NEW FOREST SAILABILITY

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

Charity no: 1210484

Chairman: Malcolm Bentley

Editor: Rowena Marsh

newseditor@newforestsailability.co.uk

Dates for your diary:
Mon 7 Dec—Xmas Lunch

Fri 2 April 2027—Start of sailing

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This year we have had nearly gale force winds; mega hot weather that made it essential to make sure the sailors had plenty of suncream and arms and legs covered; a couple of days when it was raining so had to cancel the session; and some champagne sailing days when it was a pleasure to be at the lake. Plus the closure of the A31 for 2 weeks, just east of Ringwood which caused chaos. So, all in all, a normal sailing season!



Although we have had the inevitable weed problem in the last few weeks, Spinnaker are doing their best to "de-weed" using the contraption that looks like a creature from outer space—thanks to Mags Ryle for the photo. Having said that, the safety boat teams and the pontoon teams have also been pulling out rakes full of weeds when they are not busy on other duties. I know from my own safety boat duty recently, towing boats back to the pontoon when we could not clear their "bottoms" has kept us fully occupied!

Whilst talking about the safety boat, the question was raised recently about who can—or more importantly cannot—skipper the safety boat. Malcolm has set out a much needed (and appreciated by me, at least) explanation in his Chairman's comments on page 2

On to the Race Training afternoons. I am only sorry that I could only make one session this year, and that was manning a safety boat. From the WhatsApp messages, there seems to have been a lot of fun with rescues of caps, coke bottles, bottom scraping and sausage courses. No—me neither! If you are interested in improving your sailing skills, even if not contemplating racing, then contact Steve Kitson for details and he will see about getting you on the Training list.

Late breaking news and only space for one photo—and that is of Steve Kitson and Jane Knight collecting 2nd place prize at the PaperCourt Sailing TT Race on 30 September. Well done to Steve and Jane. Andy Holmes and Calvin came fifth on 11 points in a very tight contest which came down to a count back on race finishes. They could have sneaked 3rd place.



As always a big thanks and acknowledgment to Chris Wales for most of the photos.

Rowena Marsh



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN—MALCOLM BENTLEY

In her Introduction Rowena mentions Safety Boats and who can drive. It is important that we are all familiar with any rules or instructions that we must follow and equally ensure that we fully understand them, seek clarification/guidance if necessary and practice any relevant skills, also such as hoists and slings.

The discussion has identified that the latest NFS Power Boat Instructions 8.25, issued to reflect Spinnaker policy that the minimum qualification to drive a power boat is RYA Power Boat level 2, means that it is not permitted for anyone without this minimum qualification to helm a power boat. Our amended instructions state that the helm of a Safety Boat must also hold the RYA Safety Boat qualification. ***This was not the intention (and will be updated*).**

It may be worthwhile to clarify what NFS means by some of these nautical terms:

Crew: the individuals on board with designated roles, as opposed to passengers

Manned by: the requirement for *crew* on board

Driver: the person on the *helm*

Helm: the person steering, controlling the boat with the throttle, and wearing the killcord

Skipper: the person in command, not necessarily the *helm/driver*.

Our rules and Spinnakers rules are that the safety boat can be *skippered* ONLY by a person with the RYA Safety Boat qualification and at the moment the NFS rules state that they must also be the helm. On the powerboat used for trips around the lake—normally Tango—anyone with a Powerboat 2 (PB2) qualification can drive.

Nigel Silman is doing the RYA Power Boat instructor course in November so should then be able to run courses for us. At the moment, we still need to ask Spinnaker (or another instructor venue) to carry out the Safety Boat training.

Whilst NFS sets the rules etc. and arranges some refresher training at the start of the season, this does not allow time for practice; remembering everything for the whole season isn't easy; not all may carefully read the rules; and it isn't always easy to ensure that the current version of any rules are properly uploaded and readily accessible. Thus it was an excellent initiative by Lindsey to arrange the Safety Boat refresher, which will be repeated—the next one probably at the start of next season.

