

DART SAILABILITY GROUP

Sailing for all Disabilities



Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Dart Sailability. We have been operating for nearly 20 years and over those years have benefited from the efforts of many individuals who have generously given their time and experience to ensure the success of the charity. We can only survive with the support of many generous individuals, companies, charitable organisations and our neighbours on the river. It is, therefore, incumbent on all of us to ensure that we act in a safe and courteous manner - our activities are visible to many thousands of other river users and visitors to Dartmouth and we should set a good example in all that we do.

Please enjoy your time with DSG and be assured that we are always available to receive your suggestions and any constructive criticism whenever you feel we could do better. Maintaining good, clear and courteous communications is the key to our future success.

Lastly, and most importantly, please ensure that you and those around you operate as safely as the environment permits and with due consideration to other members and those who may be impacted by our activities.

Neil and Ian

Neil Strevens and Ian Wakeling
Chair of Trustees Principal DSG

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook describes how Dart Sailability is organised and managed to ensure that everybody feels welcome to join and that operations are conducted safely and efficiently.

The Handbook is supported by:

- Specific Policies covering key aspects of how we operate
- Operating Procedures providing guidance on best practice for the conduct of operations
- Guidance Documents providing guidance on various issues

All documents are available on the web site. A copy of Operating Procedures is available in the Club House. Key Guidance documents are displayed on the Noticeboard in the club house.

If required documents can be made available in different formats upon request.

Section 1 ORGANISATION

Introduction

Dart Sailability Group is a Charity run by its members, both disabled sailors and volunteers. It was formed in 1997 and re-registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2014

Our primary aim (CIO Objective) is set out in the Group's constitution as:

'To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time activities for people with disabilities with the object of improving their condition of life, in particular by encouraging recreational and competitive sailing, in the County of Devon'

We provide people, with all types of physical and mental disabilities, with opportunities to enjoy boating on the River Dart. This includes sailing and power boating. Members can enjoy cruises on the river or participate in training courses and racing. There is also a social programme both on the river and ashore throughout the year.

We operate from Dolphin Boatyard's Dartside Quay facility on Galmpton Creek on the River Dart in Devon,

We are affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association and are an RYA Recognised Training Centre.

Management Structure

Trustees

DSG has a board of elected Trustees whose role is to oversee the management of the Group, to comply with Charity Commission and RYA guidelines and ensure DSG

is sufficiently funded to meet its stated aims (charitable purpose). Up to 12 Trustees can be elected, including *ex officio* posts for The Principal and Treasurer; the minimum practical number is four. Trustees are appointed for three-year periods, renewable three times consecutively before a mandatory retirement, and are approved by the Membership at AGMs.

Management Team

The Trustees appoint a Principal, who attends Trustee meetings together with A Chief Sailing Instructor, a Chief Powerboat Instructor and a Training Officer who form the Management Team.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the Safe and Effective Operation of DSG and is the principle point of contact with the RYA. He/she fulfils the responsibilities of Principal of the RYA Recognised Training Centre.

The Chief Sailing Instructor has responsibility for the safe and effective conduct of sailing activities and organisation of sail training and fulfils the responsibilities of Chief Sailing Instructor of the RYA Recognised Training Centre

The Chief Powerboat Instructor has responsibility for the safe and effective conduct of powerboat activities and organisation of powerboat training and fulfils the responsibilities of Chief Powerboat Instructor of the RYA Recognised Training Centre

The Training Officer has responsibility for the organisation of all other training required to ensure that Volunteers are suitably trained to undertake required tasks.

Officers

The Management Team appoint Officers who take responsibility for various elements of the operation of DSG.

These will include:

Safety Manager responsible for ensuring that legislative safety requirements are complied with and providing guidance on good safety practice

Maintenance Manager responsible for ensuring that all equipment is properly maintained and repaired

Membership Secretary responsible for processing all membership applications and renewals and acting as a first point of contact for prospective members

Welfare Officer responsible for ensuring compliance with DSG's Welfare Policy and acting as the first point of contact for anybody concerned over their welfare or the welfare of another member.

Social Secretary responsible for organising social activities

Other roles as required to share the workload

Full details of current Officers, including contact details are provided on the web site

Section 2 FINANCE

Trustees have the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the charity and ensuring it is solvent, well run, and meets its purpose. Charity funds can only be used for the furtherance of the charitable objectives. Expenditure must be approved by Trustees in advance and agreed by the Treasurer who is responsible for

maintaining a 'Reserve of Funds' equivalent to one year's running costs. Trustees can agree a level of financial delegation to nominated members of the Management Team.

Volunteer Expenses

Volunteers who freely give their time and support are entitled to claim expenses to reimburse their costs when undertaking duties or making purchases on behalf of the club. All expenses should be approved by the Management Team or other Officers in accordance with authority delegated by the Trustees.

