



Dear Marine Community,

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! 2020 was a challenge for all of us and so hopefully this year may see some positive news in relation to COVID. Fingers crossed...

Before I go any further, I would like to take the opportunity to remember one of our team who sadly passed away last week. Toby Speller was one of our dedicated Special Constables on the Marine Unit and his passion for the water was not only evident here on the team but also very much so across the various Sailing and Yacht Clubs in the south of the county, particularly Thorpe Bay Yacht Club. He will be sadly missed by so many and has left a hole in our team.

This month I have taken over as the Sergeant for the Essex Police Marine Unit, which has allowed PC Paul Rawson to step down from managing the team and take responsibility for the River Colne.

As a team we now have six full time officers who are supported by a full-time mechanic, a number of reserve officers and two dedicated Special Constables.

One of our main objectives is to ensure that users and visitors, as well as our stakeholders, are able to enjoy and use the water safely. With this in mind, we aim to be out and about in the Marine Community as much as possible, both on land and water. We will be looking to attend your various Regattas, sailing weeks and public events as much as possible and so if you are planning such an event, please get in contact with us as early as possible so we can make the necessary arrangements etc. We can attend with our "Water Van" that contains a lot of our specialist equipment and set it all up for people to look over and can also look to bring our boats along. Most importantly it will give you a chance to get to know your local officer and to also raise and discuss any concerns you may have.

Last year saw a huge increase in users and visitors to our coastline. With this came an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour on the water. While we don't want to stop anyone from enjoying the water, we do want to stop those who act in a way that puts others at risk of injury (or worse) and those whose behaviour stops others from enjoying it. We will be working with our partners including the Local Councils to utilise the various powers we have under the Anti-Social Behaviour Legislation and are also working on a Water Safety Course as a way of dealing with minor ASB (similar to a Speed Awareness Course).

The officers on the unit all have responsibility for a particular area on the Essex Coastline –

Sgt 2867 Southgate	Marine Unit	<a href="mailto:2867@essex.police.uk">2867@essex.police.uk</a>
PC 2858 Rawson	River Colne	<a href="mailto:2858@essex.police.uk">2858@essex.police.uk</a>
PC 1925 Newling	River Thames/Southend	<a href="mailto:1925@essex.police.uk">1925@essex.police.uk</a>

PC 2609 Woods	Rivers Crouch & Roach	<a href="mailto:2609@essex.police.uk">2609@essex.police.uk</a>
PC 1390 Chambers	River Blackwater	<a href="mailto:1390@essex.police.uk">1390@essex.police.uk</a>
PC 72598 Perry	River Stour/Harwich & Clacton	<a href="mailto:72598@essex.police.uk">72598@essex.police.uk</a>

You can contact us via the email addresses above or if you need to report an incident, can do so via our 101 telephone number or the “do-it-online” portal on our website [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk)

You can follow the unit on Twitter [@EPMarine](https://twitter.com/EPMarine) and you can also visit our website via this link – [www.essex.police.uk/marine](http://www.essex.police.uk/marine) Please always ring 999 if your matter is an emergency.

Before the team provide you with a short update on their areas, I would like to remind you all that our coastline is also a target for organised criminal gang activity such as drug importation and as we saw in Essex recently, the movement of large groups of people into the country (often in horrendous and deadly conditions) illegally via boats and lorries. We rely on you all as a part of the Marine Community to be our eyes and ears and encourage you to report anything suspicious that you see on our coastline and in our marinas. You can do this via our contact details above or via Crimestoppers.

I look forward to seeing you on the coast this year.

Thank you for your support,

Alex Southgate

### **River Thames And Southend**

I have had several enquiries from clubs concerned about breaching covid restrictions due to members wanting to work on their boats or clubs lifting the boats from the water. Essential work to prevent damage or loss of vessels is totally acceptable, but please adhere to the covid guidelines set out by the Government whilst carrying works out. If vessels require lifting from the water, please contact me and I will create a Police incident, so our Force Control Room are aware. This should hopefully prevent a visit from one of our local patrol teams.