We need a wide range of rules, instructions and guidance to make NFS run efficiently, safely and enjoyably for volunteers, sailors, their families and carers alike. All of this of course means that we likewise need a large group of volunteers with a wide range of responsibilities and skills willing to make it all happen by devoting time, much of it outside the sessions on the lake. A few (fairly random) examples include:

- Xmas lunch (arranging with the golf club, menu, Google form to sign up and chose menu, cross-checking payments from cards or BACs)
- Check in system (up to date data on members and groups, cross-checking annual fee receipts from cards or BACs, the Board displays....),
- Arranging and manning a stand to promote NFS at a public fair
- Managing and updating 3 Rings.....

To overcome a couple of IT issues, including ready access to the latest documents and mass emails, too many of which are now treated as spam, we may move both of these to 3 Rings. It has a Filestore, which now has the NFS Power Boat Instructions 8.25 uploaded, and a Comms system for administrators to send emails to volunteers, selected by role if desired.



FROM OUR TREASURER— ANDY HOLMES

Financial Review

From a financial point of view this season compares favourably with previous years. We have only lost a few sailing days this season. Consequently sailing fees, which are one of our main sources of income, are over £900 higher than for the same period last year. While the fees paid to Spinnaker Sailing Club and the insurance premiums have seen small increases the amount spent on equipment and maintenance so far is lower than last year. I am hopeful that by the end of the season our income will cover all our operating costs and that there will be a small operating surplus.

Conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

The process to convert our charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is now complete. The application to create the new charity was made in the spring 2024. The new charity "New Forest Sailability" was registered by the Charity Commission in October 2024 and we were then able to apply to open new NatWest bank accounts for NFS which seemed to take for ever to deal with. We then had to seek approval from the Charity Commission to transfer all the funds and assets from New Forest & District Sailability to the new charity. That approval was granted and everything was transferred over to the new charity in August last year. Since then we have been operating as New Forest Sailability. We have now reached the point that the old charity "New Forest and District Sailability" will be wound up and dissolved.

FROM ANDY AS PART OF THE BOSUN'S TEAM

News from the Bosun's Team

The Trustees have taken the decision to reduce the size of our fleet as we have only been using six Hansa 303s on sailing days and for a number of years have made almost no use of our 2.3's. It has therefore been decided to trade in three Hansa 303's and one Hansa 2.3 for a new Hansa 303. This will leave us with a fleet of nine Hansa 303's and one Hansa 2.3, which should be quite adequate for our needs. The boats that we will be trading in are numbers 2 - the blue boat, 5 - Ferndown Golf, 9 - Sun Ray and 14 - Blue Peter. Before we acquired a second power boat to give sailors trips around the lake we needed enough capacity to take everyone sailing. Now that this is no longer the case it is an appropriate time to reduce the number of boats that we have. It is also an opportunity to trade our oldest boats which will soon all be over 12 years old and will give us fewer boats to maintain.

We also plan to replace our power jet washer which we need to clean our pontoons, with one that can draw water directly from the lake. After a number of attempts to repair the old jet washer we have decided that it is no longer fit for our purposes as it is intended to work off a mains water supply and despite everyone's best efforts no longer works off water supplied from the water butt.

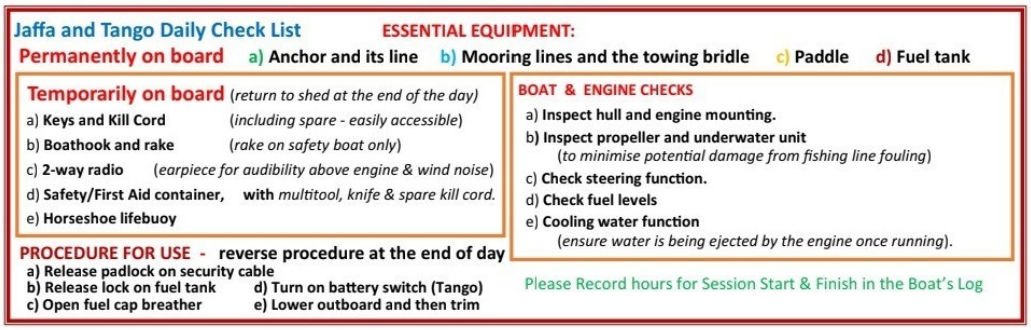
SAFETY BOAT REFRESHER

Suggested by Lindsey Venner, and organised by her via Brent, his son Dom Coleman came to give us a practical refresher safety boat course. Each session was a half day and covered:

- Set up of the boat
- Equipment needed
- How the ramp works
- Approaching a casualty in the water
- Approaching and rescuing a dinghy

There were two sessions—one morning and one afternoon. As well as the refresher attendees, we needed a dinghy skipper for each session ie someone to be rescued. Thanks go to Charlie and Calvin for volunteering to be the dinghy sailor. I don't know how the morning session went but mega apologies to Calvin for the multitude of times we needed to throw the rescue rope "bomb" to him. I think we only hit him once—mostly the throwers were fairly accurate.

