



The Portishead Lifeboat Trust

Registered Office:  
108 High Street  
Portishead  
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WE ARE ON THE WEB!  
<http://www.portishead-lifeboat.org.uk/>

## KEY CONTACTS

### Chairman:

Colin Wilson Tel: 01275 848967

### Vice Chairman:

David Herbert Tel: 01275 849578

### Training Officer:

Justin Olver Tel: 01275 818365

### Friends co-ordinator:

Colin Burgin Tel: 01275 844550

### Fundraising co-ordinator:

Brett Higgins Tel: 07886 644594

### The Portishead Lifeboat Trust Aims...

*To save and protect the lives of the general public in particular by the provision of a Lifeboat in the Severn Estuary centred at Portishead*



### I want to become a "Friend" of The Portishead Lifeboat Trust

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode:..... Telephone:.....

I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to **The Portishead Lifeboat Trust**.

I agree to my name being held on the TPLT database for the sole purpose of receiving information about TPLT. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and would like the donation to be treated as a gift aid donation.

Signature:..... Date:.....

Friend of TPLT Annual Membership £10 min.  
Friend of TPLT Annual Family Membership £17 min.  
Friend of TPLT Life Membership £250

Please return to:-

Friends of TPLT, 108 High Street, Portishead, Bristol BS20 6AJ  
Registered Charity 1049104



Life Line

November 05

The Portishead Lifeboat Trust is always on the lookout for volunteers and help at fundraising events. Should you be able to help, even for an hour, please contact Brett Higgins :- tel 70886 644594

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# Life Line

The Newsletter for Friends of The Portishead Lifeboat Trust.

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### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT A.G.M

31.October 2005. - Mr. Colin Wilson.

The trust has had an eventful and satisfying year and has further consolidated its position within the local community. We have built bridges with the Sailing Club, we have a flag to fly and have also dedicated a new Standard but most important of all we have saved two young lives. The Lifeboat Station relocation project continues albeit rather more slowly than we would like. The Treasurer's report and statement of accounts notes we are still afloat but urgently need to expand our fundraising activities in order to strengthen our financial position.

**The Lifeboat.** The 'Denbar Sage' I am pleased to report has lived up to the expectations of all concerned and we remain content and delighted with her. We will be changing the propulsion units this Autumn as they are over two years old. That apart, the Lifeboat is in good shape and should serve us for many years to come. Bob Crane and Hydrex must again be complimented for their continued and unstinting support. Without this our operating costs would be much higher. I am pleased to report that the Crew and shore helpers keep the boat cleaned and polished to the high standard expected of a craft such as ours. This indicates a pride in the vessel and in the organization we all respect.

**Our equipment.** Our equipment and boathouse in general would seem to be in good order. A minor repair to the boathouse roof was effected during the year and the roof repainted on the outside. We are currently considering further roof insulation in order to reduce the condensation levels with a view to reducing some of our electrical difficulties. A fuel store was obtained, again thanks to Bob Crane and Hydrex, the base for which we will construct this winter.

**Operations.** Since our last AGM The Portishead Lifeboat has been launched on operational service on 18 occasions. Two lives have been saved and assistance has been rendered to a further 29 persons. This is a fine record and one of which the Trust in general and the Crew in particular can be justly proud. Once again the frequency of calls increased during the summer period mainly due to the seasonal increase in craft and persons using the new marina facilities.

**Training.** Training has continued most successfully throughout the year and has followed a comprehensive schedule designed to bring the new influx of volunteers up to the standard required by the Trust and at the same time to increase the knowledge and experience of our existing crew members. This will I hope continue for the foreseeable future. Training has been ably organised by Justin Olver assisted by Adam Forrest, Mike Bailey and other experienced members of the crew. All our Cox'ns hold the Advanced RYA Power Boat qualification and we have a total callout crew of 21 plus 4 shore helpers. Our establishment is currently as follows:

- 1 Launch Authority- 5 Deputy Authorities- 6 Full Cox'ns
- 2 Second Cox'ns- 13 Enrolled crew members-
- 4 Shore helpers- 2 Trainees.

