



# Rowing in Scotland: The Next Chapter

Strategic Plan  
2026 and Beyond

# Foreword

Rowing in Scotland is built on people - on clubs, volunteers, coaches, participants and partners who give their time, energy and passion to a sport that connects us to water, to nature and to one another.

This strategy is our shared commitment to that community and to the future of Scottish rowing. It sets out a clear direction: to grow the sport, support our clubs, and ensure that rowing reflects the diversity and spirit of modern Scotland.

It also recognises that we have an opportunity - and a responsibility - to challenge outdated perceptions of our sport. Rowing is far more accessible and relevant than many believe. Together, we can show that it is a sport for everyone: rewarding, supportive and fun.

What follows is not a plan to sit on a shelf, but a living framework that will evolve as our sport does. It is shaped by the insight and ideas of our members, and it will be delivered in partnership with them.

To everyone who gives their time, energy and expertise to rowing in Scotland - thank you. Your commitment inspires us every day. Together we can ensure that our sport continues to flourish - in our clubs, on our waters and in the communities we serve.



## SCOTTISH ROWING



*L Graham*

**Dr Laura Graham**  
**Chair of the Board**



*Lee Boucher*

**Lee Boucher**  
**Chief Executive**

# Introduction

Rowing has a special place in Scotland - our leading summer Olympic sport, shaped by our rivers, lochs and coastline, and by the people and communities who bring it to life.

It builds confidence, connection and wellbeing. It develops skills that last a lifetime. Yet rowing has not always been seen as a sport for everyone. This strategy is about changing that perception and opening our sport to all.



Developed through extensive consultation - with voices from clubs, volunteers, athletes and partners across Scotland - this strategy belongs to our community. It reflects what people told us they value most: a sport that is safe, welcoming, supportive and fun.

Our ambitions align with **sportscotland's** Sport for Life vision and the Scottish Government's Physical Activity for Health Framework. We share their belief that sport and physical activity can change lives, improve health, strengthen communities and protect the environment. Rowing has a unique role to play in achieving those outcomes - through connection with others, time in nature and enjoyment of physical activity.

This is not a strategy with an end date. It provides a clear direction while allowing us to adapt as the sport evolves. We will refresh our approach as our sport grows, as our members' needs evolve, and as Scotland itself changes. At its heart, this plan is about connection - connecting people to water, clubs to communities, ambition to opportunity and rowing to the wider social, environmental and wellbeing goals of our nation.



# Looking Back: What We've Learned (2022–25)



Across this period, we have seen meaningful progress.

Our 2022–25 strategic plan set out to strengthen the foundations of rowing in Scotland - rebuilding confidence after the pandemic and creating the conditions for a safe, welcoming and thriving community. It provided stability and direction during a period of change, helping us reconnect as a sport and prepare for the next phase of development.



After several years of recovery, the sport experienced significant membership growth in the final year of the plan, rising by a quarter and reaching its highest level since before the pandemic. This reflects renewed confidence within our clubs and a growing awareness that rowing can be a sport for everyone. More than half of all Scottish Rowing members are now women - a significant milestone for equality and participation in our sport. Rowing is diversifying. More people are discovering rowing through both traditional routes - clubs, schools and universities - and non-traditional means such as community outreach initiatives and indoor rowing programmes, creating a sense of momentum and optimism for the future.

Our performance pathway has also been strengthened through new investment from sportsotland and British Rowing, supporting success in the Classic discipline and rapid development in the emerging Coastal discipline, where Scotland has continued to excel internationally with Commonwealth, European and World-level achievements. With Beach Sprints now confirmed as an Olympic discipline for Los Angeles 2028, Scotland is well positioned to build on this momentum, including the designation of the University of St Andrews as a GB Olympic training venue for Beach Sprints, strengthening Scotland's contribution to the Great Britain pathway while inspiring further growth in coastal sculling at home.

The challenges around facilities have tested our resilience, but they have also shown how much we can achieve when we work together. The East Boathouse at Glasgow Green was condemned following storm damage, leaving three member clubs temporarily without a home. Scottish Rowing has been working with these clubs and Glasgow City Council to secure a sustainable solution. The planned redevelopment of the watersports centre at Strathclyde Park will bring some short-term disruption but, in time, will provide improved facilities for all rowing users.



