

XVII Colchester Sea Scout Group



Annual Report and Financial Statement, 2022-2023

Group Scout Leader's AGM Report 2022-2023

It is impossible to write a Group Scout Leader's report (for the last time, as next year it will be a Lead Volunteer Group's report!) without acknowledging each and every volunteer who gives up untold hours to provide fantastic opportunities for the young people in our care.

The year started with the Cub section having their September Camp at Mersea. The Cubs undertook their DIY badge and went on a hike, as well as indulging in some great food! They also completed a litter pick as part of the 'Keep Mersea Tidy' campaign.

We again held a Group Christmas Meal day at Mersea, with the Beavers and Cubs having a craft session followed by a hot brunch. The Scouts watched a film followed by a 3-course Christmas meal, and the Explorers watched an important football match, also followed by a 3-course Christmas meal.

In March, 4 teams of Scouts took part in the County's BackPack event. This was a 2-day incident hike which around 500 Scouts from across the County took part in based around Brentwood. Although the teams performed excellently during the first day, we decided to abandon the event on Sunday morning due to the poor weather – this is only the second event I have abandoned in more than 20 years as a leader, but even the conditions at Glastonbury were better than we were enduring!

Once again, we have had a good year of fundraising. Our main source of funds comes from the annual Plant Sale and huge thanks must go to Marleen Batchelor, Sarah Mason and their team for organising, ordering, sorting and delivering the plants. Sara Cheeld and family also need thanks for their efforts with the Christmas pudding sale. If you are able to help with either of these events, we would very much welcome your help. Also, please help to support the events by buying even more plants and puddings! We also secured funding from Tesco Groundworks and the Colchester Centurion Rotary Club to replace all the mattresses at Mersea with new environmentally responsible memory foam mattresses. The old mattresses were donated to a charity which sends furniture to Africa. We were also able to secure funding from Essex County Scouts Hardship Fund to support a Scout to attend summer camp.

Following a successful grant application to the Essex Community Foundation, we have been able to add to our fleet of boats with 9 paddleboards, associated equipment and storage trailer which have been used to great success by the young people. This has increased our capacity for boating when the wind is in abeyance. There has been another successful season on the water with sailing weekends, taster sessions and powerboat, sailing and kayak courses.

Our water programme will be detailed later in the report, but we had around 150 people at the Group Sail Day who were given a taster session on the water and served some excellent food. At this event, we were able to present a number of awards, including the Group Seamanship Award to the young person who has contributed most to the water season – this year the award went to Dan S. We also presented two Silver Acorns to adult volunteers. These are "awarded after at least 20 years' service, which should be specially distinguished and appreciably better than outstanding". Roland Victory was presented his award by Stephen Deighton as a recognition of his contribution to Scouting in general but more specifically to Mersea HQ and our boating programme. I had the genuine privilege of presenting the same award to Jonathan Hay, Cub Leader for his dedication service to the Cub section and the wider group, often going above and beyond in his service to the group. Hannah Smith was also presented with a Chief Scout's Commendation for her service to Scouting.

Summer Camp this year was held in Swansea, initially at Silver Cross Scout Campsite and then relocating to 1st Swansea Valley HQ, via 1st Barry. Unfortunately, on our arrival at Silver Cross Scout

Campsite, it was clear that the accommodation was not up to standard and we could not stay there. Members of the Group immediately began a marathon of communication and after many phone calls and web searches, we were able to relocate to 1st Barry Sea Scouts HQ in Barry near Cardiff. 1st Barry went above and beyond expectations, providing us with not only accommodation, but also a full meal and a day of water activities the following day. We were then able to find a more permanent home for the week at 1st Swansea Valley HQ. A huge thank you must go to all members of Scouts Cymru who spring into action on our behalf and managed to rehome us. A special mention must go to the 17th & Tsunami leaders who handled the situation with stoicism and aplomb; particularly Jon and Hannah who took over the running of the camp when I was incapacitated. The young people also all deserve a mention and thank you for their positive attitude, despite having to load and unload the equipment numerous times and having to sleep on the floor of several Scout HQs!