A further 10 trainees have recently joined the training programme.

- 11 Crew members hold a RYA power boat level 2
- 10 Crew members hold a RYA power boat advanced.

We remain indebted to Dr. Tarleton and Mr Tudball for their medical and ophthalmic support and advice.

**Deputy Launch Authorities.** They operate almost independently when it comes to holidays etc. and we have not been without DLA cover at any time throughout the year. Their major role in the operational efficiency of the Portishead Lifeboat was witnessed during various events this year culminating in the fantastic rescue of the two girls at Clevedon Pier in August. Their continued support, expertise, enthusiasm and devotion to the cause is much appreciated.

**Trustees.** All the trustees have worked hard to maintain the standards and the well-being of the trust. Peter Perkins continues in office and Peter Young takes on Company Secretary, including personnel and administration records. John Gittings, our Treasurer, is assisted by Joan Herbert and Wendy Makins when the collection box scheme evolves. David Herbert our Operations Director has been a tower of strength and without his total commitment and dedication to the cause we would struggle to keep this Lifeboat in the degree of readiness to which we have been accustomed. Colin Burgin, who took on the role of Fund Raising Co-ordinator and put it back on track has handed over the fundraising operation to

### OUR THANKS TO:-

- The Ship Inn Portishead who held a lively 'Trafalgar Evening' and a collection from 'Nelson and friends' was donated to the Lifeboat.
- Thanks go to the Gordano Services for allowing us to hold a collection on site over a very busy weekend.
- Everyone in Clevedon for their donations when they held their Sea Festival.
- Everyone who attended the 'Meet the Crew' coffee morning and not forgetting Mike Lindsay and his excellent display of local maritime photos.
- Denholm Barwill Ltd for supplying sweatshirts for the fundraising committee.

### FUNDRAISING NEWS

Some of you may know Colin Burgin, who for some time has been in charge of the fundraising activities. Colin has always worked tirelessly for the Trust, co-ordinating events, and helping to drum up vital support to keep the lifeboat operational. Colin recently announced his intention to step down from this demanding role and hand over the fundraising baton. I'm honoured to be asked to fill his shoes, and I shall do my best to build on Colin's good work. I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of us all, to say a big thank you to Colin for all his hard work and achievements, and we look forward to his continued involvement.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** - Could you help? We are always looking for helpers for various events during the year, such as occasional can rattles, for an hour or two at a time.

**ANY GOOD FUNDRAISING IDEAS?** - We always welcome suggestions and ideas for different fundraising activities - including any practical help you can give!

You can contact me on 07886 644594 or by email to [bretthiggins@btinternet.com](mailto:bretthiggins@btinternet.com)

Visit our New Web Site!

- For the latest news on the boat, crew or the callouts please see our new web site:

<http://www.portishead-lifeboat.org.uk>

The new web site has been developed and maintained thanks to Adam Forest, one of the lifeboat crew members.



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body that had been in the water for a couple of weeks. Manoeuvring the body onto a stretcher and recovering the stretcher onto the lifeboat while struggling in deep mud was not entirely devoid of moments of macabre humour. Nevertheless it was a most unpleasant task and a stark reminder of the less pleasant aspects of duty in a voluntary rescue service. I have also recently been appointed as a Trustee, so I hope to be able to serve the Portishead Lifeboat Trust long after retiring from the crew in a couple of years time.

Kelvin Adams - 2nd Coxswain



#### **DEDICATION OF THE NEW STANDARD FOR THE PORTISHEAD LIFEBOAT**

On Tuesday 27th September a service was held on the slipway of the Lifeboat Station for the dedication of the new standard. It was a pleasant evening with a backdrop of rolling waves and dramatic sky, attended by the Chairman of Portishead Town Council Jean Lord and dignitaries from other organizations plus members of the lifeboat crew and Friends of the Trust.

