

## Underwater Club Boat Proposal

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### *Introduction:*

Divers rely heavily upon boats for safety as they provide transport to a dive site, surface cover to monitor and guard divers in the water and a stable platform from which to base diving operations. A safe diving platform is a well maintained and equipped vessel which is suitable for conditions and activities at sea. The ability to transport, launch and recover such a vessel is also key to its safe use and therefore a suitable vehicle is required.

For the last 18 months the ability of the Underwater Club to use its Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat (RIB) has been severely restricted as ICU no longer owns a suitable towing vehicle. The Underwater Club believe this is unacceptable and hence suggest to replacement the current vessel in line with the following information.

### *Historical events:*

January 1<sup>st</sup> 1997 the DVLA no longer awarded successful car driving licence (B) applicants with categories B+E (car and trailer), D1 (minibus) and D1+E (minibus and trailer). Drivers who gained their licence after this date required supplementary testing for the above listed categories.

In 2005 ICU added a Landrover Defender 110 to its vehicle fleet with the express purpose to provide a suitable towing vehicle for ICU clubs. At the time this type of vehicle was built this standing ICU fleet strategy. A secondary advantage of this vehicle was that with 8 passenger seats it was classed as a car and therefore could be driven on the continent by any ICU driver.

Also in 2005, the Underwater Club's primary boat (6.8m Blue Water Marine RIB) was deemed financially unviable to repair following the failing of the 'A' frame. The club agreed the early release of a £15,000 Capital Expenditure Plan (CEP) with the Clubs and Societies Board (then Student Activities Committee December 2005) to purchase a new hull.

In March 2006 the Underwater Club took delivery of a 6.1m custom built RIB from Rib Craft based on their standard offshore hull design. The new boat has a significantly deeper hull, which makes her more stable at sea, and is a lot heavier than the previous Blue Water Marine boat. These facts were known at the time by those designing and authorising the purchase of the boat, however were offset by knowing that ICU owned a suitable vehicle both to tow and recover the boat. The Rib Craft boat is transported on a Rapid trailer with a maximum allowed weight of 1500kg. As with the Blue Water Marine boat, those towing needed to have a vehicle in excess of the maximum trailer weight and a category B+E driving licence.

In August 2006 ICU's Landrover was written off in the French Alps by another ICU club away on tour.

### *Relevant Information*

To date there has been no attempt by ICU to replace the towing vehicle and such a vehicle is no longer in the strategic plan for the vehicle fleet, having been cited as uneconomical.

In the past 18 months the Underwater Club has only able to use it's boat when members who not only hold a B+E licence but also own a suitable towing vehicle are available. This is an unacceptable requirement and currently there is only one person within the club membership who has both the licence and a suitable vehicle to tow.

The Underwater Club has repeatedly requested money to support members in gaining the B+E category licence in budget applications but has never received any money. Some members have funded their training and test themselves (~£400 minimum) knowing that they would be able to use an ICU vehicle to tow. Without an appropriate vehicle available many members no longer see the relevance in spending their time and money to gain a qualification that they cannot use.

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The possibility of permanently mooring the boat in a marina on the coast has been considered by the Underwater Club, however, marina fees are high and a set location would also limit the dive sites available. Additionally any routine maintenance that may be required would become significantly more difficult if the boat is stored over 100 miles from college.

Whilst the Underwater club owns two other boats, these are both smaller inflatable boats which can be fully disassembled for transport. The safe working range of these boats is small; they lack the stability in the water of rigid hulled boats and ultimately are not as safe a diving platform. The current rib has been entirely custom designed, and fitted with appropriate equipment to make it an exceptionally stable and safe platform from which to dive.

The activity, and therefore the future, of the Underwater Club is being restricted by the inability to reach many dive sites without the need for expensive charters. Not being able to use the boat is denying the membership the chance to gain experience in boat handling skills, practical seamanship, site location and marking, all of which are key in developing well trained divers.

The current situation is unacceptable and it is clear that there is no sustainable future for the current Underwater Club boat, due to the lack of provision by ICU of a suitable towing vehicle.

The only viable solution to this issue is to replace the current boat with a lighter smaller vessel which can be transported on a 750kg rated trailer. This solution would allow the boat to be towed behind most personal cars and the car classified vehicle in the Union fleet – thus allowing ICU to provide appropriate facilities for its member's activities. Since the purchase of the vessel was from a CEP upon sale the relevant percentage of the asset would be returned to both CSB and the Underwater Club. The Underwater Club believe that this money should be transferred back to the club to fund the purchase of a replacement vessel.

A smaller vessel operating alone would not allow the same level of participation and would therefore be a further restriction on club activity. The Underwater Club is hence also requesting the reattribution and immediate release of the £10,000 CEP earmarked for an outboard engine replacement, which would become obsolete, to partially fund the acquisition of a second identical smaller vessel such that participation can return to the level prior to the loss of the Landrover.

