

BTC (Southampton) Rowing club

Club History.

BTC (Southampton) Rowing club started life as the Docks & Marine Rowing Club in 1927, changing its name in 1953 to the British Transport Commission RC and finally becoming BTC (Southampton) Rowing Club officially in 2010.

From its inception until 1987 (60 years) the club was located in the Southampton Eastern Docks.

With the development of Ocean Village, the club were given notice by Associated British Ports (ABP) to vacate their premises in 1985 and to seek an alternative location outside of the Eastern docks.

In 1987, with the help of the Sports Council (Southern), the management of the then BTC Sports & Social Club and Southampton City Council (SCC) a temporary site was found for the club on its present location in Crosshouse Road Southampton, using an existing wooden boathouse previously used by Hampshire County Council for its sailing school.

Initially the club operated on a annual renewable lease with SCC until 2005 when a 25 year lease was negotiated with SCC. We have approximately seven and a half years left on the current lease. The club became a registered charity on 20 August 2021.

We currently have approximately 140 members in total (about 80 actively rowing, 20 social members and about 40 'Saints' football supporter members). Approximately 70% of these are Southampton residents.

Since becoming a registered charity we have appointed a Community Development Officer (CDO) to our committee, whose role is to contact local schools and colleges and other community projects, to make them aware of our facilities. We also advertise our clubhouse for hire for non-rowing related functions/meetings/courses, etc. on the club's website.

Regarding expansion plans, with only seven and a half years remaining on our current lease with SCC, we wish to negotiate a new longer term lease, with the facility to develop the boathouse, either by building a new toilet and changing block for both our Ladies and Men rowers on an area behind the existing building. Or a more ambitious plan to add a second story to the boathouse to accommodate new toilets/showers/changing rooms/gymnasium and a club lounge with bar facility.

Note! Our existing lease with SCC precludes any development of any kind, on the site.

Our main concern/issue at this time is the proposed Lower Itchen Flood Elivation Scheme, with imminent plans to build a 1.2 metre high wall along part of Crosshouse Road, cutting off access to the existing Crosshouse Road car park. The loss of the car park facility will have a devastating effect on our member's ability to train, row and socialize within the club's facilities, let alone the impact on the other five recreational activities that take place several days per week throughout the year in Crosshouse Road. The loss of some part of the car park begins as early as this March, with investigation of the existing substrate prior

to the building of the wall. This project, whilst needed for future generations to prevent flooding to the lower part of the city, will have an immediate impact on the two rowing clubs, the two scout groups and the two fishing clubs, who all need access to the River Itchen via Crosshouse Road.

BTC Rowing Club, along with 25th Southampton Sea Scouts, and the general public wanting access to the river, use the slipway at the end of Crosshouse Road (this is the only public slipway available between St Denys and the Ocean Village development) the slipway has been severely damaged by the piling that has taken place in the adjacent housing development by Inland Homes. The tarmac covering has cracked, and the concrete below has risen approximate 50mm, creating a potential trip hazard for anyone carrying boating equipment to the water's edge. Rectification of this problem would very much help with the public's access to the river.

With regards to navigation on the river, this is very much the responsibility of ABP, and to their credit they have been very active in removing sunken wrecks above and below Northam Bridge which are always a concern to rowers. However, it is noticeable how the proliferation of additional mooring pontoons have been placed on the river making the navigation channel much narrower at certain points.

Finally, no doubt when the Inland Homes Chapel development reaches completion, and the hoardings are removed from the side of Crosshouse Road, the 'Crosshouse' itself can be refurbished (currently being used a toilet for the down and outs) and the general area can be revitalized to make the waterside area in Crosshouse Road a more pleasant place to visit by the general public.

Kind Regards

John Purkess

Chairman

BTC (Southampton) Rowing Club