The short service was conducted by the Rev. Sharon Crossman with the final prayer and blessing taken by Rev Philip Auden.

Music and voices floated across the water and with the Lifeboat as a backdrop and one felt the aims of the Portishead Lifeboat Trust *"to save and protect the lives of the general public in particular by the provision of a lifeboat in the Severn Estuary centred at Portishead"* was brought into focus.

The standard was made and donated by Valerie Greenham well known for making all the flags that compliment the flowers in Portishead's High Street throughout the summer months.

We were also reminded of the new flag flying high above the boathouse station for all to see depicting the logo of the Lifeboat Trust, kindly donated by Joan Herbert in memory of her husband Ray, who played a significant part in the Lifeboat. Thanks go to both these ladies for their gifts .

Brett Higgins, now a Trustee. Colin's retirement from the board of Trustees ends a span of over thirty years as he was a member of the Sailing Club Rescue team( pre Lifeboat) and Steering Committee before the Trust was formed. His enthusiasm and hard work will be missed. Colin's help could be relied upon with immediate and efficient effect, the type of input that an organization such as ours needs and makes it so much easier for people like myself and Dave Herbert.

**Fundraising.** This has continued in various forms throughout the year and we have endeavoured to have a presence at every major event in the Village, as well as the presence of Derek Wetherburn's 'Wishing Well' and we must not forget the Raft Race, ably choreographed by Andy Allen, possibly with more pre-event publicity next year. The long swim did not seem to be gathering the support we had expected and there was little hope of running it again this year without making a loss to the Trust. We are not here to lose the good money given to us by the public and so I decided not to run the event this year. We continue to be well supported by other local community organisations and personal fund raising events and I would like to thank the supporters and people who have contributed to funds. We continue to receive donations from many local people, clubs and organisations and the local support is incredible and we are obviously most grateful to all who assist us financially but remind ourselves that our need for 2006/7 is likely to be in excess of £30,000 due to maintenance and fuel increases. Portishead and North Weston Town Council continue to support the Trust to the tune of £1.200 per year. Clevedon Town Council have also given us their support with a grant of £500 and Nailsea Town Council with a grant of £200. Their contributions are very much appreciated not only for the hard cash but for the seal of respectability and approval that it gives for other organisations and people to benchmark against. We had a slight saving on insurance premiums with no reduction in cover but an increase in our operational area. There was a saving of some £1000 on pager costs due to a revised contract term. We are actively seeking people to assist with various fundraising initiatives we have in mind. There is no shortage of ideas- just manpower. Finally thanks to all who have given their time to make presentations to local organizations promoting awareness of the Trust. These presentations make a valuable contribution to the income of the Trust.

**The Future.** We continue to operate as per our present system which has proved to be very satisfactory. Having obtained planning permission we are now in the process of raising monies needed to construct the new station just outside the marina. The RNLI were appraised of this project during our visit to Poole earlier this year and have given us considerable assistance.

All we need now is the cash!

Colin Wilson (Chairman)

## TWO LIVES SAVED

Having just finished our Sunday evening meal I was trying to figure out how to operate a new camera when the pager went off. Immediately my wife opened the front door and gates whilst I was putting my shoes on. I keep my bag of callout gear in the car, so I was quickly proceeding to the boathouse, speed limit observed. The crew page went off very shortly after I left home. At the boathouse we were in the process of unlocking when the DLA, who had responded to the initial call, arrived and advised that we had been called to assist two girls in the water at Clevedon. The girls were reported to be clinging to one of the pier supports. As soon as the boat had been removed from the boathouse, I started getting changed along with my two crew for the call, Tim and Jon,. We were aware of other crew arriving and they were detailed to start preparing the boat for immediate launch.