5 Explorers and one leader headed off the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea and many of their adventures were reported in the international press, including the mass relocation from the Jamboree site to Seoul and an alternative programme put together at very short notice! One Explorer and one leader also attended the Essex Scouts North American Adventure which included a trip to New York and a canoe expedition. All of these participants were supported financially by the group including a donation as well as a percentage of their individual profit from the Plant Sale.

At the end of the summer, we were able to support the Mersea Week dinghy races with 3 ribs and the launch, with the role of Safety Officer taken on by myself. We have supported this activity for many years now and once again we were praised for our readiness, skills and professionalism. We were also asked to support the Round the Island race by providing safety cover for which we put out 2 ribs.

The Group still meets in the Army Pavilion and we are grateful for our continued relationship with the Army and Sodexo who manage the Gymnasium and Pavilion. We are always looking out for a bigger venue and will keep you informed if we are able to find anywhere as a more permanent home. Our water base on Mersea continues to provide a home for our boating activities and we are always looking to improve and develop this amazing resource.

This report started with acknowledging the volunteers in the Group. They are an incredibly dedicated team of people, constantly striving to provide outstanding activities and experiences for young people. Their commitment to the Group and its young people cannot be underestimated. It is also worth noting that we are fortunate to have a fantastic group of young people who push, stretch, challenge and entertain us in equal measure. It has been a privilege to be the Group Scout Leader this year and I look forward to reporting to you next year of our continued success!

Ian Edgar
Group Scout Leader

Executive Committee Chair's AGM Report 2022-2023

I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to all our team members, volunteers and supporters, who have dedicated countless hours to provide exceptional opportunities for the young people under our care. Your commitment and passion have made a significant impact on the Colchester 17h Sea Scouts Group success.

The year has been filled with memorable experiences and achievements across all sections of our group. Our Beaver Colony engaged in a variety of activities and badge work that kept them entertained and helped them acquire valuable life skills. Our Cubs started the year with a memorable September Camp at Mersea, earning their DIY badge and participating in a fulfilling hike. They also contributed to the community by taking part in the 'Proud of Mersea' campaign. Our Scouts embarked on exciting adventures, including participating in the County's BackPack event, a 2-day hike that tested their skills. Despite challenging weather conditions, they exhibited resilience and teamwork. Our Explorers continued to thrive, with a focus on water-based activities.

This year's summer camp in Swansea was an adventure filled with both challenges and remarkable experiences. A big thank you to everyone who adapted quickly to the change in accommodation, and special mention to 1st Barry Sea Scouts for their incredible support. Several members of our group had the opportunity to participate in international scouting events, including the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea and the Essex Scouts North American Adventure. We achieved considerable success in fundraising through our annual Plant Sale and Christmas pudding sale, special thanks to those who supported these events.

Our annual Group Christmas day brought joy and creativity, with Beavers and Cubs engaging in a craft session, Scouts enjoying a movie and a delightful Christmas meal, and Explorers watching a crucial football match followed by a feast. We also hosted our hugely popular annual Group Family Sail Day where we presented awards and recognised the outstanding contributions of our volunteers. We expanded our fleet with paddleboards, providing our young members with an even wider range of experiences and opportunities.

We appreciate our ongoing partnership with the Army and Sodexo for the use of the Pavilion whilst we actively explore options for a permanent base in Colchester. Our headquarters at Mersea has continued to serve as the hub of our activities. With generous funding from Tesco Groundworks, the Colchester Centurion Rotary Club and Essex Community Foundation, we were able to make significant improvements, including the replacement of mattresses at Mersea with environmentally responsible memory foam ones.

In closing, I want to acknowledge and thank everyone for their contributions and support, both big and small, as you have shaped the success of our group. It has been an honour to serve as Group Chair this year, thank you.

Ben Green
Group Chair

Treasurer's Report Financial Year Ending 31st March 2023

The financial year for 17th Colchester Sea Scouts runs from 1st April until 31st March. The attached supporting accounts, presented for the financial year 2022/2023 have been prepared on a receipt and payments basis.

The opening balance of the total of all bank accounts was £38,771.35 on the 1st April 2022. The closing balance was £39,773.20 on the 31st March 2023. A detailed breakdown of the accounts is contained at the end of the document.

This year the income and cost recorded in the Mersea account have been split across the various income streams and cost centres to allow for a more detailed financial breakdown.

Income

Due to the excellent work and input from the team and volunteers our total income increased this year to £71,932.67 in comparison to £51,331.09 the previous year.

