

Co. Sligo Surf Club Committee Summary and Update, November 30th, 2017

There has been three key areas addressed when the committee met with the Maritime board.

1. Update and central philosophy of the club for the next 5 years
2. The club's approach to dealing with exiting the existing building
3. The approach the club would like to take in the running of the future Centre of Excellence

Primary to the discussion is that all decisions from this point are underpinned by the outcome of a business feasibility study which is currently underway. There are no lasting decisions that can be made until this essential work is complete.

The club has experienced fantastic growth on the last few years to the extent that we had to close access to family membership in June as we could not facilitate any further increase in numbers for, primarily, the Hour of Power. We can expect year-on-year growth of between 25-40% based on interest and feedback at present. It must be noted this success is wholly a product of surf club activities and lesson provision provided in the water, and not in any way due to the structural facilities available on land.

As the club's effort is primarily on young families, '*Child welfare and safety*' is the core philosophy unpinning all decisions in the near and mid term decision-making process of the County Sligo Surf Club.

Feedback from members over the year has been very useful. The most striking feedback is that well over 85% of all members have never used the club facilities. Parents and kids get their wetsuits on at home, and go straight home after surfing. The main reason for this is the huge amount of 'stranger' traffic going through the male and female change rooms seven days a week. At a conservative estimate, there are well over 25,000 commercial customers using the facilities over just a three-month period. Adult members use their club membership as an entry vehicle into competitive surfing events or join as a gesture of community support.

Simply put, the club members do not use the club facilities and the existing building is not fit for its existing purpose from the club's perspective.

Now, as a club, we appreciate there are a number of decisions which are simply out of our control. There is a feasibility study ongoing which will allow the council to decide whether to proceed with a new centre or not. We understand final decisions should be made by February next year. We have made it clear to the board that our members do not get to use the existing facilities so whether it is a new building with funding from Bord Fáilte, or just the new site being offered, we are comfortable with either decision. Our members do not get to really use the facilities today in the existing club. As a club, we may choose to go mobile, (i.e. function as a club without a clubhouse,) with a preliminary space allocated to store our boards to use for club activities, but will need dedicated use of these facilities for the safety and supervision of our members. We will manage this over the next period of time. How long we do this for will depend on the outcome of the board's and council's decisions over the next few months.

We have also made it clear to the Maritime Board that discussion around resources for interim showers or other arrangements will be of no benefit to our club members. In a temporary facility

and the acquisition of changing space, there is more than an equal measure of unanswered questions regarding opening, closing, cleaning and responsibility. Therefore we would like to be involved in any discussion around funds being allocated to support the club while we are without a clubhouse. We are happy to have that conversation with the maritime board when the time is right.

Now, if the decision is made to proceed with the building of the new centre, there is a critically important question around what form will the management of the centre take, and who will be responsible for the strategic and day-to-day decisions of the building. We as a club are seeking autonomy and have decided to take the approach that we want to, with close co-ordination with the council and the Maritime Board, take responsibility for the centre. This is not to say that we want to be involved in the day-to-day running of the building. What we want is to have a very strong say in the way it is run, and who is running the commercial, tourist and community responsibilities of the club on a daily, weekly and annual basis.

Alternatively, we as a club are more than comfortable with the alternative of moving into the new site, minus the Board Failte funding, and building a fantastic new County Sligo Surf Club through alternative funding pathways for our members and community.

Faithfully

Co. Sligo Surf Club Committee