

Winter 2022

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2022

Once again it's been a busy year for the Marine Community of Essex. It has continued to grow as ever increasing numbers of people take up new pastimes including paddle-sports such as kayaking and paddle boarding as well as open water swimming, sailing and PWC riding.

Our team has strived to make sure that we are visible across the entire Essex Coastline from Mistley on the Suffolk border down to Crayford-Ness (just passed the Dartford River Crossing) as well as everywhere in between. We have worked with our partner-agencies including joint patrols with Border Force, HM Coastguard Rescue teams from Clacton as well as the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority.

During the summer we assisted the RNLI and Coastguard with the search for the missing swimmer near Clacton Pier who was sadly found deceased a couple of days later. This was a distressing incident for all involved and a stark reminder of the dangers of tides, especially around fixed objects in the water such as piers.



Anti-Social Behaviour on the water unfortunately continued as the weather warmed up but with numbers generally declining, we are confident that the message is starting to get through. With 12 prosecutions submitted this year for breaching the byelaws as well as engagement with riders both on and off the water, we are hoping that 2023 continues to see the numbers reduce.

As you may know, for several years both our Launch (Alert IV) and our RHIB (Sentinel) have been kept at Burnham Yacht Harbour. As of April 2023 Sentinel will be kept at Bradwell Marina. This will give us quicker access to the Blackwater and the Colne where the majority of the ASB reports originate from. It will also reduce travelling time when we are heading out on patrol in these areas. The Sentinel will still be used for patrols on the Thames etc and Bradwell actually places her at a slightly less distance than Burnham.

The Alert IV will remain at Burnham and continue to provide a visible presence on the River Crouch as well as the entire coastline.



## Operation Wave-Breaker 2022

We commit a considerable amount of time to Operation Wave-Breaker during the summer months to not only tackle reports of Anti Social Behaviour on the water but to also promote water safety. Between April and September we carried out the following activity in addition to our 'business as usual' work...

- 29 deployments under Op Wave Breaker
- 228 stop checks on the water
- 151 hours on the water
- 179 PWCs stopped and engaged with
- 12 PWC riders reported for Court action

The operation focuses on anti-social behaviour relating to all types of craft on the water but unfortunately the majority of this behaviour comes from a small minority of PWC riders. This year there were 74 incidents of Personal Watercraft related speeding/anti-social behaviour across the Essex Coastline. This is compared to 84 in 2021 and 99 in 2020. The reports come from both the public as well as those which our patrols come across while out on the water. We do understand that some incidents are not reported either because of difficulties in reporting incidents when out on the water or not knowing exactly who to call.

Emergencies where there is a threat to life—999

Everything else—Tel 101 or use the 'do-it-online' portal on the Essex Police Website.

### Byelaws

The speed limits around our coastline come under what are known as byelaws. These are local laws made by a local council under an enabling power contained in a public general act or a local act requiring something to be done – or not done – in a specified area. They are accompanied by some sanction or penalty for their non-observance. Where clear evidence exists of a breach of the byelaws, both the Local Council Officers as well as the Police can report the breaches to the relevant Council who will then decide if the matter will be taken to the Courts.

Essex Police has reported twelve people to the Court in 2022 in Essex for breaching the byelaws along the coast. Fines from the Courts aren't fixed and can range from around £100 up to £1000. In a case on the River Thames a few years ago, the offender received a fine of over £2000 for exceeding the Port Of London speed limits.

