

Since the last Annual General Meeting, the trustees have diligently continued their efforts to promote the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA). Unfortunately, the planned drop-in meeting for October could not proceed due to the proroguing of Parliament. However, the Chairman used this time productively, arranging a one-to-one meeting with Anthony Mangnall during a visit to London, where he provided an update on our progress.

In February, Wayne and David represented NILA at the Dinghy Show, where they successfully promoted the association through a dedicated stall. Subsequently, the drop-in session for MPs was rescheduled and took place on March 4th, attended by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and North Area Lead. The event was a notable success, drawing many MPs. Among the key outcomes was a consensus on the need to revive Grant Aid for Independent Lifeboats, alongside discussions about potential grant funding for training, particularly given that the previous LIBOR-funded grant for training has expired without a new sponsor emerging.

A meeting with UKsar covered the anticipated requirements under the new Rescue Boat Code, including discussions on first aid qualification levels and clinical governance, particularly with Paddy Morgan from HMCG. However, at the time of the meeting, nothing was finalised. Additionally, progress from the Blue Light Driving Committee was reported, with proposals expected this year, though their implementation has been delayed by the dissolution of Parliament before the general election.

Membership has continued to grow, with new members joining, bringing our total to 38. Unfortunately, Anthony Mangnall lost his seat in the general election on July 4th, creating uncertainty regarding our access to Parliament. Nevertheless, Anthony has recommended Paul Holmes MP as a potential advocate for our cause and has graciously agreed to remain as our President, offering further suggestions for prominent figures who could serve as trustees.

In July, we received notice of the collapse of CAVRA and their generous donation of assets to NILA. Once these assets are catalogued and valued, they may be put up for sale, after which a discussion will be held on how to utilise the funds. It is not anticipated that the amount raised will be significant.

Throughout the year, we have approached various suppliers to negotiate preferential rates for NILA members. Several suppliers have responded positively, and we will be distributing the details shortly. However, engagement with our Facebook page remains lukewarm, with only a few members actively participating. Similarly, contributions to our magazine have been sparse. Wayne has passed responsibility for the magazine to Tony Ross from ESRA, who brings extensive experience in this area. Both the Facebook page and the magazine present valuable opportunities for sharing news, information, and insights.

There was a query this year regarding whether NILA could adopt a more centralized approach to publicity, akin to the RNLI. However, unlike the RNLI, which operates as a corporate body with control over its operations, training, and equipment, NILA's strength lies in its members retaining their independence. Therefore, a "one size fits all" approach is not feasible. Instead, I encourage all members to actively engage with their local communities to raise awareness of Independent Lifeboats.

Regarding the requirements of maintaining a Declared Facility Agreement (DFA) with HMCG, it appears that qualification standards are tightening. Several members have recently undergone inspections by their DLO, and while these should not be feared, there is an increasing emphasis on adhering to the agreement. In fact, it was suggested that organizations may now face five-yearly inspections, with interim visits. One particular concern raised was the standard of competence in radio procedures.

Rob Mathews has been compiling a library of documents offering guidance on maintaining records for your DFA and on achieving boat coding. While many of you likely have your own documentation, I would recommend reviewing these materials as they may prove useful. Additionally, it is advisable to ensure that all members are familiar with the HMCG's code of conduct, which we are expected to follow.

A request was received this year for NILA's submission to the Cranston Inquiry into migrant deaths in the Channel. Although we do not currently have boats operating in the Channel, we provided a requested copy of the Rescue Boat Code. DFA documentation was requested but it was explained that these matters are handled between individual organizations and HMCG. We have since received acknowledgment of our submission.

Lastly, an article on NILA and its role within the Search and Rescue (SAR) community was published in the July edition of *Fishing News*, further raising the profile of our organization. Over the past year, awareness of NILA's influence and importance within the SAR sector has increased significantly. We anticipate that our seat on the UKsar Committee will become permanent this year, further underscoring the growing recognition of Independent Lifeboat organizations among both the public and policymakers.

Neil Dalton

Chairman

Income		Expenditure	
membership fees	£4,098.40	Shows	£ 2,184.00
CAVRA equipment	£26,451.34	Insurance	£ 477.86
donations	£250.29	Other	£ 2,012.50
gift aid	£394.99		
bank refund	£1,620.00		
Total	£32,815.02	Total	£ 4,674.36
Opening Balance	£5,985.15		
Closing Balance	£34,125.81		

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