

PROTECTING THE

# Places We Paddle

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British Canoeing's Environmental  
Sustainability Strategy



# Foreword

**British Canoeing serves a community of paddlers that cares deeply about the environment, the natural world and its sustainability. We have a responsibility to work together to protect and preserve our environment.**

The aggregate effect of individual action can be very powerful. Through positive action on climate change, we can help make our society more sustainable whilst growing paddlesport. Protecting and enhancing places to paddle can play a significant role in the wider challenge.

We need to take urgent action as our environment is facing even greater threats than ever before. The climate crisis is dramatically harming the places we paddle. Hot and dry summers have seen extreme temperatures leading to low water levels and limited paddling in places, a lack of rain putting a huge strain on

our precious wildlife. We are seeing severe storms causing sewage to enter our waterways putting our health at risk and increasing phosphate pollution causing algal blooms which are suffocating our waterways. The iconic River Wye has been facing particularly severe and well evidenced problems from this cumulative effect.

Pollution and plastic waste has put our rivers in crisis. Paddlers have seen at first hand the damage caused and have taken steps to improve the situation. Members, clubs and delivery partners have proved, through our successful Big Paddle Cleanup campaign, and the many individual initiatives,

that they want to be part of the solution. Paddlers must be the trusted guardians of our rivers and waterways, committed to leaving nothing behind but a ripple.

British Canoeing, at every level, will take steps to reduce its own direct impact on the environment from its operations and events and will support and encourage our community to take their own steps. Alongside my colleagues on the British Canoeing Board, I will hold the executive team and ourselves to account for delivery of this strategy.

Our environmental sustainability strategy will



support, promote and build on the great work already done in the community and deliver a measurable impact for the future of paddlesport and indeed, our environment.

**Professor John Coyne CBE**  
Chair, British Canoeing



# Protecting The Places We Paddle: Why It Matters To Us

**Why should paddlers care?** The climate challenge is a defining moment in our time, it threatens our people, our planet, our economy and our sport. Urgent action is needed to avoid catastrophic consequences, severe weather is already disrupting where and how we paddle.

The impact of climate change and water pollution is being felt by our clubs, disciplines and athletes. We have seen extremes in water levels, increasing sewage discharges, outbreaks of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and harmful algae.

Climate change is directly preventing our clubs and members from accessing the very waterways they enjoy and is also resulting in lost training and competition days for our athletes and teams.

Conservation and protection of the places we paddle is ingrained into our community.

Paddlers are already connected to nature, which is largely the reason they take part in paddlesport, and are concerned about blue spaces being damaged and overwhelmed by poor water quality. They want much more to be done by those in power.

However, while paddlesport is an environmentally benign activity, travel to places

to paddle can increase pollution and therefore our carbon footprint.

There is also more we can all do to improve the opportunities to recycle old kit and equipment, taking action in caring for our rivers and managing our impact on the environment will also continue.

Safeguarding our blue environments should be of great importance for all, especially for the young who will inherit and protect them in the future.



# Why We Need an Environmental Sustainability Strategy

**A healthy environment is crucial to British Canoeing and the whole paddling community. This is not only for our enjoyment of paddling, but for our health and wellbeing too.**

British Canoeing's Stronger Together 2022-2026 strategy sets out an overarching plan for the organisation, with clear targets, ambitions and cross-cutting themes - environment and sustainability is a key part. We have the desire and responsibility to protect our environment for future generations.

People are at the heart of British Canoeing and are key to delivering Stronger Together. We can control some aspects of our ambitions, like business travel, but it is the support of our members, volunteers, in clubs, disciplines,

events and coaching, and our partners, which will be invaluable going forward.

Supporting and influencing the activities of volunteers to make positive change in their local communities is crucial to delivering this strategy.

