



GREENING THE WEST BOATHOUSE

Draft environmental policy

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INTRODUCTION

‘While practising our sport, we indeed inevitably impact the people, communities and environment around us. We therefore have a responsibility as rowers and administrators to protect and preserve all that we touch through our sport by minimising negative impacts and seeking to make positive impacts instead; World Rowing wants to accompany its communities in this endeavour to facilitate the positive contribution by rowers and rowing to the wellbeing of people, communities and the environment.

As an organisation, World Rowing integrates sustainability principles and objectives into its day-to-day operations and decision-making processes, striving to be a leader in this field among sports federations.’

¹ (World Rowing)

The West Boathouse project offers an opportunity to review and rethink our environmental practice as clubs and tenants of a refurbished historic building. In this, we have developed a Green Plan for the West Boathouse in consultation with clubs and a series of surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2023. The opinions and ideas gathered from these surveys were collated and integrated into this document.

This draft sets out a series of goals for clubs and individuals - changes and modifications to our practices and behaviours in the building, on the water and travelling to venues that aim to have a neutral or positive environmental impact.

In this, we are guided by [British Rowing’s Environment Policy \(2020\)](#) and World Rowing’s stated [commitments to sustainability](#). Using these policies as a foundation, we aim to build on and develop our own policy that will form a ‘living document’, able to respond to our unique circumstances and environment. We also hope that in ‘leading by example’, we inspire other clubs to take this document and adapt it to their needs.

¹ <https://worldrowing.com/responsibility/environment/>

Why Should We ‘Go Green’?

Rowing is an aquatic sport reliant on clean water. While there have been considerable improvements in water quality along the River Clyde over the past few decades, pollution, littering, and bio-hazards can all have serious implications for the health and well-being of rowers (as well as our scaly, furry and feathery friends). Rowing on clean rivers and waterways is not just better for your physical health, it is better for your mental health too. The benefits of outdoor sport and recreation are well documented - spending time in nature and the natural light can improve your mood and reduce stress and depression.

Some of the key issues facing the river and river users are outlined below:

- Sewage and wastewater contain bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses that can cause intestinal, lung, and other infections in humans and is harmful to wildlife. It is also a major contributing factor to algal blooms.
- Blue-green algal blooms can suffocate fish, and the toxins can be harmful and fatal to wildlife and pets. In humans, exposure can cause skin irritation, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and muscle and joint pain. This is less of a problem on the Clyde but has occurred at Strathclyde Loch, Castle Semple Loch and Loch Lomond.
- The effects of exposure to heavy metals (esp. chromium and ammonium leaching from the Polmadie Burn) are not clear.
- Invasives non-native species (INNS) are widespread along the riverbanks - Giant hogweed is highly toxic and can cause severe skin burns and can make rescues dangerous. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam cause erosion of the banks.
- Lack of maintenance of the riverbanks means the unrestricted spread of invasive species. In addition, a general increase in vegetation can be hazardous to rowing and impede water rescue. However, riverbanks are an important habitat for wildlife. There is a need to find a balance.
- Plastic litter along the banks is at an all-time high. As well as being unsightly, this is extremely damaging to wildlife.

Overall, rowing is fairly low on the list of offenders in terms of environmental damage, but there is still plenty of room for improvement, particularly around travel to and from events, single-use plastics, club culture and encouraging clubs and individuals to take more responsibility for the waterways they row on.

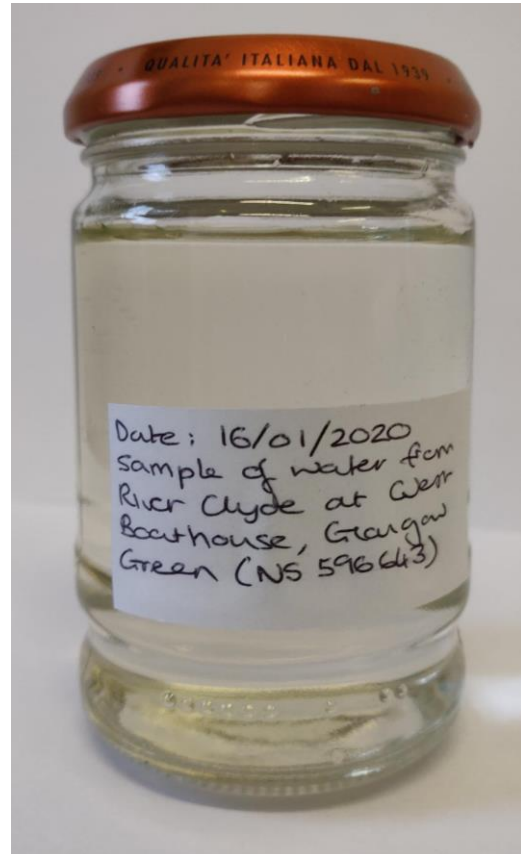
‘Zero harm’ is the ultimate goal - reducing or eliminating any negative impact on the natural environment caused by our activities. This involves a commitment to sustainable practices and the responsible use of natural resources that reduce environmental harm.

