



I would like to begin my report for 2019 by thanking everyone who has been involved in any of the club's activities over the past twelve months, for their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment. Not only paddlers but also family members and friends who have given their support. We have welcomed new members of all ages, and continue to maintain a loyal core who, despite setbacks, beyond our control, continue to enjoy kayaking and canoeing at all levels.

Our two camps this year have remained popular, with successful and enjoyable paddles undertaken at Loch Ken and The Lake District. The club has visited The Lakes on a number of occasions in 2019, not only for pleasure but also to support a range of swimming events. We provided the safety cover on a series of swims on Lake Ullswater and Lake Windermere, and also provided 1:1 support for swimmers completing the Windermere One Way in the summer: an act of endurance for swimmers and paddlers alike, and a huge spectacle worth being part of or witnessing.

Safety cover has also been provided for triathlons at Druridge Bay Country park and Ashington's Queen Elizabeth 2nd Park. Organizers of these events continue to remain complimentary of the support we give, always booking up quickly for the following year. And of course, all of these events raise ever welcome funds for the club.

Blyth Kayak Club has also been represented at a number of events around the region. Our coaches have supported Paddleability events for disabled paddlers held locally, and during the course of these have been able to liaise with the regional Safety Officer. Of course, one of the highlights of the summer was trying to keep the ducks in check at the Seaton Sluice Harbour Day duck race! We also have representatives on the Wansbeck Siltation Group, looking at solutions to rid parts of the lower stretches of the River Wansbeck of silt, and we took part in the Wansbeck river clean up where dozens of bags of rubbish were removed from the river and its banks. In October we took part in a Surfers Against Sewage litter pick on Blyth beach and dunes, incorporating this with a thorough clean up of the area around the Engine House, our club headquarters. Members of the club again had a very successful time at the Durham to Finchale Abbey race, held on the May Bank Holiday, returning with many trophies including the overall team prize.

Lack of pool facilities in the autumn has meant that we have been unable to offer novices, and intermediates, coaching sessions in a warm environment. However, we have held several novice sessions outside both on the sea and on the River Wansbeck, and it has been heartening to see the enthusiasm with which the novices who have attended, have shown to the sport. The outside environment is in fact where our sport takes place, and this is something which many pool participants in the past have unfortunately seemed unable to grasp. Wednesday evening paddles outdoors held in the summer months have proved popular in 2019 and will recommence at the onset of lighter nights this year.



I am sure that all members of the club will join with me in congratulating Pete and Becky, two members of our committee who have spent many long and sometimes arduous, cold hours completing training and assessments to become Sea Kayak leaders. They recently completed their final qualifications after a gruelling final session and well deserve this accolade. Thanks also go to members of the club who acted as their 'guinea pigs' during these sessions. I also invite you all to join me in wishing Becky every success in her recently acquired post as an instructor in an outdoor activities centre in Scotland. We shall really miss her input into the club but hope that when her contract is ended, she will return. Hopefully she will not forget us.

Finally, it is with some sadness that I must inform you that this will be my final Chairperson's Report. After many years I am stepping down from the committee. I hope that the club continues to develop and expand in future years and thank the present committee for their hard work and dedication.

Pat Jones

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Chairperson
Blyth Kayak Club