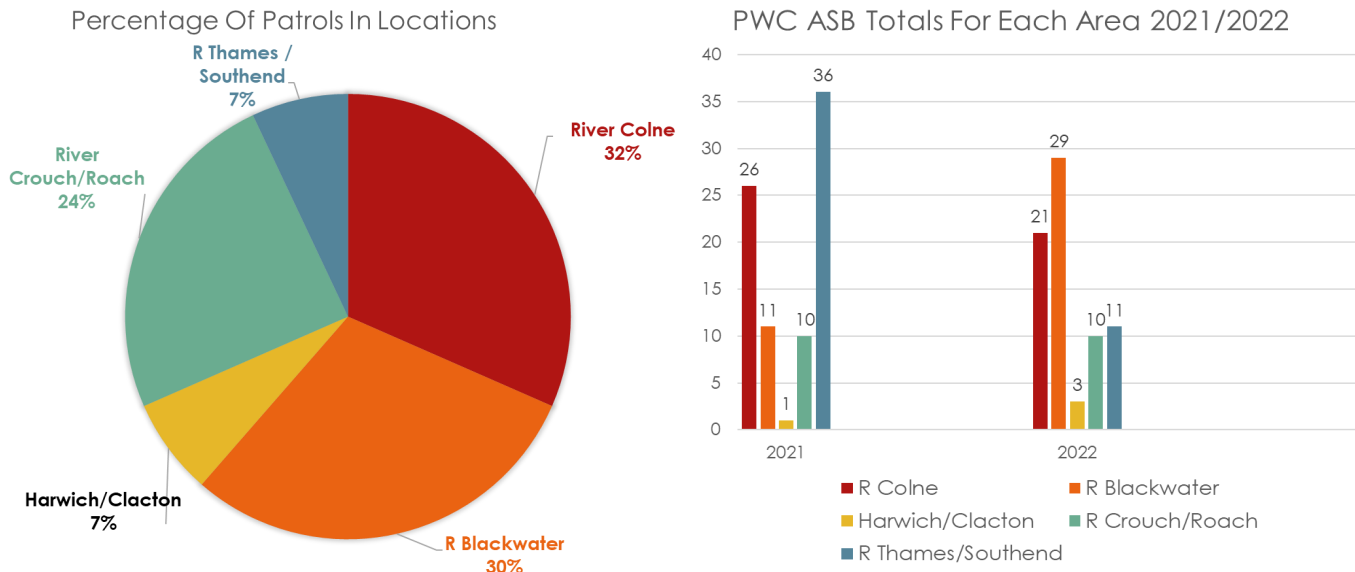


Speed limits can vary from one part of the coast to another. There are usually signs situated at launching spots indicating where the limits stop and start. The local Harbour Offices will also be able to provide this information as well as other relevant safety advice relating to the particular area. Information can also be found online by visiting the relevant Harbour Authority's website.

As a similar comparison, like the slower limits for the roads in built up areas, busy areas along the coast such as harbours and rivers are generally subject to 4—8 knot speed limits.



## Operation Wave-Breaker Figures 2022



- ▶ This year there were 74 incidents of Personal Watercraft related Anti-Social Behaviour across Essex
- ▶ We received 99 reports in 2020 and 84 in 2021
- ▶ These include both reports from the public as well as ASB found by our patrols
- ▶ The River Blackwater/Maldon saw a significant increase in PWC ASB
- ▶ Southend/R Thames saw a significant drop in PWC ASB
- ▶ The River Colne continued to see a very slight reduction
- ▶ The Rivers Crouch/Roach saw no change in PWC ASB
- ▶ Harwich/Clacton saw a rise from 1 last year to 3 this year

- ▶ Overall reduction in reports/incidents of water related ASB across Essex
- ▶ Increase in PWC riders referred for prosecution
- ▶ Significant increase in number of PWCs on the water in Essex
- ▶ Harwich Haven Authority's ban on PWC use on the Stour continues to control ASB.
- ▶ Clacton has several PWC clubs which promote safe and responsible riding. This also continues to prevent ASB
- ▶ Unregulated launching at Point Clear and Steeple Bay results in higher numbers of ASB reports/Incidents in these areas



**River Colne** - PC Fin Clark — After the busy summer for the River Colne came to an end, the winter season consisted of catching up with training and visiting our marine community in the north of the county. We have been able to target more of our shore-based community duties, visiting local marinas and clubs and working alongside Harbour Masters and the RNLI. We are still conducting patrols in Point Clear, Hythe, Wivenhoe and Brightlingsea to deter anti-social behaviour and provide police visibility in the area. We have patrolled with officers from Local Policing Teams and are currently planning for larger water safety educational events. We were very lucky to be invited to patrol the water for the Brightlingsea Colne Yacht Club fireworks display and enjoyed spending time engaging with the community and the children afterwards.

We have also attended our Essex Police recruitment events, showcasing what the marine unit do to a wider audience. We are also awaiting the court decisions for those that didn't adhere to the speed restrictions in Summer.



## **Clacton/Harwich** - PC Jon Perry -

Over the winter we have continued to conduct our coastline and shore patrols around the tendering coast, in an attempt to deny those with criminal intentions the opportunities to commit marine crime, by us highlighting any security recommendations to owners and clubs, which in turn will hopefully deter criminals attempting to target your property or premises.

We continue to work closely with our partner agencies, whereby during the last season we were assisted by Harwich Haven Authority to investigate a report of a Collision between two vessels near to the Ha'penny pier and reports of Personal Watercraft use on the River Stour and Hamford Waters.

We responded to concerns expressed from water users in Manningtree with regards to ASB which found us conducting evening patrols on the picturesque setting of the River Stour.



In the more recent months we have been working closely with Border force with regards to Clandestine vessel crossings. I cannot stress enough, please report events or information that you may have on any suspected activity, as you really may have a missing piece of the intelligence puzzle we are looking for. If the events are happening in front of you and persons are on scene call 999, alternatively if you information is of a non-urgent nature, please call the Crimestoppers Project Kraken telephone number on 0800 011 3304 which is open 24/7.

Email us at -  
[marine.policing@essex.police.uk](mailto:marine.policing@essex.police.uk)



Do it online at:  
[essex.police.uk](https://essex.police.uk)

**IN AN EMERGENCY  
ALWAYS CALL 999**



## Rivers Crouch and Roach - PC Paul Rawson

Its that quieter time of year for the marine calendar, but rest assured, we haven't been idle. I have been liaising with the Crouch Harbour Authority and councils regarding the anti social issues up river and we are still working on a joint effort to try and reduce these prior to the beginning of the season in 2023.

