

### **Making SUABC a more sustainable club.**

The Environment is an important topic for all including SUABC and it was agreed at a Management Committee meeting that we would like to be more sustainable. It was agreed that a Sustainability Working Group be established.

The SWP was set up end January by volunteers made up of Claudine Pearson, Lizzie Sartain, Jake Blatcher, Chris Belcher, Eric Appleton, and Gina Fusco. The group created a plan for a series of quick wins and given the lack of club surplus funds assumed that actions would be self-funded or no cost to the club.

Quick wins identified were as follows.

**Washing liquid** – Washing up liquid is harmful to aquatic life. Stop the use or replace with nature friendly version. *Complete* – washing liquid is no longer used to clean boats.

We have been donated a 5L nature friendly washing up liquid and it is proposed that this is now used in the Kitchen. *In progress*

### **Club House Audit**

It was proposed that the club requests a grant to assist the club in making its water pump more efficient. **This was submitted** and the Expression of Interest in Climate Green Grant has been accepted. *Action* Eric Appleton and Tom Doherty will write a full application.

*Action:* Eric and Tom will do the full audit of the premises to complete a baseline from which we can identify climate/ energy opportunities.

**Nature Audit** – Completed by Chris Belcher. Proposal circulated to Management Committee. See Appendix 1. *Actions* follow up actions to determine appropriate sites etc are in progress.

**Junior Sprint Regatta** – Creating a more environmentally friendly Event.

A proposed workshop for Juniors to come together to make suggestions about how to make the event more sustainable, was taken to Management Committee and agreed. The workshop took place successfully on 4<sup>th</sup> April. Severn Trent river rangers and British Rowing Head of Communications attended the workshop. The output was summarised in a document – See appendix 2 for details. The event itself generated positive coverage for the Club on Social media channels. *Actions* highlighted in the document are now being progressed.

### **River Pick**

There is a river pick taking place in SUA from Stratford Leisure Centre on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June from 10.30 to 12.30. The team is checking whether we could be part of this on the water (Jake and Eric investigating this). If not, members could take part on land. A club communication would be created to invite members to participate. *Action to MCM For Discussion*

### **Water testing**

It was proposed that SUABC take part in the national data collection of river health. Severn Trent River Rangers joined the Junior workshop and demonstrated river testing for ammonia. The result was very positive with no trace of ammonia. The SWP are waiting for British Rowing to announce its support of river testing at which point we would apply for free testing kit and join in the national campaign.

## **Other**

British Rowing Sustainability site – Given BR involvement in our junior workshop, the club was asked to submit a case study for the site which the team compiled, signed off by Management Committee and submitted.

### **Sponsorship/ Grants**

The SWG is identifying various 'green' based grants which SUABC may be eligible for. The team is capturing a list of these as we go along and has already helped to make an application for one grant.

## **Appendix 1 SuABC: Sustainability Group – Making space for nature**

Prepared by Chris Belcher

Issued to SWP 11 march and Management Committee 13 march

### **Audit**

On Monday 26th March, an audit took place of the boat club grounds to establish how the Sustainability Group could improve the boat club surroundings for the benefit of nature. The audit was undertaken by club member Chris Belcher and a non-member Bill Wright.

### **Bill Wright**

For the past seventeen years, Bill has worked as a volunteer for the Worcester Wildlife Trust and has experience managing three reserves in the south Birmingham area including a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). Bill has run his own garden design business for thirty years retiring two years ago. Bill is also chair of a local group called Stratford Wildlife Friends. The purpose of SWF is to enhance the wildlife corridor that already exists along the length of Summerton Way in SuA with the aim of the group to encourage and support other local conservation groups to extend the corridor within the town to protect, preserve, manage, and restore our natural environment and the ecological communities that inhabit them.

### **Birdhouses**

Our findings identified plenty of scope for birdhouses and swift boxes around the clubhouse; specifically, on the fascia under the guttering. A perfect location would be above the flat roof in direct view of the pedestrian bridge but we would need to understand the implications of the pending roof work. Also, scope for boxes on the trees alongside the hedgerow where we park the cars. Birdhouses suitable for Blue Tit. Coal Tit. Great Tit. Wagtail. Wren. Woodpecker. Sparrow. Starling.

The recently pollarded trees close to the river by the adaptive boats are an ideal spot for a barn owl house that likes to nest in a solitary position between 3 and 5m above the ground.

Birdhouses ideally sheltered north or north-easterly aspect. We could also consider hedgehog, bee, and bug houses.

