

DUN LAOGHAIRE COMBINED CLUBS

Introduction:

Dun Laoghaire Harbour is a leisure sailing resource of world class standard. Its particular qualities are:

- Easy International and National Access
- Four of the finest yacht clubs in Ireland
- Large protected bay for multiple race areas
- Large harbour with 800 berths
- Extensive onshore facilities

The ease of proximity to Dun Laoghaire town facilities, and easy access to and from the capital city centre and conurbation, are key attributes. They render the harbour attractive and accessible to Dublin for Irish and visitor sailors and spectators. The beauty of the harbour and surrounding environment, and the leisure attractions of the harbour and piers, add to its attractiveness for the sailing fraternity at home and abroad.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour is ideal water for young sailors to learn to sail. It is the most intensively used junior sailing facility in Ireland. Hosting, managing and promoting International Sailing Events is nothing new to Dun Laoghaire. In recent years clubs in Dun Laoghaire have hosted some very prestigious competitions. ***“Dun Laoghaire is a spectacular world class sailing venue both on and off the water”*** Göran Petersson, president of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

The DLCC

The Dun Laoghaire Combined Clubs (DLCC) is a body which is representative of the six waterfront Yacht Clubs in Dun Laoghaire Harbour. These are:

National Yacht Club
Royal St George Yacht Club
Royal Irish Yacht Club
Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club
Dublin Bay Sailing Club
Royal Alfred Yacht Club.

The DLCC makes an active contribution locally and internationally in terms of sailing and racing at all levels from junior, disability sailing and Olympic competition. The vast majority of our 5,000 members/electors live and work in the Dun Laoghaire area. We have been and continue to be anxious to contribute to the development of the town and the locality.

The aims of this short presentation:

The National Ports Policy clearly defines the role and land use function of Dun Laoghaire Harbour as a Regional Tier 3 port, whose main function is marine leisure and maritime tourism. **Under the National Ports and DLCC's policies to support and encourage water based sports and maritime leisure** the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company is the statutory commercial body charged with the ***“development of the harbour as a marine tourism gateway to Ireland, maintaining and enhancing the recreational and amenity value of the Harbour and promoting investment and commercial development to support the Harbour's long-term maintenance”***.

“It is clear that there is no longer a role for central Government in ports that fulfil a

*regional or local need. The longer-term development of these ports is best placed within their regional and local communities to allow both develop in a manner that is mutually beneficial”.*¹

This presentation is made in full knowledge that it is Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's policy to support and encourage water based sports and maritime leisure activities. If the policy is utilized to its full potential it can contribute to the health and well-being of the residents of and workers in the county and can also offer significant potential for tourism growth.

The DLCC wishes to present sailing as a significant development opportunity which responds to these objectives. Further they contend they should be more widely recognised, facilitated and protected by appropriate policies in the proposed Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Development Plan 2016-2022.

The aim of this presentation is twofold: the first is to set out the contributions made by the six yacht clubs in Dun Laoghaire to the development of sailing in Ireland and internationally. The DLCC as the umbrella organisation representing these clubs requests that the Council will identify the role it plays in fostering and developing the Harbour and the town of Dun Laoghaire as an international sailing venue. Through the hosting of international events it has contributed and continues to contribute substantially in economic terms to the benefit of the townspeople and its business community.

The DLCC believes itself to be a significant stakeholder among others in relation to the development of the Harbour on a sustainable basis. Reflecting on its contribution it claims recognition and a role as a partner organisation contributing to the Council's development strategies and plans for the Harbour.

A second aim relates to the termination of the HSS ferry service which is seen to have created a fantastic opportunity for Dun Laoghaire town and Harbour to provide a new facility of national significance for water based sports at the very centre of the harbour while at the same time opening up access to the water front for all.

This can be addressed by the development of a **National Watersports Centre**. This centre would be the focal point for training and participation in a range of watersports and would host major international and national sailing and other water sports events. The sports that will be facilitated can include sailing, kayaking, rowing, paddle boarding, windsurfing triathlons and scuba diving.

This would be a national watersports equivalent of the National Sports Campus at Abbotstown.