Total grant income of £12,903 was mainly made up of the cost-of- living grant £500, Arnold Clark £1000, Rotary grant £550, and Essex Community Foundation £7500. These funds were partly used to buy additional equipment such as tables, paddle boards, buoyancy aids and a trailer.

Fundraising events have again been successful and are broadly in line with the previous year.

Expenses

Our total expenditure this year has been £70,930.87 versus £55,433.54 last year. With the additional breakdown of the Mersea account it provides a better understanding of all cost, including maintenance cost for the building £5,343.93 and equipment/boats £4,778.48.

Overall Profit & Loss

There was an overall net surplus of £1,001.80 compared to a net loss of £4,102.45 last year. This was mainly due to an increase of various grants/donations.

17th Colchester Sea Scout Group

Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Total Receipts	71,932	51,331
Total Payments	(70,931)	(55,433)
Net Income / (expenditure) for the year	<u>1,001</u>	<u>(4,102)</u>
Cash, bank and invested funds b/fwd	38,772	42,874
Cash, bank and invested funds c/fwd	<u>39,773</u>	<u>38,772</u>

Statement of Monetary Assets and Liabilities @ 31st March 2022

	2023 £	2022 £
Barclays Group Account	23,582	25,878
Barclays Mersea Hut Account	10,431	7,760
Summer Camp Savings Account	4,933	3,889
Capitation Savings Account	<u>627</u>	<u>1,072</u>
	<u>39,573</u>	<u>38,599</u>
Petty Cash (Beavers)	42	107
Petty Cash (Cubs)	98	40
Petty Cash (Scouts)	<u>60</u>	<u>25</u>
Petty Cash (Total)	<u>200</u>	<u>172</u>
Total	<u>39,773</u>	<u>38,771</u>

17th Colchester Sea Scout Group

Income and expenditure breakdown for year ended 31st March 2023

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions	6,511	Membership fees	(3,450)
Explorers Rent	1,272		
Gift Aid	1,146		
Activities		Cost Activities	
Summer Camp 2022(Incl Veere Refund)	9,389	Summer Camp 2022	(10,983)
Summer Camp 2023	2,503	Summer Camp 2023	(733)
Courses	14,309	Courses	(4,526)
Sailing at Mersea	6,036	Sailing at Mersea	(3,083)
Clothing and Badges	2,570	Clothing and Badges	(4,276)
Other Activities (float)	3,006	Other Activities	(3,028)
Petty Cash payback (previously expensed)	29	Petty Cash (previously not expensed)	(200)
Negative receipts (refunds)	-		
Equipment / Assets		Purchase Equipment / Asset	
Equipment	1,850	Equipment	(14,069)
Fundraising		Cost Fundraising	
Plant Sale	7,174	Plant Sale	(2,291)
Xmas Puddings	1,473	Xmas Puddings	(1,208)
Other/TBD	0	Other/TBD	(48)
Donations (incl Bridge Club Tea & Amazon Smile Donation)	1,387	Donations	(1,957)
Grants	12,903	Grants	0
Interest			
Bank Interest	16		
		Running Costs	
		Meeting Venue (Pavilion)	(1,395)
		Storage	(1,496)
		Utility Bills	(1,583)
		Insurance	(6,482)
Maintenance Buildings	361	Maintenance Buildings	(5,343.93)
Maintenance Equipment	-	Maintenance Equipment	(4,778.48)
Total Income	71,934	Total Expenditure	(70,931.0)
Net Income/Expenditure			1,002.66

