



Annual Report

2021

Siggiewi Rowing Club

Introduction

This Annual Report covers the period from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021, a year which, as 2020, will be remembered in history for the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which brought most things, including sports, to a forced break.

This was particularly challenging for Siggiewi Rowing Club (SRC) as 2021 can be considered as the first year when the club was supposed to be fully active since being enrolled with Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and thus formally attaining the status of a VO.

The Board of Administrators

The Executive Committee of SRC in 2021 was always composed of five members, as follows:

President: Prof. Joseph N. Grima

Secretary: Dr Michelle Vella Wood

Treasurer: Gillian Farrugia-Pace

Physical Trainer: Capt. Andre` Buhagiar

PRO: Dr Danica Bonello Spiteri

The Board met regularly and frequently throughout the year, with electronic meetings sometimes being organized every few days. All members contributed to the discussion.

In addition, the Club administration was assisted through the engagement with it of champion rower Juan Farrugia, who won numerous awards in indoor rowing including the National Championships and the U23 500m gold medals at the BRIC. Juan was encouraged to take up formal coaching qualifications, which were paid by the Club in lieu of his remuneration.

Achievements and Milestones

Major achievements and milestones for SRC in 2021 include:

1. Completing the process to be enlisted as a Sports Organisations with SportMalta and opening of bank account with Bank of Valletta;
2. Enlarging the Club through enrolment of a number of rowers and ordinary members;
3. Negotiation with government entities to make use of the Ta' Kandia Sporting facilities and acquisition of boathouse;
4. Discussions with Dar tal-Providenza (DTP) on the use of their Gym off-hours;
5. The conception of a 'rowing clinic' project;
6. Commencement of Indoor Rowing Training as a Club, both 1-1 and as classes, for abled-body, and para athletes;
7. Participation in Indoor Rowing Training Championships, both locally and internationally and the award of the first world record for an SRC registered para rower (PR3-ID) in indoor rowing and winning of the first international medals in para indoor rowing at the British Virtual Indoor Rowing Championships in September 2021 (PR3) as well as various medals in the 2021 Malta National Indoor Rowing Championships;
8. Coastal Rowing (sliding-seat) training and acquisition of two shells;
9. Commencement of training in fixed-seat rowing for eventual participation in the Maltese National Regatta;
10. Participation as "Siggiewi Rowing Club" in the traditional regatta organised as part of the European Week of Sports;
11. Rebranding;
12. Fundraising and team building activities, the beneficiaries of which were the Club and Dar tal-Providenza (money donated on 1-Jan-2022).

1. Completing the process to be enlisted as a Sports Organisations with SportMalta

Although the process of registering the Club with SportMalta had started a number of years earlier, this process was never finalised due to missing paperwork, etc. In the meantime, requirements for registration became more rigorous and the Club needed to perform a number of amendments to its statute so that it would be brought in line with the current requirements of SportMalta. These included, for example, provisions on the setting up of Board of Discipline, etc. The help and support received from SportMalta in this process, particularly from Dr Karen Zammit Southernwood, is most gratefully acknowledged.

Another non-trivial administrative process which came to successful completion was the opening of a bank account with Bank of Valletta. This process took several months, and involved numerous emails, letters, forms and in-person meetings.



08.04.2021

President
Siggiewi Rowing Club

I refer to your registration with sportmalta as per 'Article 35 of the Sports Act 2002'.

I am pleased to inform you that sportmalta is hereby issuing the sport organisation's registration with SPORTMALTA up to 30th November 2021.

In accordance with Article 2 of the Sports Act 2002 your organization shall be registered as "Club" and your SPORTMALTA registration number shall be: **SM/C/315**

2. **Enlarging the Club through enrolment of a number of ordinary members and rowers**

Since January 2021, the Club embarked on an outreach programme with the aim of recruiting new members, both rowers and ordinary members. Ordinary members of our Club include our Mayor, the **majority of members of the Local Councils from both sides of the political spectrum** as well as local MPs. As a result, the Club is honoured to be able to retain its full neutrality from every aspect.