There have also been positive developments across the country. The West Boathouse at Glasgow Green reopened following major redevelopment, restoring one of Scotland's most iconic rowing landmarks and providing a home for three clubs. The University of Edinburgh invested in a new boat store at Strathclyde Park, reinforcing its long-term partnership with Scottish Rowing and its role as a key university partner in performance rowing. St Andrew Boat Club opened a new boathouse on the Union Canal - a milestone for Scotland's oldest club. Inverness Rowing Club has also enhanced its facilities, strengthening opportunities for participation in the Highlands.

Despite progress, we know that change has not always been easy. Staff transitions and limited capacity made it harder to sustain momentum in some areas, particularly around workforce development and direct support for clubs. Some ambitions of the previous plan remain unfinished - but the lessons learned will help us focus our efforts more effectively in the years ahead.

The past three years have reminded us that meaningful change takes time. They have shown the importance of investing in people, strengthening our systems, and keeping our clubs and communities at the heart of everything we do.

This new strategy builds on that foundation - carrying forward what worked, addressing what did not, and giving us the confidence and flexibility to grow stronger together.



# Three Years of Achievement

Seven Scots competing for Great Britain at the 2025 World Rowing Beach Sprint Finals



## Gender Split



45.6%  
Male



54.4%  
Female

Within the last two years, Scottish Rowing has welcomed a new Board of nine Non-Executive Directors, a new CEO and a new Senior Leadership Team - bringing fresh energy and focus to our sport



First-ever Young People's Panel launched

Scottish Rowing River Ayr Outreach Programme wins Initiative of the Year at the South Ayrshire Sports Awards



We've seen a 25.6% increase in Scottish Rowing membership (from August 2024 - August 2025)

**SPORT HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD**



Scotland was accepted into the British Rowing Junior Inter-Regional Regatta in 2024

Scotland's leading summer Olympic sport - medal winning performances at every Olympics since 2000

### Paris 2024 Results:

Sholto Carnegie - GOLD  
(men's eight)

Rowan McKellar - BRONZE  
(women's eight)



# Who We Are

Scottish Rowing is the national governing body for the sport of rowing in Scotland.

We exist to lead, support and represent the sport - creating the conditions for people and clubs to take part, grow and succeed.

Our purpose is simple: for rowing in Scotland to thrive.

We do this by working in partnership with our members, volunteers and stakeholders, building the systems, skills and culture that make progress possible.

We are guided by the values of our community and are committed to leading with integrity, inclusion and respect.

These are the foundations of our sport - and the principles that will shape how we deliver this strategy together.



## Our Vision

A safe, welcoming and thriving rowing community.

## Our Mission

To support and empower people to enjoy rowing and achieve their potential.



# Our Values:



## SAFE

We put people's safety, wellbeing and rights at the heart of everything we do.



## INCLUSIVE

We welcome everyone, celebrating diversity and removing barriers to participation.



## COLLABORATIVE

We work together, sharing ideas and building partnerships that strengthen rowing across Scotland.



## FUN

We enjoy what we do and create positive, rewarding experiences for everyone involved.



## SUPPORTIVE

We encourage and support each other to learn, improve and enjoy the sport together.

# Our Principles – How We Will Work

Our principles describe the way we will deliver this strategy - the behaviours and choices that turn our values into action:

## **We will put people first**

We will make decisions that prioritise safety, wellbeing, inclusion and enjoyment for everyone involved.

## **We will lead with integrity**

We will act fairly, honestly and transparently in everything we do. Our actions will reflect the trust placed in us by our community.

## **We will stay curious and adaptable**

We will learn from others, embrace new ideas and be willing to change as the sport and the world around us evolve.

## **We will act sustainably**

We will care for Scotland's rivers, lochs and coastlines and use our resources responsibly, to protect the environment that makes our sport possible.

## **We will measure what matters**

We will use evidence and insight to understand our progress, focusing on the real difference our work makes to people and clubs.

## **We will listen and collaborate**

We will work closely with clubs, members and partners - listening carefully, sharing learning and shaping our work together.

## **We will champion inclusion and belonging**

We will strive to make rowing accessible and welcoming to all, creating a sport where everyone feels they belong and can thrive.



