



2017 AGM Report

Chairperson's Report

CANI has had a busy year, with particularly detailed administrative and important strategic developments.

The role of the Board has been to oversee the work of the Association in areas such as coaching, performance, recreational, clubs and facilities. The Board is made up of volunteers who work to develop the strategic aims for CANI and then monitor their progress.

One of the major tasks set to the Board in the last 15 months has been to finalise the restructure of CANI in order to become a Limited Company along with attaining recognised charity status. With considerable work and focus, there are new articles in place, which will help the Board to improve its governance. We have been reviewing policies and procedures, which are being made public and transparent to our members. The charitable status will provide access to funding from wider avenues than Sport NI and Lottery Funding.

We have been able to recruit two independent Board members this year. Ian McAvoy who has taken on the role of treasurer and Paul Kitchen who is taking the lead on marketing and advertising for CANI. Both these roles are vital to ensure we see CANI moving forward with the growth of its membership and to show a wider, more accessible profile for our sport.

CANI are pleased to share the 2017-2021 strategy, which aims to Inspire people to pursue a passion for paddling; for health, enjoyment, friendship, challenge and achievement. Following consultation with clubs, providers and stakeholders we are confident that this strategy will ensure membership focussed work by CANI, which includes all aspects of paddlesport. We are awaiting confirmation of funding to put this strategy into operation, but are ready to put the operational plans into place as soon as this is in effect.

CANI relies greatly upon a volunteer workforce to support the small number of permanent staff. The Board would like to thank everyone who enables events, training, committees, coaching sessions and recreational paddles to take place.

We are looking forward to focussing in the next year; to growing our membership, seeing new people taking up the sport, enjoying success in the performance disciplines locally, nationally and internationally and providing excellent membership services including paddling opportunities for all.

General developments

Profile raising and membership

CANI is focused on raising the profile of canoeing across Northern Ireland and last year we delivered a number of programmes to provide opportunities for people to try canoeing. The programmes were BlueWay 10k in partnership with Waterways Ireland and Canoeing Ireland, Flow project in partnership with all water sport governing bodies in N.I. and National Go Canoeing Week in partnership with British Canoeing. All of the campaigns were a great success and generated new club based members across NI. In addition to the campaigns many of the CANI clubs promoted and successfully delivered come and try it events and programmes to attract new members, these are a vital part of the growth of the sport and we hope these continue.

Events

We have been working hard over the past year to attract and support events that will support the development of Canoeing and good progress has been made. The Paddle4Sport league was a good success last year bringing club members together and encouraging new people to our sport. Clubs and providers ran events that are firm fixtures and attract people from all across Ireland; these include polo events in Enniskillen and Belfast, sprint events, slalom events, sea races, symposiums etc. It was fantastic to see over four hundred students compete in the Inter Varsities organised by UJJ canoe club. CANI also hosted the Home International Surf Kayak Championships which saw teams from five nations compete in Portrush. 2017 also saw the return of Paddlefest which was held in Derry / Londonderry and was an enjoyable weekend. We were blessed with good conditions for all disciplines and the coaches provided great sessions in the sun. Paddlefest will return again in 2018.

Facility development

Facility developments are always at the fore for CANI and last year we have been working on several projects. We are working with the Lagan Canal Trust on the redevelopment of the Lagan Canal to ensure that the weirs are paddler friendly and to develop canoeing facilities where possible. The sites we are working on are Becky's Hogg Weir, Union locks, Stranmillis Weir and Shaw's Bridge. The Canal redevelopment will open up more waterways and we hope that some of the weirs will be designed to create canoeing features.

The fish pass at Toomebridge produces a world-class freestyle feature but due to metal girders at the base it is not a safe place to paddle. There has been lots of work on the redevelopment of Toome and we are waiting a decision from Inland Fisheries on the request to remove the bars.

As CANI is focused on the development of Slalom and Sprint kayaking we have identified a need for a slalom and sprint facility. The other Home Nations benefit from pumped white water courses and have seen the benefit from participation and athlete developments. CANI are focused on developing a pumped slalom course but we need to find major investment and a suitable site. A more affordable option is to develop a slalom course on the Mourne River similar to Grantully in Scotland, We are working with Derry and Strabane Council to source funding. We are also focused on developing Castlewellan into a sprint kayak facility, which would enable athletes to train on in lanes and set distances and to run local and national events. We are working with Rowing Ireland who are at the early planning stage of developing a high performance centre in Belfast, we hope that CANI athletes will be users of the facility.