### **Planting**

Opportunities to fill the gaps in the hedgerow with blackthorn, viburnum tinus, and viburnum opulus commonly known as Guelder Rose, are all excellent additions to a native wildlife hedge.

Scope to enhance the two beds as you approach the front door with flowering plants packed with pollen and to encourage pollinating insects, bees and butterflies. Also climbing plants such as honeysuckle, clematis, and jasmine against the wall and maybe a Hazel, a small, shrubby tree that

provides a valuable habitat for a wide range of UK wildlife, including birds, mammals, insects and fungi

### **Grants**

Claudine is currently identifying suitable grants that would not render the club ineligible for more pressing project funding. A current potential grant is IM Group which may be best used for nature recovery! <https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/im-properties-community-fund/>

The budget is variable and dependent on the number of boxes and plants we wish to purchase. Numbers to be agreed with the group but initially a spend of £500 but this figure could be increased to just under £1000

**Next Steps** -Discuss with Management Committee for input and agreement.

## **Appendix 2**

## **Junior Sustainability Workshop – 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

Prepared by G Fusco

Issued to SWP for sign off and Management committee 15<sup>th</sup> April

The SUABC Sustainability Working Group (SWG) held a workshop with Juniors on 4<sup>th</sup> April to discuss what Sustainability means to them, what they believe are the consequences of not tackling the issue and to gain their thoughts on what the club could do to be more sustainable and specifically ideas for a more Sustainable Junior Regatta in 2024.

The workshop was facilitated by Eric Appleton supported by Claudine Pearson, Lizzie Sartain, and Gina Fusco from the SWG.

We were also fortunate to have expert input on the day from Lily Fraser Head of Communications at British Rowing and Severn Trent River Rangers Luke McCusker, Liv Boertje and Karl James.

During the workshop the river Rangers showed the group how they sample river water for Ammonia, the presence of which would indicate sewage. The result indicated very clean water.

Liv talked about British Rowing's focus on sustainability, highlighted the importance of communication, posted throughout the session, and kindly set up an Instagram account for SUABC which we can now use.

In total 15 juniors attended the workshop from a range of Junior Squads including Harriet Froom J18, Aimee Appleton J17, Megan Rowan J17, Lucy Sartain J17, Poppy Baines J16, Martha Baines J15, Martha Cooke J15, Maeve Dunn J15, Isla Dunn J15, Poppy Warren J15, Erin Appleton J14, Ed Appleton J14, Orla Linforth J14, Martina Bonilla J13, Connor Burrell J13.

It was evident that the Juniors are well versed in sustainability and the importance of tackling this issue. They want to have a positive impact and they expressed a range of thoughts and ideas around what SUABC could do to improve its sustainability both in general and for the regatta. The following represents their verbatim views, opinions, and ideas on each topic.

### **What is sustainability**

Working to improve and maintain the environment, preserving eco-systems and natural resources

Something to improve your lifestyle that's easy to maintain - reducing waste & improving the environment

reducing waste, using re -usable materials, saving water, not using fossil fuels

carbon neutral pollution in rivers and habitats

Minimising pollution , reducing waste (food & plastics), maintaining animal habitats