# Our Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Framework sets out the direction for Scottish Rowing. It begins with the single outcome we are working towards, delivered through three strategic pillars, enabled by support for our people and clubs, and grounded in a strong organisational foundation. The framework reflects what our community told us matters most and shows how the parts fit together. It also shows how we will deliver our vision of a safe, welcoming and thriving rowing community.



# Our Strategic Framework

## Growing Our Sport Overarching Outcome

We will grow rowing in Scotland so that everyone - from those already part of our community to those discovering the sport for the first time - can enjoy and benefit from what rowing offers. Growth will mean more people on the water, stronger clubs, better connections through the pathway, and a sport that reflects the people, places and communities that make Scotland unique.

By linking people to water, to nature and to each other, rowing enriches lives, strengthens wellbeing and builds confidence, teamwork and belonging. Across our rivers, lochs and coasts, we will promote rowing as a sport that contributes to a healthier, more active and more connected Scotland, open, welcoming and proud of its place in our national life.



# Strategic Pillars

## Extending Our Reach

We will make rowing more visible and accessible across Scotland.

Through collaboration with clubs, education providers, local authorities and community organisations - including coastal and inland hubs - we will create opportunities for people who might not otherwise have access to the sport. By breaking down barriers and promoting inclusion, we will bring rowing to new places and communities, helping disabled people and other under-represented groups who want to take part feel welcome on the water. We will also work with partners to strengthen access to safe and sustainable rowing facilities, recognising that infrastructure and access to water are essential foundations for participation.

## Member Engagement

We will strengthen the experience of being part of Scottish rowing. A sense of belonging and connection is what keeps people involved, and we will work with clubs to ensure that every rower - whatever their role, age or stage - feels valued and supported. Clubs will have the tools and insight to enhance daily experiences, from recreational rowing and volunteering to learning, events and competition. With improved communications, shared initiatives and opportunities to shape the sport's future, members will feel heard, connected and proud to belong.

## Developing Talent

We will create clear and inclusive pathways that support our athletes and coaches to develop and achieve their potential in Classic and Coastal and Para rowing disciplines. Working in partnership with schools, universities, clubs, British Rowing and the **sportscotland** institute of sport, we will provide the coaching, environments and opportunities that enable progress at every level. Scottish rowers will represent their country with pride through the Scotland Rowing Team and contribute to the success of the GB Rowing Team. As Scotland's leading summer Olympic sport, with more Olympic medallists since 2000 than any other, rowing has a proud record of success that continues to inspire the next generation.



# Supporting Our People and Clubs

## Key Enabler

Rowing in Scotland depends on people - the volunteers, coaches, officials and staff who give their time, energy and expertise to make the sport happen. We will invest in their development, wellbeing and leadership, ensuring they have the training, tools and support to succeed.

We will work closely with clubs to help them grow stronger, safer and more sustainable. Our support will focus on good governance, inclusion and quality standards, helping every club offer accessible and positive experiences and operate with confidence.

We also recognise that access to safe, welcoming and sustainable facilities is critical to the success of our clubs. We will work with partners and local authorities to support the development and long-term sustainability of rowing infrastructure across Scotland.

Through shared learning and access to the Scottish Rowing Centre, we will strengthen collaboration between clubs and build a skilled, motivated workforce that reflects the diversity of our rowing community.

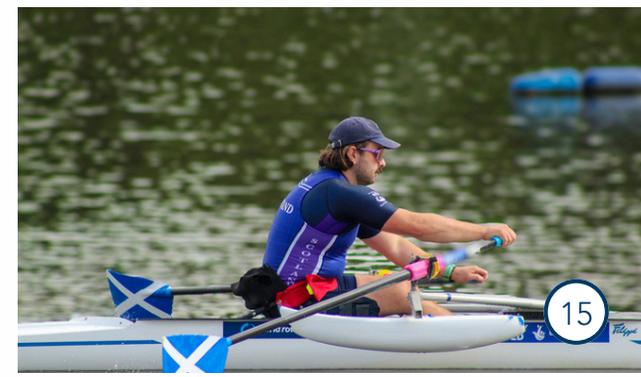
Together, we will create the conditions for people and clubs to thrive.



# Thriving Scottish Rowing Foundation

For rowing in Scotland to thrive, Scottish Rowing itself must be strong, well-governed and sustainable.

