

NORTH STAFFS CLUB LTD



MARCH 2024



CURRENT OPENING TIMES:

Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday & Thursday

7-9pm

Saturday

2-5pm (Only until the 23rd of
March)

Sunday

Junior beginner lessons

9.30 - 10.30am

Junior Club

10.30-11.30 and 11.30-12.30

OPENING TIMES as usual except the following

Last Saturday afternoon open – 23rd March

Easter – Fri 29th Sat 30th Sun 31st March & Mon 1st April

CLOSED

May Day Holiday - Sunday 5th May and Monday 6th May

CLOSED

Spring Bank Holiday Sunday 26th May and Monday 27th May

CLOSED

We are hoping to make alterations to the inside of the building over the closed period in the summer. To give us plenty of time, the club will close for the summer a month earlier this year. The last day of opening will be Friday 31st of May. We will be asking for volunteers to help with the improvements over the closed period.



WE NEED YOUR HELP

As you know the club is run entirely by volunteers for the benefit of its members. They do a variety of jobs e.g. teaching people to ski, opening the refreshment kiosk, maintenance; both on the slope and in the building, issuing and maintaining skis and boots, etc.

Over the last year or so we have only had a few stalwarts who have done a very good job keeping the slope and the building in good running order. Some have been contributing for a very long time & the years are catching up with them and they can no longer do what they could in the past. There is urgent need for more club members to get involved and contribute to the general running of the club.

Starting in April **every 3rd Saturday of the month from 9.30am** the club will be open for work sessions both on the slope and in the building.

The Dates are:

April 13th

May 4th

May 25th

June 15th

So come along and join in. If you can come for just one or all sessions, please put your name on the list at the club and let us know if you have a specific job you would like to be involved in.

Full guidance will be available in the use of the maintenance equipment etc.



NORTH STAFFS SKI CLUB 50th ANNIVERSARY (1974-2024)

2024 marks the 50th year of skiing in Kidsgrove. In this edition of the newsletter, we take a brief look back over the last fifty years at how the club has developed.



North Staffs Ski Team 1975

In its early years the North Staffs Ski Club was only small, involving a few keen skiers. (Only 27 Members at the end of its first year.)

It was formed on 3rd June 1974 shortly after the opening by the council of the John Cooney Sports Pavilion and Ski Lodge. The site was one of the first artificial ski slopes in Great Britain.

During the 76/77 season the club race team won the West Midlands Regional Trophy in the 'Sport for All' series of events.

On March 22nd, 1979, the club was thrown into crisis by the Council's decision to close the slope because the matting was badly worn. There was now a ski club with nowhere to ski!

During that period Derek Poole was elected chairman and Brian Woodcock in 1980, began organising regular coach trips to Telford Ski Centre.

During the summer of 1980, dedicated members of the ski club spent many arduous hours salvaging the good ski matting to piece together a small beginner's slope.

The first lessons took place in March 1981 and from then onwards the club grew.

Grants and various donations helped towards the purchase of the Dendix matting and equipment, enabling the club to extend the slope each season. The Telford ski trips ended in 1984 due to the popularity of the Kidsgrove Ski Slope.

Finally, in 1987 the matting reached the steepened top of the slope. The long worked on home-made ski lift became operational in March 1988 (which lasted with a lot of tender care until 2014).



A photo showing the construction of the bottom platform in 1988/89



Salvaging usable matting

The club's activities were not limited to the ski slope; It also operated a portable tow using Brian Woodcock's landrover, which was used to good effect on the slopes at Gallows Tree Lane, Keele and the Peak District when it snowed.





The club continued to flourish, and a manager/ski coach was employed. The club had achieved its objective of providing a good club slope that would be unaffected by proposed developments at the Garden Festival site. The next immediate objective was to extend its activities with young people to produce some effective racers in the near future.

In the first club magazine 1988/1989 the chairman Derek Poole says "The coming season sees us as a club with excellent facilities. An 83m slope with a button lift and a good team of workers who have slaved and slogged to see these improvements completed."

