

NILA Chairmans report 2023

Since the last AGM, the trustees of Nila have continued to work diligently towards establishing the organisation's credentials.

The organisation has continued to expand with several new members joining since the launch and last AGM and others seeking admission.

Monthly meetings of the trustees took place the main issue being obtaining a seat on UKSAR committee. The committee was extremely helpful in our pursuit of membership giving advice and support throughout, regular liaison meetings between UKSAR and the trustees have been taking place since the last AGM and I am pleased to say that a probationary membership for 12 months has been achieved.

In January a Parliamentary debate took place on Independent Lifeboats and Lifeboat coverage overall within the UK, which provided the opportunity for expanding awareness and increasing the knowledge of independent boats and the existence of NILA.

During the first months of the new year the trustees issued a request for volunteers to undertake Regional Lead roles and applications were received and accepted for the following posts. Regional Team Leader Mike Messenger, assisted by Rob Matthews and Mark Carwadine, Communication Team Leader, Chris Rudders.

Monthly Trustees meetings have now been re-scheduled to bi-monthly with intervening general management meetings.

In addition, membership of the National Water Safety Forum coastal group has been achieved with Neil Dalton and Wayne Monks representing NILA.

Several issues were raised by members in the early part of the year concerning training costs and insurance costs.

In addition to these a major issue concerning the use of Blue Lights on vehicles arose, the present code for this is being scrutinized at the moment with our Vice Chairman sitting on the relevant committee. Until this committee has completed its deliberations and issued its findings NILA cannot support, condone or excuse the use of blue lights without destroying our credibility. There has been a lot of press interest in this with the possibility of negative press occurring for NILA. I would please ask that should this occur, and you have been using blue lights and complaints are raised, that you contact NILA first for assistance in formulating a suitable response. Clarification on any new regulations can be obtained by contacting our vice chairman Sean McCarry direct.

There is an increasing use of the NILA facebook page for exchange of information and ideas which is exactly as it should be, use it as a forum for members to assist one another.

The HMCG Rescue Boat Code is also being revised to make compliance easier, this should hopefully help those members, seeking compliance and also Declared Facility status, not finding the task so onerous. Advice and help are always available from the regional team leaders and those members who have achieved the status, this is a major role and aim of NILA.

A drop-in meeting for MPs has been arranged on October 31st at Westminster and I would urge all members to encourage their local MPs to attend and to keep them updated on the activities of your organisation.

Several commercial companies which are able to supply equipment and services to Independent Lifeboats have made enquiries and requested advertising on our facebook page. Whilst the trustees feel unable to offer recommendations, they are happy to inform members what is on offer and if a company is offering discounts to members. Possible use of our closed page for advertising is being discussed.

Once again NILA will have a stand at the NEC for the Emergency Services show within the UKsar zone, any members who feel they can assist with this should contact the secretary.

Exchange of information is a key to the value of NILA and I would encourage all of you to participate when appropriate, Rob Matthews is currently preparing a library of forms which may be useful to members pursuing Coding or Declared Facility status. These are meant as an initial aid and not as a requirement of NILA.

I would like to finish by assuring all that the current trustees continue to work on the development of NILA which we regard as a work in progress, I extend my thanks to include the regional officers who are making valuable contributions on your behalf to NILA.

I would finish by acknowledging the continued help and inspiration given by Anthony Mangnall MP and Rachel Roberts for keeping NILA to the forefront of minds at

Westminster. Another parliamentary event has been scheduled for 31st October to give the opportunity for further dissemination of information regarding NILA and the work of Independent Lifeboats.