A state of the art **National Watersports Centre** can be developed in the heart of Dun Laoghaire converting existing and now redundant facilities at relatively low cost. The business case for such a centre is good. Attracting hundreds of sailors and their sponsors and families will be of considerable benefit to the town. The location of a **National Watersports Centre**² at St Michael's Wharf in the centre of Dun Laoghaire town is superior to the leading examples in Europe which are generally located at a remove from the town centre. It is close to the capital city and has first class links which will be very attractive to competitors.

¹ Ibid, Ports of Regional Significance, Section 2.7, Page 30

² For further expansion of this concept and some comparison with some existing National Watersports Centres across Europe see attachment 1.

The organisation of major sailing events of benefit to the town:

The hosting, managing and promoting International Sailing Events is nothing new to Dun Laoghaire. In recent years clubs in Dun Laoghaire have hosted some very prestigious competitions. Recent International Events have included the ISAF World Youth Championships, The Figaro Stopover, MODA70 Regatta have each attracted over 100,000 visitors to Dun Laoghaire for each of these events.

The Dun Laoghaire International Sailing Events (DLISE)³, an organisation in which the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company and the four waterfront clubs have been jointly involved in charting the future for sailing events advocates a planned approach which will open up opportunity to bid for much sought after pinnacle events. It has noted that “the reputation and relationships that Dun Laoghaire has built up in recent years means that greater consideration is now given to hosting events here. An ambition has now been set to host a major international sailing event in Dun Laoghaire at least every two years”. It noted this ambition “is well under way with events secured through 2014 and other opportunities in the pipeline through to 2020. Its planned approach over this period will open up other pinnacle events like the ISAF World Championship held every four years valued at €25m to the host country or to bid for the Youth Olympic Games 2022 for Dublin”.

The Clubs and their facilities and activities contribute significantly to the quality of sport, leisure and recreational amenities in Dun Laoghaire and the wider city area. They attract local, national and international sailing competitions and events, with direct benefits and indirect tourism and employment spin-offs for the town.

We suggest an overall approach to development of Dun Laoghaire Harbour that will promote leisure sailing activities and the National Watersports Centre as outlined above is in the best interest of proper planning and sustainable development and which will inform the drawing up of detailed policies and strategies for such development.

There is acknowledged to be considerable growth potential in sailing in Ireland. The DLCC believes that it behoves us to come up with positive sustainable proposals to achieve this potential; working together with the DLRCC, the DLHC and the other public and private stakeholders/harbour users.

The DLCC clubs contribute socially, culturally as well as economically to the wider area. The DLCC have approximately 5,000 members, with 700 keel boats and 1,000 dinghies. With an estimated annual footfall of 350,000 people involved in sailing pursuits in any year the DLCC provides some of the best sailing and racing facilities across Europe. Club racing takes place 3-4 evenings per week, during the April to October season. This involves up to 400 boats and 2,500 people per week. From October to April the DMYC Frostbite Series, which has been in existence for 44 years is the largest of its kind in Europe. It brings in dinghy sailors from Wicklow, Greystones, Bray on the Southside and Clontarf, Sutton, Howth and Skerries on the North side of Dublin, not to mention the many Dun Laoghaire-based sailors who also take part.

An independent assessment⁴ has found the biannual Volvo event alone, hosted by the DLCC, makes a €2.5m economic benefit to the area with a €0.5m economic benefit to local business.

³ See brochure prepared by Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company and the four waterside yacht clubs. (Separate attachment 2).

⁴ A case study on the socio-economic significance of the Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta (July 2009):Irish-Sea.org; marine leisure network: funded inter alia by Ireland’s Structural Funds and the European Regional Development Fund.

Sailability Dun Laoghaire is a combined initiative of the four Dun Laoghaire waterfront clubs which provides sailing for children with disabilities throughout the summer months. This takes place in various forms, every Sunday morning from RStGYC and a number of full day week long courses organised by NYC and RIYC. At all times the sailing takes place inside the protective area of the harbour piers and due to the often very delicate nature of some of the participants it is required to sail as close to the host Club as possible.

