

# ***VISION 20:20***

## **The SLYC Development Project**

The year 2020 will be a significant one for Strangford Lough Yacht Club. It will be the opportunity for a major slip and jetty regeneration, combined with a series of other enhancements of facilities that will benefit members in all sectors of membership and activity.

The project is focussed around the clear need for renewal of the Club's main slips and jetty. These have been in place for several decades, at least since 1966, and the ravages of waves, wind, and salt water have degraded the structure to a dangerous level. Additionally, there are some improvements that will make them more suited to current needs, and cure some inherent faults. We always knew that past temporary patch-ups were not going to resolve the problem, and that a full reconstruction would be required, probably costing well over £100,000. Putting off the solution did not help. We feel that the Club is in now a position to take action. This is the time to lay down a strong facility for the next 50 years use.

To simply spend a six figure sum and achieve a result no different from what exists would be a missed opportunity. There will be a lot of work specifying and contracting the work, arranging funding, and timetabling the work with minimum disruption. It would seem opportune to add in a series of enhancements, both to the slip and beyond, so that we can really feel the benefit of many facility improvements. At the present time the Committee is considering quotations from three contractors for the main concrete works, guided by the information gleaned from our consultants in the summer of 2019. As expected, the final result will shaped both by desirability and affordability. And the timing of the work, during 2020, will need to be fitted in with the sailing calendar and the winter storage needs.

In tandem with the major slip project, the Committee sees other opportunities to add enhancements to benefit all sectors of Club membership, making 2020 a year of significance for SLYC.

The proposed items for inclusion in the Project are as follows:-

1. The repair of the main Jetty and Slips 1 and 2. This work is essential for the safe access to the water for all our members.
2. The lengthening of slips 1 and 2, extending them by some 10 mts., enabling dinghies to launch right up to low tide, without having a stretch of mud before the water,
3. At the same time the upper part of the slip 2 would be altered, to correct an unusually steep segment. The top of slip 1, on which some cars occasionally come to grief, the slope would start further down, hence improving the drive round at the N.E. corner of the building.
4. The improvement of the shower areas, both male and female, including self-contained shower pods, within private changing cubicles. The provision of a separate shower for course instructors, and the general refurbishment of changing rooms, with floor drainage improvements.

5. The creation of a new small store, in front of the Chart Room, to facilitate the storage of table tops, spare chairs, and all the other clutter that ends up in the chart room.
6. The purchase of an additional outboard store, similar to that purchased in 2019. The existing one is full and there is more space demanded.
7. The erection of a new balcony on the East face of the building. This was envisaged in the original new Clubhouse plan, of 1998/9 but lack of funds caused it to be dropped. Linking the other two balconies, it would not be part of the fire escape route, and could hence have tables and chairs for summer recreational use. It could be constructed with either a steel or a glass front barrier, and the area below could be later adapted for storage or other use as may suit some future need. It would only slightly encroach on winter boat storage.
8. The provision of a stand-alone tractor engine to power the Palfinger crane, obviating the need to tie up the tractor use, just to power the crane, as at present.
9. The Provision of further hard-standing by filling in the top of slip 4, which is never used as a slip. This would aid boat storage in summer and winter, and extend the security fence.
10. The provision of a powered winch for slip 1, situated near the Rib Compound, to enable boat owners to haul out without having to use the tractor (subject to boat size), and to facilitate the launch and recovery of the Club Ribs.

It can be seen that within the proposed list there are elements for all types of membership and Club use. Items 1, 2 and 3 will benefit all boat owners. Items 2 and 4 will assist the dinghy sailors and event organisers. Items 6, 8 and 10 should assist many boat owners, particularly those with boats moored in the bay. Items 4 will benefit all sailors who get wet, including those on our very popular training courses.

Items 5 and 7 will benefit the social side of the club.

The cost of this shopping list is estimated at £175,000 to £225,000, depending on the outcome of slip quotation negotiations, and also the extent of other items to be included. The cost of the non-slip/jetty items, numbered 5-11 above totals approximately £70,000, so it can be seen that the eventual cost of the slips, and the success of the proposed fundraising activities, will determine the extent of the project able to be carried out.

It is proposed that the bulk of the cost, £175,000 will be borrowed from Danske Bank, on a mortgage of the Whiterock Bay house, at a low rate of interest. Rates are generally low at present, and are expected to remain low. A seven to ten year payback period is envisaged. This should be manageable from surpluses foreseen as similar to the current level.

The balance of the cost will be raised by applications for grants, fundraising events, requests for corporate sponsorship, and approaches to members to participate by way of long term loans and tax efficient donations to the Club, assisted by Gift Aid. A professional grant seeker will assist. It is hoped that all members will find some way to contribute or be involved, making this a major Club enhancement of which all can feel ownership, and enabling us to maximise the result.

The Committee see 2020 as the ideal time to proceed with the project. 2019 has seen the Clubs finances return to credit. The overdraft facility is unused for 80% of the year. The Carbon Trust Loan, associated with the wood pellet boiler, is now fully paid off, ending the £10,000 repayments made in each of the last three years. Club membership, activity, training income and bar takings are all on the up. There is a resurgence of both activity and the financial resilience that could support the reasonable surpluses required to repay any borrowing for the project in a relatively short time. Enhancement of facilities will only feed further into this resurgence and bring more membership and activity to the Club.

The Committee would not embark on such a major programme, involving new borrowing, unless it had the endorsement of the membership. To do this, a motion to sanction the mortgage borrowing will be put to the AGM. The timing of each element of the project, and hence the borrowing, will be subject to the season, and the need to fit in with the Club's calendar of activities.

The Club's normal annual repairs budget, usually around £28,000, will be separately reserved for other repair items, including new masts, booms and sails for some of the Toppers and, hopefully, repainting of the building exterior, among other general repair items that crop up during the year.

We ask you to endorse and support the project. It is a "once-in-50-years" event. It will mean a lot of extra work for the Committee this coming year, but it will ultimately depend on the wholehearted support, support in many forms, by all members of the Club.

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