While achieving zero harm in an environmental context may be challenging, it provides a framework to work towards minimizing our impact on the natural environment and promoting sustainability. This can help to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy healthy and vibrant waterways.

In addition, by paying closer attention to our practices and reducing consumption we **save money**.



A sample of River Clyde water from 1874, (Glasgow Museums).



A sample of River Clyde water from January 2020.

What Can Sport Offer?

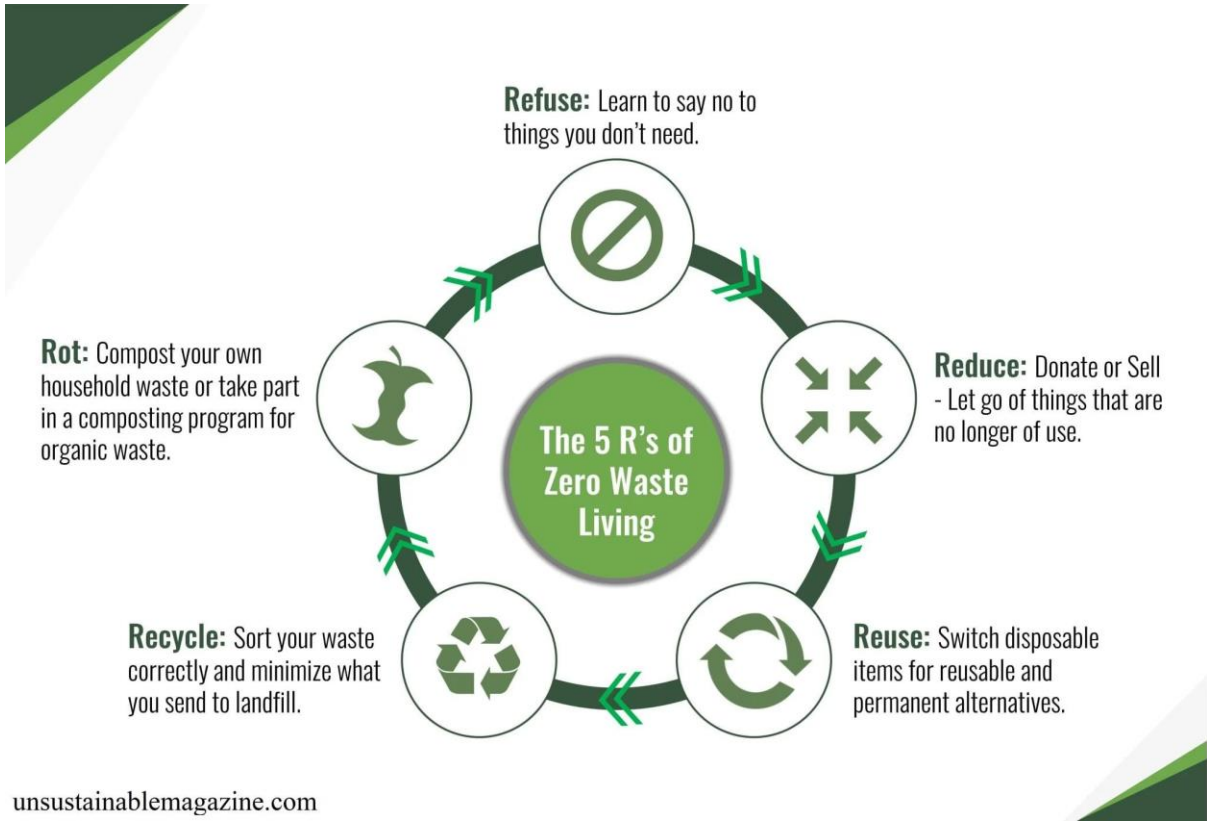
The task may seem overwhelming at times, and the impact an individual can make might feel like a 'drop in the ocean' in the face of the current climate crisis. However, those involved in sports are well-positioned to help themselves, and others tackle environmental issues. Many skills and values gained in club sports are applicable and transferable in other contexts - working as a team, having a positive mental attitude, supporting each other and taking action; even a healthy dose of competition can all be put to good use.

