

Impact Report

2025-26

HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA CHARITABLE TRUST

Executive Summary

Our Impact Report for 2025-26 demonstrates the range of successes achieved by HRRCT-funded projects this year. The Trust continues to invest in the training and deployment of coaches in underserved communities. Thousands of young people have been involved in rowing over the past 12 months through the support provided by the Trust.

Coaching schemes are continually evolving and improving what they do, how they do it and how many young people they reach. Demand for the programmes shows no sign of slowing. We continue to work in close partnership with project leaders, who are best placed to identify the most effective community partners and pinpoint where the greatest needs lie - in short, where HRRCT funds can make the most difference.

Participation in a rowing programme continues to deliver life-changing opportunities, helping children build the tools they will need to live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives. Trust-funded rowing programmes are giving thousands of young people a window to a world that many of them would not otherwise have had.

Rowing has long been perceived as elitist and inaccessible to many. Through our coaching programmes, this perception is being continuously challenged and changed. Rowing is becoming more widely supported in mainstream schools, with regular engagement benefiting the sport in general.





About the Trust

Our Mandate

"To assist in the provision of facilities and resources to enable and encourage children and young persons in the United Kingdom to participate in activities related to rowing or sculling, thereby helping to ensure that due attention is given to the physical education and all-round development of such persons."

Our Trustees

Chris Baillieu (Chair)
Adam Freeman-Pask
Dick Lester
Steve Redgrave
Richard Stanhope
Sarah Winckless

Our Investments

Over the past 38 years, the Trust has invested £7.0 million into grassroots initiatives.

The Trustees are actively investigating fundraising initiatives to extend the reach of the Trust.

This Year



21 Rowing Coaching Schemes

Schemes operated by 12 different organisations.

Countrywide Involvement

Around 200 schools and clubs across England and into Scotland.

£460,000 Awarded

Grants help fund coaching, up to a maximum of 50%.

13,000 Participants

Regular coaching sessions, taster sessions and competitions.

Diversity and Inclusion

Participants reflect the ethnic and social diversity of their local communities.

Our Projects

CASTLE MEAD ACADEMY

PURCHASED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ROWING FOUNDATION

EAST ANGLIA YOUTH ROWING

enable.

Regatta for the disabled HENLEY

GORSE

ILYR

ALL ABOARD YOUTH ROWING

HENLEY ROWING CLUB 1839

IRC

BALL CUP REGATTA 1934



Where we operate

The geographical reach of the Trust now includes Scotland, with **Inverness Rowing Club**, while **Tyne Rowing Club** runs England's most northerly project.

All Aboard Youth Rowing covers a large area in the north-west, including Merseyside, North Staffs, Manchester, Macclesfield and Runcorn, with the **Ball Cup North** being staged at Runcorn.

East Anglia Youth Rowing has projects in Norwich, Cambridge, Ely, Sudbury and Huntingdon.

Two academy groups provide coaching programmes: **Gorse Academies Trust** in Leeds and **Castle Mead Academy** in Leicester.

Projects in the south include **Henley Rowing Club**, **Henley Regatta for the Disabled**, **Oarsome Chance** at Portsmouth, Gosport and Havant, and the **Ball Cup South** at Dorney Lake.

London Youth Rowing runs projects in Bristol, Nottingham, Leeds and Islington, with **NJIRC** providing a country-wide competitive arena through virtual and in-person events.

London also has coaching programmes in Barn Elms, run by **Enable**.

Funds are awarded to the **Rowing Foundation**, which provides small grants for equipment.



What other people are saying

The Inverness outreach programme, made possible by the HRRCT investment, is already delivering measurable growth in rowing's reach, relevance, and community connection in the Highlands.

The programme has opened up new experiences, broadened horizons, and provided a positive outlet that supports wellbeing, attendance, and engagement with learning.

Lee Boucher, CEO Scottish Rowing

Our rowing programme has had a transformative impact on both our school and our scholars, particularly given that 47% of our students are pupil premium. Scholars are developing technical skills, teamwork and resilience in a setting outside the classroom.

In leading this work, Inverness Rowing Club is helping to change outdated perceptions of the sport and demonstrate that rowing can be enjoyed by everyone.

Sam Lee, Head of Rowing, Castle Mead Academy




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Supporting our Communities

- Between 31% and 92% of participants in each project have a **SEND** diagnosis, which means they have been identified as having special education needs and disabilities. These may include difficulties with communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and health issues; and sensory or physical needs.
- Projects include a broad demographic mix, with between 35% and 62% of participants being from **ethnic minorities**, broadly representing their local communities. For comparison, ethnic minorities made up 19% of the population in England in 2021, according to the Census in that year.
- **Gender balance** is roughly equal, and some projects run all-female groups.
- The proportion of participants on **Pupil Premium** is between 20% and 68%. These pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds and receive free school meals.