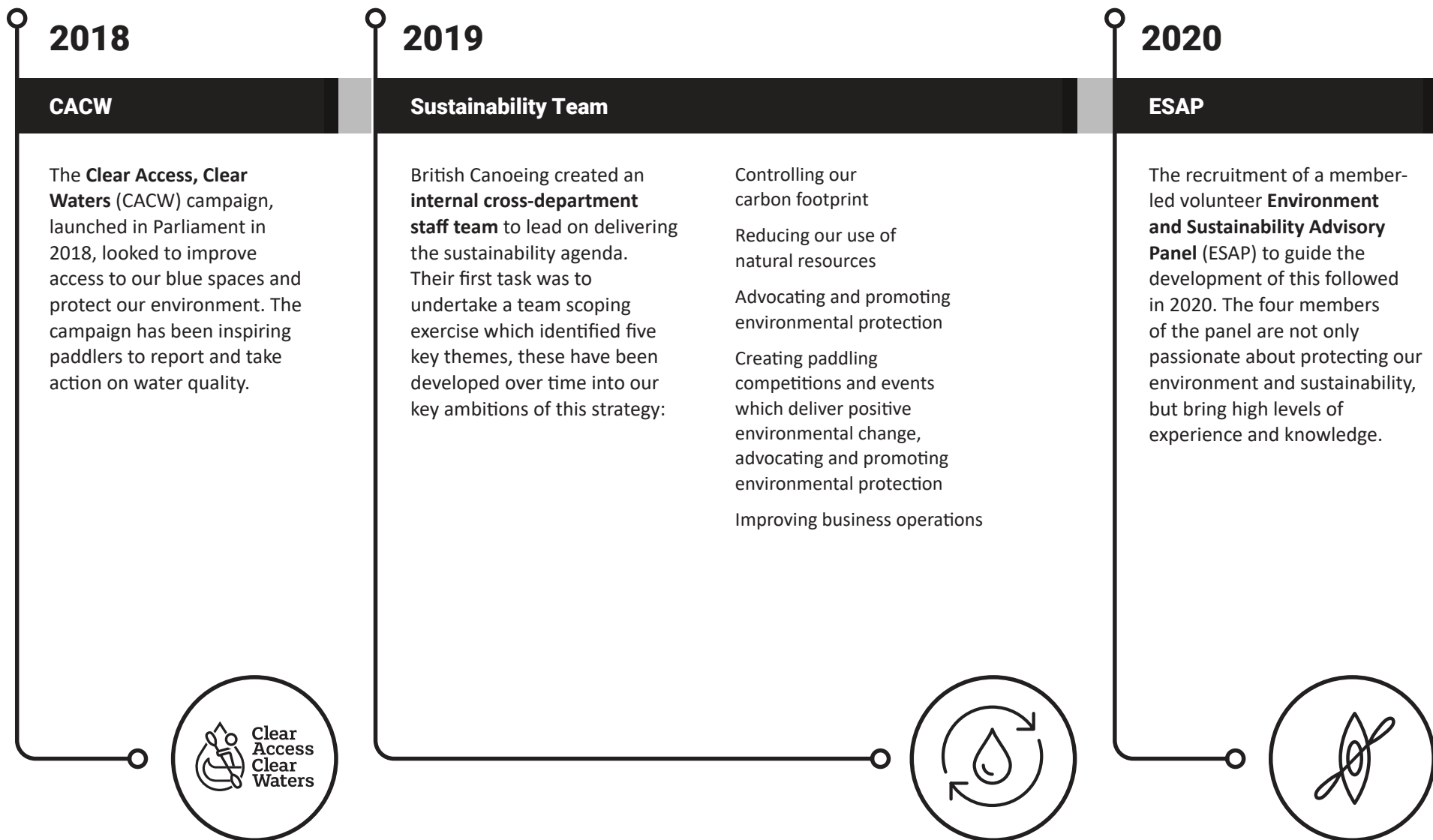
The ambitions and plans outlined are primarily focused on those UK and English areas within the remit of British Canoeing, UK activities in coaching and international competition and events, and those of the English membership organisation.



This strategy recognises the excellent **environmental sustainability** work already happening, but also how we will develop on that to deliver a measurable impact for the future of paddlesport.



