult Levels 1-3
- Start windsurfing and intermediate windsurfing (non-planing and planing)
- Start wingsurfing, Improved wingsurfing, First flight.
- RYA Instructor Courses
- RYA On Board / Discover Sailing Programme

Paddle sports -

- Non-accredited Learn To's/ Introduction to canoe/kayak/stand-up paddleboard (SUP)
- British Canoeing Accredited Paddle Start, Paddle Discover, Paddle Explorer
- To include the wider community of families and casual leisure users, **Daily Hire** of Canoe/Kayak/Stand-Up Paddle boards

Powerboat Training –

- RYA Level 2 Certificate
- RYA Safety Boat Certificate

Children –

- Youth groups from schools, scouts or other organisations will be encouraged to develop **tailored sessions** for their young people.

(This is an important part of the function of the centre. These sessions provide an opportunity to experience water sports for many who will not otherwise have this chance)

- We also offer **school holiday activities**. During the warmer school holidays the centre will run a water sports school.

Juniors between the ages of 8 to 16 of all abilities will get the opportunity to try a range of activities including canoeing, kayaking, raft building, sailing, orienteering and a range of land based activities.

- **Kids Club/After School Clubs**. Based around a selection of different water sports activities including kayaking, canoeing, sailing, raft building, these

programmes use Outdoor and Adventurous Activities as a tool to develop personal, social, and emotional skills, delivered outside the school day.

The programme also offers children and young people opportunities to gain qualifications and accreditations through learning outside the classroom including Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoeing (BC) Awards.

Corporate Team Building –

- The Centre will offer companies an activity based team building experience. Activities will include sailing, canoeing, kayaking, team building, rafting and initiative challenges.

These may include catering and local accommodation packages.

Birthday Parties –

- Offering the chance to try one or more activities on the water. Our facilities enable pre-booked or self-catering packages.

First Aid –

- We are able to host recognised courses for those needing first aid qualifications.

5.0 Our Aims and Objectives:

5.1 It is recognised that the opportunities we offer improve health, fitness and wellbeing and increased levels of self- confidence.

The Lowestoft / Waveney area is very much focused on water based activities but many people are excluded due to personal or social circumstances. Our aim is to ensure that opportunities are open to everyone.

To provide a range of affordable and easily accessible water sports opportunities for young people to develop skills through a structured program of safe wind sport and paddle sport activities in a challenging environment.

- Encourage, support, and develop outdoor educational objectives through water sports.
- To enhance the accessibility to water sports to the local community for all ages and abilities.
- Provide participants with opportunities to progress towards the recognised standards of the specific sport in line with its National Governing Body.
- To encourage youth training and progression through the RYA and BC schemes to instructor level.
- To work with youth groups in support of the DoE and scouting award schemes
- To achieve alliances with national organisations and adjacent clubs and, together, be recognised as a major centre of water sports excellence.

- To deliver safe activities through the adoption and adherence to regularly reviewed safe operating procedures.
- Safeguarding procedures based on government guidelines and RYA/BC best practices will be implemented.
- To recruit and train local young people to work in the water sports industry.

OBWSC aims are to maximise on the delivery of opportunities for all to begin and develop their interest in a range of water sport activities in a safe environment, which in turn will increase revenue and long term sustainability for the Centre, **specifically:**

5.2 *Young People and School Groups:*

During the 2023 season the Centre increased attendance from school- based activities in 2022 by 300% providing a good basis for the 2024 season and beyond. Many schools who took part recognise the benefits of our activities and have pledged to return in 2024.

We recently participated in a local “Crucial Crew” event at which over 1500 pupils were taught how to stay safe on the water. We were pleased to network with schools and staff that have not yet visited the Water Sports Centre and it is expected that more schools will now join us for our activities.

However it is clear from our research that pupils from many schools situated in local defined socially disadvantaged areas have been unable to attend in either school groups or during the Summer break for reasons of affordability. Our aim, with the help of appropriate funding and subsidies, is to correct this in 2024 and beyond and ensure that equal opportunities are offered to all local pupils.

Transport costs are also a problem for schools. We hope to be able to subsidise this area too.

All pupils in our area should have equal opportunities. The social benefits are well understood.

Local Councils and specialists recognise the social benefits (including the impact on anti -social behaviour, team building and increased levels of confidence) and have provided some financial support, but more is required if we are to expand our services in this area.

The Centre currently caters for groups of up to 24 young people; however we have been requested to cater for groups of 32.

The Centre is producing growth and revenue, with most mainly derived from schools’ activities.

To achieve our ambition to allow children and schools who are unable to make a full monetary contribution to join us, we will need to offer subsidies.

Our current income from schools groups are insufficient for this project and only cover the day-to-day costs of running the Centre.

Therefore we require additional funding for additional equipment and qualified staff to enable us to meet our objectives to offer subsidised experience to those that deserve it.

5.3 Corporate Activities:

Previous operators at the Centre delivered corporate based activities, generating higher margin revenue streams.

Research has identified a need in the area for corporate team-building days, initially to local companies, (the offshore wind companies are one example), and from other nearby counties once established.

2023 saw us offer this limited service but we wish to expand our offer significantly in 2024.

With the assistance of a retired marketing director amongst our group of volunteers, and our contact with many retired company directors of local major companies, we plan to expand this offer.

For this expansion we will need to seek funding to purchase new equipment and appropriate PPE and employ additional qualified staff.

The facilities at the Centre lend themselves very well to this project.

We are also fortunate to have good quality hotels, accommodation and restaurants in the locality, all of which would benefit from such a project.

5.4 Hiring Services:

2023 saw a healthy appetite from both the local population and visitors to the area for the hiring of our paddle craft.

This created some welcome income but, due to staffing problems, it proved intermittent.

To ensure that we maximise on this area of our offer, we plan to recruit more volunteers (as with all of our services) but this will need to be supported by paid part-time staff for which funding will be required.

6.0 Summary:

The success of the Water Sports Centre, and associated necessary revenue, relies on us providing a mix of offers stated in paragraph 4.0 above.

Increasing numbers and income from all areas is key to the ongoing success of the Oulton Broad Water Sports Centre.

In Summary, our aims and needs as described above are:

- a) Increase our offer to more school groups (from groups of 24 to 32)
- b) Increase our Summer Activity group numbers.
- c) Ensure that all young people, irrespective of the ability to pay, have the opportunity to use our services.
- d) Expand our Corporate Activities (Groups of between 10 and 15 delegates)
- e) Maximise on the potential of our Hiring Services (7 days a week)
- f) Expand our other offers listed.
- g) Seek and employ additional paid and unpaid Volunteers.
- h) Seek and employ additional qualified Staff including an Assistant Centre Manager.
- i) Expand and upgrade our stock of equipment, including PPE and safety craft.

- j) Seek appropriate Grant Aid and support and also increase our revenue stream to achieve our aims and Objectives, initially on a 2 year basis in order to move the Centre into a self-funding business long term.

To achieve this, external funding support will be required over a two year period (refer to attached Business Plan) to move the centre into a self- funding business long term.

“Oulton Broad Water Sports Centre – where life-long water sports experiences are offered in an idyllic setting, including those from under- privileged backgrounds”

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CIO No. 1193626

Supporting Documents:

Business Plan 2024 - 2025

Assistant Manager and other additional Employee Job Descriptions and Costs

List of required new equipment with costings

List of current equipment (Asset Register)

REDACTED CV

Activity register 2023

Centre financials 2023

Endorsements and Testimonials

13/12/2023