Many of you will be laying up for the year and packing or storing your equipment away for the winter, but please remember to try and secure your valuables. This time of year we do have reports of vessels being broken into or items being stolen from them due to the darker nights and fewer people being around. If you would like any crime prevention advice please feel free to contact me or anyone on the team.

We will be increasing our shore patrols of marinas and clubs during the winter period, but will still be out on the water, so if you see us remember to wave. Please remember to report any incidents of crime, anti social behaviour or suspicious behaviour in or around the river. It is really important for us to know what is happening in your area, no matter how small an issue, it may be just that additional piece of information we need. We also need accurate statistics of incidents in or around the rivers, so please let us know. I will be making more presentations to clubs in the new year, if you feel your club would benefit from a visit or talk from us please let me know.



## River Blackwater - PC Daren Chambers -

The colder weather has seen a reduction on the number of water users on the Blackwater, so you will see us increasing our shore based patrols around marinas and yacht clubs. You are our eyes and ears so please come and chat with us if you see us around. What you tell us shapes how we patrol and influences our priorities.

Thankfully thefts of boats are relatively rare, however we did have a report of a person gaining access to boat on a mooring in West Mersea recently. Please take the time to review your boats security and ensure it is properly secured and no valuables are left on board. Contact me if you would like more advice. Don't make it easy for would be thieves by leaving spare engine keys on board.

## Your information may be the piece of the puzzle we are looking for!

The marine unit work together with our partner agencies to jointly solves issues, targeting those that are causing harm to our community.

Unfortunately, we are unable to do this Unless incidents are reported, could you be holding the missing piece of the puzzle.

Please report incidents such as –

- Suspicious activity in marinas, boat parks and on the water,
- Vessel movements at night without navigation lights,
- Buoys in unusual places, & vessels paying attention to them.
- Persons using vessels who appear out of place due to lack of experience, equipment, suitable clothing etc.



*If it looks out of place or doesn't feel right it probably isn't.  
Report it and let us build up the intelligence.*



## River Thames - PC Ian Newling

Over the last few months we have been busy working with Border Force as well as colleagues from other departments within Essex Police to target criminal activity along the Thames corridor, including operations in and around Leigh and Canvey Island.

We recently received information that a drone had been seen under the Dartford River Crossing. We teamed up with the Port Of London Authority and attended the bridge where we were able to gain access to the concrete supports. Having done so the drone was located and taken away for examination to identify the owner and to see ensure that the drone hadn't been used for illegal activity. Fortunately on this occasion the drone belonged to someone who had lost it while flying and was unable to retrieve it.

During the recent stormy weather, a yacht slipped it's mooring off of Southend and was washed ashore. Fortunately no other damage was caused to any other boats but it does serve as a reminder to regularly check the condition of you lines and ensure your boat is secured safely.



Lastly, we have been supporting Southend City Council with their amendments to the Public Spaces Protection Order which will see the foreshore and water areas included, giving both us and the council powers to disperse those committing anti-social behaviour and issue on the spot fines where necessary.



## Marine Crime Prevention Steps

- Fit good quality locks to your boat
- Trailers are easy targets for thieves
- Mark your property
- Fitting an alarm to your boat and advertising it is a great deterrent
- Always remove any ladders or other means of access to your boat

Lastly, if something doesn't look right, then it probably isn't. Always contact the Police if you have any concerns or suspicions.

Email us at -  
[marine.policing@essex.police.uk](mailto:marine.policing@essex.police.uk)



Do it online at:  
[essex.police.uk](https://essex.police.uk)

IN AN EMERGENCY  
ALWAYS CALL **999**



## #DontDrinkandDrown



As part of the national Don't Drink and Drown campaign, run by the **Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)**, Essex residents are being urged to

- make good choices
- look after one another and
- make sure that routes home after a night out are away from the water.

The campaign was extended to cover December's World Cup tournament, which brings extra cause for concern around water safety.

However, the advice and key messages are relevant throughout the year.

## OPEN WATER SWIMMING SAFETY ADVICE

The popularity of open water swimming is constantly increasing but with this comes a rise in the number of people requiring help out at sea.

The **RNLI** have provided the following safety advice when swimming in open waters - Be prepared. Check the weather and tides, choose your spot, go with a buddy, have the right equipment.

- If in doubt, don't go out. No matter how much preparation you do, or how experienced you are, if a swim doesn't feel right there is no shame in getting out of the water straight away, or not entering.
- Make sure you acclimatise to avoid cold water shock.
- Be seen. Wear a bright coloured swim hat and take a tow float.
- Stay within your depths.
- Float to live.



## Digital 101

You can report non-emergency crime by calling **101** or by using **Digital 101**, our quick and easy to use online service that's available at any time.



**Digital 101** is available on the Essex Police website: [essex.police.uk](https://www.essex.police.uk)



If you, or anyone you know, is interested in protecting and serving Essex, you can follow us on social media, or search #FitTheBill

#FIT THE  
BILL