

HISC AGM Report 2026 – Sailing

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Overview

Overall, it has been a great year on the water, with high levels of participation across all activities, no doubt helped by the lovely weather. However, members' patterns of Club use and participation continue to change as the economics of sailing become more challenging and competition for people's time increases. In response, the Sailing Committee continues to evolve the HISC 'offer', with positive results that ensure we remain the sailing club of choice.

Club Racing

Club racing continues to be very popular both in the Harbour and Bay. Overall turnout is in line with last year but with material increases in the Aero, Merlin, Optimist and RS Feva.

The recent Club Racing Survey was responded to by over 50% of racing members. The majority support the existing racing format, with strong preferences for Sunday Committee Boat racing, Sprints and Pennants. The Racing Committee will be reviewing the full results and discussing any proposed changes with Fleet Captains.

The 'Get Racing' initiative has proven popular with shorter courses and will be further developed in 2027.

The Fleet and Fleet Captains' WhatsApp groups continue to drive engagement and the sharing of ideas and knowledge. This has resulted in increased turnouts and greater member inclusivity, strengthening the HISC Club culture.

Members' response to Club duties remains a challenge, with only a small minority not completing their allocation which we will be addressing in 2027. There is a wide range of duties both on and off the water, so there is something for everyone; this will be communicated more clearly for 2027. Special thanks once again to Theo Gayler, our Sailing Supervisor, who manages the system and member engagement—a tough job, with nearly 3,000 duties to fill!

Thanks also to Simon Radford Rear Commodore Racing and team for adapting and maintaining such a full and varied racing programme.

Boardsports

The growth of Boardsports continues apace, both at HISC and nationally, particularly in winging. We have around 160 boards registered at HISC, with nearly 50 spotted on the

water when conditions are good. Fortunately, we are blessed with one of the best locations in the country, offering safe open water, good wind record with the added bonus of a reliable sea breeze in the summer months.

Organised Boardsports events for members, including Sprints and Supported Days, are proving very popular and cater for experts, improvers and beginners. Open events hosted at HISC, such as She Flies, the Round Hayling Challenge and the Tide Ride, showcase what we can offer and have received great reviews from visitors and members alike.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy has recently issued a survey to everyone who pays Harbour Dues, with a section focusing on Boardsports and whether its use of the Harbour should continue to be approved. Representations have been made by a large number of Boardsports members. The Harbour Conservancy is very appreciative of the HISC Foiling Code of Conduct and the approach to registration introduced last year, which will undoubtedly help to shape its future strategy. In the meantime, all members with boards are requested to ensure that they are registered and have paid Harbour Dues.

Demand for 'Windsurf' lockers is at an all-time high, with a long waiting list. Planning permission issues have delayed the building of additional capacity, but we are getting closer to a resolution. In the meantime, a QR code system will be introduced to measure locker usage in 2027, as the lockers will form part of the HISC 'Use It or Lose It' Policy. Members are also reminded that the lockers are intended for board storage, in line with Club Policy, so a 'no board, no locker' rule applies.

Thanks to Angus McIntyre, the Boardsports lead, for being so helpful and supportive in growing this very popular activity.

Paddlesports

This is a new category for 2026, reflecting the evolving range of craft supported at HISC. Canoeing membership is expected to grow, together with the number of open events, following the successful Coastal Canoe Round Hayling event held in July. Wind and wave conditions were challenging, but competitors gave great feedback on a very well-run event.

Rowing, particularly in Celtic Longboats, has been adopted by most clubs in the Harbour and offers participation to all age groups and skill levels. Our new Celtic Longboat has been delivered. It was fully funded through member donations and grants from HISST, the 500 Club and Sport England. Many members have been undertaking training in advance of the boat's arrival, and work is well advanced on the Paddling Policy and booking system. More news will follow, but everyone is encouraged to have a

go! Special thanks to Simon Radford for leading this project and to Kirsten Bithell, the de facto Class Captain.