So far this winter season there has been less reported boat and marina crime and I hope this trend continues. There have been a few incidents of vessels being released from their lines or moorings around the Canvey, Benfleet and Watt Tyler Park areas, so please can I ask that you report any crime or anti-social behaviour even if you think it's a minor incident. This allows us to build a picture of crime trends and problems and plan patrols accordingly.

Over the last few months there have been several incidents along the Thames of people taking photographs or filming port areas and commercial sites from their fenced perimeters. Again, I would encourage you all to report any suspicious behaviour on land or water via the “999” system. Also bear in mind that any unusual boat activity could be a sign of people being illegally trafficked from the continent. I have attached an Op Kraken poster with Boarder Force contact details which can be printed and displayed in your clubs.

Please feel free to contact me with any issues or concerns you may have no matter how small they are and I will do my best to help or get the right advice for you.

Stay safe and have a Happy New Year

Kind Regards

Ian

### **Rivers Crouch & Roach**

The winter always sees a significant reduction in activity on the Rivers Crouch and Roach compared to the rest of the year and with the COVID restrictions in place there are even less people about than there normally would be at this time of year. Unfortunately, this does make the Marinas more appealing to thieves, especially during the evenings.

This month a small RIB was stolen from the pontoons at Burnham during the hours of darkness and so please continue to make sure you secure your boats and property and report anything you think looks suspicious to us asap.

As the season picks up and our waters become busier we will be arranging some community engagement events as well as some joint patrols with our Border Force colleagues.

Please feel free to contact the unit with any queries or concerns you may have.

Thank you

Dawn

### **Rivers Blackwater and Colne**

The last 3 months have seen a reduction in water based antisocial behaviour on the Rivers Blackwater and River Colne, inevitable as we come into the winter months.

Unfortunately, the owner of a pleasure craft had the engines removed whilst at moorings on the Salcott Channel. Enquiries are ongoing, but if you see any suspicious behaviour when on the water please report it to us.

We have recorded a small number of thefts from boats and around Mersea we have had reports of small items such as fuel containers being taken from unattended boats on swinging moorings. We are aware of similar incidents where the boat owners have not reported the thefts to Police.

We would urge you to report any crimes to us as it helps us build up the bigger picture and identify any patterns and then deploy our boat and shoreside patrols accordingly. If it's not an emergency you can report crime online or by calling 101.

We received a report of a boat break-in at Maylandsea - the boat was on hard standing at the time. In the current climate where people should be staying at home, we have stepped up our patrols of marinas and storage yards. You can help us by keeping an eye on each other's boats and report any suspicious activity to us.

Stay safe

Daren

### **River Colne**

PC Paul Rawson has just taken over responsibility for this area from PC Daren Chambers. Paul is one of our longest serving officers on the Marine Unit and I understand that a lot of you will have already had dealings with him in the past.

Paul is in the process of making contact with the key stakeholders within this area to arrange some meetings via Teams but feel free to contact him on the above email address if you have any questions or concerns.

### **River Stour, Harwich and Clacton**

Despite the weather recently, I have been taking every opportunity to visit the various sites across the area and have been providing security advice where identified. Understandably the current Government restrictions are having a huge impact on our marine community who have largely not been able to get out on their boats or visit them. I would like to take this opportunity to remind owners that despite the lockdown restrictions, their equipment and property is still at risk of being stolen and so please remember to secure it or remove it where possible.

Towards the end of last year, Essex Police supported our colleagues at Border Force to intercept and secure over sixty people who were crammed into a fishing vessel that was heading to the Essex/Suffolk coast from Belgium. All persons onboard were arrested and taken into custody where they were processed by Border Force staff. This does highlight the fact that our coast is susceptible to this type of activity and so I would encourage everybody to report any suspicious behaviour they see along our shores.

I have also been out teaming up with the local Community Policing Team at Harwich conducting joint high visibility patrols, visiting stake holders and working on some partnership working opportunities for the spring and summer.

Thank you

John