The power of small changes is also a helpful philosophy which transfers well from the world of sports to environmental action. Small, incremental changes and modifications to behaviours and attitudes can have a significant cumulative effect. This approach involves breaking down every aspect of a task or process into small, manageable components and then finding ways to improve each component by a small amount.

We have used this model throughout our policy, alongside the core principles of the 5 R's - a framework for reducing waste and promoting sustainability developed by Bea Johnson in 2013.

They are:

Action	Benefit
<p>1. Refuse: <i>Do we really need this?</i> This refers to eliminating waste at source by saying 'no'. An example would be refusing to buy single-use plastics (water bottles etc). This also involves rethinking behaviours by considering the environmental impact of our actions and making conscious choices to prevent waste and promote sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent use of raw materials ● Prevent landfill ● Promote mindful behaviours
<p>2. Reduce: <i>Can we use less of this?</i> Whether it's cycling to an event, turning off the lights, or making your own sandwiches, can we find ways to reduce our impact on resources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce use of raw materials ● Reduce landfill ● Reduce costs
<p>3. Reuse: <i>Can this be repaired, repurposed or re-gifted?</i> This refers to using items multiple times instead of throwing them away after a single use. An example would be setting up a kit swap.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prolong use of materials ● Reduce and redistribute cost
<p>4. Recycle: <i>Can this be turned into something else?</i> This refers to the process of converting waste materials into new products. This helps to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and conserves resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvage raw materials ● Reduce landfill
<p>5. Rot: <i>Can this be composted?</i> Organic materials can be decomposed into organic materials to create compost. This could be banana skins, cardboard, leaves or grass/vegetation cuttings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrich soil and support plant growth



KEY OBJECTIVES

Our key objectives are adapted from British Rowing's Environmental Policy and input from rowers and volunteers, particularly Karen Hansen.

- **Protection of the habitat of fauna and flora and biodiversity**
Rowing provides opportunities to observe wildlife in its natural environment across thousands of miles of waterways and coastlines. With this in mind, it's important to be conscious to avoid disturbance, damage and disruption to nature.
- **Conservation of resources: both renewable and non-renewable**
The conservation of natural resources through careful planning and efficient use of water, energy, and raw materials. Minimise waste by reduction at source by taking into consideration the 5 R's at all points in decision making.
- **Reduction of the production of waste and pollutants in all their forms**
Careless storage of boat fuel, certain chemicals used in cleaning products (e.g. bleach, surfactants) used on boats or in the building, and plastic waste can all have harmful impacts.
- **Recognition of the importance of heritage and indigenous cultural values**
Many cultures and local communities are reliant on biodiversity and have a particular relationship with their landscapes and seascapes. If competing, running an event or travelling to row, consider the local impact on surrounding communities.
- **Promotion of healthy conditions for all involved in the sport of rowing**
Hosting an event or providing facilities in safe and healthy conditions, is important to the well-being, comfort and enjoyment of all involved. These events also provide an opportunity to highlight and promote good practice.
- **Fostering environmental awareness and education about sustainable development within the rowing community**
Raise awareness and nurture an ethos where all members can contribute to and learn about environmental sustainability. Share ideas and encourage innovative approaches which can be applied in everyday life, outside of rowing, as well.
- **Consulting the wider community to foster positive partnerships.**
By identifying local organisations who can advise you in your endeavours, it will give you all the support you need to become more environmentally sustainable

ACTIONS

Priority Action: Recruitment

Recruit volunteers to oversee, implement and monitor the Green Policy. This group need not be entirely composed of rowers - parents, friends and supporters will bring enthusiasm, knowledge and skills we may not have 'in-house'. Working in partnership with other organisations on events such as litter picks and bio-blitz's increases their impact and can be effective in opening up new audiences and creating closer links with the local community.

