



**for the attention of the OGA Association Committee
prepared by the OGA East Coast Area Committee**

This paper has been prepared by the East Coast Area Committee to inform discussion at the forthcoming Association Committee meeting in Liverpool, 13 January, 2024.

OGA Communications: National and Area needs

Executive Summary	2
Background	2
A national proposal (in brief)	2
The East Coast interim solution (in brief)	2
OGA Communications: what do we want?	3
A national proposal	3
The East Coast interim solution	4
Appendix: review of OGA online and social media use	6

Executive Summary

Background

The National OGA website and social media channels have not been consistently maintained and used in the past year. It has been proposed to contract someone to create content for these communication channels at a monthly fee.

The East Coast Area Committee sees three potential areas of concern with this:

1. Creating online content at a national level without clear objectives and consideration of how it fits with Area content across the OGA website and social media could be counter productive.
2. How do we measure the success of proposed National activity for the OGA? It is not clear how National communications will support and be supported by, the established Area communications approaches which are actively using a range of media channels.
3. What will be the effect on motivation and commitment of the many volunteers across the OGA Areas who give up their time and energy as volunteers? There needs to be a clear policy in place with an impact assessment of any proposed changes, agreed across all Areas, prior to paying a contractor to undertake National comms.

A national proposal (in brief)

The East Coast Committee propose that the OGA develops a Communications Strategy based on what the OGA already does and what its aspirations are for the future.

The starting point must be 'Communications', 'People' and 'What do we want to communicate as an Association locally and nationally and why?'

The 'channels' and potential technologies to achieve any agreed objectives must follow, not drive the conversation. Initial discussions do not need to focus on technology. The outcome should be a 'Statement of Requirement'.

We need to be brave and look at a radical solution. This may mean spending some money, but not until we've agreed what it is we want to do and have agreed the brief for a supplier!

We call on the Association Committee to appoint a group of OGA members/Area officers in the context of ALL comms. channels used in Areas. This group should be tasked in reporting back by Easter, in order for a decision to be made before the summer sailing season begins.

The East Coast interim solution (in brief)

Pending any OGA-wide strategy the newly constituted EC Committee has agreed a local strategy to ensure there is an interim solution which drives engagement through social media, website, email and paper based tools, according to the preferences of EC Members. We note this is similar to approaches in the Solent, South West and Bristol Channel Areas.

The EC solution is based around their Area Newsletter, Eastcoaster which is still made available in print, archived online as PDF. The Eastcoaster Editor and other members of the Area Committee manage content on the EC Area of the National website www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/about.html, a 'blog' style website at www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk, a booking website hosted on Square, a public Facebook Page and private Group, a YouTube channel and several WhatsApp groups. These Comms. are supported and integrated by regular lively MailChimp campaigns 'pushing' content to all registered EC members.

OGA Communications: what do we want?

A national proposal

The East Coast Committee propose that the OGA develops a Communications Strategy based on what the OGA already does and what its aspirations are for the future.

In order to achieve this, the Association should enlist a competent group of OGA members/Area officers in the context of ALL the comms. channels including what local Areas are already doing as their own solutions. Social Media (eg MailChimp campaigns, WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) is used to a varying extent by all Areas of the OGA, apparently at times in preference to, and/or as an alternative to the Association website/Social Media channels.

The first task of this group should be to review current online activity in ALL the OGA Areas. In order to move quickly on this issue, an informed review could easily form part of the discussion/agenda for the meeting in Liverpool, January 2024. A rough analysis is appended, undertaken by the EC OGA Online Committee.

The starting point must be 'Communications', 'People' and 'What do we want to communicate as an Association locally and nationally and why?' The 'channels' and potential technologies to achieve any agreed objectives must follow, not drive the conversation.

Key members of this group could be Phil Hopson, Gaffers Log Editor (but not if he is already being paid since this would represent a conflict of interests) and those in the Areas who currently manage/administer or help with local comms. The Group could build on the proposals in this paper and move forward quickly using online comms. such as a dedicated WhatsApp group.

We need to be brave and look at a radical solution. This may mean spending some money, but not until we've agreed what it is we want to do and have agreed the brief for a supplier!