As far as the equipment goes, there had been a laminated check list on each powerboat. These are to be updated and reinstated on the powerboats.



Jaffa and Tango Daily Check List **ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT:**

Permanently on board a) **Anchor and its line** b) **Mooring lines and the towing bridle** c) **Paddle** d) **Fuel tank**

Temporarily on board (*return to shed at the end of the day*)
- a) **Keys and Kill Cord** (*including spare - easily accessible*)
- b) **Boathook and rake** (*rake on safety boat only*)
- c) **2-way radio** (*earpiece for audibility above engine & wind noise*)
- d) **Safety/First Aid container,** **with** *multitool, knife & spare kill cord.*
- e) **Horseshoe lifebuoy**

BOAT & ENGINE CHECKS
- a) **Inspect hull and engine mounting.**
- b) **Inspect propeller and underwater unit** (*to minimise potential damage from fishing line fouling*)
- c) **Check steering function.**
- d) **Check fuel levels**
- e) **Cooling water function** (*ensure water is being ejected by the engine once running*).

PROCEDURE FOR USE - reverse procedure at the end of day
- a) Release padlock on security cable
- b) Release lock on fuel tank
- c) Open fuel cap breather
- d) Turn on battery switch (Tango)
- e) Lower outboard and then trim

Please Record hours for Session Start & Finish in the Boat's Log

Following the refresher, Lindsey produced these notes together with some possible actions:

1. Drift downwind approach – assume driver and 1 x crew in safety boat
   We used this method to approach a casualty in the water.
   First, use radio to communicate with OOD that there is a situation and proceed to casualty. Approach slowly, going in and out of neutral. Position boat a few metres away, across the wind, so the wind drifts the boat towards to casualty. Talk to casualty to reassure. Click into gear forward or backward to adjust position. Kill engine at the point where you are confident your crew will make contact with casualty.
   SB driver and crew work together to hold onto casualty, lower ramp down to water by slowly walking up ramp to ensure controlled lowering (unclip the side furthest from winch handle first), bring casualty to ramp, bring casualty aboard preferably on casualty front (driver & crew lift together), stay with casualty and assess whilst other person raises ramp. Drive to shore.
2. Approach from downwind
   We used this approach when the wind dropped – you need to be very confident in the drivers ability to drive up to a casualty and not run into them.
3. Towing a Hansa off a lee-shore
   We used the bow-tow method. Approach the sailboat with the bow of SB pointing into the shore, wind behind you. Crew throws a throw rope. Skipper wraps line around the mast twice and holds the end. Skipper raises rudder, if possible to avoid breakage. SB slowly reverses, into the wind, towing the sailboat off the lee shore. Ensure you drive out far enough. Think about lifting engine. Sailboat may need to attach rope to something else (like bow painter) if they cannot easily reach the mast.
4. Practice holding SB just off a buoy on the lake, taking account of the wind.

There were some question about the fuel tank (where we seem to have issues this season).
1. Should the air vent be left open or closed when not in use. In an ideal world we should leave fuel cans full, so there is no air, then compression of tank is not an issue. In our case this is not practical, so the suggestion is to leave vents open, all the time, unless we are transporting them on/off the boats.
2. Should the tanks be locked on boats or unlocked when in use. We could leave them locked all the time as it is difficult to foresee a scenario when they would be released in an emergency, if there was a fire you would get as far away from tank as possible.

TT Race Day— Thursday 9 July 2026

Report by Malcolm Bentley

This year we moved the event to Thursday 9 July to avoid clashing with the busy club racing at Spinnaker Sailing Club on a Wednesday and this worked well. Entries were strong with 29 up from 25 last year.

