



Dear Marine Community,

The weather has slowly started to improve and as such, we have started seeing a slow but steady increase in activity within our community. We have continued with our increased presence along the coast and have received some positive and encouraging feedback on our Twitter page.

Our Rigid Hulled Inflatable boat is nearing the completion of its refit and will hopefully be out on the water in May. This will help us significantly increase our presence on the water as well as our ability to cover more of the coastline during a single day's patrol.

As well as being a Policing Team for the Marine Community of Essex, my team also have specialist skills including water searching and swift water rescue. Over the last couple of months, they have been involved in searching inland water ways for a knife used in a murder as well as searching for a firearm that had been discarded in a lake. Fortunately, we are supported by our Marine Reserve officers who can backfill the full-time officers to ensure that we are still able to be out and about in the community. While I'm on this subject, our team of reserve officers increases next month as four new members undertake their training at the beginning of May.

From May through to September we will be running Operation Wavebreaker. This is our overarching plan to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour both on the water and along the coastline from Tendring in the North of the County all the way down to Tilbury in the South. We will be working with local councils such as Colchester and Southend to jointly utilise powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Legislation to make the water as safe as we can for all users.

This year will also see us working closely with Maldon District Council to trial an exciting new pilot scheme to tackle anti-social behaviour out on the water. I won't give too much away at the moment as the final preparations are still being pieced together but we are confident that it will allow us to reach out to far more of our community and enable us to engage and educate far more users of our waters as well as giving us greater ability to help Local Authorities enforce the Byelaws. I will update you all soon!!

As more of you take to the water, it's the right time to make sure that you are fully prepared, and your safety equipment is checked, and you know how to use it in an emergency. The RNLI always have a wealth of safety advice and so please have a look on their website and/or social media pages to find out more.

If you have any concerns or need any advice, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Marine Unit Officers -

Sgt 2867 Alex Southgate	Marine Unit	2867@essex.police.uk
PC 72598 John Perry	River Stour/Harwich & Clacton	72598@essex.police.uk
PC 2858 Paul Rawson	River Colne	2858@essex.police.uk
PC 1925 Ian Newling	River Thames/Southend	1925@essex.police.uk
PC 1390 Daren Chambers	River Blackwater	1390@essex.police.uk
PC 2609 Dawn Woods	Rivers Crouch & Roach	2609@essex.police.uk

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

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

Please always ring 999 if your matter is an emergency.

Thank you for your support,

Alex Southgate

River Thames And Southend

As you are all aware the anti-social behaviour involving some jet ski users has started early this season and I have already received a number of complaints from other water users, Councillors and off duty Police Officers. I know this is of great concern to us all and I have already had joint meetings with the Council, Port of London Authority and the local Policing Team to discuss water safety and a review of the current Byelaws is also currently taking place. Could I ask that all dangerous and nuisance incidents on the water and shoreline are continued to be reported via “101”, online at Essex Police or in an emergency “999”. I have already started to collate these incidents so please try and include numbers and descriptions of persons and vessels involved and any identifying marks on vessels. Footage of these incidents is really powerful evidence and if this can be captured without compromising your own safety then please forward to me @ Ian.Newling@essex.police.uk. There is obviously a lot more work to be completed with water safety and you all have my full support to achieve this.

The illegal harvesting of shellfish has also started early on the Southend and Canvey shoreline and this activity has a high commercial value. The oyster beds on the Southend shoreline are unlicensed and any product entering the food chain is untraceable making it impossible to identify the source of any outbreak of food poisoning. Some of this activity is funded by organised crime gangs and frequently involves people that are coerced or forced to do this work including illegal migrants. This season I have already been working with the Environmental Officers from Southend Council, the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority and the charity Care and Justice who support victims of this type of crime. Most of the pickers involved are outside the area and have little or no knowledge of the dangers of working in tidal waters and how easily it is to be cut off by the tide, so please report any activity to the council on my.southend.gov.uk or “999” in an emergency.

Please continue to stay safe

Kind Regards

Ian

Rivers Crouch & Roach

Covid restrictions are beginning to relax and we are looking forward to seeing you on the water again soon.

I would like to start off by thanking the staff at Burnham Marina who assisted us by locating a vulnerable missing child recently. The help and support you give us really is invaluable, and on this occasion brought welcome relief to everyone involved in the search for the child who was safely returned home.

Staying with Burnham, unfortunately at the beginning of the year we had a report of the theft of an outboard from a small dinghy. Whilst you are in your marinas or clubs please keep your eye out for people who you don't recognise and report them to your harbourmaster or appropriate club representatives. It is also a good time to evaluate the security of your boat and equipment. Please contact us if you would like advice or suggestions.

