

Communications

1. Introduction

The Royal Yachting Association Northern Ireland (RYA NI) is the Governing Body for the sport of Sailing and Boating in Northern Ireland.

Effective communications are a fundamental requirement of any successful organisation. RYA NI will continue to invest significant time and effort in its internal and external communications and in finding ways of improving communications. The overall objective of that commitment to continuous improvement is to increase the effectiveness of RYA NI and through that to improve and develop the sport of sailing and boating in terms of both levels of participation and performance.

The principles in developing good communications are clarity, timeliness and openness, subject always to compliance with good practice and with legislation e.g. Data Protection requirements and Child Protection Policy.

There are four main areas of communication in RYANI these are:

Internal Communications

Communications with those who provide or receive a service

Communications with Sponsoring Bodies

And other External Communicators

While there are clearly some overlaps in these four main categories, this document aims to outline RYA NI's approach to communications sing each of the four headings.

2. Internal Communications

The structure of RYA NI is defined in its Memorandum & Articles of Association and Regulations. Essentially there are a maximum of 7 Directors (including the Chair, Vice Chair, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary) who make up the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee coordinates the work of RYA NI employees and of the three standing committees and reports to Council. Council is made up of representatives from each RYA affiliated Club in Northern Ireland and the 7 Directors.

Within this internal RYA NI Structure the main face to face communications are an Annual General Meeting; Council Meetings (3 per year); Executive Committee Meetings (6 per year); and other standing committee meetings as required. These direct contacts are supported by verbal, written and electronic communications as required with a policy of increasing the use of the RYA NI Website.

Alongside these representative communication routes there are parallel linkages mainly between RYA NI business Manager and Club Secretaries and RYA NI Training & Development and Performance Managers and relevant club representatives.

Internal Communications are focussed on ensuring that the 'internal stakeholders' are kept fully informed of its activities of RYA NI (and vice versa) and have adequate opportunity to influence the direction of RYA NI. In order to achieve this, RYA NI aims to communicate effectively with all its internal contacts thereby allowing all involved to play their full part(s). An important wider aim is to communicate in such a way that interest and activity in the sport is encouraged and that the RYA NI is seen to be an effective Governing Body giving positive leadership to the sport.

While much of the internal communication in RYA NI originates from staff in the RYA NI Office, the Chair and to Directors determine the framework, principles and guidelines within which outgoing communications are initiated.

3. Communication with those who provide and those who receive a service from RYA NI

The main activity within this area is the setting up of contacts with providers of coaching and training services and with those who receive those coaching and training services. Most of the individuals in these two categories are members of clubs and many of those being coached or trained are young people.

Communications with coaches and Trainers are aimed at ensuring that they are suitably qualified; fully aware of their responsibilities and where posts are paid, about the levels of remuneration involved.

Communications with those undertaking training courses may be directly with the trainer or through RYA NI normally by the Training and Development Manager. Again the aim is to ensure clarity about arrangements and responsibilities. The other important area under this heading is communications with the young sailors in the Junior and Youth Training Squads and with staff in our Elite Facilities. The Performance Manager is responsible for communicating details of selection process and subsequent coaching and competitive events with the young people in the Junior and Youth Squads and with their parents. Contracts have been prepared for such coaching and competitive events and meetings are held with parents to clarify roles responsibilities and expectations. Obviously compliance with best practice in the area of Child Protection can impact on information communicated both inside and outside of the squads.

In the case of Elite Athletes the Performance Manager maintains contacts between the sailor, Sport NI, and where appropriate the Sports Institute NI. The RYA and the Irish Sailing Association (ISA) Such contacts range from submissions for funding to programme development and event planning and the same principles of agreeing what is to be provided in the way of support and what is expected in the way of efforts and output forms the basis for communications and contracts between RYA NI and the sailors.

4. Communications with Sponsoring Bodies

The main sponsoring bodies of RYA NI are Sport NI (SNI) and the RYA (at National level). Funding from SNI is on a 3 yearly basis with a review at the end of each year . RYA funding is on an annual but rolling basis.

Both bodies require regular written reports on progress with the agreed targets and objectives and there are frequent verbal and written exchanges. The formal communication and report lines are through the RYA NI Office under the direction of the Chairman and Executive Committee. However in parallel with these formal lines of communication there are regular officer to officer contacts on specific areas of business. These less formal contacts are important elements in reinforcing the working relationships between the organisations.

The main aim of communications (both formal and informal) with RYA and SNI are in the first place to ensure that a proper and convincing case for funding is made and subsequently to demonstrate that targets are being met and that RYA NI is developing in a professional way and fully aware of its responsibility to be accountable for the way in which allocations are spent.

In order to ensure successful outcomes from this area of communication, RYA NI will continue to strive to meet deadlines for returns of information and respond promptly and fully to opportunities to bid for resources and to requests for progress reports.

5. External Communications

The 5th main area of communication is the wider range of contacts with the public generally and with other interested or similar bodies including potential sponsors.

In conjunction with section 5.5 of the RYA Staff Handbook 'Press and Media Communications'. A copy of that statement is enclosed as an appendix. References to the Chief Executive or Communication Manager etc should be read in NI as Chairman or Operations Coordinator. Communications with this 'external' group may be through the media; the RYA NI website; responding directly to requests for advice or information or simply establishing good working relationships with other bodies or individuals.

In order to make the most of publicity and media opportunities, RYA NI is represented on the UK wide RYA Public Relations Team. The aim here is to produce press releases and promotional material regularly and linked to achievements or launches of initiatives at other appropriate times.

RYA NI is also committed to further developing good working relationships with other and similar organisations e.g. the Irish Sailing Association and other sports organisations through exchanges of information, attendance at joint meetings etc.

Contacts from the public are often by telephone. The aim of RYA NI is to ensure that telephone calls or other contacts will be answered promptly. The individual answering the initial contact will do his/her best to deal with the request. If that is not possible he/she will pass on the request to someone who can assist and advise the enquirer accordingly.

When the office is unmanned, telephone calls will be directed to a mail box system and staff will aim to respond to such messages within the next working day.

Conclusion

While every effort is made to communicate effectively within and from RYA NI it is recognised that there will always be room for improvement in Communications. The aim of RYA NI is to strive for ongoing improvement in our Communications at all levels.