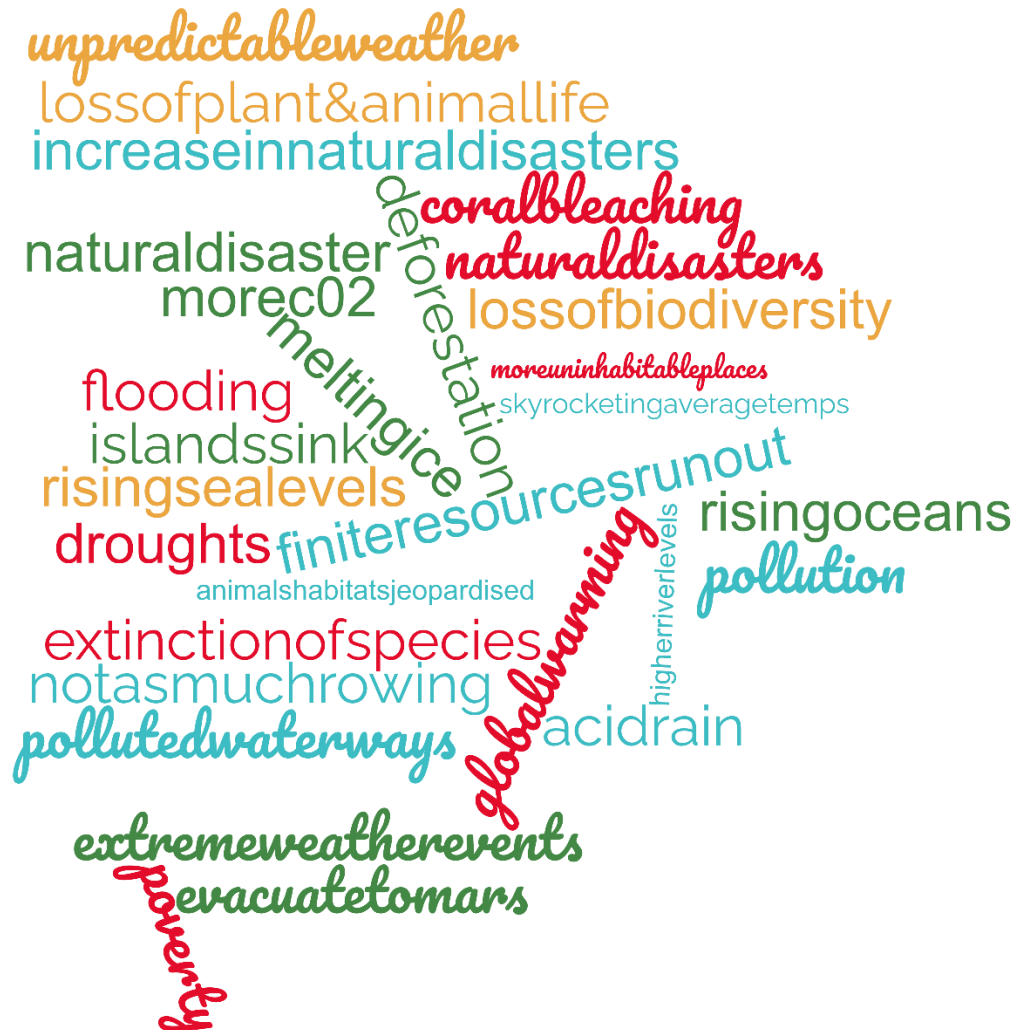
Not having a negative impact on the world now or in the future

Meeting the needs of the current generation without jeopardising future generations needs

Means society fulfilling its own needs and the next generation in a way that doesn't harm the environment or use up all available resources

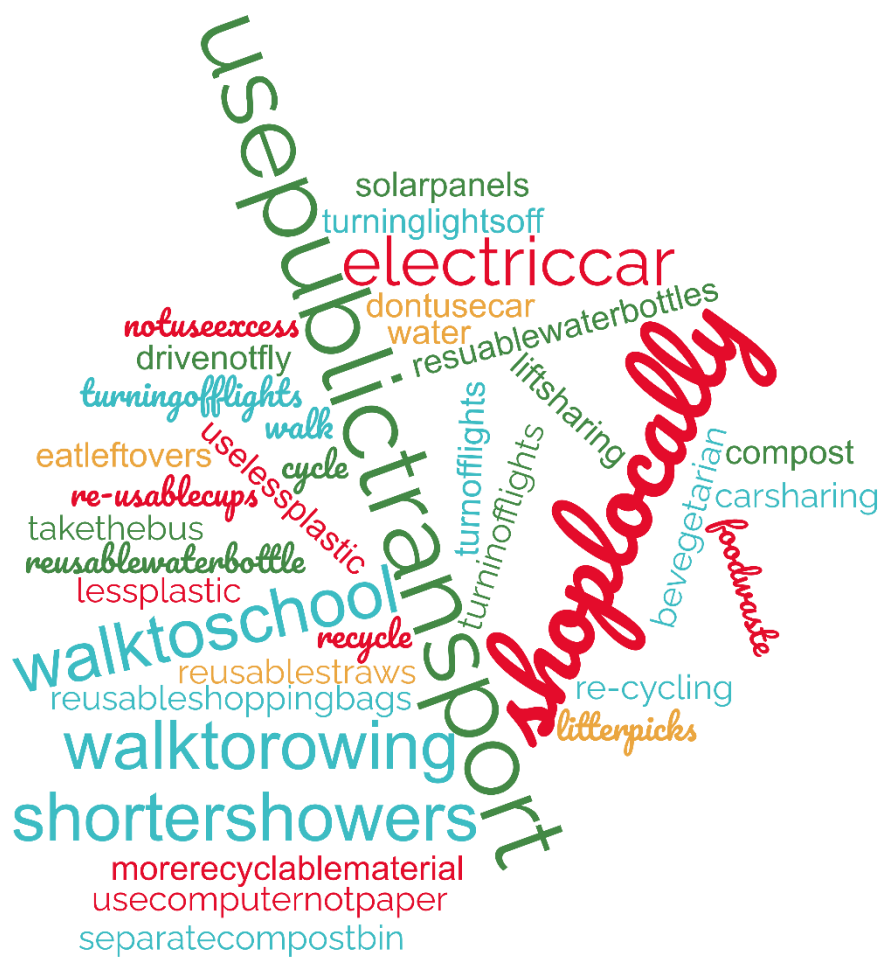
## Consequences of not acting sustainably

A wide range of consequences were stated with impacts on people's lives and livelihood, the environment, nature, animals and of course on rowing.