The programme which was started 6 years ago has greatly expanded over the past few years and now has 40 plus participants. The initiative has been recognised by the County Council and the Clubs as a great success and a worthy voluntary venture. Sailing is one of the few sports that children with disability can participate in on the same basis as abled bodied children. There are no other centres for disabled sailing in Dublin or indeed Leinster

This year Dun Laoghaire **Sailability** were delighted to be hosting the President's Cup from the RIYC in August which involved regional teams from the four provinces sailing in four different fleets with at least 35 participants both disabled adult and children. Racing over the two days took place entirely inside the harbour.

As noted earlier the Harbour, with combined DLRCC, DLHC and DLCC support hosts Major International Sailing Events – typically 5 a Year. Dun Laoghaire clubs have a proven track record of success in identifying, bidding for, planning, managing and implementing International Sailing Events. The pre-planning durations can take up to several years. They also require a clear certainty on future commitment on harbour usage plans. A typical major event will be of a week's duration and involve 75 to 150 boats; with up to 600 participants, the majority of whom will be international visitors. Among recent major international events were:

- ISAF World Youth Sailing Championships 2012.
- Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta 2011 (biennial event).
- La Solitaire du Figaro 2011.
- Star Class European Championships 2011.
- Topper Worlds 2011.
- U.K. National Squib Championships 2010.
- Irish Cruiser Racing Association National Championships 2010 and 2014.
- Laser SB3 World Championships 2009.

Recent International Events have included the ISAF World Youth Championships, The Figaro Stopover, MODA70 Regatta have each attracted over 100,000 visitors to Dun Laoghaire for each of these events. There are over 200 people directly involved with the running of and participation in, these series.

The DMYC is hosting this year's Shipman Class Championships, later this month (27/30th), with boats coming from all parts of the Irish Sea, including the IoM, Scotland, England and Wales. This is just one of a number of such events run by the Clubs which take place during the year. Hosting of Irish Sea Offshore Racing Association (ISORA) events is another major series of events. At a national level expert teams from Dun Laoghaire contribute to supporting such events as:

- (a) Tall Ships (Dublin/Waterford/Belfast)
- (b) Volvo Ocean Race (Galway)
 - (i) Clipper Race (Cork/Kinsale)
 - (ii) Cork Week (Crosshaven)

Overall the DLCC has developed race management skills and resources (experienced organisers, rescue and support boats and equipment) to run the highest level international events, as well as general club competitions.

In addition to social/cultural and racing income there is also a further economic impact on Dun Laoghaire, including:

- The chandlers, public transport, local petrol stations and parking in Dun Laoghaire.
- The boatmen and support companies who service and keep the various committee boats, mark laying and rescue boats ready working and available throughout the winter.
- Mooring fees and charges payable to the DLHC.
- The continuing contribution by members and staff of the clubs to manning the lifeboat.
- The continuing contribution by members and staff of the clubs to sailing programmes for the disabled.
- The local commercial sail training schools.

The very presence of these clubs and the activities based on them such as the social events, open lectures, the arts and language courses make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the greater Dun Laoghaire area. The sailors and their entourages bring sustained spending power to Dun Laoghaire Town throughout the year but the very spectacle of all these boats sailing in Dun Laoghaire harbour and in Dublin Bay is in itself an attraction for millions of Dubliners to come to Dun Laoghaire to walk the piers, enjoy the water, see the boats and watch the sunset.

The sailboats and the sailing events are themselves an important part the spectacle that attracts millions of Dubliners to Dun Laoghaire.

Conclusions:

In summary, leisure sailing is an activity that has taken place in Dun Laoghaire for over 150 years. It contributes to the recreation/sport/leisure amenities of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. It generates revenue for the harbour and the wider town economy. There is significant scope seen for further publicly supported development of sailing combined with sustainable revenue generation.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour has as noted above unique qualities which suit it to sailing activities. It is strongly suggested that the sailing environment, as a part of the wider social and ecological environment merits protection. **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Council is requested to make provision for this in a policy for the Harbour area, covering:**

- recognition of, support for and protection of the water based recreational uses of the harbour;
- critical assessment of commercial shipping development that may compromise this activity;
- objectives that will allow for the protection and provision of ancillary land-based facilities to support leisure sailing.
- Consideration to be given towards the development in the harbour area of a **National Watersports Centre** to promote Dun Laoghaire in particular as an international centre; to be created in the harbour, building on similar institutional models already established in the U.K. (e.g. Pwllheli and Weymouth) and several other European maritime nations (e.g. the Netherlands).

