

Summer 2023

## PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER ON THE THAMES

We are urging people to familiarise themselves with the new extended Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that covers Southend seafront.

During the pandemic, there was a rise in the number of people using personal watercraft (PWCs or jetskis) but a small minority behaved irresponsibly, putting other water users in danger and breaking local byelaws.

The extension of the PSPO covers the whole of the Southend foreshore from the MOD grounds at Blackgate Road to half-way across Two Tree Island where there are sites of scientific interest.

The only place you are allowed to launch a PWC from is the Shoebury Common Slipway in Ness Road and everybody riding a PWC will now have to stay at least 400m away from any public beach, pier or berthing area.

Failure to comply with a PSPO is a criminal offence that can lead to a fixed penalty notice of £100 or a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

During the 2022 season, we stopped and spoke to 179 personal watercraft riders and 49 people in power boats about their behaviour on the water.

And, as a result, 164 verbal warnings were given and 12 personal watercraft riders reported for court action after speeding.



PC Ian Newling, who covers the River Thames, said the PSPO has been brought in after several near misses involving PWCs and anti-social behaviour from riders.

“We don’t want to discourage people from using PWCs, the idea is to make sure that everyone is safe and that includes the riders themselves.

“The PSPO is there to regulate those people who don’t want to abide by the rules. While the vast majority have been fine, a small minority have been causing problems.

“Their riding has been dangerous at times. They have ridden through moorings, and in areas where there have been swimmers, kayakers and paddleboarders. It’s fortunate that we’ve not had any serious incidents.

“We will always look to engage with people first and explain the legislation, but if there are repeat offenders, we will take enforcement action.”

PC Newling’s advice to anyone thinking about going out on the water is clear.

He said: “Get some proper tuition before you even consider buying a PWC and build up your experience. PWCs are the motorbikes of the water and people underestimate how powerful they are. Some PWC can go as fast as 90 knots. If you hit a wave at even 50 knots, you’re likely to come off and seriously injure yourself.”



## HMS Trumpeter

At the end of July, the team joined up with the Royal Navy to complete some planned joint training. Over the course of three days, we tested our interoperability with the Navy's HMS Trumpeter and her crew. This included cross-decking (where crews transfer between vessels whilst moving) casualty evacuation and search and rescue/man overboard techniques.

HMS Trumpeter had just returned to her home port of Ipswich from overseas and her crew of six were keen to find out about what we do, our equipment and vessels as well as our capabilities.

This has cemented the foundations for future training and joint operations between us in the future.



## Kent & Essex IFCA

Our team work closely with our colleagues from the Brightlingsea office of the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. IFCA manage local inshore fisheries resources and protect our diverse marine environment. This includes monitoring, education and in some cases, enforcement.

Joint patrols have seen staff from IFCA join us on our boat while we cover the North Essex coast and have allowed us to gather, develop and share intelligence as well as continue to provide a visible presence and reassurance in our marine community.

At the beginning of August we joined IFCA for shore patrols at West Mersea in response to reports of thefts of oysters. This gave us the opportunity to speak with both local fishermen as well as residents about their concerns and develop our information and understanding of the problem.

## Reporting Suspicious Activity

Did you know that there are several different agencies which work to protect the coast and keep both the UK and the marine community safe? To ensure that any information regarding suspicious behaviour along the coast is passed to the correct agency promptly, Crimestoppers run the *Coastal Crime Line*. You can provide information anonymously by calling 0800 011 3304

If you, or someone else, is in immediate danger or a crime is in progress call 999.

**REPORT IT. LET'S SORT IT.**

To report anonymously, call the Coastal Crime Line powered by Crimestoppers on 0800 011 3304. In an emergency, always call 999.



Follow us on Twitter @EPMarine



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

IN AN EMERGENCY  
ALWAYS CALL 999

## Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

At the end of June we received reports of an incident on the River Colne at Rowhedge involving a large group of PWC riders. Several 999 calls were made to our control room after the group engaged with people on the river bank and our RHIB Sentinel was able to catch up with some of the PWC riders as they returned to Point Clear.

As a result of enquires by our team, three PWC riders have been summonsed to court for breaching the speed limit byelaws while another has been summonsed for an offence of common assault.

Each year we run Operation Wave Breaker over the summer months which focuses our patrols in the key hotspot areas for ASB, which are as follows—

- River Colne
- River Blackwater
- River Thames/Southend/Leigh On Sea

These patrols are in addition to our usual work and aim to reduce ASB through engagement, education and where necessary, enforcement. This operation has been running since 2020 and each year the number of reports (and instances of speeding found by our team) has reduced. This year I think its fair to say that the poor weather has also helped reduce the numbers but, that aside, our increased activity, visibility and joined up approach with our Harbourmasters has helped send a strong message to those that choose to ignore the speed limits.



## The Rules Around PWCs

We often receive reports of PWCs being ridden by children. However, generally there isn't an age limit on who can ride them.

The speed limits around our coastline come under local authority byelaws which are usually obtained by Harbourmasters to ensure safety in and out of busy areas of water.