The lake was mirror flat in the morning and racing was postponed from the scheduled 11am start. Fortunately, as expected, the wind did fill in at about 12 noon, albeit variable and shifty. This meant that only 3 races would be run, 1 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon and would mean there would be no discards.

The heat wave was still pretty strong and affected several sailors and volunteers but fortunately everyone was careful regarding hydrating, sun cream, hats, shade (when they had the chance on shore) and having a safety boat on standby to pour water over their head between races.

James Oborne, the Race Officer from Spinnaker, set a 4 mark course, with the first leeward mark left to starboard with the 3rd, short leg back upwind to the left of the course, leaving mark 3 to starboard and then downwind to leeward mark 4 to port and then upwind through the line on each lap and on up to Mark 1. This introduced some attractive novelty to TT courses, including leg 4 crossing leg 2.

The Liberty fleet of 6 boats started first, 4 from Frensham Pond and 2 from Whitefriars. Racing was close and competitive and, rarely in a TT, even saw a protest hearing from race 1 on giving mark-room. Mike Everitt picked up some weed in the second race, so may have lost some time whilst a safety boat towed him astern, finishing 4th in that race. However, he was 1st in the other two races and ended with 6 points, tied with Paul Phillips, and thus won the event having two first places to Paul's one. This also places Mike first in the 2026 National series to date after 7 events, with Dave Durston second and Paul Pearson third.

The 303 2 Person was the biggest fleet of the day with 13 boats, nicely swelled as usual with 5 boats from New Forest Sailability, with at least 4 sailors crewing in a TT for the first time.

Over the three races, the 1st and 2nd places were shared amongst just three boats, with only one 4th and one 5th between them. Jazz Turner and Seb were clear winners with two 1st and a 2nd, Lara Sturgis and Kat were second, just a point ahead of Lynne and Stuart Swan. The best New Forest Sailability boat was 4th sailed by **Jane Knight** and **Judith Cooling**.

The 303 1 Person, this year with 5 out of 8 boats from Whitefriars members, was similarly tightly competitive amongst the top three boats, between them gaining all but one of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd places in the three races. Sophie Brisley and James Woosnam were tied on 5 points, giving Sophie first place for the event having won two races. Phil Monk was third.

With only two entries in the Hansa 2.3, they started with the 303 1 Person fleet. Andrew Lebec had to retire from race 2, having won the first race, and so always had a challenge to beat Sarah Parker, who won that race and race 3.



Jane & Judith



FloJo & FloBo—Friendly rivalry?? Perhaps not!



All important tea table—really sorry to have missed that

MOMENTS AROUND THE SEASON



George Barratt-Pearce



Chris Scott

Both achieving their Silver Awards



Ben Maxwell receiving his Certificate of achievement and badge

Probably our youngest ever sailor

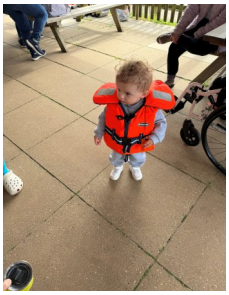
Val Stevens wrote: On Friday we had Paula, carer to Scott visit us with her daughter and grandson. The idea was for all of them to go out in Tango but there was concern regarding a life jacket for the little one. Thankfully, Malcolm found something in the shed and the photos are of the little man wearing his life jacket. Unfortunately we had a queue and by the time they got out on the water the little man went to sleep!! He looked so cute and surely at 19 months old must be our youngest sailor yet!!



Umm—I like my new jacket



I'm ready to go



Come on—I'm waiting

Weed and Wind (or no wind)



We have had the annual growth of weed in the last few weeks which has given the safety boats crews some much needed practice in boat rescues and weed removal. There has also been some comment in the Race Team WhatsApp group—something about Bill and Ben, but I am much too young to understand the references (yes, I am!).



Talking about weed—here is a photo of Olly waiting to be de-weeded and feeling the temperature of the lake.
Well, it has been hot this season.

And one of Rory paddling back in zero wind conditions.
I note that Jane is not exerting herself!



Putting the boats away at the end of the day

There are ways of doing things and then there are the smarty pants ways of doing things. If you think it is hard work getting the boats to the launch pontoon at the end of the day, try this—it's John Harper style!