In & Around The Boathouse

Action + Mitigation	Goals	Timescale
<p>REFUSE single-use plastics (water bottles, plastic cutlery, wet wipes etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage the reuse of water bottles. Refills of tap water are available in the kitchen. ● Encourage people to bring food in reusable containers ● Use recycled and recyclable materials for events ● Use refillable containers for cleaning products ● Look for alternatives to plastics wherever possible 	<p>Drastically reduce and work towards eliminating single-use plastics in the building. Reduce use of plastics overall e.g.</p>	Ongoing
<p>REFUSE disposal of wastewater from boat washing into the river</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure club members are aware of how to safely dispose of wastewater ● Put signs up indicating how and where to dispose of wastewater 	<p>Eliminate all wastewater being poured directly into the river</p>	Ongoing
<p>REDUCE water consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a bucket and sponge ● Members minimise time in showers 	<p>Reduce use of raw materials Reduce cost</p>	Ongoing

<p>REDUCE use of harmful chemicals (especially those containing bleach and surfactants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure those in charge of purchasing are aware of guidelines ● Share resources where possible ● Replace with eco-friendly alternatives ● Only use when necessary ● Ask club members to consider the types of shampoos/body washes etc they use in the shower 	<p>Reduction in chemical pollutants entering our waterways</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>REFUSE eliminate presence of vermin to avoid disease and use of pesticide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure good hygiene and food waste procedures around the boathouse. 	<p>No vermin in the boathouse</p>	
<p>RECYCLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure recycling bins are clearly labelled and visible, and arrangements are in place for recycled material to be regularly taken to appropriate recycling collection points ● Keep a record of what materials boats and other equipment are made of to enable easy and safe disposal or recycling. 	<p>Reduce waste</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>REUSE kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up a reuse network to recirculate clothing and equipment 	<p>Reduce waste and cost</p>	
<p>REDUCE electrical consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure all lights are switched off ● Don't leave taps running 	<p>Reduce waste and cost</p>	
<p>REDUCE spillages and impact of spillages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Store hazardous chemicals in a secure, well-ventilated place and use with care ● Establish procedures for responsible disposal or clean up of fuel or chemical spills ● Motorboats regularly checked for leakages 	<p>Reduce spillages and ensure there are mitigation procedures in place to reduce environmental impact</p>	
<p>REDUCE the impact of travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up a carpool ● Encourage use of public transport or sustainable transport option (Walk, cycle) to the boathouse and events ● Ensure bike racks are maintained 	<p>Reduction in people driving to events</p>	
<p>REDUCE the use of pesticides and herbicides, esp. glyphosate-based weed killer such as 'Roundup'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use organic weed killer 	<p>Reduce harmful pollutants and damage to wildlife</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant other species (e.g. ivy) to crowd out weeds and invasives 		
<p>REDUCE cross-contamination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent the spread of invasive non-native species and wash and clean boats thoroughly, especially before transporting boats to another lake or river. 	Prevent the spread of invasive species	
Travel & Events		
Action + Mitigation	Goals	Timescale
<p>REDUCE the impact of travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a carpool Encourage use of public transport or sustainable transport option (Walk, cycle) to the boathouse and events Ensure bike racks are maintained 	Reduction in people driving to events	
<p>REDUCE the impact of promotional materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate promotional/marketing materials to minimise the use of single-use plastics - e.g. PVC banners Future-proof banners and signage where possible (e.g. avoid putting dates on banners) Ensure all club merchandising (t-shirts, mugs etc) serves a viable purpose and is sustainably sourced Ditto awards and trophies 	Reduce waste and cost	
On The Water		
Action + Mitigation	Goals	Timescale
<p>REDUCE disturbance to wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of sensitive habitats and disturbing wildlife with noise or boat wake Plan riverbank management carefully with wildlife and their seasonal behaviour in mind Take extra care during nesting or spawning seasons 	Prevent disturbance to wildlife	
<p>REDUCE impact to the banks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid contributing to riverbank erosion, and if evidence of erosion becomes 	Maintain riverbanks Reduce disturbance to wildlife	

