

Royal Channel Islands Yacht Club Redevelopment Options

Questions and Answers

The following are the most frequently asked questions and answers provided at the three consultation meetings with members. It is hoped that, along with the Summary of Options, the following will provide sufficient information to allow members to vote on their preferred option at the AGM.

Q. Why do we need to do this? Can't we just maintain what we have?

A. Beyond routine maintenance, the building is structurally very tired. The Club extension was built in the 1960's, was re-roofed in the 1990's and needs re-roofing (or rebuilding) again. Electrics need rewiring, increased H&S needs must be addressed, the floors in the original building are sagging and thanks to the success of sailing, improved facilities are required for training, changing and storage. Addressing just the building's structural issues and standing still without delivering value, is beyond the Club's resources due to membership fees being 38% behind inflation and a lack of economy of scale in the restaurant. The time is right for members to consider options to carry a fully inclusive yacht club forward into the future.

Q. Could we see a range of options please? Not just one vanity project.

A. Members were canvassed on a range of options in the 2023 survey which attracted 500 responses. Consequently, a range of options have been investigated, from maintaining what we have to rebuilding the Club entirely. All have varying fundraising or planning challenges subject to the aspiration. The project committee have narrowed these down to Option 1: Not redeveloping but trying to maintain what we have, and three further scaled options for development including rebuilding entirely.

Q. What considerations have been given to improved sailing facilities?

A. We are currently very restricted for training, showering and storage facilities for sailors. Resolving these is fundamental to securing the right balance between social and sailing needs – where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The additional space offered by Option 3 provides for two potential training areas, improved and extended showering facilities and increased storage space.

Q. How can we afford it?

A. This first stage of providing members with the level of detail requested to choose a preferred option (architectural phase RIBA1) is capped at less than £15,000. This has enabled the Project Committee to engage a project manager, architect and quantity surveyor. The team has maintained significant momentum to provide detailed architectural options, high-level cost estimates and a detailed report in 10 weeks.

The 2023 survey demonstrated that all options would attract different levels of donations, legacies, interest free loans and interest-bearing debentures/bonds - a method successfully used by the Club to purchase the car park, by La Moye Golf Club and many other clubs including the current new Royal Ocean Racing Club building in Cowes.

Loans and interest require repaying through operational profit. A model has been created that looks at each option, the ability for each of them to increase membership revenue and restaurant net profit. The ideal pay-back period then drives the maximum amount that can be borrowed and consequently the fundraising target for gifts. This is then compared to how attractive each option is for giving. At this stage a wide range of assumptions can be made. In the likely event that options that carry the Club into the future inspire more gifts and lower interest loans, the model suggests that this will be the most affordable and sustainable route for the Club.

The option favoured by members will go forward to a more comprehensive feasibility study including building, club profitability and fundraising. The estimated cost of getting to planning consent and tendering is £155,000 to £170,000. This would require the first (and hardest) tranche of fundraising.

Q. Which option is the Project Committee recommending?

A. Having considered and juggled many considerations, the Project Committee is recommending Option 3 to members with the following rationale: 1. Improved facilities for sailing members. 2. Maximised use of second floor and views (both inside and outside). 3. Increased restaurant covers whilst minimising staffing overheads. 4. Architectural balance of old and new, whilst exposing two stories of the old building within the mezzanine design. 5. Easier approach with planning than Option 4, whilst securing the long-term future of the Club and attracting fundraising. If fundraising for Option 3 is not successful, then an enhanced Option 1 with further refurbishment would be a fall-back position. However this would not resolve the medium to longer term challenges of rising sea levels, flood defences, facilities etc.

Q. Could we not repurpose the top two floors of the building?

A. This has been considered in detail. 1. Fire escape routes within the old building make this very difficult. 2. The existing flat is in good condition and delivers over £20,000 per year towards the running of the Club. 3. Lift access is currently to the first floor only and would reduce the available space further. 4. Considerable additional costs would be required to bring these floors into use for members.

Q. During the redevelopment, will the Club need to be shut? Have we considered the cost and potential loss of members?

A. All options including Option 1 "Maintain what we have" would require closure to rebuild the extension roof and refurbish the kitchen. A number of relocation options have been looked at and this is an important consideration for the operational element of the feasibility study. Les Creux (used by La Moye Golf Club) is no longer available. Informal

discussions have been had with the St Helier Yacht Club and it is hoped that members will be able to take temporary membership there in a similar environment, for which the Club might deduct the cost from their RCIYC annual subscription. We would hope that, due to the RCIYC re-joining fee, members might consider continuing to pay the balance of their membership as a contribution to the Club's future. Either way, the impacts will be scoped and budgeted for.

Q. What initiatives are being pursued to improve restaurant net profitability?

Whether self-managed or contracted out, the restaurant is challenged by a small economy of scale, licencing limited to members and guests, single seatings per dinner and the desire to keep Club prices lower than commercial establishments. Cost cutting has resulted in staff turnover and variability in the offering. Closer monitoring of margins and a change of chef in late 2023 is showing promise. Pricing and discounts have been reviewed. David Cameron has kindly offered his assistance with budgeting and operational aspects. 2024 is the year to demonstrate how much the restaurant can contribute to repaying any loans an interest as part of the 2024 feasibility study into the chosen building option and fundraising.

Q. Tell us about what is happening in relation to conservation in this area and the impact on the Club?

A. Conservation areas are coming in and are in the current Bridging Island Plan. The law has been changed so the first conservation area is due to start in January 2024, with St Aubin being the first designated area. There will be scrutiny in terms of planning applications, as we are such a prominent site. The RCIYC building is not listed. If it remains unlisted, the external facade of the building in a conservation area is of more importance than the internal part of the building. The full options report considers these issues in considerable detail.

Q. Why do Options 2 and 3 not take the extension as far as the road along the full length of the building?

A. Option 2 tries to balance the extension, centered on the tower and main entrance of the original building. In either option, the impact of extending to the corner would be significant in relation to the streetscape, neighbouring buildings and planning. However, suggestions have been made for extending seawards over the sea wall and historical precedence for this on the site has been evidenced.

Q. What has been considered on the subject of coastal erosion?

A. The Island Plan includes flood assessments and anticipated sea level rises, for which St Aubin's is 2nd on the list after Harve des Pas. As part of the feasibility study, the survey team would have to check if the wall has been undermined and what its integrity is like. If it needs stitching and / or underpinning etc. that is what the design team / structure engineers will look at.