STUART FOREMAN—RIP



On 27 June, Malcolm Bentley sent the email that with great sadness he had heard of the sudden passing away of Stuart from Stuart's sister Sue.

I think it is only now that it is possible to reflect on Stuart's contribution to NFS, after his untimely death. Certainly on Tuesdays I am going to the lake to find that the powerboats are still unprepared, there may or may not be enough fuel for the engines, there is no-one telling us how the boats/ powerboats/ engine locks/ fuel breather caps/ radios etc should be set up or reminding us of the various codes for padlocks, gates and clubhouse. (Although it is a big thanks to Calvin in particular on Tuesdays that the radios are powered up and the disabled parking cones are put out.) Stuart—OK, a marmite figure— was always there sorting stuff out and reminding us how things worked. He was also always getting repairs done—even if it meant him trying to delegate to someone else!

I remember Stuart starting to sail with us. He would go out in a 2.3 having set up a Go-Pro camera to record himself sailing and, I always assumed, to help him to improve his sailing. Actually, he was definitely a "gadget man" so he may just have wanted to play with his toys! Later on, he decided he wanted to learn to helm the safety boat and I remember him crewing for me and then asking to take the helm (something which would not be possible now when you need Powerboat 2 to helm). Then he decided to do his PB2 course—in Southampton so that he could learn on the sea rather than on the easier waters of the lake. We did the Safety Boat course together and he (with, I think, encouragement from John Harper) spent much of the sailing days and race days in the safety boat. Although he did still skipper a 303 when there were enough safety boat drivers or he wanted a change.

I regarded Stuart as a "buddy". Yes - he could be pedantic but, gosh, did he give a lot of time, effort and energy to NFS. I last had a couple of hours with him in the safety boat on a race training afternoon and he was still full of plans for his future, including training to become a dinghy instructor. Always wanting to keep learning. I know he had his medical problems and didn't like the heat but was still battling on. I, and NFS, will miss him.

Some other comments:

Chris Wales: Sad loss

John Harper: Shocked and saddened to hear of Stuart's passing, a good guy who will be sadly missed.

Mags Ryle: Just got back and heard the news about Stuart's sudden death. How sad, and a great loss.







Stuart was a devoted sailor and volunteer at NFS and most of you will know that he was awarded the inaugural Volunteer of the Year Award in 2024.

Here are some photos of him—although my favourite is of him and John Harper on "red alert" on the safety boat during the covid pandemic. Actually, I have changed my mind—doing "bunny rabbit" ears with Steve Kitson is a photo I have not seen before and shows his more cheeky side!



Hated any kind of fuss!

TESTWOOD LAKES SAILABILITY

KINGS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

As mentioned in the Spring 2026 newsletter, Testwood Lakes Sailability (TLS) has been awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. The ceremony took place on 14 May and was attended by Malcolm Bentley on behalf of New Forest Sailability.

As many of you will know, TLS was set up by Eric Blyth, who was also a driving force in setting up NFS. Eric, who suffered from MS, unfortunately died before the award was granted but he was represented at the ceremony by his widow, Sheila. Spike Spencer (also a driving force in the early days of NFS) reported "Yesterday's ceremony at Testwood was a great success despite the intermittent rain and hail! Malcom was there as a visitor from NFS. The Lord Lieutenant himself made a splendid speech and passed the award into Sheila Blythe's hands. Geoff Holt sent his apologies as he had to be elsewhere for the LL to present another KAVS to Geoff's Wetwheels organisation later the same day. The TLS event was filmed for Channel 7 local TV so may appear there over the next day or two."



Sheila Blyth accepting the Award
from the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire



Members of Testwood Lakes Sailability
and a 303 named Eric Blyth

RON SAWFORD, MBE

Another recognition for Sailability is the award of an MBE to Ron Sawford in the King's Birthday Honours List in June. Ron was instrumental in the development and success of the Hansa Class in the UK and until recently was in sole command of the various Hansa events and regattas.

His company, Sawford Marine Ltd, is the sole UK manufacturer and distributor of the Hansa boats so it is fair to say that we have had lots of contact with him over the years. Long may that continue and congratulations to Ron for the honour.



Ron with the 2019 Exceptional Contribution Award from RYA Sailability