In terms of rowers, the Club managed to secure the registration of two elite rowers, experienced rowers, as well as a number of other abled-body and para athletes who started rowing for the first time. These included an athlete with an intellectual disability and an athlete with an above the knee amputation, who took rowing rather seriously. Here it must be emphasised that our membership base in terms of athletes is truly diverse with some members aiming to compete at high-level national and international events whilst others row to improve their health and wellbeing, and to be part of a vibrant rowing/sport community.

A very important sector of the SRC membership base is that of “para rowers” and the Club is honoured to have actively training with it the Secretary General of Malta Paralympic Committee Julian Bajada who had started his connection with rowing whilst reading for his postgraduate degree with the University of Cambridge, UK.

3. **Negotiation with government entities to make use of the Ta’ Kandia Sporting facilities and acquisition of boathouse**

4. **Discussions with Dar tal-Providenza (DTP) on the use of their Gym off-hours**

One of the major obstacles faced by the Club in 2020 and before was that it did not have premises from where to operate. Given the nature of the Club, it was felt that in an ideal scenario, the Club should have both a boathouse, to focus and develop on-water rowing, and an

on-land training facilities, to focus on indoor rowing and develop a professional strength and conditioning programme which is tailor-made to the athletes needs and abilities.

The Club administration had various meetings and discussions with several government and church entities, the most fruitful of which were meetings with the Hon. Dr Clifton Grima who is responsible for Sports; the Hon. Silvio Schembri, who is responsible for Lands; Mr Mark Cutajar, CEO of SportsMalta, Mr Dominic Grech, Mayor of Siggiewi and the Local Council, and Rev. Fr. Martin Micallef, the Director of Dar tal-Providenza.

Through the meetings with the Hon. Dr Grima and Mr Mark Cutajar held in January 2021, we were informed that SportMalta was in the process of setting up an indoor rowing training facility at Ta' Kandia, l/o Siggiewi which the Club could use. Although we had initially been informed that by February the premises should be made available to us, there were some delays and the Club could only start using the premises in October 2021. This was possible after an agreement was reached that SRC members would make use of the state-of-the-art dedicated premises at an annual nominal fee of EUR50, payable to SportMalta. The help and support of the Hon. Dr Clifton Grima, Mr Mark Cutajar and Mr Alex Camilleri who were instrumental in reaching this agreement is most gratefully acknowledged.

In the meantime, through meetings facilitated through the Mayor of Siggiewi, Mr Dominic Grech, the Club administration also had meetings with the Hon. Silvio Schembri who kindly explained to us the process how a VO can lease premises and assisted us, through the Ministry, to identify suitable premises and apply for a title through the GLA9 procedure. In fact, an application was filed by the Club on the 17th September 2021 (Application no. GLA9/2021/0115) to acquire a leasehold on 8, Moll ic-Ciangatura, Marsa. This application was successfully processed and on the 17th November 2021, we were notified that “with reference to your application no: GLA9/2021/0115, for the Request for disposal of 8, Moll ic-Cangatura, Marsa, the application was reviewed by the Lands Authority on the 20/10/2021 and the Authority’s decision was to approve the allocation of subject premises for the grant of 15 year lease under VO rates”. This meant that the Club could now truly start its process of on-water rowing. The help of the Hon. Silvio Schembri, Mr Dominic Grech, Mayor of Siggiewi and his brother, SRC rower Gilbert Grech, the Ministry and Lands Authority is most gratefully acknowledged. We also thank Perit Professor Dione Buhagiar, who assisted the Club *pro bono* in the application process.

In parallel, the Club also discussed with Rev. Fr. Martin Micallef, the Director of Dar tal-Providenza (DTP), the concept that SRC could make use “outside working hours” of the gym space of DTP. This would effectively mean that the Siggiewi and the rowing community would be brought closer to DTP and its residents, who would also benefit from the use of SRC equipment. These discussions were very positive, and, it was agreed that an application for funding would be made through SRC through the VO Small Initiatives Scheme (SIS) grants. Moreover, SRC and DTP started the process for formulating a Memorandum of Understanding on the use of the DTP Gym by SRC.