Renewable energy is a major risk to our natural environment and CANI are working to protect our rivers and lakes. Where possible we get involved in hydro projects to ensure that construction work will have minimal impact to the river levels and there is a suitable route through.

Foyle Paddlers have been working with Derry and Strabane Council to ensure that the club gets a revamped facility at Prehen boathouse, this work will provide better facilities for the club to open its door to new members and to work with more local groups etc.

The Belfast Kayak Academy pool is now fully functional and is enabling people to try canoeing in a warm environment. The pool is available for hire for clubs and individuals.

An exciting new development has started at KnockBracken Reservoir outside Belfast, which will be a centre for all things waterbased. The centre is hosting a junior international invitational polo competition this August.

Access to lakes and rivers and important to or sport, CANI play an active role in maintaining existing access and to work with landowners to gain new agreements. CANI are currently working on sites in Derry, Omagh, Strabane, Toomebridge and Cookstown to develop facilities and places to paddle.

Strategy development

A large amount of time was invested in the later part of 2016 on the development of a new strategy. The process started with an extensive consultation with CANI clubs, providers and retailers, which was finished off with a planning day with key committee members and officers. As a result CANI has developed its 2017 – 2021 strategy for Canoeing in Northern Ireland and will be launching it at the AGM.

Funding for 2017 - 2021

Along side the development of the strategy we were preparing the four-year funding submission to Sport NI. This was a time intensive process that diverted focus from other areas of work but was worth the effort. At the time of writing this we are waiting for final confirmation but the outlook is good and we anticipate a significant increase in investment across most areas. The outcome will be released following official notification from Sport NI.

Member database

The CANI database is over four years old and is no longer fit for purpose so we have started the replacement / improvement process. We have been working on the new database for a short time and we are confident that the replacement system will improve the way that you engage with CANI, book courses, book events, manage your own record and generally make processes much easier for all. We hope to have the system implemented before the end of 2017.

Recognition awards

CANI launched its new recognition awards at the end of last year to recognise the good work of volunteers within canoeing. Without the commitment and dedication of volunteers within all aspects of our sport a large majority of opportunities and activities would not take place. The winners of the awards are on the CANI website.

Lobbying and representation

This is an area that CANI need to improve at but during 2016 we were actively involved in the campaign to save the Education Authority Outdoor Education centres from closure. CANI are represented at the National Outdoor Recreation Forum that is focused on all aspects of Outdoor Recreation and in particular access and legislation.

Staffing

The CANI staff team is small with three full time officers, part time administrator, part time finance officer, part time slalom and a part time surf kayak coach. To help meet the members needs we take

on placement students and this year we were joined by Leah Robb. Leah has been with CANI for nine months and has been involved in performance developments, marketing and PR and events. We wish Leah all the best with the remainder of her studies and her future career.

Many of you will know Matt McKnight who has been with CANI for two years as the talent coach. Matt has developed the slalom and sprint programmes and has supported the surf programmes among all areas relating to performance development during his time with CANI. Matt is moving to New Zealand to coach slalom for the Bay of Plenty canoe club. Matt made significant developments while with CANI and will be missed by the athletes, parents, coaching staff and the other members of the staff team. We wish Matt the best of luck in his move and new life.

Governance developments

Committee restructuring

To ensure CANI is fit for purpose we have been restructuring the committees. This restructure means that there are specialist committees advising and monitoring all aspects of CANI's work. An example of this is the formation of an equality committee that advises the CANI executive and CANI Board on matters relating to Equality within paddlesport. Safeguarding is always a priority and as a result there is a safeguarding committee in place to ensure policies and procedures are followed and action taken to ensure best practice within our sport.

Company restructure

CANI has developed over the past years and has changed its legal standing to reflect the growth. CANI is now a limited company with charitable status, this change will mean greater protection for CANI and its directors and will enable CANI to apply for alternative funding sources that are only open to charities.

