

## Vice-Chair's Report, 2024

Welcome to our new members and to all our returning members! When trying to summarise the club's year, it is so hard to pick out everything I should mention because so much has gone on during 2024!

Firstly, I want to thank all the volunteers who give up their valuable time to help keep the club running. Quite simply, without you, there wouldn't be a club. There are many different volunteers at HXCC, from the coaches on the water who pass on their knowledge, to the committee members who make the decisions on how we operate the club, to the people who help clean up riverbanks or transport boats. Everyone can volunteer, and if you'd like to know more about getting involved, drop me a line at [vicechair@halifaxcanoe.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@halifaxcanoe.org.uk).

Here are a few highlights from 2024:

- We started the year in the pool, with our volunteer coaches teaching people to paddle or roll. Thank you to Bob for organising these sessions, and to the coaches and safety team for running them.
- The club received a sports grant from Allianz to help us buy some new spray decks. Many thanks to Steve Smith for managing the grant application.
- In July, the club ran its first slalom race in over 10 years at Oughtibridge, near Sheffield, raising much-needed funds for the club. Les and Sarah organised the event, and the volunteer support from non-slalom club members was superb. Thank you to everyone who helped make the race so successful. This was a great success, and we're planning another race in 2025!
- Mike's quiz night in October was a roaring success! Some of the questions were hard, but it's fair to say that we all had a great time raising some funds for the club. Thanks, Mike!
- River, lake, and sea trips started in January and continued throughout the year. These are reliant on our volunteer coaches giving up their time, so please make sure you sign up for them in 2025.

I'd like to talk a little about our volunteer coaches and helpers. It's so important that we give them the appreciation they deserve—they give up their time to keep us safe on the water and to help us all develop our particular paddling passions. Did you know that to do this, they keep up to date with varying qualifications, including safeguarding, CPD, and first-aid?

During 2024, the following coaches completed paddlesport qualifications so they can help the club: Al Benson became a White-Water Leader Award holder, Les Ford became a Paddlesport Touring Leader, and Aaron O'Malley qualified as a Paddlesport Instructor. Several other volunteers are planning to complete training courses over the next few months, including Bob Lawler (Paddlesport Touring Leader), Jane Whieldon and Mike Scholefield (White-Water Leader), and Steve Smith (Sheltered Water Kayak Coach) training.

Multiple people (too many to mention!) completed the Paddlesport Safety and Rescue (formerly FSRT) course and the White-Water Safety & Rescue course. All of these skills keep us safe on the water, and a huge thank you to everyone involved in the provision of these courses and to those who committed their time to improve their skills.

Rosie Lonnon, our marketing officer, appeared on BBC Look North earlier to talk about our water quality measuring activities. This is important work, and you can get involved by contacting Steve Smith at [environment@halifaxcanoe.org.uk](mailto:environment@halifaxcanoe.org.uk).

Throughout the year, we've seen river clean-ups removing rubbish from the river, and our local MP visited to see what we have to deal with. Well done to everyone who helped organise and host this important visit!

As vice-chair and current head of the committee, what am I looking forward to in 2025? The July slalom race (get it in your diary now!), I'm looking forward to the river trips run by our coaches, the pool sessions that we run in the winter, and some of Mike's legendary events! I would like to see some greater use of our Warley Moor site by all club members, and I hope to be up there soon in my boat.

A final thought about our volunteers: by stepping forward, your time and skills have made a huge difference. Thank you.