5. The conception of a ‘rowing clinic’ project and submission of the SIS Grant Application

In 2021, the Club also submitted its first formal application for funding through the Small Initiatives Scheme (SIS). The project aims to set up a Rowing Mini-Clinic to be used for

introducing individuals with physical and/or intellectual impairments to rowing, with an ultimate aim of integrating them into mainstream club training and competition as para athletes. The mini-clinic will also be piloted to carry out individualized or small-group training and/or rehabilitation through rowing, with a focus for individuals with permanent or temporary physical and/or intellectual impairments.

In addition, since the SIS grant scheme works on a partial pre-financing, SRC embarked on a call for support so that funds could be found to purchase the equipment before the full refund. A number of individuals came forward and supported us, namely Mr Dominic Cutajar, Dr Francis Lanfranco, Dr Daniel Aquilina and Ganado and Associates who donated money. Their support is most gratefully acknowledged as without it, the Club would not have been in a financially viable position to commence the project.

- 6. Commencement of Indoor Rowing Training as a Club, both 1-1 and as classes, for abled-body, and para athletes**
- 7. Participation in Indoor Rowing Training Championships, both locally and internationally, medalling of SRC athletes in various categories at National Level, and the award of the first world record for an SRC registered para rower (PR3-ID) in indoor rowing and winning of the first international medals in para indoor rowing at the British Virtual Indoor Rowing Championships in September 2021 (PR3)**

Another important which was prioritized in 2021 was the establishment of rowing training programmes and competition.

This was by no means easy, since 2021 was a year when sport was characterised with ongoing uncertainty, and the Club has very limited resources.

Training sessions in indoor rowing commenced in the private residences of the Committee members, when the Club was approached by the parent of young athlete with an intellectual impairment who *de facto* became our first training member of the Club in indoor rowing, coached by Michelle Vella Wood and Joseph Grima. This coincided with the decision taken at the last AGM which gave priority to inclusivity and training of physically/intellectually impaired athletes. At a later stage, other members started to join training, and the Club sessions started to take shape. The first competition that the Club took part in for 2021 was the British Virtual Indoor Rowing Championships held in September 2021, with the participation of three athletes, including para rower Owen Mallia, who was awarded Gold, and junior athlete Scarlett Yilmaz who was awarded silver. These athletes were coached by Juan Farrugia and Joseph Grima.

In October 2021, the Club finally obtained permission from SportMalta to start using the Ta' Kandia premises and this meant that classes could not move from private residences to a centralised facility. As a result, the Club could start getting people of all abilities together, and offer them professional training in indoor rowing at cost-price. These classes were a success with individuals improving not only in rowing technique and ability, but in many other ways. The kind support of SportMalta, particularly through Mr Mark Cutajar (CEO) and Mr Alex Camilleri (Facilities Manager), is most gratefully acknowledged as is the input of our coach Juan Farrugia. Juan not only gave his time to the club, but did so with a passion that is second to none.

Concurrently, the Club also started to be assisted by former Italian National Team coach Dr Dario Cerasola who helped in the coaching of one of our elite athletes and provided other advise when needed. The coaching by Dr Cerasola was provided *pro bono* and his help and support is most gratefully acknowledged.



Another major achievement of the Club in this sector are the excellent results obtained in the National Indoor Rowing Championships held on the Saturday 20th November 2021. where a record number of our athletes participated (SRC was the Club with the largest number of entries), and a number of athletes medalling.

As is customary with the Malta National Indoor Rowing Championships, the Championships included the para rowing categories which were run with the joint support of the Malta Paralympic Committee who assisted with the national classification process of athletes. Siggiewi Rowing Club para athletes Isaac Borg won the 500m PR3-ID category whilst Julian Bajada won the 2000m and 500m lightweight PR3-PD categories. New national records were established for the 2000m LW-M-PR3-PD (Julian Bajada, 8:29.5) and 500m HW-M-PR3-ID categories (Isaac Borg, 1:56.0).