The DLCC which is representative of significant numbers of sailors and which contributes to the international development of the Harbour as a focus for watersports respectfully requests

that Councillors give full consideration to and accept the two motions in accordance with the relevant DLRCC regulations and procedures:

Motion No: 1

Add new Policy after policy OSR12 as follows:

To Protect Dun Laoghaire as an outstanding recreational harbour and sporting amenity of national significance

It is the policy of the council to protect and enhance the water based recreational amenity of Dun Laoghaire Harbour and its ability to host national and international competitions.

Any commercial shipping proposals within the Harbour should be required to ensure that there is no material detrimental impact upon the water based recreational amenity facilities of the Harbour and its ability to host national and international competitions.

Reason

It is noted that the draft Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan includes a number of policies which relate to water based sports and recreation, including the following:

“Policy OSR12: Water-Based Sports

It is Council policy to support and encourage waterbased sports and maritime leisure activities along the coast subject to Beach Bye-Laws. The County features seventeen kilometres of coastline, which is a valuable asset. If utilised to its full potential it can contribute to the health and well being of the residents of, and workers, in the County and can also offer significant potential for tourism growth”.

The sub-text to Policy OSR12 states that:

“It is recognised that the development of improved facilities for sailing and other water-based sports are important for the revitalisation of Dún Laoghaire Harbour and the other harbours along the coast of the County. The Council will support such water-based uses and activities in the harbours and along the coastline, with an emphasis on those that cater for a broader spectrum of the population”.

However, the Draft County Development Plan does not include any policies or objectives which seek to ensure that these water-based recreational and sporting facilities of national significance at Dun Laoghaire Harbour are protected and not significantly impacted upon by future commercial development in Dun Laoghaire Harbour.

The importance of the incorporation of such policies in the County Development Plan to protect water based recreational and sports facilities, including sailing, in Dun Laoghaire Harbour is highlighted by the recently published proposals for very large scale commercial cruise liner berthing facility in the centre of the Harbour. Such a proposal for a commercial cruise liner and berthing facilities in the harbour, designed to accommodate extremely large

commercial ships, has the potential to seriously undermine the existing water-based sporting and recreational facilities at the harbour and in particular sailing.

It is respectfully submitted that the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016 – 2022 should explicitly recognise that development to facilitate commercial shipping operations in the harbour should only be considered where they do not materially diminish the water-based recreational amenity and compromise the value of the harbour, which is an important national sporting asset, and its ability to continue to host national and international events.

It is further submitted that the County Development Plan should recognise that the nearby Dublin Port is capable of fully meeting the commercial shipping needs of the city and region, including berthing facilities for very large commercial cruise ships, in accordance with the Dublin Port Masterplan and in accordance with the National Ports Policy.

The national significance of Dun Laoghaire as an outstanding recreational harbour and sporting amenity should not be permitted to be seriously diminished or eroded by inappropriate large scale commercial shipping proposals such as a very large scale commercial cruise ship berth in the centre of the Harbour.

Motion No: 2

Add a new **Specific Local Objective** (SLO) for Dun Laoghaire Harbour as follows.

“To develop a National Watersports Academy on the site of the former HSS ferry terminal and car marshalling area in Dun Laoghaire Harbour”

Reasons

The termination of the HSS ferry service has created a fantastic opportunity for Dun Laoghaire town and harbour to provide a new facility of national significance for water based sports at the very centre of the harbour, whilst at the same time opening up access to the water front for all and reconnecting the harbour to the town.

This can be addressed by the development of a **National Watersports Academy**. This centre would be the focal point for training and participation in a range of water sports and would host major international and national sailing and other water sports events. The sports that will be facilitated can include sailing, kayaking, rowing, paddle boarding windsurfing triathlons and scuba diving.

This would be a national watersports equivalent of the National Sports Campus Project at Abbotstown.

This will also enable Dun Laoghaire to build on its established reputation for providing world class international sailing events and is a popular destination for competing sailors and would provide very significant economic benefits to Dun Laoghaire town centre.