We will lead with integrity, care and transparency - embedding Safe Sport, equality, diversity and inclusion through our leadership and culture. By investing in our people, systems and the Scottish Rowing Centre, managing our resources responsibly and identifying new commercial opportunities, we will build an agile, resilient organisation that gives confidence to our members, partners and the wider sporting community.



# Building Strong Partnerships

**Partnerships are at the heart of Scottish Rowing's success.**

We recognise that our ambitions can only be achieved by working collaboratively with others who share our vision and values.

We will continue to build strong and constructive relationships with British Rowing and our Home Nation counterparts, recognising our shared commitment to the success of the sport across the UK. Scotland will contribute actively to areas where collaboration adds value and avoids duplication, while maintaining the independence needed to represent and respond to the priorities of our own members.

We will also build on our long-standing and sector-leading partnerships with universities across Scotland. These collaborations represent a significant and sustained investment in higher education, supporting coaching, performance and participation, while creating environments where students can balance academic success with excellence in rowing.

Our relationship with **sportscotland** is central to this strategy. Their investment and partnership working strengthen every part of our work - from governance and workforce development to participation and performance. Together we will continue to strengthen our people and organisations and contribute to Scotland's national outcomes for sport, health and wellbeing.

As the Scottish Rowing Centre evolves, we will work closely with North Lanarkshire Council and other partners to realise its full potential as a community asset and national hub for participation, performance and learning. Alongside the wider facilities at Strathclyde Park, the Centre provides a unique venue for rowing in Scotland, supporting opportunities to host national and international events that bring wider benefit to the sport and the local community. We will ensure the Centre and park continue to be shared spaces where sport and community thrive side by side.

We will partner with watersport and environmental organisations to protect Scotland's waterways and coasts and will grow coastal sculling as a complementary discipline to Classic rowing. Working with coastal communities, sailing clubs and St Ayles Skiff clubs (through the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association), we will create opportunities for people to experience rowing on Scotland's coasts. This will ensure resources are balanced and that both disciplines thrive, while respecting the distinct identity of the skiff movement.

We will also work collaboratively with other Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) and partners to identify shared goals, leverage resources and deliver outcomes that advance our shared ambitions and support the wider sporting system in Scotland.

We will seek values-led commercial and sponsorship partnerships that enhance the visibility of rowing, diversify our income and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the sport. By building relationships that align with our purpose, we will create opportunities for growth, innovation and positive impact across Scotland.

Beyond this, we will nurture partnerships with local authorities, schools, colleges and community organisations - creating a joined-up approach that supports participation, wellbeing and excellence across Scotland.

Our current partners -



# Our Ambition for the Future of Rowing

If we deliver on the priorities set out in this strategy, rowing in Scotland will look and feel very different over the next decade. More people will see rowing as a sport that is open, welcoming and relevant to their lives, and the perception of our sport will have shifted - from something exclusive to something proudly Scottish, inclusive and community-led.

## By 2035, we will have:

- Grown rowing participation across Scotland, with more people on the water, and from more communities, than ever before.
- Strengthened our clubs and hubs so they are safe, inclusive and sustainable - places where everyone feels they belong.
- Created a visible and accessible pathway supporting progression from beginner to performance in both Classic and Coastal disciplines.
- Established rowing as a sport that reflects modern Scotland - diverse, welcoming and relevant to people's lives.
- Developed a skilled and motivated workforce of coaches, volunteers and leaders who feel valued and supported.
- Strengthened the network of rowing facilities across Scotland, ensuring clubs and communities have access to safe and welcoming places to experience the sport.
- Delivered a Scottish Rowing Centre that serves both the national community and local residents as a hub for participation, performance and learning.
- Built strong partnerships across sport, education and the environment to enhance our collective impact.
- Strengthened the long-term sustainability of Scottish Rowing through sound governance, new commercial income and responsible operations.