# Where Are We Now

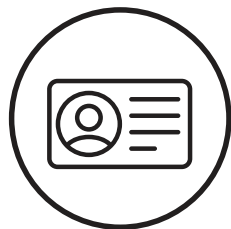


# Where Are We Now (Continued)

2021

## Go Green

Since 2021, paddlers have been able to choose to 'Go Green' when they join or renew their British Canoeing membership. About a quarter of our members (26%) have selected this option and we have ringfenced £2 from each subscription to reinvest in the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign. This money has helped to fund kits for the Big Paddle Cleanup. Members have told us, after waterways licence and liability insurance, that supporting Clear Access, Clear Waters was a key benefit.



2022

## The Big Paddle Cleanup / The Paddlers' Code / Sustainability Partnership / CACW Champion Club

Through **the Big Paddle Cleanup** more than 1,000 volunteers filled 700 sacks with plastic, glass bottles, cans and food wrappers. This incredible effort by members, clubs and other volunteers, led to British Canoeing being shortlisted at the BBC Green Sport Awards in the Teamwork category. This goes to show that we are 'Stronger Together'.

We also continue to inspire our community to help us and our partners tackle Invasive Non-Native Species on our waterways. This is not just through the physical

removal of, for example, floating pennywort, but also by encouraging paddlers to 'Check Clean Dry' to stop its spread.

British Canoeing has recently launched the **Paddlers' Code**, developed with Natural England, reflecting their work with the Countryside Code. The code informs all paddlers how to best protect wildlife and prevent environmental damage, with good practice guidelines such as avoiding dragging boats on river banks and disturbing gravel beds, where spawning fish might be.

British Canoeing has a **sustainability partnership** with energy consultancy UK Direct Business Solutions Limited (DBS). This aims to support British Canoeing's affiliated clubs and commercial Delivery Partners to become more sustainable and energy efficient and to help to save money and counteract rising energy costs. DBS will help us measure and collate data to record our baseline carbon footprint.

Affiliated clubs which are active on environmental issues receive **Clear Access, Clear Waters Champion**

**Club** recognition for their dedication to protecting the places we paddle, by taking action on plastic pollution, water quality and Invasive Non-Native Species. Champion Clubs are also exploring more environmentally sustainable practices such as greener energy, greener transport and reducing the use of throwaway plastics.



# Our Vision For The Future – To Become A Low Carbon Organisation

**In 'Stronger Together 2022-2026,' we set out our vision to care and protect our natural environment by setting a clear plan towards becoming a low carbon organisation.**

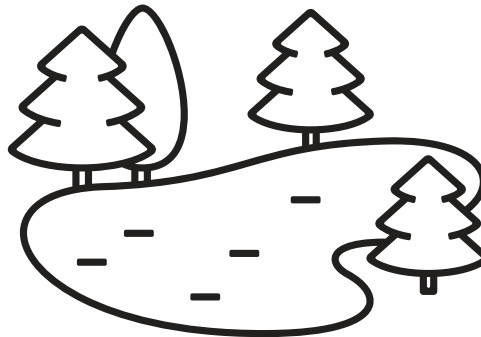
The ambitions we are committed to taking within this strategy are aligned to that vision.

As a responsible organisation driven by our values, we recognise our responsibility to protect the environment in which we enjoy our sport and recreation. Recognising

our duty in taking the lead in achieving measurable change in reducing the impact on the emissions we create.

To achieve our vision we must reduce our use of natural resources and promote environmental protection identified within our ambitions.

EVERY PERSON MATTERS,  
STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE,  
ALWAYS WITH INTEGRITY,  
ENJOYING THE JOURNEY,  
INDIVIDUALLY COMMITTED,  
STRONGER TOGETHER



# Our Vision For The Future (Continued)

British Canoeing is joining other national and international sporting organisations in supporting the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework. We will commit to achieving the specific climate goals of halving emissions by 2030 and aiming to achieve net zero by 2040 as part of the race to zero.