Independent board member recruitment

In line with the company restructure CANI recognized that it will be useful to have independent members on the new committee of directors and has recruited two independent directors to the board who have expertise in marketing and accounting.

Partnership working

It is vital that CANI work in partnership with many organisations to achieve common goals and to develop canoeing across N.I. Sport NI is a key partner as CANI's main funder and we ensure that we work closely with all of the departments within Sport NI. British Canoeing have gone through major changes over the last year and have a new CEO who is very keen to ensure all of the countries work together and has established new process to ensure this happens. CANI work closely with Canoeing Ireland on projects that span Ireland and are currently working on a joint programme to target new people into canoeing as part of the Blueway 10K challenge. Tollymore have been a great support to CANI over the past year and have assisted with the development and delivery of the specialist coach training and moderations.

Club developments

Recreational paddles

CANI along with the recreational steering group reviewed the recreational paddles from previous years to see what was working best. From this review the format for the 2016 paddles were put in place. After an increased number of participants taken part in the 2016 recreational paddles we decided to go with the same format for 2017. The first couple of paddles this year have been a great success with many new participants taken to the water. We have also had a good number of

members continue to take part in these paddles. CANI is very thankful to the recreational steering group and the clubs involved in running recreational paddles.

Support to existing clubs

CANI continues to support all clubs through support documents, Clubmark, club panel, emails, calls and face-to-face meetings. Along with this CANI helps clubs to develop programmes in their local areas such as Junior Paddlesport Hubs, Junior Bladers, Recreational Paddles, pool programmes and other initiatives.

Club Panel

The club panel continues to be a great resource of information for the clubs and CANI. It is a great way for representatives of clubs to interact with other clubs on club matters and gain useful information, advice and feedback. The information that CANI received from clubs this year was very useful.

At the start of 2017 CANI held a club meeting at Oxford Island to discuss club matters. From this the clubs will meet at Club Panel two further times in the year. CANI will be hosting another club meeting at the start of 2018, to continue to keep clubs up to date with club matters.

CANI would like to thank all who have been involved in the club panel and the club meeting and look forward to further involvement throughout the year.

Clubmark N.I.

Eight CANI's clubs have been accredited with the CANI Clubmark. These clubs have found the process very useful and are really seeing the benefits of the scheme. They find their clubs running more smoothly, and have very clear outlines to work towards. This benefits Coaches, Volunteers, Children and Parents, as it is easy for everyone to see how the club is structured and run. Belfast Kayak Academy is in the final stages of achieving CANI Clubmark. This is an excellent scheme for clubs to be involved in, so please contact CANI to get involved.

Junior Paddlesport hubs

There are two Junior Paddlesport Hubs based in Northern Ireland which meet once a month between September and April. The hubs are made up of a variety of CANI clubs who focus their hub sessions in two different geographical locations. One hub meets in the Armagh area, which consists of Belfast Kayak Club, Belfast Canoe Club, Lisburn City Paddlers, C3 Craigavon Canoe Club, and the newest 2 clubs to join this are Belfast Kayak Academy and County Antrim Paddlesports. The other hub meets in the Omagh area and is made up of the following clubs, Foyle Paddlers, Erne Paddlers and Mid Ulster Canoe Kayak Club.

CANI support each of the hubs with coach development days throughout their season. The key focus behind the hubs is to create the best learning environment for the young paddlers, to develop, have fun and socially interact with other young paddlers from different areas.

CANI would like to say a huge thanks to all the coaches and volunteers for their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication.

Event Safety

Throughout 2016 CANI continued to roll out the British Canoeing Event Safety Management Workshop. CANI is pleased to see that there was a good up take in the workshop, with many clubs who run events, now having event safety officers in place. The workshop provides all the building blocks for running safe events and will guide you on the appropriate documentation that has to be

submitted for your event. CANI have been supporting clubs throughout 2016 and 2017 in the authorisation of their events.

National Go Canoeing Week

2016 was the first year that CANI, Clubs and Providers took part in National Go Canoeing Week. It was a great week of paddling opportunities, where there was 1417 participants took part in paddling activities. This year's National Go Canoeing Week is from 27th May - 4th June and there is a good range of paddlesport activities on offer.