We had an update from the Coastguard to advise that the girls were still in the water and had been there for about 15 minutes, I briefed the crew that I would proceed to Clevedon as fast as possible and they would have to do the best they could with the radio communications as any delay in getting to Clevedon could be critical. The launch of the Lifeboat went very well due to a well rehearsed procedure. The passage to Clevedon was routine with calm sea and good visibility. As we approached the pier Jon spotted the girls at the third support out from the beach. We went straight in to them. Tim pulled the first girl out and sat her on the deck while Jon pulled the second girl out, placing her on the deck also. Both were conscious, but shivering. We advised the Coastguard that both casualties were on board and we were proceeding to Clevedon slipway where we were met by the girls parents and local Coastguards. At this point Jon commented that 22 minutes ago he had just finished his meal and was about to open a can of beer when the pager went off and here we were having dragged two lucky girls out of the water.

Speed was of the essence on this occasion. Without a quick response from all involved the outcome could have been very different. The girls were on board the Lifeboat 17 minutes after the 999 call was made. Both girls were treated for mild hypothermia by paramedics who were on the scene for nearly an hour.

Dave Herbert (Cox'n)

### It only took 11 minutes

Many of you I am sure will have seen the above incident in the local press, but may not be aware that from the time the alarm call was received by the DLA it only took 11 minutes until the Lifeboat was launched. When taking this into consideration and remembering that all concerned in these rescues are volunteers, have families and jobs, it shows a high level of professionalism and commitment to the lifeboat cause.

When dealing with persons in the water, speed of rescue is essential. Even on a hot day a person in the water can show signs of hypothermia after 15 minutes, and in the winter this is under 10 minutes, so a quick response from the Lifeboat is essential.



## Congratulations

Congratulation to Jon Colwill and Kelvin Adams who have been promoted to 2nd Coxswains. Well done to them both!



## Boats and Planes

I joined the crew as a trainee in September 2003 after responding to a newspaper advert for new crewmembers. It would be natural to believe that most of the lifeboat's crewmembers would be associated with the sea at work, but this is not the case and for me it is particularly so. When not involved in lifeboat activities I am a commercial airline pilot, taking people on their holidays from Bristol Airport. My first time afloat on the Bristol Channel was on my first training trip in the Portishead Lifeboat. Nevertheless, although the Portishead Lifeboat Trust provides full training for all new recruits, I was not a complete stranger to the skills involved. The 3 crew positions in the lifeboat are Coxswain, Navigator, and Radio Operator, and the skills involved in these tasks form the basis for many of the skills involved in flying an aircraft. In addition, joining the crew was not my first introduction to nautical activities. As a school boy I attended a merchant navy officer cadet training school, HMS Conway. As cadets we spent part of most days on the waters of the Menai Straights in North Wales, and were taught sailing, rowing and powerboat handling skills. Little did I realise that 30 years later I would finally make use of my GCE 'O' levels in Seamanship, Navigation, and Marine Science! Two of us from the 2003 intake of crewmembers have recently been promoted to 2nd Coxswain, and I now look forward to being able to lead the crew on rescues. My job often involves having time off during the week, so I am able to respond to callouts when others are at work.

Of the callouts that I have been involved in so far, two stand out as the best and worst experiences. The best was in June 2005 when Coxswain Tony Daw plus myself and Clive Scott-Green attended the yacht 'Baucette' which had run aground on the Middle Grounds sandbank. The yacht was high and dry, and bolt upright in the sand. There was little we could do for the crew other than transfer non-essential members to another yacht. It was difficult to suppress a roar of laughter though when we found out that the Baucette's skipper was a fund raiser for the Penarth RNLI, and that they had run aground while returning from a fund raising rally. The photos taken by Clive of me wading back to the lifeboat with the Baucette in the background were not only published locally, but also made it into the Sun, the Daily Mirror, and 'Hello' magazine – fame at last! The worst experience, in stark contrast, was the recovery of a