



## PROSPECTUS



**WELCOME TO POOLE GIG ROWING CLUB**

**GOING THE EXTRA DISTANCE TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY**

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## WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

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**B**eing the Chairman of Poole Gig Rowing Club, I am lucky enough to be part of something that offers so much to so many, in our community. Overseeing a club that exists for the benefit of the community, is something I am very proud of and find very inspiring. Offering easy and affordable access onto the water, is one of the most important offerings of the club.

Poole Harbour being one of the world's largest natural harbours, we are able to offer much to our members, from social rowing through to race participation. Whatever a rower's participation preference might be, the underlying benefits are the same, we offer opportunities for fitness, friendship and fun.

It is very emotional for me personally, seeing a beginner join the club and watching their journey; building the necessary technical rowing skills and confidence levels; see them become part of a team and having a common cause – in so doing, perhaps addressing something that was previously absent for them; then onto see them giving something back to the club – be that passing on their knowledge to new starters, or, perhaps by becoming a cox.

It's upon seeing this that I realise how much more Poole Gig Rowing Club offers than just rowing. Something I and all other members should be proud of, and strive to maintain

*Carl Haslam*

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## POOLE GIG ROWING CLUB..... FROM THE BEGINNING

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*It is difficult to provide an insight into Poole Gig Rowing Club without looking back to some historic moments in time..... moments that are hundreds of years apart but all connected to the wonders of the sea*

To explain the origin of PGRC, we need to turn back the clock to the 1500's, to the swashbuckling reign of Harry Paye (or 'Arry Paye' as he was known to his enemies!) and then fast forward to the 1700's when the first gigs were built to take pilots out to sailing ships off the Cornish coast.

In linking this history, we hope to bring colour and meaning to the importance of PGRC 'today' and how its existence positively influences its members, its community and the wider world of gig rowing.

### **BACK IN HARRY PAYE'S DAY.....**

The people of Poole are all too familiar with the legacy of 'Harry Paye', a famous (or to some, infamous!) smuggler, pirate and adventurer who intercepted many ships off the Dorset coast during the 14th century, raiding their stores for whatever he could take back to Poole.

To this day, Poole celebrates 'Paye Day' every year in memory of one of Harry's most daring and vengeful feats- the capture of a French ship and her cargo



A spot of training in Poole Harbour



Members of Poole Gig Rowing Club with their gig, 'ArryPaye' taking part in the Paye Day procession along Poole Quay.

comprising 12,000 gallons of wine which he brought home for all to share!

Who would have thought that 600 years later, in 2010, a group of locals would get together to plan a fundraising event that would not only commemorate the legend of Harry Paye but would form the beginnings of Poole Gig Rowing Club?

With a great deal of support from the local community, a generous businessman, a neighbouring gig club and the wider gig rowing world, the 'Pirates of Poole' were able to acquire a fibreglass pilot

gig that they planned to row from Penzance to Poole. As none of them had any gig rowing experience, they dedicated a great deal of time to training and in May of that year, they were ready to set off in their gig 'ArryPaye' to row the 250 miles to Poole along the Cornish, Devon and Dorset coastlines.

Equipped with a small cannon and a bundle of apology letters they'd written on behalf of Harry Paye, they stopped off at various ports along the way (often hosted and accompanied by gig rowers from other clubs and

communities) to hand out their letters and rest their weary bodies.

Aside from attracting a great deal of publicity, they raised over £32,000 for their chosen charities including MacMillan Cancer Support, Wessex Heartbeat, the RNLI, the Royal Marines Charity Trust Fund and Headway.

As a 'moment in time', this was the beginning of what would become a thriving rowing club with a spirit of generosity and a common desire to 'give something back' to its community.