Section 3 INSURANCE

DSG has an insurance policy that exceeds the Third Party liability recommendations made by the RYA. It includes cover for the Group premises, the boats and liability insurance for all members. A copy of the Employer's Liability Certificate is on display in the DSG Club House. DSG also holds Trustees and Officers insurance to protect the interests of those that govern and manage the organisation.

Section 4 MEMBERSHIP

Dart Sailability welcomes anybody to join irrespective of Categories of Membership

Everybody taking part in DSG activities afloat or undertaking maintenance of DSG equipment, except on a commercial basis, must be a member of DSG for insurance purposes. Membership can be in any of the following forms.

Sailors – An individual with a disability. Entitled to take part in all activities. Has voting rights at Charity Meetings

Volunteers – Individuals who volunteer time and effort to provide support for any activities required to deliver the activities of DSG afloat or ashore. Has voting rights at Charity Meetings

Honorary Members – Individuals selected by the Trustees to be rewarded for their services in support of DSG

Temporary Associate Members - Persons who have a legitimate need to be involved in DSG activities on an occasional basis. This may include people visiting for a trial session before joining as a sailor or volunteer or visiting and participating on a short-term visit as a sailor or volunteer and individuals providing support for a sailor or group of sailors. Such membership carries no other rights. Temporary Associate Membership lasts for 6 months.

Guardians, carers and family supporters of Junior members must also register as Temporary Associate Members if they wish to go afloat.

Group Membership – Available to formal organisations such as schools, homes, charities etc. Allows up to a defined number of members of that group to participate in DSG activities at any one time.

A group paying an annual fee is entitled to nominate one member of staff who will have voting rights at DSG General Meetings

Groups may also participate in DSG activities on payment of a one-off fee for each activity.

Groups must complete a Day/Visitor form listing all attendees on each occasion. This includes registration as Temporary Associate Members.

Membership Fees

Membership Fees are set by the Trustees and are subject to approval at an AGM or Special General Meeting

Sailors and Volunteers and Groups pay an annual membership fee.

Volunteers pay a nominal fee to cover administrative costs but may also make a small additional donation.

If there is a case of financial hardship this should be identified to the Membership Secretary who has the authority to waive or reduce the annual sailing fee. He/she can take advice from the Principal or Chair of Trustees where it is not a clear-cut case.

Newcomers and Taster Sessions. A sailor may take part in a free taster session prior to taking up full membership. A Temporary Associate Member form must be completed before the session for insurance purposes.

Visiting Sailors. Sailors from other Sailability groups may visit DSG and are granted reciprocal rights. Sailors on holiday and not members of other Sailability groups may be charged a reduced membership fee. A Day/Visitor Form, which includes registration as a Temporary Associate Member, must be completed before the first session.

Individual Registration and Records

All volunteers and sailing members, including those attending a trial 'taster' session, must complete (or have completed on their behalf) a Membership application and have paid their dues as part of the registration process, before taking part in any activities in order to be covered by insurance. Information on Volunteer and Sailing membership application can be found on the website. Those attending taster sessions or prospective volunteers or sailors without access to online membership application should ask a DSG officer for a paper application form.

Online registration on Membermojo is necessary to record contact details for Next-of-Kin or other emergency contact details and should also show any routine or emergency medical information that might be required in the event of an accident.

Sailors, or their carers, are expected to advise volunteers assisting them, afloat or ashore, of any requirements they have for assistance and anything about their condition that the volunteer should be aware of in order to provide appropriate support in the event of an incident occurring.

The Volunteer Membership form requests additional information about an individual's past experience, skills or qualifications gained from paid or voluntary employment that may be relevant to their work at DSG. This should not preclude any volunteer with little or no obvious relevant skills or qualifications offering their help. The charity trains all volunteers to ensure they are capable of conducting any tasks asked of them.

All volunteers are expected to complete the one-day Disability Awareness training course within a year of joining. DSG is licensed to run these courses and holds them annually. Dates are published in the annual programme, on the website and in the DSG clubhouse.

Trustees, volunteers and those in contact with children or vulnerable adults will also be asked to complete an application for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks). DSG complies with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and has a Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders which is available to all applicants. All information provided or gained from external sources is treated in confidence. In the event that a DBS check reveals any offences or other matter that might be relevant, the Chairman, Principal or a Chief Instructor will discuss the matter with the volunteer in accordance with the Policy on Recruitment of Ex-offenders 2021.

Leaders of groups should complete the Group Membership form each season. At each session, a list of the names of the sailors should be handed to the shore team.

Note: the DSG Trustees reserve the right to deny membership to sailors or volunteers on reasonable grounds. It is the DSG Chairman's final decision to refuse or terminate membership of DSG. In the case of volunteers, the Principal may advise him/her.