Ideas strategy development starting points

1. Review what Areas and OGA National are trying to achieve through existing comms. leading to a clear 'OGA Communications strategy' with a matching resource plan.
2. Who are our audiences and why do we want to communicate with them?
 - 2.1. Non-Members: publicise who the OGA are, what we do and how we do it including cruising, racing, the Gaffling, Boat Register; promote Gaff rig; provide clear overviews of each Area and their activities; encourage people to join.
 - 2.2. Yachting press and industry: show what the OGA are and do to encourage their support for Gaff rig and the organisation.
 - 2.3. Existing Members: keep them informed of Gaffer activity in their own Area and wider; promote involvement in national and Area events and activities; take entries for events; encourage mutual support and group comms.
3. Principles
 - 3.1. Present a clear sense of the OGA as a single (inter)national organisation: consistent logos, fonts, banners etc. Promote cross-Area involvement, support and cooperation.
 - 3.2. Maintain high quality presentation and production values.
 - 3.3. Provide communication in a format and scope to maximise the engagement of our intended recipients with different choices: websites, blogs, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, email, paper etc.
 - 3.4. Promote 'two-way' conversations and member/public contributions, not just 'broadcast' or 'one-to-many' comms.
 - 3.5. Minimise administrative effort and unnecessary duplication of content creation (effective up-to-date tools, link to existing content, don't replicate input)
 - 3.6. National communications focus is on steering and coordination to Members and managing external 'brand' and comms. Areas manage local member comms. within a National framework.
 - 3.7. The effectiveness of all communications is measured continuously and adjustments made as necessary to meet objectives.

The East Coast interim solution

Pending any OGA-wide strategy the newly constituted EC Committee has agreed a local strategy to ensure there is an interim solution which drives engagement through social media, website, email and paper based tools, according to the preferences of EC Members.

Based loosely on the ideas above, the following outlines how the East Coast OGA is developing their comms. locally. The approach has similarities to solutions adopted in the South West and Bristol Channel Areas.

The East Coast OGA has had an active online presence since 2006. Since December 2022 the Area Newsletter comprises a regularly updated website www.eastcoastgauffers.org.uk, 'download for print' quarterly digest (posted to those members who request it) with archive copies available back to 1995, Facebook & YouTube channels promoted via lively monthly MailChimp campaigns.

In developing this strategy, we have assumed that all the principles outlined in the National proposal apply. The following should be read with reference to the **footnotes and sketches.

EC OGA online approach

1. OGA website: www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/about.html
 - 1.1. East Coast About: maintains an overview of the Area including bios of Committee Members and email link to the Area Secretary.
 - 1.2. East Coast Events: Calendar summarising events for the year and index record for each event. This index record points to a detailed page on the OGA website until booking opens for the event. It will then will point to Square, number 7 below. See note**.
 - 1.3. East Coast Online: replaces the old 'News' and 'Eastcoaster' tabs with a single tab giving access to Eastcoaster, which carries our News, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube.
 - 1.4. East Coast Racing: results and handicaps.
 - 1.5. East Coast Gafflings: details of the two EC Gafflings available for hire.
2. Eastcoaster Newsletter (mixed media and channels).
 - 2.1. Publicly accessible website www.eastcoastgauffers.org.uk with news and articles allowing social media sharing, searchable by date, tags and categories to read, subscribe to and contribute articles/news.
 - 2.2. Eastcoaster quarterly PDF 'download for print' digest with printed version available for those who ask (and pay) for it by post.
 - 2.3. Mailchimp monthly campaign to all signed up EC Members summarising activity from other channels (Eastcoaster, Facebook, YouTube etc.) and promoting Area and National events and other activity.
3. Facebook Page and Private Group welcoming Member and public led conversations as well as broadcast messages, 'likes', 'follows', 'shares' etc.
4. WhatsApp
 - 4.1. General East Coast Area conversation group for any who wish to use it
 - 4.2. Event Chats: Groups established for specific event communications and photo sharing. Archived (including photos) and removed after the event.
5. OGA YouTube channel: making Member videos of their boats and OGA events available to all.
6. Square: Event booking forms linked from Event details on the OGA website

**NOTE

There is a question about Event Information on the National website. Currently (2023) each event has a detailed entry entered to the OGA Website AND entered on the booking system Square. This is so that communications about events can link Square which has details and booking questions. This requires duplication of event details on OGA Website and Square which should be avoided.

East Coast OGA - Jan 2024 Communications Tools

ECOGA Eastcoaster Mailchimp

Emails
Monthly ? emails to members with links to articles on Eastcoaster, Facebook, events on National site, other news, and shop

Emails to Members

CHANGE:
Summary lines on Events page link directly to SQUARE once bookings open, bypassing detailed event page on website

National OGA Site - East Coast Area Page

About

Events

Online

Racing

Gafflings

Gallery

CHANGE: replace NEWS with page linking to Eastcoaster, Facebook, Whatsapp and YouTube.