## THE CORNISH PILOT GIG.....A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

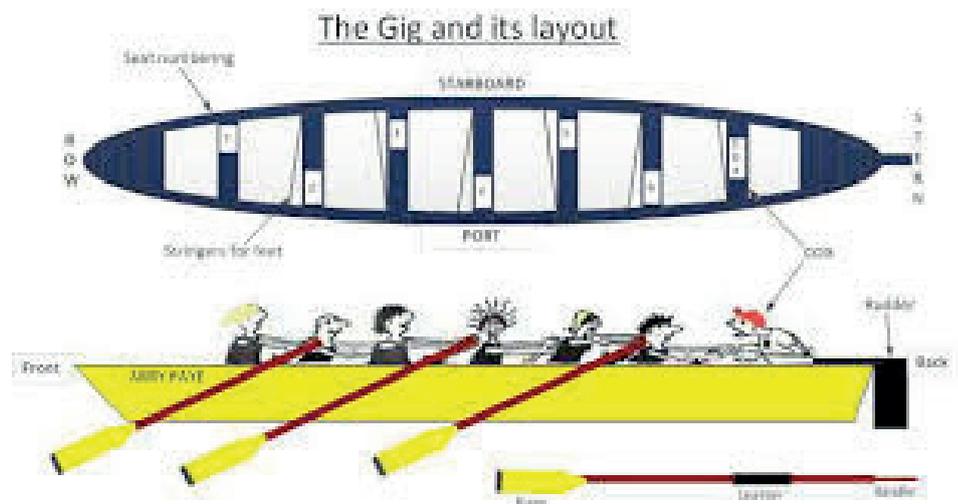
*A traditional Cornish Pilot Gig is a 32 ft long rowing boat with a 4 ft 9 inch beam, clinker built with elm on oak, designed for 6 rowers and a coxswain. The specification is based on the "Treffry", a gig built in 1838 and still in use today by Newquay Rowing Club.*

The original use for the classic Pilot Gig takes us back over 200 years to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. These light but sturdily built boats were designed take pilots out to incoming ships in the Atlantic Approaches during the 1800s. The fastest gig would have the best chance of securing the pilotage ...so they were built for speed.

At a time when shipwrecks were all too common, gigs were also deployed to save lives and

in very foggy conditions. In this instance, the gig deployed to aid rescue was the "Sussex" (originally built for the men of Bryher in 1886). Fortunately, all of the passengers of the 'Minnehaha' were saved and landed by other boats but the men of Bryher in 'Sussex' rescued a number of cattle by expertly lashing their horns to the thole pins of the gig so that they could be rowed ashore!

The peak time for pilot work was the early to mid 1800's but the



cargo. Whilst there are many stories to tell, one of the most compelling displays of immense bravery concerns the wreck of the 'Minnehaha' off the Isles of Scilly in 1910. The ship, carrying 64 passengers and a large cargo of cattle went ashore, near Bryher in the early hours of the morning

evolution of steamships and improvements in navigation meant it was unnecessary for ships to call on the services of a local pilot so the use of wooden pilot gigs gradually declined.

## THE REVIVAL



In 1988, Ralph Bird became President of the newly formed governing body for gig rowing—the Cornish Pilot Gig Association (CPGA) and today, there are over 80 active gig clubs spread across the British Isles and overseas.

Over 8,000 rowers of different ages, shapes and sizes enjoy the exhilarating sport of gig rowing and throughout the year they

will travel to championship and regatta events across the country to compete with other clubs. Over the years, many great friendships have been made and the economies of many coastal communities boosted by visitors in Lycra!

The CPGA is dedicated to upholding the heritage of the Cornish Pilot Gig and works very closely with all communities in ensuring that the wonderful tradition of gig building and gig rowing is preserved, developed and continued for future generations.

The CPGA is affiliated to British Rowing, the governing body for both indoor and outdoor rowing.