In 1993 the manager/coach Chris Poole (who was tragically killed in an avalanche in 1997) and others wanted to move the club assets to the Festival Park commercial ski slope site. At an Extraordinary General Meeting club members decided by majority vote that they would keep the club at Kidsgrove, after an agreement Chris moved to Festival Park and the club committee and members took over the running of the slope at Kidsgrove.

From then on, the club has been staffed by volunteer members who give up their time in order to operate the centre for the benefit of all other club members. All revenue generated by the club is used to further improve the slope, facilities, and equipment. The aim was, and still is to promote the sport of skiing and provide affordable skiing for all.

In the mid 90's the angle of the slope was not as it is now. The Dendix bristle matting had a steep section at the top, a shallow section in the middle and then a drop off into a steep section at the bottom. Another issue was the run-out area at the bottom which was built on a wooden platform that involved high maintenance each summer. The bottom area was too steep to teach beginners properly.

The senior instructors developed a vision for a slope that would be good for teaching and provide a challenge for more advanced skiers. It was realised that this would require a major change to the profile of the slope, and that this was well out of the club's usual DIY approach.

It was recognised that major funding would be required, and David Dick started talks with Sport England and Mike Keating of MK Enterprises to look at likely costs and funding. A small group of members got together to see what could be achieved and what was involved in bidding for funds. To limit liability for anyone on the committee the club became North Staffs Ski Club Ltd in 2001 registered at Companies House.

The club made a bid for about £73k towards a £150k project, the balance coming from club funds. The work took place from July to October 2004, a particularly rainy summer, and the new slope reopened in November.



The new slope profile gave a teaching area that has a consistent gradient from top to bottom and we had a new, much safer surface of Playgrass with a full misting system. Acts of vandalism occurring in the previous couple of years had cost the club dearly so it was decided to erect the anti-vandal fencing using loans from members of the club.

At a committee meeting in 2011 it was recognised that the club was financially very healthy with an embarrassment of riches in the coffers. It was decided to apply for extra land from the council. We couldn't go up or down so we had to try to go out sideways effectively doubling the size of the slope.

After a great deal of negotiating with the council planning permission was given to extend the leased area of land. Decisions were made to provide a Snowpark with jumps and rails for freestyle skiers and variety of terrain for those who do not wish to be so adventurous but would benefit from interesting features. The freestyle slope was opened in 2014 alongside the new lift.

North Staffs Ski Club continues to look to the future, and we are hopeful to have exciting developments to reveal later this year- More information in Other News!



NEXT FREESTYLE/ RECREATIONAL FRIDAY

22ND MARCH

Hot on the trail of any tasty news, the newsletter team caught up with Ross from Freestyle Friday for a quick chat about what's been going down.

What's Freestyle Friday all about?

'Freestyle Friday' is the opportunity for club members and visitors to practice on the slopes and to get to grips with the features in the freestyle park. We have kickers, pipes, and rails to practice jumps, twists and grabs. It's an open night with no instructing, but there are occasionally freestyle coaches on hand to show you how to use these features safely, and a great bunch of skiers and boarders there to share tips and support each other's endeavours. The Club are also one of the only facilities in the region to have an airbag so our squad can practice aerial tricks in safety. This season we've seen an increase in our members learning 180 and 360 spins, and some advanced skiers have been using the airbag to work on front- and back-flips. In short, Freestyle Fridays provide a fun space to build confidence and support the long-standing and much-loved Oatcake Jam! We're here every other Friday, with airbag sessions around once a month, and it's all FREE for club members!

How's the 23/24 season shaping up?

What a fantastic season the Freestyle Friday team is having so far! Attendance has grown from around 10 freestylers in September to over 30 at the last meet up, with people travelling from as far as Lincolnshire. Also a Big up to the Keele University 'massive!' who are coming down in increasing numbers; nice one Joel! The airbag sessions have proved particularly popular with most of the regular crew progressing the complexity of the tricks they are performing, and then transferring their new skills over to the freestyle slope: A special shout to our youngest air-bagger, Woody Grocott! And there's lots to look forward to in the closing months of the season including the next Airbag Session and Spring social on 22nd March (keep an eye on social media for details) and a planned Trip up for Kendal for K-jam in May (again, Watch the SMs).

