

Report on	Ballyronan Boat Club – Development Proposal
Date of Meeting	Thursday 13th May 2021
Reporting Officer	Nigel Hill Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Nigel Hill Head of Parks

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek members approval to engage with Ballyronan Boat Club in relation to scoping the potential for Club House development proposals at Ballyronan Marina.
2.0	Background
2.1	Ballyronan Boat Club was established in 1972 with 66 subscribing members under the auspices of well-known local people in the community. Activities that year included sailing for Mirror's and GP14s twice a week, with the boats stored in a small yard courtesy of a local landowner, and a sailing course supported by the Sports Council. A Glover site hut served as clubhouse/changing room, and boats were launched down a slipway adjacent to the old stone pier.
2.2	1975 saw the start of constructing the marina, which was completed the following year, just in time for the GP14 summer open meeting with some 30 boats from all over Ireland competing. In 1977 with the new marina providing an influx of larger craft, racing was run for cruisers as well as GP14s and Mirrors, with up to 20 boats participating twice a week.
2.3	In 1978 it became necessary to move the clubhouse to accommodate developments and a 40 year lease was agreed with Cookstown District Council for a site overlooking the Lough to the right of the car park. Regular sailing continued with the addition of an annual sailing course run by SELB.
2.4	Ballyronan was the venue for a series of training days for the Irish team going to the 1979 World Championship in Perth, Western Australia. The NI Championship of the Scorpion Class was hosted again in 1979 along with normal racing, cruising, and training events. With the clubhouse moving to the new site, a need was recognised to upgrade facilities to a modern standard, and plans were developed accordingly. However, the lack of grant funding in 1980 meant plans had to be revised. A second temporary building was acquired to provide changing accommodation.
2.5	The club worked on through the 1980s with an enthusiastic cruiser fleet to the extent that berth space in the marina was under pressure, but in common with other areas, a dwindling small boat fleet. Events were run for the GP14 fleet in 1981, '83, and '86, all well supported by visitors from all over Ireland.

2.6	Unfortunately, Ballyronan became a regular target for vandalism culminating with the destruction of the Council's toilet block and the Club's second building. Membership dwindled as a result, and eventually, the Club was forced to give up, relinquishing its remaining clubhouse and site.
2.7	In November 2000 a meeting was called and the Club was reformed. Sailing was organised with both racing and cruising events and membership climbed, in due course reaching over 70 subscribing members. The Club acquired a number of boats to facilitate running training courses and to provide for members who did not have their own boats.
2.8	To date the Club still lacks access to a clubhouse with the capacity to provide appropriate facilities for people participating in boating activities. This situation has led to a high rate of membership turnover with many people trying boating, liking it, joining the club, but parting after a time. With membership now growing strongly again, the Club is keen to investigate the options toward re-establishing facilities on site. This would enhance the presence for the Club and help promote the Marina as a water sports centre for our district and across the province.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Current development plans at Ballyronan Marina are designed to enhance the overall visitor experience, encouraging engagement in outdoor recreational activities such as camping/glamping, walking and children's play along with supporting new and innovative health and wellbeing pursuits such as open water swimming alongside passive leisure opportunities to a growing populous.
3.2	Ballyronan Boat Club are a key partner with Council at the Marina. The Boat Club work closely with council bringing people together to facilitate and promote water sports to a potential catchment population of 150,000 within 30 minutes of the centre. In order to proactively progress continued development at Ballyronan, the club wish to revisit the proposal of a permanent clubhouse base with appropriate facilities. To initiate the first step, the club are seeking Council support and engagement in discussions to develop an options appraisal.
3.3	The club have identified two potential sites. One to the south side of the old pier and a second option proposing a floating clubhouse in keeping with the new council developments on the site (appendix). The club are keen to progress discussions, as they strongly believe they have identified the need and that the base to develop from is necessary for the continued prosperity of the club and the expanding future of the Marina.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Council financial commitment remains to be determined on this project proposal. However, a request to lease lands for the purpose of development is likely to be an option for Council consideration.

	Human: Current staff compliment sufficient to progress project development proposals.
	Risk Management: In line with Council policies and procedures
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In line with Council policy and procedures
	Rural Needs Implications: In line with Council policy and procedures
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members as asked to consider the content of the report.
5.2	Members approval is sought for council officers to progress discussions with Ballyronan Boat club and assist in creating a development proposal/concept plan for presentation to a future Development Committee meeting.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A – Ballyronan Boat Club correspondence 12th January 2021 Appendix B – Ballyronan Marina site map