*In the early 1980's, Ralph Bird, a gig builder based in Cornwall, decided to revive gig rowing by bringing together four historic pilot gigs to a race event in Truro. As it was such a success, clubs throughout Cornwall started to form.*



Gigs rowers from the UK and overseas taking part in the annual 'World Pilot Gig Championships' on the Isles of Scilly  
Image kindly provided by GigRower

## POOLE GIG ROWING CLUB- ROWING AND GROWING.....

*Keeping up with tradition and growing in popularity, PGRC acquired its second fibreglass gig in 2015 and named her 'Robbie Paye' after Harry's brother.*

**B**oth 'Arry and Robbie Paye are widely used by the club throughout the year as, unlike wooden boats, they do not require as much time out of commission for annual maintenance.

In keeping, however with the CPGA's tradition of competing in wooden boats, Poole Gig Rowing

Club managed to purchase a wooden gig from the 'Help for Heroes' charity in 2017.

Once she was brought back to Poole, she received her classic black and yellow livery and was re-named 'Isabelle' after Harry Paye's wife.

Isabelle has enabled PGRC to join the gig rowing community and regatta circuit in earnest and in 2019, crews of men and women represented Poole in Isabelle at the World Pilot Gig Championships on the Isles of Scilly for the first time.

Loved and well-maintained, Isabelle has clocked up many nautical miles since she was acquired including a number of regattas along the south coast and on the Thames at the annual 'Great River Race', a 22 mile 'marathon on the water'.

Having three boats has enabled PGRC to provide a broad range of rowing activity for all of its members, from social rows around Poole Harbour and along the Quay to more demanding training rows to improve fitness and technique.



*A women's crew in Isabelle making a buoy turn at Bridport Regatta*



*A mixed crew rowing past the Houses of Parliament at the Great River Race on the Thames*

## OUR BASE

Storage of essential equipment (oars, life jackets etc.) is housed in a shipping container located in a storage yard based in the commercial side of the docks. Unfortunately, there is restricted access to this facility and junior rowers (under 18 years) are not permitted to enter the restricted area where the storage container is located.

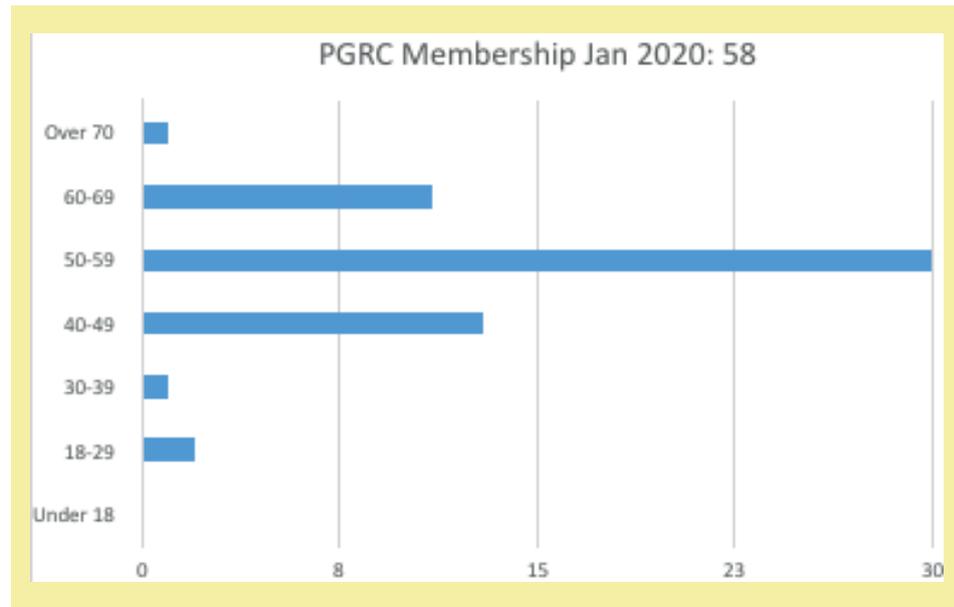
Ultimately, PGRC would like to move to a more public waterside location as this would greatly improve the club's presence and visibility within the local community and lead to a desired increase in membership and participation across all age groups.