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

	£	£	£
	01/04/2022	In-year	31/03/2023
	Balance	Movement	Balance
Monetary Assets			
Barclays Group Account	25,878	(2,296)	23,582
Barclays Mersea Hut Account	7,760	2,670	10,430
Petty cash	172	28	200
Summer Camp Savings Account	3,889	1,044	4,933
Capitation Savings Account	1,072	(444)	628
Monetary Assets	38,771	1,002	39,773
	01/04/2022	In-year	31/03/2023
	Balance	Movement	Balance
Monetary Liabilities			
Petty Cash reimbursement outstanding	0	0	0
Monetary Liabilities	0	0	0
Non-Monetary Assets	Estimated	Additions/Disposals/Change in value	Estimated
	Value 1/4/21		Value 31/3/22
Mersea HQ	250,000	0	250,000
Mersea HQ - Contents	6,480	(648)	5,832
Zodiac 4.7m RIB with 40HP outboard	4,513	(226)	4,287
XS 5m RIB with 50HP outboard	9,025	(451)	8,574
Topaz Xenon x 2 c/with launching trolleys	4,513	(226)	4,287
Dagger Kayaks x 10	4,233	(212)	4,021
Topaz Uno Sailing Dinghies x 7	8,123	(406)	7,717
18ft Oyster Sailing Dinghies x 3	1,703	(85)	1,618
Canadian Canoes x 2	903	(45)	858
Trailers and misc boat equipment	2,708	(135)	2,573
Motor Launch and 10HP Inboard Engine	6,092	(305)	5,787
XS RIB with 70HP outboard	18,050	(903)	17,147
XS RIB with 40HP outboard	13,538	(677)	12,861
Topaz Vibe Sailing Dinghies x 1	2,256	(113)	2,143
Kyoti 4WD ATV	10,138	(2,028)	8,110
Wayfairer Dinghyx1	500	(25)	475
Taz Trolley	900	(23)	877
GB856 Black Trailer	4,939	(123)	4,816
Non-Monetary Assets	348,614	-6,631	341,983

Vehicles - 20% depreciation
Mersea HQ - Contents - 10% depreciation
Mersea HQ - 0% depreciation
Boats - 5% depreciation

Reserves policy:

It has been agreed at Executive Committee level that the Group will maintain minimum cash reserves of £10,000. This was historically the figure needed to replace an outboard engine allowing the Group to continue functioning if an outboard was lost or stolen. It is also the estimated figure needed to refund payments for a summer camp if this event had to be cancelled at short notice. This figure will be reviewed by the Executive Committee on an annual basis, taking into consideration current pricing and likely impacts of inflation.

Bank account details:

The Group currently operates 5 bank accounts

- Group current account (£23,582)
- Mersea HQ current account (£10,431) – restricted fund, to be used for Mersea income and expenses only
- Capitation savings account (£627) – restricted fund, to be used for payment of the Scouting HQ membership fee for all youth members
- Summer Camp savings account (£4933) – restricted fund, to be used for payments for the purpose of the Group's Summer Camp each year

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of XVII Colchester Sea Scout Group

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the XVII Colchester Sea Scout Group for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report:-

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement:

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Claire Gray

Professional qualification: FCA

Address: Unit 3, Upp Hall Farm, Salmons Lane, Colchester, Essex CO6 1RY

Date: 31st Jan 2024

Beaver Scout AGM Report 2022-2023

Beaver Scout Leader: Elizabeth Mullender

Assistant Beaver Scout Leader: Gill Murgia, George Cheeld, Ellie Pavey

The Colony has maintained around 20 - 24 Beaver Scouts over the past year. We have held weekly meetings and outings and events.

At present we have a number of names on the waiting list, both boys and girls, and at present we have almost been able to take in all those who are old enough to join.

I am pleased to report that the Beaver Colony is back to normality – we have done a number of activities which during Covid we were not able to do.

We continue to do badge work with the Beavers which keeps them entertained and learning skills for life.

We have presented a number of badges, gardeners, cyclist and air activities to name a few. Beavers attended the group sail day with their families and we also had a successful sailing evening just for the Beavers.

In December a number of Beavers joined the leaders to attend the Group Christmas day and we made Christmas crafts.

Being back at the Pavilion has been good for the Beavers as we have been able to get them out and about instead of being stuck at home in front of a screen.

My thanks to Gill, Ellie, George and the 2 Explorer Scout young leaders without whose help I could not run the Colony each week and it is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the leaders of the group who have helped us over the last year when we need assistance.

Liz Mullender

Beaver Scout Leader

Cub Scout AGM Report 2022-2023

Cub Scout Leader: Jonathan Hay

Assistant Cub Scout Leader: Emma Hopkins, Simon Hurley, Aaron Traynor

We started the year with 25 Cubs in the Pack and ended it with 28. 7 went on to the troop, 1 left Scouting and we have had 5 Beavers join us over the year and 1 from the waiting list.

