

# SCA Equality Group

Here we take a look at the benefits of, and reasons behind, the newly established SCA equality group ...

SCA has recently established a new Equality Group to monitor and assess all aspects of equality and inclusion relating to the focus areas of the Strategic Plan with the aim of improving the inclusivity of paddlesport in Scotland. Here we explain why it was felt that such a group should be set up and how it can increase access to, and long term participation in paddlesport in Scotland.

## Values and culture

Equality and inclusion are words that appear frequently in organisational policies, but what do these words and policies actually mean? The reality is that an organisation can have as many equality, diversity and inclusion policies as it likes, but they mean nothing if they are not translated into actions that dictate positive behaviours because it is these that ultimately reflect the true values and culture of an organisation.

The SCA has six core organisational values, set out in the 2017- 2021 Strategic Plan. These values underpin the SCA mission of enabling and inspiring involvement in paddlesport.

- Leadership
- Engagement
- Openness
- Inclusiveness
- Responsibility
- Collaboration

These core values are reflected in a wide range of events and activities that SCA Board, Committees, Staff, Clubs and Members have been involved in to make paddlesport as accessible as possible to a diverse demographic. SCA has a programme to train coaches and volunteers in Paddle Ability which is aimed at removing barriers to participation in paddlesport. Indeed, many of those coaches and volunteers have used that training in the highly successful Wheels to Water event that is organised annually in association with Scottish Disability Sport.

Other examples of activities aimed at improving the participation of specific groups in paddlesport are the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium (involving SCA), club-run disability and LGBTQI sessions, and women-specific events at CVC. The purpose of these activities is not to create insular spaces, it is to create comfortable spaces that the participants can identify with, flourish within and which then open doors for wider inclusion in paddlesport.

## Role of the Equality Group

One of the first actions for the new Equality Group is to capture as much information as possible on current activities. By capturing and sharing the knowledge and experiences of SCA clubs and members engaged in equality, diversity and inclusion activities, we

can get a clearer idea of the current landscape. This will allow us to review where we are with equality and inclusion in relation to the SCA Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and therefore identify gaps and opportunities for future development.

## Objectives of the SCA Equality Group

- To review the SCA's progress towards the Equality Standard in Sport.
- To seek out opportunities, through the work of SCA Committees, Affiliated Clubs and paddlesport providers, to make the sport more inclusive through events and activities being run in a different way and/or through publicising paddlesport using alternative media.
- To provide advice to the SCA Board, committees, clubs and staff regarding improvements and changes which can be made to make paddlesport more inclusive.

While we are using the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan as a framework to develop our action plan for the immediate future, this is only the start. A culture of equality, diversity and inclusion is very much a part of the forward vision for SCA and the Equality Group is already contributing to the formulation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

## Composition of the SCA Equality Group

The Terms of Reference of the SCA Equality Group state that the Group comprises the SCA Board Equality Champion, SCA Regional Development Manager and up to six individual SCA members with an interest in (and experience of) making sport more inclusive. Following an open recruitment process advertised in **SCOTTISH PADDLER**, website and via social media the following group members were appointed.

- Liz Cain is SCA Board Equality Champion and is also SCA Recreational Director and SCA Regional Officer Central. She is currently Head of Centre at Manor Adventures Lockerbie.
- Gary Entrican is an Outdoor Instructor at Firbush Point, Sport and Exercise at University of Edinburgh. He has been involved in a number of initiatives relating equality and dignity in the workplace, has participated in the Wheels to Water events



Left to Right: Liz Cain, Gary Entrican, Gemma Hendry, Roger Holmes and Adam Burns

and assisted Edinburgh Kayak Club with LGBTQI events.

- Gemma Hendry is a Director and Instructor of Able2Adventure, a disability-specific organisation offering a wide range of outdoor activities to people with a disability. Gemma is also a new Paddle Ability Provider.

- Roger Holmes is the SCA Regional Development Manager and has been working towards inclusive paddlesport initiatives and deals with disability-related enquiries. He has been involved with Wheels to Water since it started and is a new Paddle Ability Provider.

- Adam Burns is the Manager of Willowgate Activity Centre at Perth. He runs disability and Additional Support for

Learning (ASN) sessions at the centre and is currently looking at setting up an Inclusive Paddle Club. He is also a new Paddle Ability Provider.

### What happens next?

The SCA Equality Group will be collecting as much information as possible on the current demographic, bearing in mind GDPR and also that not all elements relating to equality are collected from members. We therefore will not be aiming to cover everything defined as a 'protected characteristic' as defined by the Equality Act.

We would like to hear from you about equality and diversity paddlesport activities you have been involved in, what

worked well and what could have been better. We'd also like to have suggestions for activities or events that you think would make a difference to SCA, either by supporting current members and/or attracting new members to enjoy paddlesport.

If you haven't been involved in any activities but would like to be, please let us know - the personal reward is truly outstanding. We plan to showcase various equality and diversity activities of SCA clubs and members in future editions of **SCOTTISH PADDLER**, so watch this space!

You can reach the Equality Group by emailing [equality@canoescotland.org](mailto:equality@canoescotland.org)

## INCLUSIVE PADDLING

# Introducing Paddlesport To People With A Disability



Inclusive paddling at Lochore Meadows...

Taking place on Saturday 27 June at Castle Semple Country Park in Lochwinnoch, Wheels to Water is the annual event designed to give those with disabilities, and their families a chance to try a number of sports.

Along with paddlesports, there is sailing, power boating and hand cycling for participants to try and we are looking for volunteers to come and help make paddlesports possible. The day is a lot of

fun for everyone involved and volunteers from previous years have found it an extremely rewarding experience that enhances their understanding of coaching people with varying disabilities.

If you are able to help out, you will be taking people of all ages out on the water and giving them a fantastic paddling experience. You do not necessarily need any experience of coaching people with a disability (although this would be useful),

just a willingness to learn and muck in! All instruction on using adaptive equipment will be given. We are unable to pay volunteers to attend, however you will receive lunch on the day, and attendance will count as an 18 month CPD update.

If you're able to help this year we'd love to hear from you, please email [roger.holmes@canoescotland.org](mailto:holmes@canoescotland.org) for more information.