Any plans for the 24/25 season yet?

Looking further ahead, the Team behind FF are working with the Sunday Freestyle instructors to rollout a cohesive progression plan for all our young freestylers ready for the delivery in the 24/25 season; there's talks in place regarding park features to make progression easier for all abilities (top and bottom end); and the date of the OATCAKE JAM 2024 has been released!

Anything to say to our members who haven't been to a Freestyle Friday session yet?

Come on down! The slope is open to all skiers and boarders who've passed their basic proficiency; we're a friendly bunch and would love to see you on the slopes, whether you're interested in freestyle, or just want to come and ski the main sloop and take in the atmosphere.

It sounds like a great evening, anything else you wanted to add?

Just a massive thankyou to all the volunteers and members who have got involved with the night and made this season (so far) so much fun! It takes a lot of work to open the club house and slope, set up the airbag and extra features, and provide support and encouragement to all the freestylers, young and old. Without everyone giving up their time it just wouldn't be possible, or as Rad!

www.ski-kidsgrove.co.uk



Timings:
9-10 Registration
10-12 Open Practice
13-15 Judging
16-17 Prize Giving

Entry fees:
Advance £25
On the Day £30
50 Bib Numbers Available

Rules:
Helmets
long Sleeves
Gloves
are compulsory

Music Refreshments

**OATCAKE v10
Jam 2024**
Kidsgrove Ski Centre - 12th Oct 24

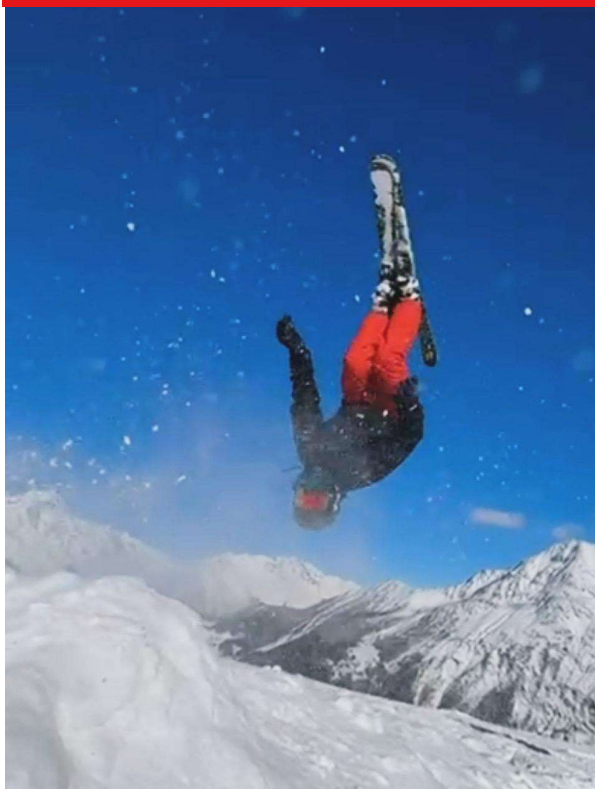


CLUB HOLIDAY

2025

We have had a keen response to the information about this holiday to the Hotel Petit Palais in Cervinia, Italy on the 19th of January which was sent out by post and email.

Ski Club Holiday Jan 24 to La Thuille



The Ski Club holiday to Italy in January was a great success and was enjoyed by all.

Noah (One of our young instructors) who you may have spotted doing some crazy freestyle skiing on a Sunday, enjoyed his first trip to the Alps with his Dad, Aaron.

Noah has kindly shared some brilliant images with us of the trip including some very impressive freestyle tricks!