By committing to this framework we will be working with our partners and stakeholders to influence their future direction. Partners such as:

 **British Canoeing has committed to a**



**50% emissions reduction by 2030**

and a net zero emissions target by 2040

## International Olympic Committee (IOC)

As the owner of the Olympic Games and as the leader of the Olympic Movement, sustainability is now firmly embedded as an executive priority within the IOC. This is within their corporate ways of working and specifically across three key areas: ensuring sustainable Olympic Games; strengthening the role of sport as an enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and engaging the wider Olympic Movement.

The IOC have committed that all future Olympic Games, from 2030, will be climate positive with the Paris 2024 sustainability team already pledging to deliver this.

## International Canoe Federation (ICF)

The ICF is the head organisation of all national paddlesport federations worldwide, administering all aspects of canoe sport worldwide.

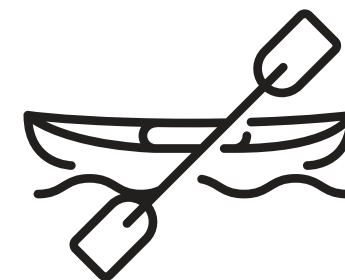
The ICF has committed to join the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as part of its overall strategy to make a positive impact on the environment.

The ICF commits to setting a target of 50% emissions reduction by 2030 as a minimum and a net zero emissions target by 2040 and to make all ICF Events carbon neutral in 2022. The ICF commits to submitting a concrete plan (within 12 months of joining the Framework) on how it intends to reach interim targets.

## Funding Partners

Both UK Sport and Sport England are members of the Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC) set up to lead and coordinate the sector's efforts on climate change and environmental sustainability.

The group will harness the sector's collective resources to help reduce the environmental impact of sport, recreation and physical activity and contribute to the UK's transition to net zero.





# How We Will Achieve our Vision and Targets

## Ambition 1

### Controlling our Carbon Footprint

#### KPI 1

- 🎯 Reduce the carbon footprint relating to business travel by 50% by 2025

#### KPI 2

- 🎯 Reduce the amount of waste generated against the 2022 baseline by 10%

## Ambition 2

### Reducing our Use of Natural Resources

#### KPI 3

- 🎯 To achieve 50% of the membership opting for Go Green membership by 2026

#### KPI 4

- 🎯 Reduce the net energy consumption of British Canoeing leased and managed facilities from the 2023 baseline by 10% per year

## Ambition 3

### Advocating and Promoting Environmental Protection

#### KPI 5

- 🎯 Increase participation in the Big Paddle Cleanup by 50 clubs, groups or delivery partners per year until 2026

#### KPI 6

- 🎯 Host a Parliamentary event to influence environmental protection by increasing access to blue space

#### KPI 7

- 🎯 Recruit 10 Clear Access, Clear Waters ambassadors to advocate and promote environmental issues in paddlesport by 2024

## Ambition 4

### Creating Paddling Competitions and Events which Deliver Positive Environmental Change

#### KPI 8

- 🎯 Produce clear baseline measurements and reporting from the ICF 2023 Canoe Slalom World Championships

#### KPI 9

- 🎯 Embed sustainable practices across domestic events run by British Canoeing by 2026

## Ambition 5

### Improving our Business Operations

#### KPI 10

- 🎯 100% paper-free British Canoeing business operations from 2024

#### KPI 11

- 🎯 All business tender decisions will score sustainability including carbon emissions as a key criteria



# Controlling our Carbon Footprint

**British Canoeing's first task must be to reduce our carbon footprint through more sustainable travel and to minimise waste generation across our sites and from our events.**

