

## Poole Sailability and the Five Ways to Wellbeing

Poole Sailability is a registered charity that is entirely managed and operated by volunteers. Granted charitable status in 2009, their mission is to ensure “Disability is not a barrier to experiencing the joy of sailing”, and to that end they strive to make each session as enjoyable as possible. Participants are encouraged to take an active part in the sailing of the boats, and informal training is offered for those who are inexperienced. They also ensure that sailing with Sailability is affordable to all.

The charity, which has an annual operating budget of £13,000, is supported by members’ fundraising, donations and grants. In 2016, the membership was about 65 made up of Disabled Sailors and Volunteer Helpers who enjoyed 40 sailing sessions and delivered over 450 individual sailing places for disabled members of the local community. The only charge to participants is a small annual membership fee.

### **Connecting People**

For both disabled members and volunteer helpers (who are also members) an important part of what Sailability does is getting out and meeting others in the community. They believe that building these connections can enrich members’ lives. On Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings from April to October, members can meet and learn to sail or just enjoy being on the water in the glorious surroundings of Poole Harbour. Each boat has a crew of up to five so there is ample time for a catch up. After sailing they head for the café to chat and “put the world to rights”. In the 2016 survey, 95% of members were very or mostly satisfied with their membership. To Sailability, social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing.



Sailability also has links with local disability groups such as Dorset Blind Association and other Sailability Centres at Chesil and Lymington.

### **Being Active**



A typical session starts with people getting kitted out and then a short briefing about the sailing area before heading down to the pontoons, where helpers aid people to board the boats. All safety equipment and lifejackets are provided. Both first timers and experienced sailors are given a warm welcome. For members seeking a bit more excitement, Sailability participate in the Poole Week yacht racing event held at Parkstone Yacht Club, where they compete against non-disabled crews. They hold about six race training sessions before the event which takes

place over five days in August. Sailability members are always made most welcome and join in with the after race social activities. Those wanting a more relaxed time can enjoy all-day sails exploring Poole Harbour.

### **Keep Learning**

Sailing is an activity involving continuous improvement of both practical and theoretical skills. Members can learn all aspects of sailing and general seamanship. They are also encouraged to helm the boats under power and sail, to handle the sails and ropes and take an active part in the sailing of the boat, under the watchful eye of a highly experienced skipper. The winter is a chance for members to learn to maintain the boats and there are often informative theory sessions for learning about seamanship and sailing techniques.



These include first-aid, power boat driving and the use of hand-held radios. For those who want to, there is the opportunity to gain Royal Yachting Association (RYA) sailing and power boat qualifications.

## Taking Notice

For some members who may have quite isolated lives, getting out and about on the water with other people is very different. Volunteers encourage people to take notice of their fellow crew members and be aware of when and how people need help. Time together in the boats is time when taking notice of others and what they say and do is very important. Outside of the boat, an appreciation of the weather and the tides and their effect on the boat provide the structure for discussions about the surroundings. Also, there is a need for members to be aware that they are sharing the water with many other craft and that they may need take appropriate actions for everyone's safety.



## Giving

Members are encouraged to look after fellow team members, share experiences and support each other in the boats and out of them. There is an active social programme and members work together to raise funds. The public have opportunities to give monetary donations or their time, assisting on the water or in administration and fund raising roles. Sailability currently has 32 volunteers. Local businesses and clubs give their services and donations to purchase lifejackets, first aid equipment, mobility aids, safety boat equipment, maintenance parts and materials, engines and fuel and even replacement sailing boats or safety boats. Bourne Leisure at Rockley Park are their boatyard landlords and Rockley Watersport provide RYA training and facilities.

Sailability have plans to grow their sailing membership in 2017, increasing the number of sailing sessions they offer. They plan to recruit and train more volunteers and secure the financial future for the charity so that they can include more people in their opportunities to enjoy wellbeing on the water.



Bournemouth CVS and Poole CVS are working with Public Health Dorset to support local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to deliver better public health outcomes. This project is to help the sector measure and demonstrate the impact their work has on health and wellbeing in their communities. These case studies are designed to highlight the varied and substantial impact VCSE organisations have on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a tool comprising of a set of five, evidence based public health indicators about the kinds of activities that individuals can do that are known to improve their health and wellbeing:

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

To learn more about the work of the Bournemouth and Poole VCSE sector please contact  
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