Whilst most spaces are now taken, we do operate a reserve list, as we sometimes have people who need to withdraw.

In one of the rooms, we do have a space for a female to share with a lady who has already made her booking.

If you are interested in either the one remaining space (one lady) or you would like to be added to the reserve list please get in touch ASAP

Via email to
nsscholidays@outlook.com



JUNIOR CLUB NEWS

SNOWLIFE AWARDS



Congratulations to the following Junior Club Members who have been awarded Snowlife Awards in 2024.

Blue 1

Elsie Le
Elsie Ly
Ella J
Jake F
Oliver
Jessica D
Joey
Lily
Jessica C
Issac P
Francesca
Grace
Seb
Hattie

Blue 2

Jake F
Jay

Blue 3

Chloe
Ella W
Hafsa
Jay
Annie



UK SNOWSPORT FOUNDATION INSTRUCTOR COURSE

Our latest group of Young Instructors (many of whom you may recognise from junior club) spent a weekend in February being trained by Ryan from Snowsport England. Both days started at 9:30 am and ended at about 4:30 pm.

Over the two days they were pushed to their limits in their own personal skiing skills, and in activities that challenged their ability to communicate and teach others how to ski.

When they received their personal feedback on Sunday afternoon, they could hardly keep their eyes open and walk up the bank to the car park.

Ryan praised them for their high level of engagement in the course and the way they tackled all the challenges he threw at them. He was also impressed with the knowledge and experience they brought to the course, so thank you to all the club instructors who have worked with them so far.

This is just the beginning of their instructing journey; you might now spot them on the slope working with our qualified instructors; observing and helping to teach lessons. You will also see them on Sundays after junior club developing their own skiing.

We would like to thank them for being great ambassadors for our club.

Well done to Amelia, Freya, Jack, Nye, Oscar, Orson and Fin.



50 YEARS OF NSSC CELEBRATIONS

You will have seen from our Headline article that this is the 50th Year of NSSC. We would love to hear your memories and see your photos of the club over the last 50 years. Our aim is to collate these stories and pictures into a special celebration newsletter to come out in the Autumn as part of our celebration.

If you have any stories or pictures you would like to share, please email Gemma at g.pilbury@outlook.com.

SUMMER BUILD PROJECT

CAUTION CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

The club is hoping to carry out some internal changes to the club house over the summer closedown. We are looking for assistance from club members who are able to offer their time and services either for free or at a very competitive rate (the less money spent of the build, the more money is available for vital resources, like new skis and boots!)

We're looking for the following trades who have availability between June and September:

- ☐ Solicitor/lawyer
- ☐ General Builders/ brickies competent in structural works.
- ☐ Structural Engineer- (immediate start)
- ☐ Joiners/ shop fitters
- ☐ plasterers
- ☐ Electricians
- ☐ Plumbers
- ☐ Painter/ decorators
- ☐ Non- trade volunteers for strip-out/ refurnish

For more information please contact Ross on 07913 850560, or email rossankers@hotmail.com

OTHER NEWS

REMOVAL OF PERSONAL ITEMS

Please can all personal items be removed from the club house by Sunday April the 15th. Due to planned building works during the summer, the club house will need to be completely emptied of personal items. Because of very limited storage space any remaining personal items will be disposed of, this includes boots, skis, jackets etc.

FOR SALE!

Wheelie Bins

We have several wheelie bins that we are hoping to sell. They were used to sanitise skis for our covid protocols but are now surplus to requirements. They are all in excellent condition, they are clean and have lids. Several colours are available. Please pop in to enquire.



Cycle Helmets

We have 5 size small cycle helmets for sale. Colours are white, black and blue. These were sent to us in error when we ordered ski helmets. They are brand new in their boxes. £5 each. Please enquire in the clubhouse.



THE CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

The Christmas raffle raised a fantastic £236.00 which will go towards paying for the defibrillator which we now have in the club house.

Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket & donated prizes. Special thanks go to Suzanne for organising and collecting all the brilliant prizes!