*Resolutions:*

1. No future exists for the Underwater Club boat in the current situation and the situation is not acceptable to the membership, therefore the asset must be replaced.
2. DPFS should authorise the sale of the current asset
3. CSB should transfer all funds from the sale of the asset back to the Underwater Club to purchase a replacement vessel.
4. CSB to approve the reattribution and immediate release of £10,000 Underwater CEP to fund purchase of second vessel.

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*Financial Considerations*

Obviously the financial commitments for a project such as this needs careful consideration. Costing information from different manufacturers has been assembled below for three possible configurations of new boat, it should be noted that model 1 is the most similar to the current RIB. Whilst the exact design of any new vessel reflects in the final cost, it can be estimated from the figures below that this project will require between £30,000 and £40,000 to achieve completion.

The current Ribcraft vessel has an estimated market value between £10,000 and £15,000, however this could rise sharply depending on demand. If CSB approve the change to a £10,000 ICUC Capital Expenditure Plan (CEP) and allow its early release with a club contribution of ~ £2,000, then the available funds would be in the region of £25,000, enabling the club to move forward in raising the remaining funds to complete the project through current SGI and other funding bodies.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>Description / Notes</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Description / Notes</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Description / Notes</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Hull	Ribcraft 5.3m	£ 7,495.00	Ribcraft 4.8m	£ 5,895.00	Humber Assault 5.0m	£ 5,046.00
Consol	Ocean Double	£ 633.33	FS Single with jockey seat	£ 775.00	Sports upgrade	£ 180.00
Spray Shield		£ 495.00		£ 349.00	<i>included</i>	£ -
Jockey Seats	Two	£ 1,320.00	<i>included</i>	£ -	<i>included</i>	£ -
Fuel Tank	Stainless Steel 20 Gallon	£ 885.00	Stainless Steel 12 Gallon	£ 830.00	Plastic 14 Gallon	£ 350.00
Steering Linkage	Seastar hydraulic	£ 745.00	Seastar hydraulic	£ 745.00	Hydraulic	£ 595.00
Distribution Box	6 way distributor	£ 295.00	6 way distributor	£ 295.00	6 way distributor	£ 75.00
Navigation lights	LED Nav lights	£ 349.00	LED Nav lights	£ 349.00		£ 195.00
Cylinder Rack	6 cylinder rack	£ 550.00	6 cylinder rack	£ 550.00	6 cylinder rack	£ 385.00
A Frame	Double 1.5" tube	£ 620.00	Double 1.5" tube	£ 620.00	Single 1.5" tube	£ 325.00
Box Cages	for safety equipment	£ 269.00	for safety equipment	£ 269.00		£ 225.00
Engine Bolt	insurance requirement	£ 69.00	insurance requirement	£ 69.00		£ 90.00
Engine	Yamaha 4 stroke F100	£ 7,299.00	Yamaha 4 stroke F60	£ 5,999.00	Mercury 4 stroke F60ELPT	£ 4,800.00
<i>Installation</i>		£ 816.33		£ 816.33		£ 740.00
Deck Fittings	included	£ -	included	£ -	Deck U bolt, cleat & D rings	£ 85.00
Trailer	Rapide unbraked	£ 1,398.00	Rapide unbraked	£ 1,398.00	Bramber unbraked (RG3/590)	£ 1,050.00
Instrumentation	GPS/Sounder, Radio	£ 500.00		£ 500.00		£ 500.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£23,738.66</b>		<b>£19,459.33</b>		<b>£ 14,641.00</b>
	<b>Total (ex VAT)</b>	<b>£20,203.11</b>		<b>£16,561.13</b>		<b>£ 12,460.43</b>

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*Appendix A: Legal requirements for class B vehicles towing:*  
(From [www.direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoring))

Category B vehicles may be coupled with a trailer up to 750kgs MAM (allowing a combined weight up to 4.25 tonnes MAM) or a trailer over 750kgs MAM provided the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle, and the combination does not exceed 3.5 tonnes MAM.

For example:

- a vehicle with an unladen weight of 1.25 tonnes and a MAM of 2 tonnes coupled with a trailer with a MAM of 1.25 tonnes could be driven by the holder of a category B entitlement. This is because the MAM of the combination does not exceed 3.5 tonnes and also the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle

Whereas

- the same vehicle with an unladen weight of 1.25 tonnes and a MAM of 2 tonnes when coupled with a trailer with a MAM of 1.5 tonnes would fall within category B+E. This is because although the combined weight of the vehicle and trailer is within the 3.5 tonnes MAM limit, the MAM of the trailer is more than the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle