

Some Places Are Worth More Than Saving: How the sailing community is helping to shape the next chapter of the Roseland Centre

By Deborah Lambert TRC Partnership Trustee

“Saving a place is only the beginning. The real challenge is creating a future worthy of its potential.”

We all remember where it began; a first sail.... a first capsize ... a first race.... the first moment when the wind, the water and the boat suddenly made sense!

For many of us, there is a place attached to those memories: a sailing club, an outdoor centre, a slipway beside a river or an estuary where confidence grew and friendships were formed.

These places rarely make headlines, yet they quietly create generations of sailors, instructors, volunteers and lifelong ambassadors for the water. They are where skills are learned, independence develops and a connection with the natural world begins. For many, they are also the places where future ambitions quietly take shape.

Sadly, many of these places face increasing challenges. When they disappear, the loss is about far more than buildings and facilities. It is the loss of somewhere that enables people to discover what life on the water can offer.

The Roseland Centre, in the peaceful Cornish village of St Just in Roseland, came close to becoming one of those losses.

But this story has a different course.

A community that refused to let go

When the Roseland Centre faced closure following its sale by Cornwall Council, local residents, former visitors and supporters from across the country recognised that something important was at risk.

This was not simply about saving a building.

It was about protecting a legacy.

For generations, the Centre had introduced young people and adults to sailing, paddlesports and outdoor learning. As an RYA sailing training venue during its time with Cornwall Outdoors, it provided a base for sailing courses, residential programmes and experiences that helped people develop skills, confidence and a deeper understanding of the water.

The centre's location a short walk down the hill to the Fal Estuary and Carrick Roads offered an exceptional natural classroom, where tides, weather, navigation and teamwork became part of the learning experience.

Thousands of people passed through its doors, many beginning or developing their relationship with sailing and the outdoors.

cross Cornwall and far beyond, many people carried memories of school residential visits, sailing courses and outdoor adventures at the Centre. When closure threatened, those memories became the catalyst for action, as a community crowdfunding campaign secured its future.

“Learning to sail, wild camp, cook on open fires and paddling open canoes; these experiences shaped my future choices. I want to make sure as many children as possible have the opportunity to make their own lifelong memories of being in the outdoors”

Today, the Roseland Centre is community-owned and trustee-led, charting a new course; one that builds on its heritage while creating opportunities for sailing clubs, training groups and outdoor communities to write the next chapter.

A natural home for sailing communities

The waters around the Roseland Peninsula provide an outstanding environment for dinghy sailing, cruising, adventure and outdoor learning.

The sheltered waters of Carrick Roads and the Fal Estuary offer a remarkable variety of conditions, from protected and sheltered tidal creeks and pools, ideal for developing confidence, to wider waters that allow more experienced sailors to explore and progress.

Nearby launching options provide access to this unique sailing environment, allowing visiting clubs and groups to bring their own boats, instructors and programmes, or hire from local providers.

At St Just Creek, a short walk from the Centre, launching is available from the local slipway or St Just Bar near Pascoe’s boatyard, subject to tide and local conditions. St Just Pool provides sheltered deep water at high tide, overlooked by the iconic St Just in Roseland Church.

As with all tidal sailing venues, the rhythm of the water shapes each day. Planning around tides, weather and conditions becomes part of the experience; one of the reasons these waters are such a valuable place for developing seamanship.

Beyond the creek, sailors can explore the sheltered reaches of the Fal Estuary, the magnificent Carrick Roads and, when conditions allow, the wider coastal waters of Cornwall.

It is a landscape that encourages curiosity, learning and a deeper understanding of the relationship between boat, sailor and environment.

More than somewhere to stay

Whether it is a dinghy sailing weekend, an RYA training course, a youth sailing programme, a club development trip or simply time together on the water, the Centre exists to support those experiences, bringing together clubs, instructors and outdoor organisations to create adventure partnerships and new opportunities on the water.

Those partnerships are created by instructors sharing knowledge.

By volunteers giving their time.

By sailors encouraging newcomers.

By clubs creating the opportunities that allow others to discover the same sense of freedom and possibility.

The Roseland Centre is not an activity provider. It offers exclusive-use group accommodation across five refurbished bunkrooms, together with generous shared spaces, meeting areas and the flexibility of catered or self-catered stays, allowing clubs and organisations to create their own programmes.

Groups arrive with their own instructors, coaches, leaders and equipment, or hire locally. With an on-site caretaker and flexible accommodation, the Centre provides a relaxed and sociable base to return to, to share stories and become part of the continuing story of this special place.

A tradition worth passing on

Sailing communities understand stewardship.

They understand that the places and opportunities enjoyed today exist because previous generations cared enough to create and protect them.

Every sailing club carries that tradition.

The volunteer who unlocks the clubhouse.

The coach who gives up a weekend to support young sailors.

The experienced sailor who helps someone else master a new skill.

The committee member who ensures the next generation has somewhere to learn.

The Roseland Centre is part of that same tradition.

Choosing the Centre as a base is more than a practical accommodation choice. It is a way of supporting a community-owned outdoor centre that continues to create opportunities for people to experience the water.

Every visiting club becomes another thread in its story.

The conversations after sailing.

The boats being prepared.

The shared meals.

The discussions about tides, weather and tomorrow's plans.

The memories that become part of a place.

These are the moments that give a centre its purpose.

Charting the Future

The Roseland Centre survived because people believed it was worth saving.

Its future will be shaped by the communities who choose to use it.

Every sailing club weekend.

Every training course.

Every young sailor gaining confidence.

Every instructor sharing knowledge.

Every new memory created on the water.

Together, these experiences will help ensure that future generations can discover the same freedom, responsibility and joy that sailing has always offered.

Because sailing has never only been about where a journey begins.

It is about what is learned along the way—and what is passed on afterwards.

The Roseland Centre is charting a new course.

One built on the foundations of its past, guided by its community and sustained by a simple belief: that the greatest legacy we can leave is not simply the places we preserve or the memories we create there, but the knowledge, confidence and opportunities we pass on to those who follow.

Information

The Roseland Centre offers exclusive use to sailing clubs, RYA training groups, outdoor organisations and communities looking for a base from which to explore Cornwall's exceptional waters.

Designed for self-led programmes, training weekends, club trips and group adventures, the Centre provides comfortable accommodation, flexible shared spaces and the freedom for visiting groups to bring their own boats, instructors and activities.

Supported by an on-site caretaker rather than employed instructional staff, it offers groups the independence to plan and deliver their own programmes while having a welcoming base to return to.

The Roseland Centre,
St Just in Roseland,
Cornwall



Find out more by visiting the website:
<https://theroselandcentre.org/>

Email: enquiries@theroselandcentre.org

Possible photo captions:

"Every sailor remembers where it began."

"These places rarely make headlines, yet they quietly create generations of sailors, instructors and volunteers."

"Every visiting club becomes another thread in the continuing story of the Roseland Centre."

"I wish you, the trustees and everyone involved with the Roseland Centre every success. It's clear this isn't just about preserving a building; it's about creating opportunities for people to discover the outdoors in ways that can stay with them for a lifetime. Tell the story!"