apparent, report it to the appropriate authority (see 'Links and Resources' section for SEPA contacts)		
REFUSE littering and pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not discard waste into the waterway Keep bottles and other items secured in boats to prevent their loss into the water 	Prevent harmful pollutants entering waterways	
Strive for Excellence		
Action + Mitigation	Goals	Timescale
A Green Boathouse Work towards creating a sustainable, practical sanctuary for wildlife around the building.	Reduce and manage invasive species around the building and create an attractive habitat for wildlife	
Innovate Research and evaluate alternatives e.g. look into schemes to support the transition to electric vehicles.	Reduce waste and cost	
Promote and Share Partner with other clubs/sports who are keen to develop their environmental activities. Spread the word through social media, workshops etc	Increase awareness Celebrate achievements	
Partnership Offer support where possible to groups and organisations with an environmental remit e.g. The Conservation Volunteers.	Increase awareness Develop and expand new audiences and partnerships	
Care Recognise that anxiety around climate crisis and environmental breakdown is an issue for many and take steps to support members.	Ensure that members are supported, and their mental health and well-being is not negatively impacted	

ENVIRONMENT & MENTAL HEALTH

Tackling climate crisis and environmental breakdown can be daunting and has potential impacts for mental health. Climate anxiety, or the fear and worry associated with the impending effects of climate change, is a very real and valid concern among many people, especially the younger generation. Here are some ways we can mitigate the impacts:

1. **Educate:** Provide people with accurate information on climate change and its potential impacts. Help them understand the science behind it and what actions are being taken to address it. This can help them feel more empowered and less overwhelmed.
2. **Encourage:** Encourage people to take action on climate change, whether it be through advocacy, volunteering, or lifestyle changes. This can help them feel like they are making a difference and alleviate some of their anxiety.
3. **Practice self-care:** Encourage people to engage in self-care activities, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time in nature, to help reduce stress and anxiety.
4. **Foster a sense of community:** Encourage people to connect with others who share their concerns about climate change. This can provide a sense of community and support, and help them feel less alone in their worries.
5. **Model positive behaviours:** Model positive behaviours yourself by making environmentally conscious choices in your own life. This can help people see that their actions can make a difference.

EVALUATION

Evaluation helps us determine the effectiveness, success, and impact of the actions outlined above. We would also propose making the policy a standing agenda item at committee and organising regular meetings to ensure sustainability principles are fully integrated into discussion and decision-making. A **yearly review**, measuring success against our stated goals and timescales will highlight where there is a need for further work and where we are doing well.

Mechanisms could include:

- monitoring the uptake of reused kit
- club surveys on travel habits
- counting bags of waste material vs recycled material from the boathouse over a month each year to track evidence of a reduction

A full evaluation plan will be developed following feedback and review of this document.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RIVER

THE SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (SEPA)

There are several public bodies in Scotland responsible for protecting and improving our environment. For river-related issues, SEPA is likely to be the most relevant. SEPA are a regulatory body who has overall responsibility for protecting Scotland's environment. They have a handy online guide, outlining [WHO DOES WHAT](#)

TO REPORT AN INCIDENT:

- POLLUTION HOTLINE: 0800 80 70 60
- SUBMIT ONLINE: <https://www2.sepa.org.uk/environmentalevents>

Scottish Water provides water and sewerage services to most households in Scotland and have a duty to maintain public sewers and drains and deal with sewage. They are regulated by SEPA.

Riverbanks are usually the responsibility of the local authority (e.g. Glasgow City Council or North Lanarkshire Local Authority) or private landowners. Other stakeholders include The Crown Estate, which owns the river bed up to Cambuslang.

LINKS & RESOURCES

- World Rowing Sustainability Policy; <https://worldrowing.com/responsibility/environment/>
- British Rowing Environmental Policy: <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Environment-Policy-2020-v-3.pdf>
- [Athletes of the World](#)
- [The British Association for Sustainable Sport: BASIS](#)
- Rowers Against Rubbish (Facebook Group)
- [Sports and Sustainability International](#)

CREDITS & THANKS

This draft document was created by Ingrid Shearer, Julia Anne MacDonough, Karen Hansen and Lauren Doyle, with contributions and feedback from Clyde River Foundation, Marine Conservation Society and the Conservation Volunteers.

It is built on work by Clydesdale ARC Juniors Emma Drummond, Niamh Ferns and Calum Ferns who conducted an environmental survey of 113 rowers from 10 clubs across Scotland in 2020. This was followed by further survey work in 2022 drawing opinions on the use of single-use plastics. We

would also like to thank the many club members, friends and family and those with an interest in the river who contributed to our surveys.