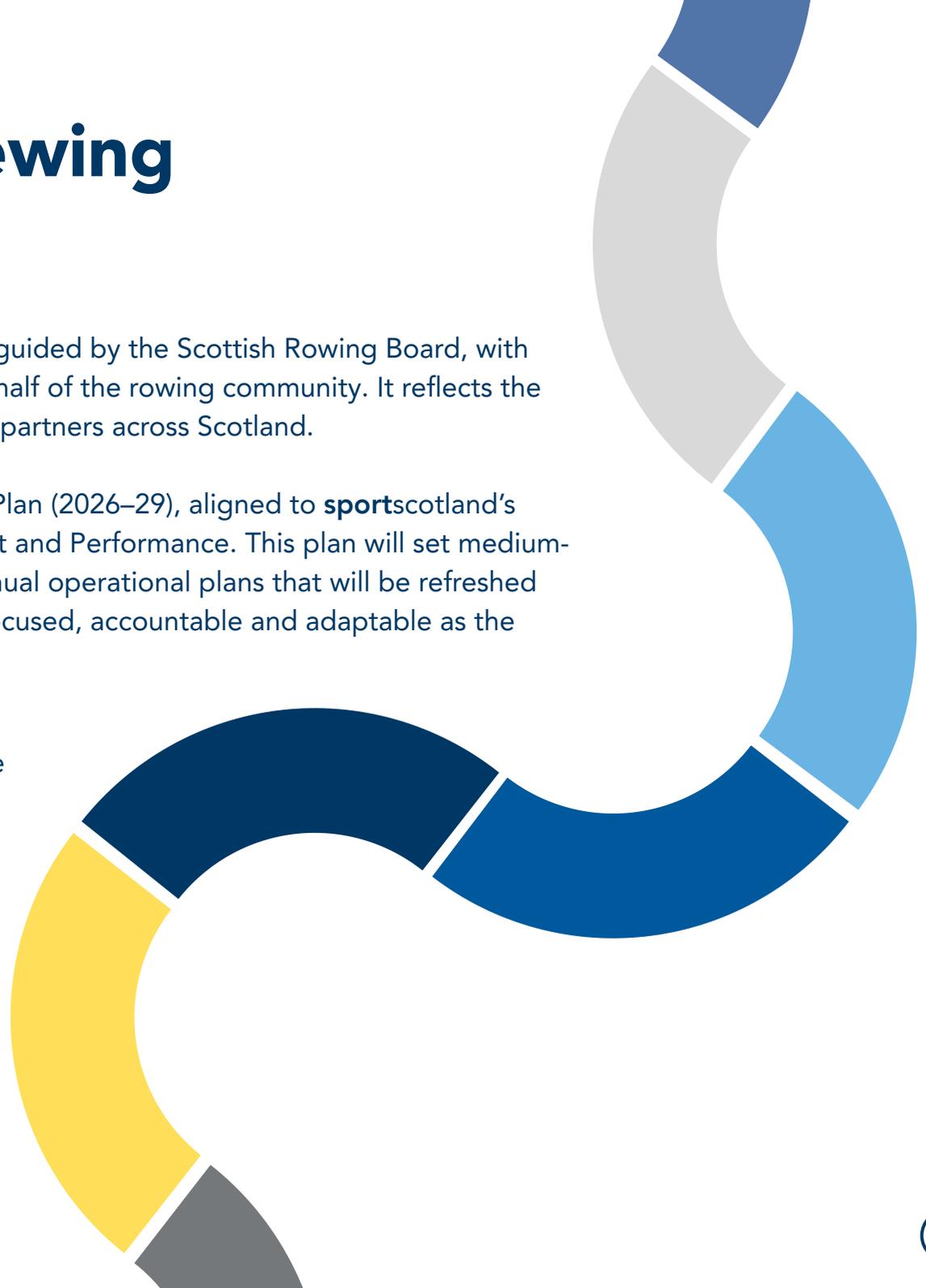
# Delivering and Reviewing This Strategy

This strategy has been developed collaboratively and is guided by the Scottish Rowing Board, with delivery led by the Chief Executive and staff team on behalf of the rowing community. It reflects the insight and ideas of our clubs, members, volunteers and partners across Scotland.

Implementation will be guided by a three-year Delivery Plan (2026–29), aligned to **sportscotland**'s investment areas of Effective Organisation, Development and Performance. This plan will set medium-term priorities and outcomes, supported by detailed annual operational plans that will be refreshed each year. Together, they will ensure our work remains focused, accountable and adaptable as the sport evolves.

Progress will be reviewed regularly by the Board and reported annually to members, partners, funders and the wider rowing community.

We recognise the changing context in which we operate - including financial pressures, environmental challenges and the evolving needs of our members. This strategy is therefore designed to be flexible and responsive, allowing Scottish Rowing to remain relevant and resilient in the years ahead.





SCOTTISH  
ROWING

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