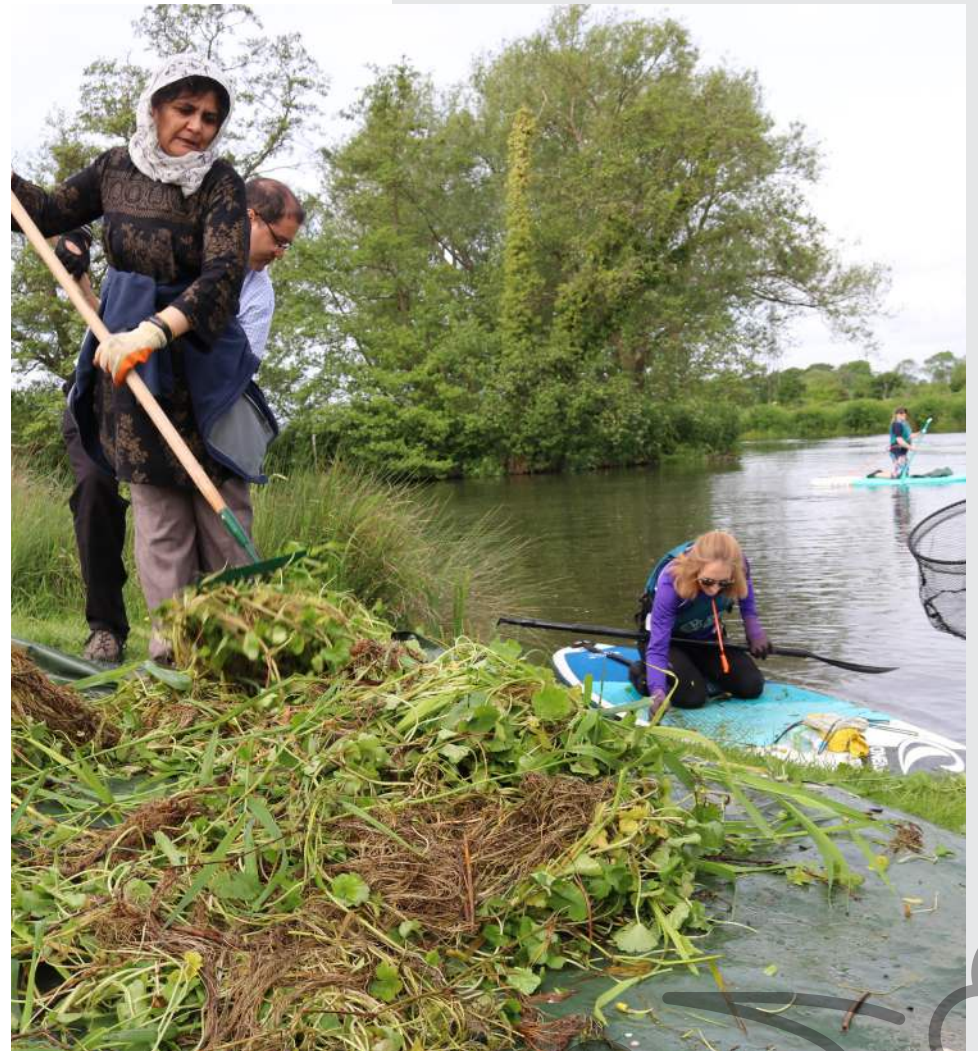
We will seek circular economy solutions by looking to extend the use and life of our kit and equipment, reusing and recycling wherever possible.

### Where do we want to be by 2026?

An organisation with a clear understanding of our carbon footprint, actively reducing our impacts and engaging in carbon neutral.

We will have a clear understanding of our baseline, actively reducing travel emissions, with significant steps being taken by all to keep this to a minimum.

We will prioritise off-setting our remaining carbon footprint by investing in environmental projects that proactively promote sustainability and provide a clear benefit to our members and the paddling community.



## Controlling our Carbon Footprint

### What actions will we take?

- By the end of 2023, establish British Canoeing’s baseline carbon footprint from direct and indirect emissions from our managed facilities and programmes. Identify sources and establish data for emissions within our supply chain and then reduce them by 2024. (This covers the scope 1, 2 and 3 foundation for an efficient carbon footprint strategy. See National Grid).
- Undertake a staff travel plan detailing measures to encourage more sustainable travel. Measures would include a review of the expenses policy to encourage staff to use public transport and avoid single occupancy trips where possible. We will proactively encourage and incentivise those who can cycle to work or use electric vehicles. We will also increase investment in audio and visual technology to enable and enhance virtual meetings by 2023.
- Deliver the Annual General Meeting (AGM), coaching and leadership courses, conferences, and provider training online where practical, to reduce the need to travel, annually from 2023.
- Support Delivery Partners and clubs to increase the opportunities to reuse and recycle equipment, and appropriately maintain kit and boats to increase longevity by 2024.
- Support and facilitate clubs to work together to develop sustainable practices, including equipment movement, access to shared craft, and reducing travel, via the Clubhouse digital resource from 2025.
- Develop policy by 2024 on sponsorship contracts to improve alignment with British Canoeing’s sustainability objectives. Review existing sponsorship deals at renewal time. To include an end of contract plan to reduce waste of team kit. Encourage plastic free shipping and commit to zero landfill.
- Work with our facility partners through a variety of onsite recycling facilities, minimising the impact of residual waste through responsible disposal by 2026.
- Eliminate single-use plastics in our operations, events and membership fulfilment by 2025.