## What I do to be more sustainable

The juniors are already consciously making changes to their daily lives to support improved sustainability.



## **What can the club do to be more sustainable**

A range of possible actions for the club to take were identified ranging from the simple egg turn off lights, turn off taps, use hand towels not wipes, to the more long-term egg Add solar panels.

### **Use less resources water & energy**

- Turn off taps
- Turn off lights
- Automatic lights in club room
- Use dishwasher only when full
- Use eggs to generate energy
- Solar panels on roof
- Use renewable energy grid
- Shorter showers
- Increase flood defences
- Reconcrete boathouse floor
- Review drainage in boat house
- Higher/more racks for floods
- Be vegetarian
- Eat leftovers

### **Recycle & Reuse**

- Recyclable cups
- Reusable cups
- Reusable water bottles
- Buy and resell clothes
- Recycle Waste/recycle bin
- plastics/recycling/compost
- Don't use wipes use hand towels
- Hand towels not paper towels
- Don't waste food
- Visible signage re recycling
- Purchase less plastic
- Reduce single use plastic
- Litter pick
- Use computers not paper

### **Transport**

- Use public transport
- Cycle /walk to rowing
- Lift share training /events
- Electric launches
- Use electric cars
- Shop locally

### **Invest in Nature**

- Have a living wall by side stairs
- Support nature
- Planting on site

## **How can we make the Junior Regatta more sustainable**

Catering (food and Drink), Reducing Emissions and Communication were all areas that could be delivered with more of a sustainability lens. Communication was felt to be a powerful way to make members and visitors aware of what SUABC is trying to achieve and why, educate on the simple changes that can be made and to encourage all to act more sustainability at the event and in their own lives.

Social media would be a perfect channel to reach juniors and get engagement. To make this successful we need volunteer(s) to lead on social media pre, during and post the event.

Inputting to the collection of data about river quality would be helpful to understand and protect nature and water quality.

The following outline the specific ideas put forward.

## Catering-A more Sustainable Junior Regatta

### Drink

Recyclable cups only  
No single use plastic  
Encourage people to bring their own mugs and cups  
A stand sells Reusable bottles/cups  
Discounted drinks in reusable cups  
Advertise refill station= Water Tap

### Food

Use local food van  
BBQ using locally sourced produce  
Vegetarian options  
Reduce/remove food packaging  
Volunteers make food  
No bought food in tea tent  
Support local businesses  
Places to scrape off food aid recycling  
Serve food on plates , sit and relax – less litter

## Less pollution-A more Sustainable Junior Regatta

Encourage Lift shares – crews do selfies and post  
Don't use white & red plastic tape– use rope  
Re use Race numbers  
Use less paper – mobile friendly versions  
Race orders for Marshalls on phones  
More bins – less litter  
Use recycled glass for prizes  
Organise a post event litter pick



## Communications-A more Sustainable Junior Regatta

### Communication

Promote a more sustainable approach in all communications

Have someone responsible for Social Media of the event

Use social media – selfies, etc pre, during and post regatta

‘no littering signs ‘

Signs dotted around about environment and quality of the environment

Sponsor that advertises sustainability

Announcements on littering and environment in between races

Use safety briefing to promote recycling

### Next Steps

The Sustainability Working Group will,

- liaise with the Junior Regatta Lead to work with the team to input the ideas for the regatta and assess which can be adopted this year.

- use the contents of this workshop combined with the wider SWG action plan to potentially attract a sponsor for the Junior Regatta or other activity.

- review all the other input to put into easy/difficult, high impact/low impact to create an action priority list.

- circulate this summary to SUABC Management Committee and to Juniors via the Junior Co-ordinator or Eric Appleton.

- incorporate this output into the sustainability update for members as part of AGM

The SWG has already proposed that SUABC take part in river water testing and will do this as part of the BR initiative which is launching imminently.

### Appendix 3 – Example output from junior workshop