*PGRC is based in the Port of Poole Marina, with moorings against a pontoon for three gigs on the water at any one time.*

## OUR MEMBERSHIP

Out of a current membership of 58, men and women between 40 and 59 represent over 70% of the total. The health and wellbeing benefits of gig rowing cannot be stressed enough and the club is proud that it has been able to make a positive impact in this respect.

We hope the following accounts of individual experiences will evidence this.



*The naming ceremony of Poole's wooden pilot gig 'Isabelle' in 2017*

## 'THIS GIRL CAN'



*PGRC's membership has grown steadily over the years and currently includes a high number of participating women, some of whom have returned to physical exercise after periods of inactivity.*

PGRC provides a friendly and comfortable environment for those wishing to improve their fitness and increase their confidence. To this end, the club is planning to formally engage with the 'This Girl Can'

campaign- a nationwide initiative funded by The National Lottery which aims to promote sport to women regardless of age, shape and size.

### MY STORY – ALICE



**H**i, I'm Alice. I'm 28 and I live and work in Bournemouth. I joined Poole Gig Rowing Club in June 2019 after seeing one of the gigs in the harbour. I rowed with a club in my hometown as a teenager, so I knew I'd love it. It felt great to get out on the water again, and make some new friends. My first row with the club was a Technical row, which normally

takes place on Wednesday evenings. I met Helen, the new members coordinator at the gig shed and she introduced me to some of the other club members and made me feel very welcome. It was a fantastic way to spend a beautiful summer evening. At the end of the row, the coxswain took time to give me some positive feedback on my rowing, which really helped build my confidence getting back into it.

Last year, PGRC hosted their first regatta. It was a big moment for everyone involved and it was very exciting to be a part of. I look forward to competing in more races with the club in the future. The club doesn't just consist of competitive individuals, there are plenty of social rows to join too. This is where most of the clubs new rowers begin. It's great to see the time and dedication that goes into helping a new rower feel comfortable and safe.

As a shift worker, I often found it hard to find the time to commit to sports clubs, but PGRC row all year round, and we are able to get out on the water in the evenings too.

It's a great feeling to be out on the water. It doesn't matter what kind of day I've had. The moment I get into the boat, all my worries of the day disappear. Team sports really help me take more accountability for my health and fitness and being a part of PGRC has helped me improve this greatly. As I enjoy competitive rowing, I'm doing more exercise off the water to help improve my performance on the water too. I feel so much better for it.



*These Girls Can! Training night for a women's crew in Poole Harbour with 'Boudicca' moored in the background on the eve of her cross Channel voyage to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings, June 2019.*

## MY STORY – CHRIS



**H**i, I'm Chris and I have lived in Poole since 1992 with a few years out to help set up a drug rehabilitation facility in London.

I joined Poole Gig Rowing Club in July 2019 after the Membership Secretary

invited me to give it a go. The request piqued my interest, for sure, as I had been looking for something that would interest me. Whilst I know of hundreds of events and activities going on in Poole most did not fit my character or interests. I was looking for something physical, outside, with a skill to learn and something low impact on the joints. (I am very physical but on the wrong side of 55 to engage in long distance running or martial arts!) I thought rowing would give me this and a closer interaction with others.

On my first day I was given a dry representation of a basic rowing stroke, how to hold the oar and all the safety data that is required for rowing.

What was I expecting, from joining PGRC? Quite frankly I was expecting a lot less than I got. The club is amateur, run 100% by volunteers and yet is organised with a totally professional attitude. The welcome and care I received meant that after one row, I really felt that I 'belonged'. The professionalism was exemplified by two events, firstly the regatta that the club hosted for the first time last summer, no hitches, and all visiting crews were smiling with their day on leaving, and secondly the AGM, which was open to all members, had structure and followed the Club Policies from beginning to end.