The leadership team now comprises 4 warranted leaders. Due to external commitments, we do not enjoy a full quota of leaders every week but we plan for this and have managed with the valued help over the year of the Explorer Scouts Josh W, Hector C & Martha S.

Attendance is excellent and the Cubs participate in all the activities with great enthusiasm. This year 1 Cub gained the Chief Scout Silver Award; the highest award achievable in the Cub section and are to be congratulated and many are well on their way to doing the same. We have also awarded a further 110 other badges over the year plus 19 joining in badges.

In September 16 members of the Pack attended our annual Pack camp down at our HQ at Mersea. The Cubs took part in various activities towards their DIY badge, as well as hiking in to camp along the sea wall, pitching tents and teamwork skills.

In the Autumn term we had a couple of trading post evenings involving various tasks earning points to ultimately 'buy' enough equipment to build a flagpole and fly a flag. We had a hobbies night which proved interesting. Essex libraries paid us a visit which was a great success culminating in the Cubs acting out various stories in front of the Pack.

November saw the Pack involved in senses night as part of the disability awareness badge and we had an evening all about Divali including lighting over 80 tealights set out in a lovely pattern. We also covered some knot tying as well as the Scientist badge and made a Christmas tree containing the Cubs hopes and wishes for the year ahead.

The Pack was well represented at the Christmas craft/brunch day down at Mersea.

The new year saw us cover the Navigator badge and First Aid and physical activities as part of their Skills challenge badge. We also enjoyed a pancake night and teamwork challenge evenings. Easter biscuits were made and some made it home to friends and family! The Pack was represented at the annual St. Georges Day parade and they all looked very smart.

May camp down at Mersea traditionally for the youngest Pack members was a success covering DIY, beach art, crabbing and a visit to the Lifeboat station given to us by Simon Hurley (Baloo), himself a member of the Lifeboat crew.

The term finished with us being taken out on the water in various boats by Explorer Scouts & Scouts. There are too many to name, but BIG thanks go to all involved as the Cubs had a great time igniting their enthusiasm for sailing and giving them a taste of things to come.

Although we finished at the tail end of July, 3 of the older Cubs attended the Group Summer camp in Wales. They had a great week taking part in activities including clip & climb, a visit to an indoor tropical rain forest, Margham park, swimming in Cardiff, kayaking in Barry, a visit to Tenby Lifeboat station and a boat trip out to see the seal off Caldey Island. They had a great week and once again were a credit to themselves and a pleasure to spend a week with.

My thanks once again over the last year go to the leadership team in no particular order for their friendship & support:

Emma Hopkins

Simon Hurley

Aaron Traynor

Ian Edgar (Scouts)

Steve & Paula Deighton

George Cheeld

Adam Skull

.....and a big 'thank you' to the Cub Scouts and their parents for their continued enthusiasm.

Jonathan Hay

Cub Scout Leader

Scout AGM Report 2022-2023

Scout Leader: Ian Edgar

Assistant Scout Leaders: Paula Deighton, Adam Skull, Jasper Smith

Scout Section Assistants: Chris Dorrian, Glen Foster

Group Skills Instructors: Jack Kellett

This year has been another successful and enjoyable time for the Scout section. The Scouts had a varied programme in the autumn term with Pavilion nights including completing their meteorologist and fire safety badges, including a visit to Colchester Fire Station. We rounded off the term with our famed, “Board Games and Pudding” night!

In addition to the usual Wednesday night activities, Scouts attended other group events. A number of Scouts attended the Christmas meal at Mersea. The Scout section helped raise money through selling Christmas puddings. The Scouts helped serve tea, sandwiches and cakes at a Bridge Club Tea.

The spring term 2023 saw the Scout programme take on an international theme with nights dedicated to Holi, St David’s Day, National Pizza Day, Burns night and an international debate night. We had a pancake night and did a litter pick in the area local to the Pavilion, complete with a torrential downpour. The Scouts also attended the St George’s day parade. Several Scouts completed their RYA Level 1 Powerboat qualification.

In March, 4 teams of Scouts took part in the County Backpack held around Thriftwood Scout Campsite in Brentwood. The Scouts took part in a 2-day incident hike, and unlike some other teams had to cook their own food! Unfortunately the weather was so poor that we decided to abandon the event on the Sunday morning and return home – then spent the next few weeks removing all of the mud from the camping equipment and trying to get everything dry again!

