

TRUSTEE & SPONSORS REPORT OF SERVICE 2018

I have pleasure in presenting the 2018 End of Season Report and although this year has not been as busy as the previous one, it has kept us busy and presented several challenges.

We finished 2017 by giving overall sea and beach safety cover for the annual St Elizabeth Hospice Christmas Day Dip which saw several hundred dippers enter the very cold water, thankfully without drama. 2018 found us on New Years Day fundraising at John and Ann Whites Charity Ferry Crossing Event which raised £800 for the service. On the very cold and windy night of 3rd January we were put on Flood Alert by Suffolk Resilience Gold Command which continued until the 5th when we were stood down. Again thereafter funding became an issue as is usual following any busy year. Whilst being busy does always prove our worth, the downside is that it always depletes our funds and we found ourselves having to use money ring-fenced for our new lifeboat. The only core funding we receive is a total of £2,500 from both Felixstowe TC and ABP-Port of Ipswich, this sum is always put towards our insurance premiums of £3,000. The remaining deficit of nearly £25,000 has to be raised through the public and available grants. Unfortunately most grants cannot be used for running costs, thus we got off to a bad start by for the first time in our 22 years of service not being afloat for our Easter 'shake down patrols'.

An appeal was launched through the media which resulted in news features on national, local TV and radio. This immediately resulted in a sponsorship offer by the East of England Co op of an in store fund raising initiative, and 2 months of free fuel which incidentally was later extended to cover the entire season totalling £4,104. Within the same period we were contacted by London businessman and philanthropist Mr Kevin Craig who's family frequent Felixstowe, and he gave a generous donation of £6,000. Other donations received totalled £9,000 which enabled patrols to immediately get underway on Saturday 28 April, and with three incidents being handled over that first weekend. Details of all the incidents handled and relative information are given in the enclosed Summary of Service. These endorse the statement made by the Suffolk PCC in 2010, 'no value can possibly be put on regular marine patrols'. They also fulfil our strategy of 'Prevention is better than Cure'.

It is my sad duty to announce the deaths of two friends of the service who died within a few weeks of each other in hospital, and in December. The first was Mr Len Wenham of Levington whose generous donation made our new lifeboat a reality, and which he named 'Last Orders'. Volunteers attended his funeral at Levington Church where family and relatives requested our present lifeboat to be alongside his grave. The service sent a wreath in the form of a lifebuoy. Our second sad loss was that of trustee and retired Coxn Michael Hood. Mick joined the service in 1998 eventually advancing through to achieve Coxn status, and although in his 70's when he died, he still played an active role on the Committee. Mick died in hospital following a short illness with his family around him. He will best be remembered by his colleagues for his sense of humour, eagerness to help and his passion for the service.

Now on a more uplifting note I can report that progress on fitting out our new build rescue platform 'Last Orders' is going well, and she should be on engine and sea trials

early in the new year. There is still a lot of work to be done prior to her going into service ie Ofcom licensing, MCA Codeing, fitting her sea going equipment and of course the crew shakedown periods. This 4th generation lifeboat with her sophisticated navionics and SAR equipment should meet the needs of our ever increasing role.

In our rescue role, congratulations go to one of our long serving volunteers and Snr Coxn's for receiving a Royal Humane Soc award for water rescue, this is our second such RHS award.

Most of you will be aware that the service has been a 'Nomad' for most of its 22 years, by not having a permanent base from which to operate, or to store the vast range of our equipment. This has sadly held us back operationally with the UK rescue authorities, which as been morally challenging, and a logistics nightmare. We have had to hire the Library for a class room facility and our volunteers have had to pay for parking. Now a long overdue new opportunity has emerged in central Felixstowe close to other Emergency Services. The East of England Co operative have always been staunch supporters of the FVCPRS and on hearing of our unsatisfactory situation vowed to help. So in June CEO Roger Grosvenor suggested us having the use of their old dairy unit adjoining the Felixstowe Supermarket in Hamilton Road and which had been empty for some years. A site visit soon revealed that the unit would be very suitable as it had a sizable storage yard. Bt September a lease had been signed by both parties with the service paying a peppercorn rent. Work party volunteers were soon cleaning and decorating, with 'Homebase' providing the materials, whilst the landlords own contractors replaced or checked the existing aged electrics and plumbing, to include new heaters, lights, and a sink unit. Finally the Co operative even provided desks, chairs and other office fittings from their Wherstead Park store. To say that we are very proud of 'Guardian Base' is an understatement, and for the first time in our now long history we were able to hold the Crews End of Season debrief at our own Base. (In the dry and warm)

In addition to the necessary public appeal media cover, we had a three page feature in the July edition of the 'Suffolk Magazine' titled 'For the safety of all' which was probably the best article to ever go to press. Referring to our motto of 'For the safety of all' we have taken on another voluntary task at Felixstowe which is a monthly check of the resorts lifebuoys from Landguard Viewpoint to the Ferry.

Another important development concerning our volunteers is the passing of 'The Assaults on Emergency Workers Act which applies to emergency service volunteers. The maximum jail term for acts against blue light staff has been increased to 12 months.

So, as we draw near to our 23rd year, what are our expectations ?. Our new base has, at long last allowed us to apply for RYA Teaching Establishment status. It is not our intention to offer training to outside parties and this will be strictly in-house only for our volunteers, thus saving us, and indeed the volunteers money.

When commissioned into service, 'Last Orders' will further push our boundaries both in training and operations.

Based on recent events in the English Channel we expect to see an increase in illegal immigration incidents. Indeed, the RYA has recently warned of the ' Vulnerability of east coast illegal activity'. They have highlighted what we already know by drawing public attention to the quieter areas of the east coast, where comings and goings after dark are often completely unseen. During 2017 we produced our own Risk Assessment and SOP's for any 'Migrant Boat Encounter that our crews may encounter.

Finally, our last duty for 2018 will be to provide the complete marine safety package for the St Elizabeth Hospice Christmas Day Charity Dip. All these achievements are only possible because of public support. We would like to say a big thank you to the public and extend our appreciation to all the businesses, companies – large and small, near and far who support Coast Patrol Rescue in so many ways.

Operations / incidents, casualties & lives saved 2018

The service carried out 40 days of patrols = 720 hours of volunteers free time to the community. This does not include the 17 hours on the January Flood Alert requested by Suffolk Resilience Silver Command, or the additional 36 hours of training.

Our patrol/lifeboat 'Volunteer' covered some 2,840 miles on patrols of the immediate area, and our furthest distances tasked away by HM Coastguard were north to Sizewell and south to the River Blackwater.

'Volunteer' attended 50 incidents and 33 casualties involving a total of 134 persons with 5 lives being saved, and 23 craft were towed to safety.

Byelaw infringements incidents handled were 23, with an additional 9 security or immigration related incidents.

John Cresswell
1st Coxn / Ops Manager

18th December 2018