This year's overall lightweight female winner was Siggiewi Rowing Club rower Claire Sammut who won all three 2000m, 1000m and 500m open age categories. In the heavyweight male open age categories, Steve Said of Siggiewi Rowing Club was the overall winner of the 2000m race, closely followed by Mark Schembri (2nd) and Matthew Delia (3rd) Jan Tanti of Siggiewi Rowing Club won the 1000m race whilst our Coach Juan Farrugia won the 500m race. A number of other athletes won the Masters and Junior categories, the youngest of whom were twelve-year olds Scarlett Yilmaz and Liam Farrugia of Siggiewi Rowing Club who won the female and male Under 12 categories.



8. Coastal Rowing (sliding-seat) and acquisition of two shells;

Training in sliding-seat coastal rowing continued and a number of SRC rowers were able to train through using the privately-owned C1x.

Moreover, in August 2021, the Club was approached by Mr Robert and Mrs Kathy Valleau (Tel: +1 (908) 230-9271, email: rtvall@aol.com) who most kindly donated two rowing shells they had purchased some years ago, which boats should be usable in our waters, together with a donation of 300EUR for their repair. At present, these boats are in storage through the kind support of Mr Alastair Buttigieg and will be repaired shortly. The generosity of Mr Robert and Mrs Kathy Valleau is most gratefully acknowledge and will be forever remembered as the first major such donation for our Club.



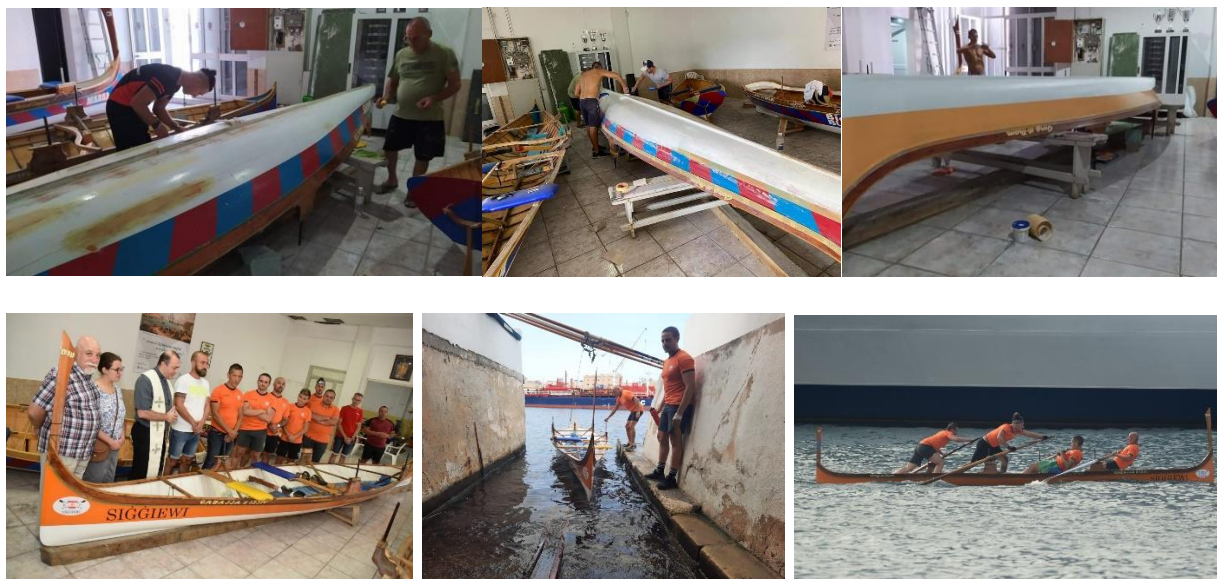
9. **Commencement of training in fixed-seat rowing for eventual participation in the Maltese National Regatta**
10. **Participation as “Siggiewi Rowing Club” in the traditional regatta organised as part of the European Week of Sports**

In 2021, a number of Club rowers started training in the modality which is normally used in the Maltese Traditional National Regatta through Marsa Regatta Club after the Club president purchased a boat from them in his personal capacity. This boat, a Tal-Medalji boat, S1331, which was eventually painted in the Siggiewi colours and named “Providenza” was loaned to the Club for training and competition purposes.