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR.....

*PGRC is a highly visible and active supporter of its community and encourages all members to get involved.*

### **SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY**

Some of the events and attractions the club has supported over the years include:-

- Harry Paye Day on Poole Quay
- The Fishermen's Parade on Poole Quay
- The Poole Harbour Boat Show
- Wareham Wednesdays (family fun events throughout the summer- including a visit from 'The Pirates'!)
- The RNLI Kayak Row



*PGRC pulling in the crowds on Paye Day, Poole Quay*



*A crew rowing out to welcome the 'Lord Nelson' in Poole Harbour*



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PGRC is proud of its community and will always go the extra distance to promote Poole and its surrounding areas including other groups and organisations that share a love of the sea.



*PGRC supporting the RNLI 'kayak rowing' day*



*The Pirates arriving at Wareham Quay, fully equipped with water cannon (Wareham Wednesday)*

## INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP

*PGRC has seen a year on year increase in membership and works hard to ensure that all of its members are given the help and support they need to maximise their rowing experience.*

Whilst the club is aware that owing to its current location, it is unable to widen its membership to junior rowers, it is committed to a strategic plan to start the process of developing a junior section within the club.

Aside from gig racing and training, PGRC actively provides and promotes a full and varied range of rowing activity including:-

- Social rows in and around Poole Harbour
- A 'pay as you row' experience for non members

- Courses run by qualified Coxwains and RYA qualified members (passage planning/ charts/ general seamanship)

The Club committee members, rowing captains and coxwains are highly committed to ensuring that every member and visitor maximises their enjoyment of rowing, whether for fun, for company, for speed or all of these things!

This spirit of support and inclusivity is woven through the entire membership base with everyone, regardless of ability or experience helping and encouraging others.



*Poole Men competing in their first World Championships on the Isles of Scilly, 2019*

## A NEW BASE

- A building in which the gigs can be stored and maintained
- New skills for volunteers from the community who are keen to learn about boat repair and maintenance
- A social space for members to meet, socialise and relax after rowing
- A space to accommodate fitness training equipment (rowing machines, weights etc)
- A chance to increase membership to include juniors
- An opportunity to acquire a second wooden boat to allow the club to represent more crews at regattas and other events
- Higher visitor numbers to the town for future regatta events
- The ability to engage in new activity such as "litter pick rows" to reduce the plastic in Poole Harbour
- A chance to "open its doors" to the community by providing taster sessions, team building events and initiatives with other groups and charities in the area

*A new base in a visible waterside location will bring the following benefits to PGRC members and its wider community:-*

## FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

**A**side from PGRC's long term plan to relocate, it has to meet a number of fixed costs annually in order to provide safe and seaworthy boats for members to row.

### **Some of these costs include:-**

- Annual repair, maintenance, inspection and insurance of 3 gigs
- Maintenance and replacement of safety critical gear including lifejackets, lights, radios
- Maintenance and repair of the club's trailer
- First Aid & Safeguarding courses for volunteers

- Transportation costs to regattas and other events

### **Benefits to funders and sponsors can include:-**

- Team Building events for members or employees of partnering organisations
- Regular rowing sessions for members or employees wishing to improve their health, fitness and wellbeing
- Advertising on our road trailer and club website
- Naming rights to a new pilot gig or building

*As part of a formal 5 year plan, the club is keen to engage with possible funder and sponsors who will share the vision of PGRC and its desire to improve the health and wellbeing of its community.*



## CONTACT US

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If you would like to learn more about PGRC and to discuss the possibility of a partnership with the club, please contact

E-mail: [info@poolegigrowingclub.co.uk](mailto:info@poolegigrowingclub.co.uk)

Tel: 07927 955879

Via [www.facebook.com/PooleGigRowingClub](http://www.facebook.com/PooleGigRowingClub)

We will be delighted to hear from you.