Coaching developments

Developments within the UK have mainly been focused on the continued development of the British Canoeing award scheme. The main changes in 2016 and 2017 on the award scheme have been the update to the leadership awards. Where there is now the new Paddlesport Leader, Moderate Water Leader and Advanced Water Leader. The moderate and advanced water leader has replaced the four and five star awards. To accompany these awards the Guide Scheme was also launched at the beginning of April.

During 2016 CANI offered the following range of courses for coaches to continue their development; Assessor Training, FSRT orientation, and FSRT moderation. Also to ensure standardisation within the Coaching awards CANI put on moderation for the providers.

Club Activity Assistant

The Club Activity Assistant is an exciting new endorsement aimed at supporting club and volunteer workforces. CANI have been working closely with the Club Activity Assistant Coordinators in 2016 and 2017 in setting up the programme and developing volunteers into Club Activity Assistants within their clubs.

Paddlesport Leader

April 2017, British Canoeing launched their new Paddlesport Leader qualification. This is aimed at paddlers taking on formal leadership responsibilities in benign, sheltered water environments and aims to support leaders run safe, quality, enjoyable trips based on their group's needs and aspirations. CANI are currently advertising for coaches to become providers of the of the new Paddlesport Leader qualification.

British Canoeing / CANI Delivery Centre Audit

On the 8th December 2016 Lee Pooley head of coaching and qualifications came over to complete the delivery centre audit of CANI. The audit was successful with only a few minor changes to be made to some operational systems. The delivery centre audit will take place on an annual basis with CANI.

Quality Assurance

CANI are required by British Canoeing Awarding Body to Quality Assure (QA) the delivery of the British Canoeing coaching awards. CANI will continue to QA British Canoeing UKCC 1 and Level 2 training and assessment courses throughout 2017.

Moderations of providers

Over 2016 CANI arranged a number of one-day moderation events for providers of British Canoeing Foundation Safety and Rescue, as it was mandatory for all providers to attend this moderation to continue delivering this award. In February 2016 CANI put on White Water Safety and Rescue Training moderation for the delivery team. Moderation for British Canoeing Coach Educators took

place in February 2017. All moderations are to further develop the providers to ensure that the standard of British Canoeing courses is at a high standard across the country.

Continuous Professional Development

To ensure the development of coaches CANI offer a suite of CPD modules. CANI Paddlefest 2017 focused on updating coaches through a range of different workshops from the suite of CPD's and through looking at best practice in coaching and safety for various disciplines. This gave many coaches an opportunity to update their qualifications. If you are interested in the modules from our suite of CPD please visit the CANI website and get in touch with CANI.

Coaching and Leadership Provider workforce

As part of the coaching and leadership provider workforce CANI reviewed coaching and leadership courses for the last three years and the providers who delivered them. Each provider has to maintain a minimum delivery requirement for coaching and leadership awards. From these statistics all providers were notified of their current status. CANI will continue to review and support the provider workforce.

Talent Development

Over that past year CANI Staff, Performance Committee Members and Board Members have been working hard behind the scenes to develop and launch the updated Performance Pathway and Selection documents relating to each Performance Programme. These documents provide a clear and transparent process to progress within the Squad structure that provide Northern Irish athletes the best possible development environment to go on and win medals at Olympic, World and European Championships. These documents can be found on the CANI website alongside the updated performance tab which has information on performance funding, coaching and general information relating to performance paddlesport.

Race Support

Over 2016 and 2017 season CANI have been working hard with the coaches on each programme to maximise the race support they can deliver. During 2016 CANI supported lead coach of the Surf Programme Marty McCann to attend the World Wave Ski Championships in Santa Cruz, Portugal. Here he supported many development squad athletes competing against the best juniors in the world allowing him to set them up for their best performances. CANI have helped support Lead Coach of the Sprint Programme Ray Sweetlove to attend multiple Nottingham Regatta Championships over the 2016 and 2017 season. This has given him the opportunities to work with the squad members during a race weekend and to tailor his training post race to the needs of each individual athlete. Domestically within Slalom Matt McKnight has supported a Division 1 race in Teesside and a Premier Race in London. Through these races he has been able to work with athletes to gain the necessary race day skills needed to be successful within Canoe Slalom.

