

Golant BOATWATCH.

Report to the Parish Council, May 2021.

The Golant Boatwatch Committee is pleased to bring you this year's report, which covers the period since the last report, made to the 2019 Parish Meeting.

The restrictions caused by COVID-19 have obviously had a significant effect on the way we have been able to operate since the first lockdown began. However, we have been able to continue to carry out activities in line with our objective of discouraging crime and encouraging safe use of the River Fowey.

In normal circumstances we provide high visibility patrolling of our foreshore, from the north end of the Pill, to the far end of the mooring frapes, in the direction of Sawmills, with on river patrols, going down as far as Penmarlam and Polruan. We keep record of these patrols in the Boatwatch Hut at the Quay, and would normally log hundreds of patrols each year. These patrols continued in 2019 and early 2020, until the start of the lockdown in March 2020. At this point we had to stop patrols and close the Boatwatch Hut.

The restrictions meant that many people with boats at Golant were unable to check their condition. To give re-assurance to boat owners, and to identify problems occurring after major weather events, Golant Boatwatch launched a new service "Virus Virtual Patrol". On a monthly basis videos showing boats moored on the river, on the frapes and resting in the Pill. This service was very well received, and will be continued in the future over the winter periods when many river users are not able to visit their boats regularly.

In the period between the first and second lockdowns we were able to get back on the river, and two on-the-river evening flotilla patrols were held in July and August, operating under social distancing rules. The sun

failed to shine brightly on both occasions, but each had a splendid turnout of around 40 hi-vis jacketed people, suitably distanced between around 12 boats.

Covid restrictions made it impractical to re-open the Boatwatch Hut during the period between lockdowns, and the decision was made to take the opportunity for refurbishment. The Hut had become very damp inside, suffering both from water ingress around the roof and condensation on the underside of the roof. The external condition was also such that the Hut was something of an eyesore in the Village. Both the Parish Council and Fowey Harbour generously agreed to contribute towards the refurbishment, which is now almost completed. A new, insulated, roof has been installed and the Hut has been repainted both externally and internally. The appearance of the Hut is also being enhanced by decoration evocative of its history as a railway maintenance worker's hut close to Golant Halt station.

It is planned to have a formal re-opening of the Hut in late June, after which it will be fully available again for use by members when carrying out Boatwatch Patrols.

The marine crime rate has been effectively zero again but there have been the occasional instances of minor theft from boats.

To further assist in the deterrence of potential crime, Boatwatch has agreed with Golant Quay Users Association that CCTV coverage of the Quay and Hut areas should be provided. This will be installed this summer.

The Boatwatch Facebook site continues to prove an excellent way for us to reach-out well beyond the Parish, with frequent postings about activities and problems on the river and links to relevant marine related stories. In addition, our members (and friends) also receive regular updates on Boatwatch activities and bulletins on marine related issues from our own communications editor.

Covid restrictions have meant that we have been unable to hold our normal village hall events - the 2020 and 2021 Spring Get Togethers and November 2020 AGM. We did hold an AGM by Zoom last year, which attracted a good turn-out, but was, of course, no substitute for the real thing. We should be able to hold an AGM this year, in the newly refurbished Village Hall. This is planned to include a talk by the Border Force agency.

We remain a highly valued element within the Port of Fowey organisation, with continued encouragement and support from the Harbour Master. Other aspects of our community involvement continue as in previous years, and financial donations will be given to the local Air Ambulance, RNLI and NCI Polruan.

Our membership is currently over 70, with actual membership significantly higher than this as many memberships are for couples. We continue to be indebted to David Parry whose picture raffle (which is only available to Boatwatch members) raises hundreds of pounds for our organization each year.

Our expenditure has been high recently due to the costs of the work on the Hut, although this has been minimised by the help of very willing volunteers to carry out the painting and decoration activities. However, thanks to the assistance from the Parish Council and Fowey Harbour, our finances remain in good shape.

We would also like thank the Parish Council, for their support in meeting the electricity bill in the Boatwatch Hut. With the removal of the dehumidifier, this cost will be much reduced in the future. In return, Boatwatch will provide every assistance in the work necessary to allow a more modern, internet linked, Car Park machine to be operated via the Hut facilities.

Thank you very much for listening. Does anyone have any questions?