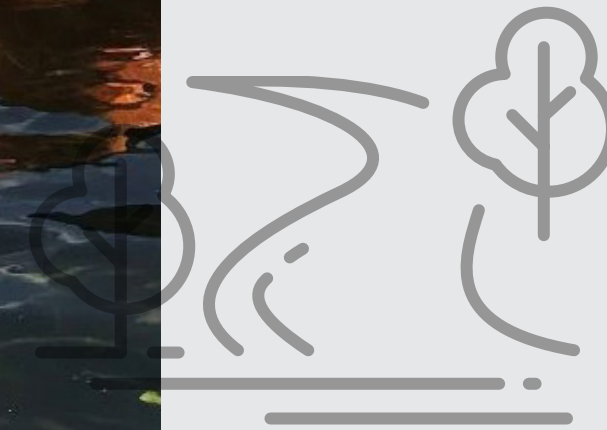
### How will we measure success?

#### KPI 1

- 🎯 Reduce the carbon footprint relating to business travel by 50% by 2025

#### KPI 2

- 🎯 Reduce the amount of waste generated against the 2022 baseline by 10%



## Ambition 2

# Reducing our Use of Natural Resources

**We will improve our energy efficiency, reduce our water consumption and address our use of single-use plastics and other non-renewable materials made from non-renewable resources.**

### Where do we want to be by 2026?

An organisation actively reducing the use of energy and water at both training and office locations. Influencing and supporting clubs and partners to address and reduce their own use of resources. We will have a clear understanding of our baseline and we will have set clear base targets and stretch targets for improvements over the next four years.

### What actions will we take?

- Establish our baseline usage data for energy and water by 2023
- Reduce physical resource use and reuse where appropriate by the end of 2023 with remaining resources made from 100% recyclable products
- Actively promote paper free Go Green membership and increase the number of members choosing this option annually from the 2021 baseline
- Seek commercial partners that will incentivise the use of sustainable practices for clubs and Delivery Partners via grants or direct green energy supply or operating models by 2025
- Utilise existing technology to generate positive carbon impact from our owned and leased sites including the generation of solar power generation by 2026
- Influence Lee Valley Regional Park Authority to explore greener energy solutions for the pumped white water course in 2023
- Re-tender the membership fulfilment provision to include sustainable options and ideas as a key decision criteria in 2023

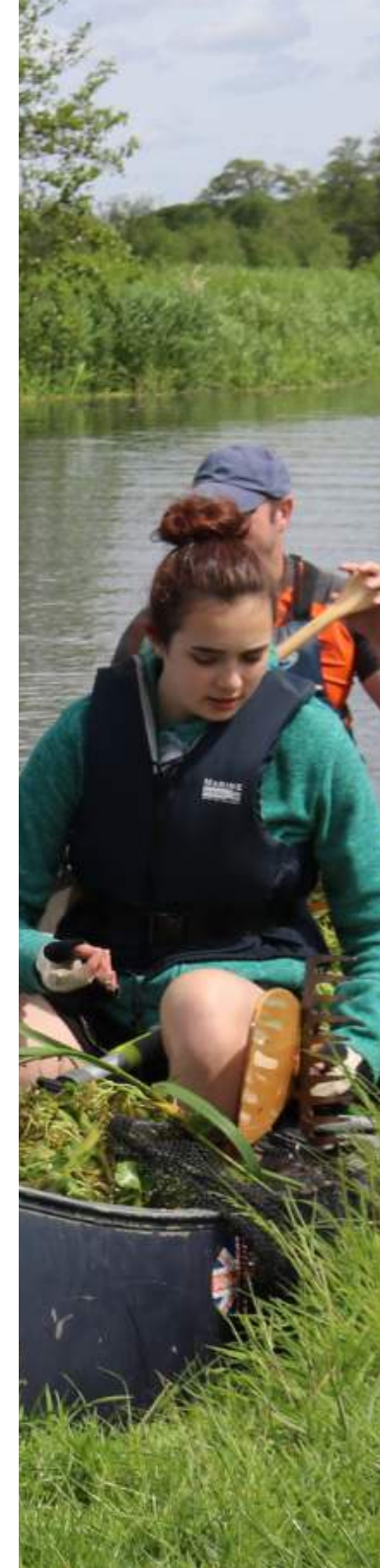
How will we measure success?