EC OGA Events and Regalia Book / Buy pages

Events

Member choices, details & payment-
Organiser Reports -
Tickets, options, T&C checks -

Regalia Shop

Member choices and payments -,
Order details to distributionteam -
Sales and stocks Reports -

Payments & Refunds

Treasurer reports

Event Item

Merch. Item

ECOGA Eastcoaster Blog

Eastcoaster 'Posts'

Paper Eastcoaster

Create PDF quarterly and print and email for those that want it. Place on National Eastcoaster page

Facebook Page and Group

Public and Member 'Posts' and likes

WhatsApp Group

Member chat

ECOGA Library

AGM Minutes & Papers

Committee Minutes & papers

Event documentation - 'standard' and year specific

Notes on 'operating procedures'

Photo Library?

Events have:

1-page Diary PDF (EC Gaff related events)
Entries on National Calendar
Entries with details on ECOGA Events noticeboard

Buy Tickets 'Item' on Square with details and options
PDF Documents -Risk Assess, Skipper Dec, NOR, SI

Appendix: review of OGA online and social media use

	OGA Website	Facebook Page	Facebook Group	Whatsapp	Instagram	Local Blog	Newsletter / Mag	Email	YouTube
National							Gaffers Log		
Solent			Public					Mailchimp	
South West							Dog Watch	Mailchimp	
Bristol Channel							Severn Tidings	Mailchimp	
Dublin Bay								Mailchimp	
North Wales									
North West								Mailchimp	
Scotland									
North East									
East Coast			Private			Blog eastcoastgaffers.org.uk		Mailchimp	

The following is a rough outline of all the non-print communications currently undertaken by the OGA. It is not exhaustive and may be inaccurate. Many of the wide range of online 'communication channels' are used by OGA members in the local Areas. In order to capitalise on any 'channel' it needs to be regularly updated and integrated with other 'channels' including print.

The occasional 'post' on Facebook, a website or Instagram is really a waste of time and energy in terms of promoting and developing the OGA as a lively Association.

Association website

The Association website www.oga.org.uk has virtually no up-to-date content easily accessible from the homepage. It does not seem to be used extensively by many Areas, except for listing Events and the occasional News item. South West Gaffers and Bristol Channel have recently updated their Area Pages introducing new tabs for navigation to local content. Some Areas do not use the website at all. The primary purpose of the Association website should be to promote the Association and ensure visitors, whether or not they are members, can easily find what they are looking for, 'pushing' them to lively local Area content. It fails to serve this purpose.

YouTube

There is an **Association YouTube Channel**. It has a few videos, mostly related to the East Coast. It has never been promoted until recently when some OGA60 footage was published. Dublin Bay has a collection of illustrated talks on the **Dublin Bay YouTube Channel**.

MailChimp campaigns

Since March 2023, all Areas have sent at least one email campaign via MailChimp with several Areas using this as a regular communication channel. Stats. indicate an average 'open' rate of 60% - 70% which is extremely good. Dublin Bay has their own MailChimp account.

WhatsApp

Use of WhatsApp has increased over the past few years in several Areas with positive reports from Members and Organisers, in particular during the OGA60 celebrations.

Facebook Groups and Pages

There are several Area Facebook groups and pages but the majority do not seem to be actively maintained and/or managed.

Facebook Public Group - OGA: The Association for Gaff Rig Sailing. OFFICIAL group. 4.4k likes, 4.8k followers. Who is the admin. for this group?

Facebook Public Group - OGA: The Association for Gaff Rig Sailing. UNOFFICIAL group. 2,637 members, 30 - 40 posts per month, set up 2018. Who is the admin. for this group?

Facebook Page - East Coast Gaffers 2.4k likes, 2.6k followers, set up 2012, actively managed by Eastcoaster Editor to 'push' traffic to other FB pages/groups and www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

Facebook Private Group - OGA East Coast Gaffers. 156 Members. Created 2022. Admin: Ian Clarke

Facebook Young Members' Private Group - Admin. Georgina Tall

Facebook Page - Solent Gaffers 910 likes, 963 followers, set up 2016, Solent admins publish regular posts for events and news with links to register/sign up using Survey Monkey and www.org.uk Solent Events pages

Facebook Public Group - Solent Gaffers 724 members, set up 2016, average 10 - 12 posts per month, Richard Jacobs (Solent) is admin.

Instagram

South West Gaffers and Solent Gaffers are active on Instagram, posting regularly. No-one has been admin. for the main Association Instagram presence since May 2023.

**Beverley Yates & Nick Phillips [in consultation with the EC Area Committee]
17 December 2023**