Attendance Records

The Membership Secretary is responsible for keeping a record of Members who attend.

Volunteers should record their attendance on the register held by Shore Party. The records are required to complete returns to the Charity Commission and the RYA.

Section 5 SAFETY

Principles

The safety of all members is the key priority for DSG. This is achieved through:

1. The conduct and regular review of a Risk Analysis considering all aspects of DSG operations and the outcome of Reviews of Incidents. The Analysis is available on the website
2. The development and application of Operating Procedures and guidelines designed to mitigate risks and reflect best practice. The Operating Procedures are available on the website.
3. Training and Experience of Volunteers
4. Awareness of the capabilities and needs of disabled sailors

It must be recognised that sailing and powerboating are by their nature unpredictable sports and therefore inherently involves an element of risk.

The responsibility for personal safety is shared by all volunteers and sailing members capable of protecting themselves and others from harm.

All members should be alert to potential hazardous situations and take avoiding action and/or report potential hazards and any incidents to the Officer of the Day immediately.

Members should not undertake any task that they do not feel competent to, or capable of, undertaking and/or they have not been trained to undertake.

Life Jackets and Buoyancy Aids are provided by DSG and must be worn afloat and on the pontoon. The Operating Procedures provide advice on the use of Buoyancy Aids or Life Jackets.

DSG does not provide any other protective clothing. Members should wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. Advice is available from the Senior Management Team and Instructors.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the Safe and Efficient conduct of DSG activities.

The Senior Management Team and Safety Manager are responsible for conducting a Risk Analysis of DSG Activities and reviewing and updating the Analysis annually and as necessary following the review of any incidents that may occur.

The Senior Management Team, (Principal, Chief Instructors and Training Officer) are responsible for the development of Operating Procedures to define procedures and guidance for safe operations.

The Safety Manager is responsible for ensuring that all equipment has been appropriately serviced, checked and certified where required. He/she is also responsible for ensuring that the Risk Analysis is maintained and that all incidents and safety concerns are properly investigated and addressed. The Safety Manager is accountable to the Principal and Chair of Trustees.

The Senior Management Team are responsible for organising volunteer training and, where appropriate, determining which volunteers are competent to undertake which roles.

The Officer of the Day's responsibilities are defined in the Operating Procedures. They include making a decision on what activities can take place considering weather conditions and the allocation of suitable volunteers to each role. They are also responsible for managing the response to any incident and addressing any Safety Concerns that may be raised during the day.

Boat Skippers have particular responsibilities for Safety defined in Operating Procedures. These include the final decision on whether a boat is safe to operate and that the prevailing weather, river/sea, and maritime traffic conditions are suitable for the experience of the crew.

Dignity of Risk

Dignity of Risk refers to acknowledgement that a person can make a decision* on the risks that they are prepared to submit themselves to. Their choice should be respected even if it looks risky to others. However, their actions must not ignore DSG Operational Procedures or put other persons at risk.

Any members who have concerns over an activity should check that the person is aware of the risks to themselves and, if concerned for the safety of others stop the activity and seek advice. The OOD has the final decision if an activity can continue.

**Those with mental capacity issues may not be able to do so safely*

Section 6 SAFEGUARDING

Dart Sailability's membership includes Children and Vulnerable Adults. DSG is committed to ensuring that they are not subjected to any form of physical, sexual, psychological, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect. We recognise that everyone, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership or social status, has a right to protection from discrimination and abuse.

DSG has a Policy and Procedures for the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk and Children and an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy. These are available via the web site and should be read by members.

In particular, Dart Sailability requires all Volunteers to apply for an enhanced DBS certificate. This will be processed by the DBS Coordinator via the Royal Yachting Association for all new volunteers who commence regular attendance.

Whilst all members have a responsibility for ensuring the safety of others, Dart Sailability appoints a Welfare Secretary to ensure that the Policy is implemented and maintained in line with best practice and guidance from the RYA. The Welfare Secretary is also the first point of contact for anybody with concerns about their own or somebody else's welfare. The Welfare Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate action is taken over any concerns that may be raised.

The Welfare Secretary's name and contact details are published on the website and in the Club House.

Section 7 BEHAVIOUR AND COMPLAINTS

Behaviour

Members shall not act in any way that would compromise the safety standards or reputation of DSG. There is a basic expectation that all members act in a courteous and caring manner towards other members of the Group and not act in a way that might upset other users of the water and shore side.

Complaints Regarding the Conduct of Members

Minor complaints should be passed to the OOD who will deal with them if possible or otherwise contact the Principal. More serious complaints are to be brought to the immediate attention of the Principal or another member of the Management Team. If necessary, they should be contacted by phone if they are not already on site.