Unlike on the roads, we can't issue speeding tickets to those who exceed the speed limits and there aren't offences of careless or dangerous driving. However, we can and do report those who breach the speed limit to the courts who in turn have issued heavy fines.

Those who have caused damage to other vessels or serious injury to another person, or would likely do so due to their behaviour, can be prosecuted under the Merchant Shipping Act which can result in fines up to £2000 and or a prison sentence of up to 6 months.

As mentioned already, some local authorities around the UK have obtained Public Spaces Protection Orders which does allow for tickets to be issued for breaching the conditions of the order.

Also, some Harbourmasters have stipulated that only those who have completed an Royal Yachting Association PWC course and have third party insurance can launch and use PWCs in their harbour areas.

In some cases, such as on the River Stour, the local Harbourmaster has banned the use of them altogether.

## Snapshots Of Our Work In Your Areas



We were tasked to provide an escort for HMS Diamond as she passed along our coastline and up the River Thames for the King's Coronation



The poor weather led to a low turnout for the Brightlingsea Regatta but it didn't stop us attending with our colleagues from Clacton RNLI



Throughout the summer PC Rawson has been conducting early evening patrols at Hullbridge to deter ASB on the River Crouch



We have joined forces with Essex County Fire and Rescue to support their Water Safety campaign. PCs Clark and Cox at a Clacton engagement event



We have excellent links with our local HM Coastguard Teams and have worked with the Clacton team on a recent multi-agency exercise.



Operation Wave Breaker patrols to tackle ASB continued this year. This included joint patrols with the Brightlingsea Harbour Master



Boarding ships entering the River Thames alongside our colleagues from Border Force



Our RHIB Sentinel out on patrol on the River Colne



Out on the Maldon District Council PWCs, patrolling the River Blackwater



Joint patrols with Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries



Working with West Mersea RNLI at Maldon

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

Digital  
101  
[essex.police.uk](https://essex.police.uk)

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

IN AN EMERGENCY  
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## Alert IV Retires From Service

Over the years, our Police launch Alert IV has been a familiar sight along the Essex Coast.

Originally built in 1996 by Halmatic, she is one of three identical vessels that went into service with the former Customs & Excise.

In 2005, Essex police acquired her for their fleet and she was immediately put to work from her home port of Burnham.

The Alert weighs over 17 tonne and has headed out to sea in all weather including snow and gale force winds.

She carries all manner of equipment including stretchers, a defib, boarding ladders and body recovery equipment.

She is also fitted with a galley comprising of oven, fridge, toaster and microwave, allowing officers to remain at sea for extended periods of time.

Over her service she has tackled everything from the Olympic Games, escorting warships and Royal visits to firearms incidents and rescues. She has even made it over to mainland Europe and back during a training exercise some years back.

She has served the Marine Community of Essex well and provided close to 20 years of deterrent, visibility and reassurance along our coastline.

We are in the process of identifying a replacement vessel (Cabin RHIB) and will update you with further details when we are able to.



Alert IV in 2005 shortly after she joined Essex Police



Returning home to Burnham at dusk in 2022



## Lock Up Your Outboards

Unfortunately, we have seen a recent rise in the number of outboard engines which have been stolen. This has been a particular problem around the River Blackwater and so we are asking our Marine Community to be extra vigilant around marinas and boatyards, especially as we head towards the end of the season and look to start winterising our boats.

There are some simple steps you can take to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of marine crime, including the use of outboard engine covers and engine locks.

As always, please report any suspicious behaviour or anything that doesn't look right to 101 or our do-it-online portal.



A simple lock can deter thieves



**Let's Talk About MARINE CRIME** | 5 MINUTES | 5 TIPS

- 1** **Fit good quality locks to your boat.** Using surface mounted barrel locks or cheap padlocks are more likely to attract the attention of thieves. We recommend a good quality padlock and hasp/n'stiple secured by stainless steel nut and bolts. Outboards should be fitted with a specific outboard lock. If you are unable to lock it – remove it.
- 2** **Trailers are easy targets for thieves.** Always fit a quality trailer lock to the hitch and a wheel clamp, or better still fit a detachable hitch and remove it. Consider having a ground anchor fitted and chain the trailer to it.
- 3** **Mark your property.** This deters thieves and helps us return your property if it gets stolen. Consider using paint or a permanent marker, an ultra-violet permanent marker or Datatag. Selecta DNA property marking kits are available specifically for marine equipment.
- 4** **Fitting an alarm to your boat and advertising it is a great deterrent.** Consider a sensor on the hatch with a passive infra-red beam in the main cabin. Guard wires can be fitted which activate when cut, these are ideal to protect dinghies and outboard motors. Sirens fitted inside the cabin will disorientate an intruder and fitting strobes to the highest point on the mast will help draw attention.
- 5** **Always remove any ladders or other means of access to your boat** if you are storing your boat on hardstanding.

Read this leaflet? Pass it on to a relative, friend or neighbour. Let's all talk about crime and how to prevent it happening.

ESSEX POLICE | Let's Talk About MARINE CRIME | SECURE PROTECT PREVENT



## 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](http://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**