The summer term 2023 saw our usual Mersea sailing nights. At the Pavilion, we hosted the Royal Navy Youth Engagement team in a joint meeting with the Explorers. We held a Coronation tea party for parents which was prepared and served by the Scouts and completed the Environmental Conservation badge. A large number of Scouts attended the sailing weekends. We also pitched tents ready for summer camp and had an evening of fire lighting and s’mores at Thorrrington. The final night before the summer involved playing outdoor games as well as a BBQ.

Summer Camp this year was held in Swansea, initially at Silver Cross campsite and then relocating to 1st Swansea Valley HQ, via 1st Barry (see GSL report above). 52 members of the Group from Cubs upwards attended – this included 23 Scouts. Activities included Clip and Climb, kayaking, sailing, an indoor rainforest, seal watching boat trip from Tenby, swimming and the week was rounded off with the usual awards and entertainment.

There are currently 30 Scouts in the troop. The leadership team for this year will be Ian Edgar, Paula Deighton, Adam Skull, Jasper Smith, Chris Dorrian, Glen Foster and Jack Kellett and Jules Smith. There are currently 4 Explorer Scout young leaders working with the section.

Ian Edgar

Scout Leader

Explorer Scout AGM Report 2022-2023

Explorer Scout Leader: Hannah Smith

Assistant Explorer Scout Leaders: Steve Deighton, Pete Bartholomew, Phil Bartholomew, Clare Hurley, Roland Victory, Richard Nunn

We are a District based Explorer Scout Unit and also, importantly, in partnership with the 17th Colchester Sea Scout Group. We place a strong emphasis on water-based activities, as well as enjoying many shore-based events. We meet at the Colchester Garrison Pavilion and at the 17th Colchester's HQ at Mersea on Tuesday nights between 7.30 and 9.30pm.

We wear the Sea Scout uniform with ties, although we still wear the scarf of the 17th Colchester for other less formal activities. The 17th Colchester Sea Scout Group is Royal Navy Recognised, and the Explorer Unit shares that recognition. It is one of the few Explorer Scout Units to carry this prestigious recognition with such numbers as we have.

Membership of the Unit is available to both boys and girls aged between 14 and 18 years old.

Autumn 2022

This term we worked to create a vlog about mental health and spent a lot of time discussing the various issues that arose. We also worked on a Buddhism project creating Mandala art using threading patterns. The young people also completed Module A in order to be able to assist as young leaders in the younger sections.

Spring 2023

A chip shop survey was the highlight of the term. The unit assisted with maintaining the boats. Some of the group also worked towards their Platinum award by planning and conducting their expedition.

Summer 2023

The paddleboards were used alongside sailing and kayaking opportunities throughout the summer term. We visited Thorrington where we built fires. The term was concluded by a water fight and BBQ (in the rain). During the holiday, 6 explorers attended international activities. 8 also attended the group camp in Wales.

Young Leaders

Members of the Unit regularly assist with all the other sections within the 17th Group. This secures the relationship with younger members of the Group, providing them with an insight into the opportunities offered in joining the ESU – the best type of promotion for future recruitment. This has continued where other sections have offered online scouting throughout the pandemic.

Awards

Badges awarded this year include 3 Platinum Awards, Creative Arts, Hikes, Musician, Nautical Skills, Physical Recreation and Water Activities badges.

Currently we have a large leadership team which has enabled greater flexibility in terms of attendance, so a big thank you is due to all of the team for their dedication and hard work. Numbers remained steady with 20 on the books.

Hannah Smith
Explorer Scout Leader

Mersea HQ AGM Report 2022-2023

RYA Centre

A very busy year for our Volunteer Instructors and the Support from the often-needed logistics team. Level 2 Powerboat Courses were run in September, March & two in August, the March course being for members of the RSPB and the centre is now an approved supplier.

We were asked by the Royal Navy Scout Scheme to put on an Explorer RYA Weekend, this occurred in October 22 and was fully booked with Explorers from all over the country! This brought in much needed revenue. We were then further offered the chance to run an Adult Leaders weekend focusing on Level 2 Powerboat and RYA Safety Boat Courses, again this was fully booked.