Incidents Afloat

The responsibility for all on water activities and volunteers at DSG is vested in the Principal and the Chief Instructors. Any incidents involving safety of any vessel or individual are to be reported to them and will automatically warrant investigation, recording in the incident log in accordance with the relevant Operating Procedures (available on the website). They will ensure that remedial action is taken as required. This may be just reminding those involved of their responsibilities and providing additional training. More serious cases may involve removal of an individual from DSG and then the case will be referred to the Trustees with a clear account of any investigation and, if sought, any recommendations.

Inappropriate Behaviour

The need for a review of a member's conduct can be initiated by an observation or by a pattern of behaviour which becomes evident to, or is brought to the attention of the Principal, Chief Instructor, Instructor, Assistant Instructor, or Welfare Officer. Alternatively, it can be by means of a formal complaint from another member. In this latter case, the complainant must identify themselves to the Principal who will interview them to establish the facts underlying the complaint. Where the concern relates to behaviour towards a Child or Vulnerable Adult it shall be referred to the Welfare Officer in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk and Children available on the website.

Complaint Procedure

The DSG Chairman is responsible for ensuring the overall conduct of members of DSG. In the event that a member (sailor or volunteer) is observed to behave in a manner that could be considered to be unacceptable, unsafe or otherwise merit remedial action or further sanction, then an immediate investigation will be carried out by the Principal or a member of the Management Team to determine the facts. The overarching principle shall be for the matter to be reviewed fairly and in a non-prejudicial way in order to achieve natural justice and prevent any recurrence. The complainant can take no other part in any subsequent disciplinary proceeding.

Once grounds for disciplinary action are established this should be communicated to the possible offender and a hearing arranged with the Principal. Following a hearing a decision may conclude that there are no grounds for further action or that the complaint/observation is upheld. The decision of the Principal in this respect shall be final.

Where a complaint is upheld, it must be that the offender has exhibited conduct that is prejudicial to the reputation of DSG or has caused disruption to the harmonious working of the organisation.

Remedial action shall be decided in a manner that is appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the offence, also to include repeated offences where past remedial actions have not proved successful. Remedial action can take the form of further training, a restriction on the involvement of the offender in certain activities or suspension for a period of time.

Following a hearing the defender will be informed that he/she has received a formal warning as to future conduct and if further offence takes place a final warning will be issued which if ignored may lead to expulsion in accordance with the DSG Constitution (2014).

If the complaint can't be handled by the Principal, then the complaint will be passed to a group of three trustees, normally led by the DSG Chairman, who will deal with the matter as described above.

Section 8 TRAINING

RYA Training

DSG is an RYA Training Centre certified to run Sailing and Power Boat courses and issue internationally recognised certificates. These include the RYA SailAbility and PowerAbility schemes which are designed to ensure that everybody can achieve certificates matching their capabilities.

Training is managed by the Chief Instructors. Courses are organised to meet demand from Volunteers and Sailors. Anybody interested in undertaking a course and achieving a certificate should talk to the relevant Chief Instructor. Our adapted boats mean that sailors with a wide variety of disabilities can undertake RYA courses. The RYA has provision to annotate certificates where a participant needs extra help with some tasks eg “jumping ashore”, looking behind etc. If there is sufficient interest courses can be arranged to qualify members as Instructors. All training is free to members although there is an expectation that members will use their qualifications in support of DSG activities.

As an RYA Training Centre we are subjected to annual inspections by the RYA. These cover all our boats and equipment used for training and relevant operating procedures and Policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose and reflect best practice. We also have access to RYA Support and Guidance and networking with other Training Centres and Sailability Groups.

All RYA Training is conducted in accordance with RYA requirements on Instructor/Pupil ratios and oversight and safety support, and follows the defined syllabus. Detailed scheduling of courses is decided by the course leader and approved by the relevant Chief Instructor.

Volunteer Training

It is important that volunteers understand how DSG operates and are able to assist in the activities that are undertaken. All volunteers will be expected to attend an Induction Course and Disability Awareness training. Arrangements for courses will be publicised on the web site and by email.

Further training is provided to enable volunteers to develop their skills and assist with particular activities. This includes Lifting and Handling, Boat Rigging and Boat Crewing. Competent Power Boat operators can undertake Support Boat and Safety Boat handling training to ensure they understand our boats and how to operate with our adapted boats.

Volunteers can also undertake RYA Powerboat and Sailing Courses to allow them to act as skipper of relevant boats. Experienced volunteers can undertake an assessment and familiarisation with a Chief Instructor.

Refresher Training is provided for all volunteers prior to each season commencing.

RYA First Aid Courses are run as necessary to keep Instructors up to date and train other volunteers.

Annexes
SAFETY INC CLOTHING
SAFEGUARDING