As the weather is improving, we are starting to see more recreational users on the water. Please remember all water users require a licence when using the Crouch (see <https://crouchharbour.uk/dues/>) and this includes paddle boarders, kayakers and PWCs (Jet skis).

On the subject of Jet skis, we are aware of ongoing issues of excessive speed from Jet ski users launching at Hullbridge. If you have any information regarding these water users, we would love to know. Please contact us at MarineU@essex.police.uk, report it online at <https://www.essex.police.uk/> or call 101 if non-urgent, otherwise call 999 for emergencies.

River Blackwater

It has been a relatively quiet period in the last quarter due to the national lockdown restrictions.

The only items of note for this update relate to ongoing nuisance issues at marinas where local youths have been breaking into boats on the hardstanding. This is a timely reminder to make sure you secure your boat adequately and remove any means of access if you store your boat on hardstanding. Please also ensure you remove any valuables on display.

As restrictions begin to relax, I am sure we are all looking forward to getting back on the water. We are hoping we do not see a return of some of the water based anti-social behaviour experienced last year, but if you do see any please report it to us. If we are able to attend, we will do. If you have clear photographic evidence of water based anti-social behaviour please send them to us at marineu@essex.police.uk. If you witness more serious offences, please report them via normal methods (online or 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies).

We would love to meet you face to face. If you see us, please come over and say hello. If you are planning a regatta or other event, please do let me know as we would love to come along and hear about the issues that are important to you.

You can learn more about the Police Marine unit and the local bylaws by visiting www.essex.police.uk/police-forces/essex-police/areas/essex-police/au/about-us/marine-unit/

River Colne

It's been fairly quiet so far this year, with only one or two initial reports of launchers from Point clear, but no reports of Anti-Social Behaviour so far. In view of the current lockdown and inability to travel we are expecting a busy season this year and I would urge anyone to report any issues of Anti-Social behaviour or marine crime to Essex Police so that we have a complete picture of what is happening in the River Colne. The River Colne has historically been one of our hotspot areas, please be assured that it will be one of our targeted areas and you can expect to see us on the water in your areas regularly. We are committed to working with the community and partners to help improve your local area and will continue to monitor issues as they appear.

We have had our first river community meeting on 31st March on Teams to discuss the forthcoming year, with a second planned for 27th April. Our discussions have included the forthcoming plans from various community members and Police which include;

- (i) Development of a Public Space Protection Order for the river with Colchester Council to help us deal with anti-social behaviour. This will include giving us the ability to issue fixed penalties and move people on from the area when they cause ASB.
- (ii) Ongoing talks with Bourne Leisure around the use of Point Clear launching area.
- (iii) ANPR at Point clear provided by the Brightlingsea Harbour Master.
- (iv) Colne Watch and council plans to improve river signage for users.
- (v) Launch of Operation Wavebreaker by Essex Police to target anti-social behaviour on the water during 2021. This will involve High visibility policing around the Essex Coastline every weekend during the season.

As membership of this community group increases, we hope that other river users will be able to raise any issues they may have for discussion throughout the year. If you would like to take part in future meetings or would like to raise an issue, please let me know.

During 2021 we are hoping to attend as many regatta's and club events as possible in your area, if you know of any river events already booked where you would like our involvement please contact us to discuss how we can help.

River Stour, Harwich and Clacton

Understandably the Government restrictions during the Covid19 Pandemic had a huge impact on our marine and foreshore's community having access to their vessels and enjoying our coastlines. I would like to thank all those that abided by the Government Guidelines in 'staying at home' in order to reduce the strain on all the emergency services.

Since our last quarterly newsletter, I have continued with our site visits from both land and sea, and where needed highlighted any identifiable security issues or findings, whilst also managing to catch up with a few of you on route.

In the coming weeks/months on your return to the water I hope that you find everything as you left it and that no opportunist have helped themselves to items or caused malicious damage. Should you

find yourself as a victim of crime please report this on-line and follow the steps in the following link or call Essex Police on 101. Please add as much detail of equipment that may have been stolen to give us the best opportunity of identifying it via online enquiries or at upcoming boat jumbles which we shall be in attendance. <https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

We have received a report of criminal damage in Wrabness, where a bridge onto the marshland has been vandalised after suspects have taken a chainsaw to it! and around the coastline there have been a small number of boat's being broken into on their moorings or hard standings and as we speak reports of small items missing from sailing club storage yards.

Please report any suspicious behaviour both on land or water, on-line or by calling 101, or if deemed an emergency by calling 999. Unusual boat and coastal activity could be a sign of people with ill intent or being illegally trafficked into the UK and we are looking to recruit your eyes and ears as all information coming in helps us in building an intelligence picture to target the offenders along with our partner agencies.