#### KPI 3

- 🎯 To achieve 50% of the membership opting for Go Green membership by 2026

#### KPI 4

- 🎯 Reduce the net energy consumption of British Canoeing leased and managed facilities from the 2023 baseline by 10% per year



## Ambition 3

# Advocating and Promoting Environmental Protection

**We will continue to strive for policy change on access and environmental protection through Clear Access, Clear Waters.**

We will also inspire the paddling community to take action on improving water quality, plastic pollution, Invasive Non-Native Species and encourage sustainable paddling behaviour.

### Where do we want to be by 2026?

An organisation that has made further progress in establishing clarity of the right to paddle on inland waters and achieved policy commitments to protect the environment. We will be a leading voice on environmental issues and best practice, with a community recognised for their contribution to environmental protection.



### What actions will we take?

- Update the Clear Access, Clear Waters (CACW) Charter and continue to campaign for fair shared sustainable, open access on inland waters by 2023
- Strengthen the network of volunteers and Clear Access, Clear Waters Champions to inspire action to protect our environment by 2024
- Raise awareness of environmental and sustainability matters and embed this within our communications, courses and qualifications from 2023
- Create advice and guidance to inspire and enable clubs to adopt sustainable practices such as caring for equipment to increase longevity in 2023
- Develop and promote the Clubhouse digital platform, to support the work of clubs in environmental sustainability from 2023
- Improve the profile of paddling and sustainability through campaigns and promotion of key areas of activity, including increasing participation in the Big Paddle Cleanup, Go Paddling, Clear Access, Clear Waters and both international and domestic competitions annually from 2022
- Work with athletes and UK Sport to encourage participation and leadership in environmental initiatives from 2023
- Influence government policy by working with key stakeholders and partners to ensure measures within the Government's 25 year plan are achieved, ambitious targets are set to meet net zero and increase biodiversity by 2026



### How will we measure success?

#### KPI 5

- 🎯 Increase participation in the Big Paddle Cleanup by 50 clubs, groups or delivery partners per year until 2026

#### KPI 6

- 🎯 Host a Parliamentary event to influence environmental protection by increasing access to blue space

#### KPI 7

- 🎯 Recruit 10 Clear Access, Clear Waters ambassadors to advocate and promote environmental issues in paddlesport by 2024

## Ambition 4

# Creating Paddling Competitions and Events which Deliver Positive Environmental Change

The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships has embedded sustainability throughout the planning process, developing an event sustainability strategy with key principles of:

### Sustainable Foundations

- embedding sustainable practices across all aspects of the event

### Minimising our

**Impact** - minimising negative environmental impacts occurring as a result of the event

**Positive Action** - ensuring positive changes occur as a result of the event

We will use the competition as a platform for creating environmental and social impact, not just within international events, but as a driver to embed sustainable practices within all our domestic events.

### Where do we want to be by 2026?

An organisation that can deliver domestic and international events equally focused on engaging and successful competition and environmental responsibility. The carbon footprint of our events will be measured and significantly reduced. To address our most challenging remaining carbon emissions, we will contribute to recognised and relevant schemes to offset this, with the anticipation that the need for this will fall in time as our carbon footprint reduces.