In practice this means that SRC athletes now have a boat they can use for training purposes, with the result that SRC was able to take part in the traditional regatta organised as part of the European Week of Sports in September 2021 where the boat was rowed by SRC rowers Mark Schembri, Gilbert Grech, Joseph Grima and Lino Fabri. Marsa Regatta Club also loaned other boats to our Club for this regatta, which permitted SRC to take part in five out of six races organised on the day as “SRC”. This was a first for our Club, and for the rowing community in Malta.

The Club thanks Joseph Grima for loaning his boat to SRC as well Mr Raymond Fabri, his grandson Caiden Gauci Fabri and the rowers themselves who helped in the re-painting of the boat in the Siggiewi colours.

The generosity of Marsa Regatta Club, who lent us their boats for this regatta is most gratefully acknowledged. Their act of kindness was nationally recognised through the prestigious “Fair Play Award” by the Malta Sports Journalists Association.



11. Rebranding

In 2021, the Club also embarked on a major rebranding exercise, spearheaded by Joeaby Vassallo. Work included upgrading of our website and Facebook account, setting up of an Instagram account, as well as a redesign of our logo and new club gear.

The work of Joeaby Vassallo is most gratefully acknowledged.

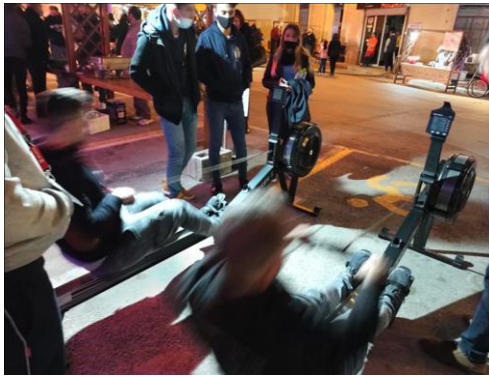


12. Fundraising and team building activities, the beneficiaries of which were the Club and Dar tal-Providenza (money donated on 1-Jan-2022)

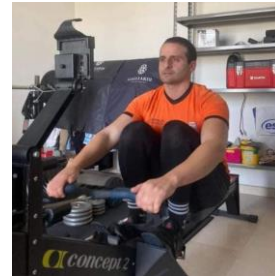
In December 2021, the Club also took in an important outreach event as part of Pjazza Milied in Siggiewi, organised by Siggiewi Local Council. This event resulted in the recruitment of several new rowers.

After Christmas, the Club also organised what is now gradually becoming our key December event to collate money, this time in the form of a 100+km row, a joint effort of many keen individuals. This event was conceived a number of years ago by elite rower Jan Tanti who now forms part of SRC.

Through this event, SRC raised EUR420, half of which were donated to DTP in January 2022.



Milied Flimkien, Sat 18-Dec-2021



100+km row

Financial Report

Starting Balance on 1 st January 2021:	€93.25
Income:	€3481.37
Expenditure:	€567.50
Balance on 31 st December 2020:	€3007.12

Notes:

- The balance of €3007.12 includes the €210 that were donated to DTP in January 2022 that were raised as part of the 100+km row organised in December.
- The Club Assets in ownership at the end of the financial year are the two boats donated by Mr Robert and Mrs Kathy Valleau. All other boats used by SRC athletes are privately owned and not property of the Club.

Acknowledgements

The Club thanks all those who have supported the Club to enable the dreams of the Siggiewi affiliated rowers become a reality.