A number of athletes within the Canoe Slalom Programme competed for a place on the Canoeing Ireland Canoe Slalom Squad and will be competing at international events in 2017. To support these individuals Matt McKnight provided coach support during selection races in Dublin and Slovakia. This together with regular meeting with the Canoeing Ireland Slalom Committee we believe provide the best opportunities for athletes from Northern Ireland the best possible chance of selection.

For the athletes selected in 2016 CANI worked with Matt McKnight to attend competitions in France, Spain, Slovenia and Poland allowing the athletes the best possible chance of success on an international stage.

Recruitment

At the end of 2016 CANI launched its new “Talent Identification Academies”, this new initiative draws on the success of similar programmes conducted within British Canoeing which have seen members go on to compete for Team GB at World Championships and the Olympic Games. This new initiative aimed at attracting young people with the skills and desire to compete in Canoe Sprint and Canoe Slalom by working with local Primary and Secondary schools within the geographical area of CANI’s two Performance Hubs. In late 2016 CANI began working with three Primary Schools and one Secondary School to carry out Phase 1 testing and by early May 2017 CANI finished Phase 3. The selected young people will begin training within the Academies in June 2017 and we can’t wait to see how they get on.

Development Squads

In late 2016 the Canoe Sprint Programme moved from its base at Shaw’s Bridge to Belfast Boat Club. This move has allowed a greater level of access for athletes to equipment alongside an increase in facility standard and access to a gym. This alongside the embedded programme of mid-week sessions and squad weekend sessions should see an improvement in race results from all on the programme in 2017.

The Canoe Slalom Programme has an embedded programme of mid-week sessions and squad weekend sessions. In 2016 the Canoe Slalom Squad had an overseas training camp in Augsburg Germany at the site of the 1972 Olympic Games. Here athletes from Northern Ireland got to paddle on a world class coach and were able to meet several athletes who were bound for Rio 2016. Currently there are 6 CANI athletes based in Nottingham at the artificial course, this has enabled them to train in a high quality daily environment.

The Surf Programme has continued to with regular monthly sessions under lead coach Marty McCann. With the World Surf Kayak Championships being held in Portrush in 2017 the squad have been focused on making sure they are ready to compete at the highest standard in front of a home crowd.

Polo Support

Over the past year Talent Coach Matt McKnight has been working closely with Belfast Kayak Academy. In 2016 he helped support the club as they hosted the Junior Open and Irish Open competitions in Enniskillen. He has also been working with the coaching staffs to help them develop both teams and individuals who have the necessary skills required to compete at a high level within Canoe Polo.

British Open and Home Internationals Surf Championships

In late 2016 CANI hosted the British Open and Home International Surf Championships in Portrush. This event saw competitors from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and N.Ireland travel to Portrush to compete. It was a great turn out and despite poor conditions competitors pushed themselves hard with England coming out victorious. Unfortunately due to lack of surf the British Open had to be cancelled.

Athlete Successes

Last year CANI athletes competed at Irish, British, European and World Class events at all age categories from Junior through to Senior. This is an amazing time to see so many young people progress through the Performance Programmes and now into National and International Teams. Some of the highlights from 2016 are:

- Jonny Young finished 8th at the Paracanoe World Championships

- Jonny Young was 2nd in the British Paralympic Selection races securing himself a reserve boat for Rio
- Afton Fitzhenry finished 6th at World Cup 1
- Afton Fitzhenry finished 5th at the U23 European Championships
- Afton Fitzhenry finished 8th at the U23 World Championships
- Hannah Craig, Jake Cochrane and Elliott Davidson all competed in the European Championships
- Jake Cochrane, Eoin Teague and Elliott Davidson all competed in World Cup 2 and 3
- Jake Cochrane, Eoin Teague and Conleth McLarnon all competed at the Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships
- Jake Cochrane and Eoin Teague competed at the Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships
- Kirsten Eatock won the Division 1 race in Shepperton.
- Mathew Lamont came 2nd in the European Surf Kayak Championships
- Mathew Lamont won the Irish Open Championships
- Mark Taylor, Marty McCann, Andrew Lamont, Sofia Lazarescu, Megan Gamble, Jamie Gamble and Meabh Lynch all competed in the World Waveski Championships

If you would like more details on any of the areas please contact the CANI office office@cani.org.uk or call 07875092928