

The Royal Life-Saving Society

Surrey Branch

Branch 'Audit' & Action Plan

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**Authors:**

Stephanie Andrews  
Clive Teague  
Graham Wilson

**Contact:**

E: [graham@life-saving.net](mailto:graham@life-saving.net)  
T: 07785 222380

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Graham Wilson (Branch Chair)

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**0) BACKGROUND**

This document was prepared at the request of River House as part of a national initiative. The headings may seem a little 'forced' - this is because they are based on the categories of information requested rather than those that we might have used had we been preparing this document from scratch for Branch use.

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**1a) UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND HOW TO SERVE THEM - NOW.**

**1: IDENTIFY THE CURRENT CUSTOMERS - BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL**

- **Life Saving Clubs** - we have only three remaining, Dorking, Woking, Aquarius (the latter represents roughly 33% of Branch Awards, the other two 17% and the remainder of Awards are generated by local Schools. We perceive that most clubs fizzled out because there was no-one prepared to take over the running of them, though other reasons were often given to justify this (eg cost of pool time).
- **Swimming Pools & Leisure Centres** - we 'influence' prospective lifeguards, lifeguards, supervisors, T/As and pool managers. There appears to be a significant trend back to the days of 16-18yr olds working for a year or so before going to university.
- **Schools** - we are aware that there are various 'specialist' roles who have an involvement rather than just Heads of PE. We did try a targeted mailing about four years ago, but were VERY disappointed by the response.
- **School Teachers**
- **Trainer/Assessors**
- **Cricket Clubs and Cricket coaches** - Our dedicated outreach worker has done an excellent job of ensuring that every identified coach in the county (and the wider county north of the M25) has been trained.

- **WI?** - the NFWI programme provoked a few courses but these seem to have fizzled out.
- **New parents?** - interestingly, it is the far more affluent, professionals who request SABL courses (several in the Kensington & Chelsea are, for example).
- **Individuals of all ages** (but probably important to separate them out)
- **Duke of Edinburgh** candidates - make up the majority of the older club members.
- **Swimming teachers** - they mainly take the NRASTC, and few go on to anything else. Those that teach lifesaving have always done so, we see no-one doing the NRASTC and then introducing lifesaving into their courses. We are aware that there is growing competition from the parallel STA award in the county.
- **Fire and Rescue Service** - although the relationship lapsed when there was a change in management at the training college, we used to train all recruits to BM level.

**CONCLUSION** : We have a surplus of potential customers - those areas where we are strongest are where there are one or two keen TAs prepared to devote far more time and effort.

## 2 WHAT SERVICES DO YOU SUPPLY TO EACH OF THEM?

- **Teaching Courses** - life saving, lifeguard, life support, specialist modules
- **Teaching generally** - it's a bit grandiose to describe SABL as a 'course', for example
- **Assessments** - life saving, lifeguard, life support
- **Mentoring** - support
- **Awards processing** - local processing of some awards
- **Life saving competitions** - Annual Branch wide, communal activity
- **Technical support** - questions answered, advice given, standards maintained
- **Keeping TAs informed** - mainly technically

## 3 MAKE A LIST OF WHAT THE BRANCH DOES WELL AND STATE WHY YOU THINK IT IS SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR AREA

- **Teaching life saving to the public** - a few strong life saving clubs; each has a different reason for its success - Dorking (private schools); Aquarius (commercially driven swimming schools); Woking (is a continuation of the Swimming Club).
- **Teaching life saving to swimming teachers** - strong demand for NRASTC
- **Teaching life saving in schools** - where a teacher has a keen interest
- **Web site** - central point of information to the Branch
- **Conveying technical information to local TAs etc** - running updates, presentations at the AGM and so on

#### **4 MAKE A LIST OF ANY ISSUES FOR CURRENT CUSTOMERS THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF**

To answer this properly, we probably need to ask our customers. The model answers given by RH generally all apply, though we do not lack assessors, nor do we have a lack of water for the OW awards.

- Lack of commitment from individuals to teach
- Lack of commitment from individuals to run clubs
- Cost of pool and dry facilities
- Lack of promotion (people don't know who or what we are; requires both skill and time)
- Limited imagination on the part of many TAs (sorry, we know that won't be popular but most TAs got involved for one reason, continue for that reason, and are not particularly interested or aware of the other things we could be doing)
- Lack of initiative on the part of many (esp TAs) (ditto)

**CONCLUSION 1:** The single biggest problem we face is that people simply do not know about the RLSS, what it is about, how it differs from VAD organizations, that it is even something to do with swimming.

**CONCLUSION 2:** Where a club exists there is usually sufficient demand from potential members. Clubs that do well have a strong link with Swimming Clubs or Schools. Clubs fail because of a lack of succession within the teaching staff. Closure may then be triggered by price/availability of pool space. We have not been particularly good in the past at stimulating new TAs within clubs (though it is a lack of Trainers that is the problem). Generally, most TAs are active in other teaching (eg commercial and specialist clubs).

#### **5 WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE BRANCH TO ADDRESS?**

<b>GETTING SOME MORE ENERGETIC AND ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE INVOLVED - ONES WITH VISION, DRIVE, AND WHO ARE PREPARED/WANT TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.</b>
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- Providing trained teachers (and assessors)
- Expanding the number of awards taken each year
- Promoting greater water safety awareness in Surrey
- Promoting greater awareness of life support 'threats' in Surrey
- Promoting life support skills for all
- Being recognised - by just about everyone (Surrey Ambulance, Schools, GPs, Media, sports coaches (esp swimming coaches) etc etc)

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## **1b) UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND HOW TO SERVE THEM - FUTURE**

### **1 MAKE A LIST OF POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND THE CURRENT OR POSSIBLY NEW SERVICES YOU COULD PROVIDE TO THEM**

- Disabled clubs - disability awareness award
- Pre-natal classes - baby life support
- Care homes - staff and (some) clients - life support skills
- Nurseries - life support skills
- Other sports club coaches - similar to cricket coaches
- Competitive swimmers - we have three or more universities in our Branch area, but we don't have a County team!
- Community Life Support - needs a sexier title, but it's middle aged men who make up the bulk of the 150000 who die each year! None of the other RLSS programmes target this group.

### **2 WHAT RESOURCES WILL YOU REQUIRE TO SUPPORT THIS EXPANSION?**

- More life support teachers
- More assessors - do we NEED to assess?
- Additional courses to train both
- A national agreement with the governing bodies and regulating authorities - would make it a LOT easier!
- Funding to allow the courses to be free to the participants
- Packages to give to volunteers (when we find them) - almost mini-business plans for specific programmes and outreach activities

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## **1c) TO GENERATE, MAINTAIN AND MONITOR FINANCIAL, HUMAN AND OTHER RESOURCES**

We see no benefit in providing a 'budget'. Finance is not an issue. Expenditure depends on more than just having the money. The time and effort donated by Branch members will always be the limiting factor.

It seems grandiose to speak of a "Branch Action Plan". We need more volunteers and so we have, as a result of this exercise, decided to mail all members with a plea for more help. We hope that by April 2008, we shall have the opportunity to open a new Life Saving club, and to initiate some outreach activities - depending on the interests of the volunteers.