It has shown me there is so much more to life than just sitting in my room on my X-Box.

It’s not just about rowing.

Young people learn life skills, confidence, social skills, resilience and independence by attending one of our rowing programmes.



Evaluating what we do

Measuring value for money consistently and fairly presents an ongoing challenge.

Anecdotally, we know that School Heads report a reduction in truancy rates, better concentration in class and a general improvement in attainment in those who participate in a rowing programme.

With the support of British Rowing, we have run a successful pilot project this year introducing Upshot, an evaluation and monitoring tool, to help us gather important data about our projects. The rollout of this software to the remainder of our delivery organisations starts in Autumn 2026, and will provide insights into the impact that our coaching programmes have on young lives.

> **The positive changes in student motivation, school culture, and aspiration demonstrate a strong return on investment. This funding has been absolutely pivotal in what we have managed to achieve and deliver. Without it, we would have been unable to pay for the coaching and supervision required for the sessions.**
>
> Castle Mead Academy





Placing Rowing on the Curriculum

> **I thought rowing was only for kids from privileged backgrounds. My own view has been challenged and changed.**
> Head of PE, Bishop Young Cof E Academy, Leeds

All Aboard Youth Rowing uses funding from their participating schools to provide team kit, featuring the logos of HRRCT, AAYR and their school. It not only equips pupils for the programme but also fosters a sense of pride, belonging and team spirit. A willingness to use their funds in this way illustrates only too clearly the value that the 43 schools place on the coaching provided by the Trust.

Expansion into Ely and Cambridge means that participation in the **EAYR** programme has increased by 30% this year. Most school programmes are limited to a minibus-sized group, but in one case the entire class walks to the river, which increases capacity and also builds self-reliance.

The programme at **Castle Mead Academy** operates at full capacity, demonstrating a strong level or demand and engagement, while the continued enthusiasm for rowing among young pupils suggests that the programme is becoming an increasingly important part of the school's sporting culture.

Participant Voices



> I have a hearing impairment and my cox has learnt to give me hand signals when instructing the crew, so I feel included and understand what to do.

> I love rowing, because I am pretty darn good at it.

> I have found that rowing has made me a lot more active, as in the past I have not exercised.

Parent Voices

My daughter has increased in confidence, self-esteem and fitness. Her wellbeing is directly impacted by her participation in sessions.

It has helped her to sleep and to focus, especially during what has been a very difficult year for her, and as someone who struggles a lot with building friendships, it provides a safe and inspiring setting for her to mix with others.



Rowing has greatly improved my child’s mental health, offering focus and calmness beyond the water. Unlike traditional school sports, rowing provides a unique mix of skill, discipline, and teamwork, which they’ve embraced wholeheartedly.

They often share how it has enriched their school life, building resilience and fostering strong connections with peers. Personally, it has boosted their confidence and taught them the value of perseverance and collaboration.

My son has enjoyed rowing and has a sense of pride from doing it. He enjoys coordinating with a team, being at the bow and coxing.

He likes the outdoor 'on the river' nature of the sport, and it’s a real privilege to try during school time. It's so nice that he can take advantage of the river. Most watersports are expensive. We didn't even know he could try rowing free, so this has been amazing.





Upshot

Monitoring and Evaluation

This year we have run a successful pilot with two organisations starting to use software from Upshot to record attendance at training sessions. The system provides a monitoring and evaluation tool to help schools, clubs and the Trust to evidence the impact that coaching programmes are having.

All other recipients of Trust grants will start using Upshot from the Autumn of 2026, allowing the Trustees to better measure the impact that funding has on individual programmes and to ensure that funds are delivered in the most appropriate way.

The system is partly funded this year by a grant awarded to the Trust by British Rowing.

The Trust at HRR 2026

The Trust enjoyed an enhanced presence at this year's Regatta, with large-scale photographic displays in both Enclosures depicting rowing activities from many of our projects, raising awareness of the Trust's work.

We welcomed 40 project leaders and coaches who joined us for a networking event on the first day of racing. This gave them a forum in which to share their experiences and issues, to discuss ideas and to forge valuable working relationships together. It also provided an opportunity for many of them to connect with the Trustees in person for the first time, and for the Trustees to hear first-hand about their progress.

Following the successful introduction last year of a professionally produced video promoting the work of the Trust, we once again featured clips and interviews from participants and coaches every day on the live broadcast during the lunch and tea breaks.

An income of £22,500 was generated at the 2026 Regatta through fundraising initiatives, including private donations, donations at the HRR Shop and the Sodexo silent auction.





Thank you for your support

HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA CHARITABLE TRUST