### What actions will we take?

- Deliver the ICF 2023 Slalom World Championships with clear targets for minimising or offsetting the impact on the environment. To use the event to create and share best practice for the future delivery of international events in 2023
- Develop sustainable event resources for event organisers and discipline committees by 2024
- Journey planning for national team training and competition will be an essential tool, taking into consideration timescales, athletes, costs and carbon emissions to reduce the carbon footprint, annually by 2024
- Introduce relevant and robust travel plans for people and equipment, including sharing or hiring of boats overseas to reduce the number of boats taken to competitions, from 2025
- Offset any remaining impacts of national team training and competitions through globally recognised organisations that directly impact our blue spaces by 2025
- Seek to influence the ambitions of the ICF and IOC to include carbon footprint from travel as a consideration of competition planning and allocation by 2026

How will we **measure success?**

#### KPI 8

- 🎯 Produce clear baseline measurements and reporting from the ICF 2023 Canoe Slalom World Championships

#### KPI 9

- 🎯 Embed sustainable practices across domestic events run by British Canoeing by 2026



## Ambition 5

# Improving our Business Operations

**We will minimise our environmental impact and deliver benefits through the better selection and improved usage of products and services. To ensure that all products and services are sourced and produced under an agreed set of acceptable environmental, social and ethical guidelines and standards.**

### Where do we want to be by 2026?

An organisation that has removed or reduced the carbon impact of its business operations and activities, making procurement decisions based on environmentally responsible principles, prioritising the sourcing and use of secondary materials. Taking the lead with manufacturers of paddlesport equipment and encouraging the development and use of environmentally friendly technologies and product development.

### What actions will we take?

- 100% paper free for business operations by 2024
- Produce a sustainable procurement code that includes responsible sourcing, the use of secondary materials, avoiding single-use plastics and minimising the environmental impact linked to each stage of a product's lifecycle, as key evaluation factors in all business tenders by the end of 2023
- Increase the sustainability of IT suppliers by committing to refurbish and recycle all technology annually from 2023
- Seek an equipment manufacturer to partner with in the development of recycled kit and equipment from 2025



How will we measure success?

#### KPI 10

- 🎯 100% paper-free British Canoeing business operations from 2024

#### KPI 11

- 🎯 All business tender decisions will score sustainability including carbon emissions as a key criteria

# How Will We Measure Success

## This is where the journey really begins.

We have the right people and plan in place, with the passion and drive needed to deliver it.

We're up for the challenge, to become environmentally sustainable in everything we do and making a difference

to all aspects of paddling at all levels, from members and the public, through to our clubs and partners.

But, we also recognise the role you play, whether by helping to spread the word, getting

involved or paddling the waterways so that together, we can protect the places we paddle for future generations.

We will be reporting the progress of this strategy and the achievement against the KPIs

on the British Canoeing website regularly, celebrating our successes and highlighting our challenges as well as promoting opportunities to get involved.





PROTECTING THE

# Places We Paddle

**The British Canoeing Board and Senior Leadership Team are committed to delivering this strategy and upholding the commitments outlined within it.**

**Ashley Metcalfe**  
Chief Executive Officer

**John Coyne**  
Independent Chair of the Board

**Dee Paterson**  
President

**Richard Boreham**  
Independent vice Chair of the Board

**Nick Donald**  
Independent Director

**Stephen Craig**  
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland

**Martine Kushner**  
Independent Director

**Kerry Chown**  
Canoe Wales Director

**Zoey Rowe**  
England Director

**Clare Dallaway**  
England Director

**Steve Linksted**  
Scottish Canoe Association Director

**Chris Earle**  
Director of Recreational Paddling

**Greg Spencer**  
England Director

**Lisa Bryant**  
Director of HR

**Lee Pooley**  
Director of Coaching & Qualifications

**Susan Hicks**  
Finance Director

**Robert Knott**  
Director of Business Development & Communications

**Barry Wade**  
Director of Digital Transformation

**Nancy Squires**  
Director of Governance

**Keir Worth**  
Director of Paddlesport