A Level 1 Powerboat Course was offered in April to Scouts and younger Explorers and the team also put on another water bonanza during Whitsun Week with a lot of young people improving their skills and gaining new certificates, this phenomenal effort has seen just about everyone that attended has now caught up with their levels post the pandemic.

12 members of the team undertook their RYA First aid renewal which was also funded by the Royal Navy Scheme.

Over August Bank Holiday weekend, the Centre has gained 5 new Powerboat Instructors who will greatly bolster and assist the current team.

Fleet

We have said goodbye to both the Omega Sailing Dinghies, these boats have not really worked as we had intended so they have gone to good homes.

The Fleet has been bolstered by the addition of a fleet of paddleboards which Hannah has now become a qualified instructor, again funded by the RN Scheme.

Albatross and Cormorant, our two oldest boats have been completely refurbished internally by the very dedicated Sunday morning crew (we are open to assistance from any parents that are free from 9.30 to 12.30 on a Sunday morning November through to March).

The Launch has been completely stripped back and re-varnished.

Throughout the year, the boats have been kept serviceable by the team often being turned around within 48 hours to allow the next session to go ahead, juggling our working and family lives to ensure that the young people have the craft available.

Headquarters

Whilst quite old, the headquarters is in good condition with the grounds outside maintained by John Woollard. The addition of new mattresses has made for better sleeping and kept everything fresh.

The team have made a new workbench, fitted in a new sink in the workshop, all the lighting has been replaced with LEDs and we have obtained a metal store for all the loose Topaz items.

The HQ is now fitted with broadband to bring us into the 21st Century.

The Group Christmas meal was held at Mersea along with the Summer Sail Day & BBQ which was a huge success.

We have even had two birthday parties in the HQ!

Group Sailing

We ran four sailing weekends over the summer period, all of which were fully subscribed and we also took a large number on day sail basis each time; it is so good to see everyone fully back to normal, There have been taster sessions for the Beavers & Cubs, and both the Scouts and Explorers have managed evenings in the Summer Term.

The Kayaks and Paddleboards made the pilgrimage to Summer Camp in Wales.

Community

To help assist with the financing of the Mersea facility we offer on the water experience sessions to other Scout Groups, from Beavers through to Explorers. They can also rent the accommodation for residential stays.

Since the last report we have offered a lot of sessions - made a lot of young people smile, a few even managed a scream(!!) and importantly only a couple did not enjoy the experience.

We have taken out 205 people for these experience sessions from other Scout & Guide Groups over the review period.

The team have offered support to Mersea Island Rowing club for their annual gig meet with launching and safety boat support.

Ian Edgar has led the team for safety boat support for Mersea Week with some amazing reviews and thankyou's and we have also provided safety cover for the Round the Island Race

Kayaking

Members of the summer camp party did some kayaking in Wales.

Teamwork

None of the above just happens - the level of programme we are offering requires serious support. Over the year we have welcomed new faces to assist with the running of these sessions - some are from the Group and others are from out of the Group who just like to be on the water and are prepared to work whilst doing it.

We are also seeing the dividends paying off in the young people we have been training who, in turn, are now all able to offer instruction to others.

We continue to wear the water team clothing with some pride!

Costing

The more the equipment is used, the more it requires upkeep. A few volunteers work round the clock to ensure boats are available for every session and this costs large sums of money. But thanks to the commitment from the youngsters and the volunteering to take others out (instructors, safety boat, etc), we have seen Mersea HQ become a financially viable asset whilst keeping costs to our Group at what I believe to be a very affordable rate when compared to all other centres offering this type of activity.

Now to the "Thank You's" ...

To name everyone would take forever - so to all the people who have assisted myself with the successful running of the Mersea facility, I thank you on behalf of every person you have made smile this year.

It should be also noted that this is all done by volunteers.

To the Adults that ensure the residential weekends happen and run smoothly, I offer special thanks (we can't even guarantee you a bed now). And finally to John Woollard who diligently attends the HQ, often to remove rubbish and sort 'odd jobs', cuts the grass (which looks superb), sorts out the fire alarm when it trips on, and gets sails repaired at very short notice, the Group offers their sincere thanks and gratitude.

Steve Deighton
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Principal 17th Colchester Sea Scouts RYA Centre
Mersea Activity Co-ordinator