Cruising

The Cruising community continues to enjoy a strong social programme, with many informal rallies and more organised, well-attended Club events, including visits to Bembridge and the Channel cruise to Cherbourg. More events are being planned for 2027, including a reverse Round the Island event sponsored by MDL.

Racing has been more muted this year, but work is in progress to encourage greater participation.

The new Selene has been in operation for her first full season and with a few minor enhancements has certainly met the brief and some !

Demand for moorings was much stronger this year, with virtually all of them occupied. Capacity for visitors and temporary event moorings is limited, so we are investigating the possibility of taking up some of the unused MDL moorings in the Mengham Channel.

An unseaworthy yacht sank on the moorings during the summer, a timely reminder to all yacht owners to undertake regular checks. Our Marine team did a great job in safely recovering the yacht but unfortunately, she couldn't be saved due to extensive damage whilst submerged.

The winter lay-up is planned to start on 12 October, now that a reconditioned tractor has been purchased to replace our old one, which succumbed to the effects of our harsh marine environment.

Following the huge success of the family Sailaways, an adult version is being planned for 2027 so that everyone can enjoy exploring the Harbour in company. We are actively seeking volunteers to help organise so if you want to get involved let me know.

Thanks to Fred Mundle and his committee for their work in support of this very active group.

Youth Sailing

The Youth Section has shown a real increase in activity this year, helped by the many dedicated parents who have given their time to lead fleets or events. Thank you all. Particular highlights include:

- Hints and Tips training days supported by sailing 'heroes', hosted by HISC Olympians Eilidh McIntyre, James Peters and others.
- Family Sailaways have been incredibly successful and fully booked. The August day saw over 100 people travel by water to East Head. The events were well

organised, with dedicated leadership and full tally and shore-team support. Feedback has been excellent, with special thanks to Rachel Evans for leading this initiative.

- Activity and turnouts in the Optimist and Feva fleets have increased by nearly 50% compared with 2025, which is great to see.
- The Seals and Red Ribbon Training Clubs continue to go from strength to strength, introducing more young sailors to fun on the water.
- The Youth Commodores Cup, held during the HISC Open Day, proved very popular. The Le Mans-style beach start and quick-fire, multiple-race format were great fun and will also feature in the calendar next year.

Family Fun Week, 27–31 July was brilliant and received great reviews from all that attended and the HISC support team. Youth Race Week, 3–7 August, was also very well attended and received an average feedback score of 4.8 out of 5 – possibly the best ever!

Training for Optimists, IICA, 29er, Fevas and Teras starts this month through to March 2027 with a great range of experienced coaches helping our youths and juniors build their skills.

Overall, an exceptional year so thanks to Gemma Griffiths and team for making it so special.

Championships and Events

2026 was a very busy year for events, hosting several major competitions and once again positioning HISC firmly among the UK's leading venues for dinghy competitions. Feedback is always sought from event organisers and competitors after each event, and it consistently praises the high quality of the race management, shoreside support, House facilities and HISC staff. Well done, Team HISC!

The events included:

Elite National Championships

RYA Youth Nationals

RS 400 and 4000 Nationals

RS 21 UK& IRL Cup

Aero UK Women's Championship

505 World Championship

We also continued with our singlehander and doublehander Open Meetings focused weekends to boost numbers, make them more cost effective to run and keep entry fees manageable.

Other major events included :-

Federation Week

Youth Race Week

Family Fun Week

Round Hayling Boardsport Challenge

The Tide Ride proved once again to be a great, fast-action event for competitors and spectators alike and now firmly back on the HISC calendar for the future.

HISC Training and Hire Fleet

Training remains a core function of the Club, whether in sailing, powerboating, boardsports or the forthcoming rowing programme. Many members have learnt new skills or improved existing ones during the year, which is great to see. A full programme is available for the winter and into 2027, so if you want to improve your skills, the HISC office team is there to help.

Following feedback the Youth Summer training camp has been moved to the beginning of summer holidays in 2027.

The extensive hire fleet remains popular but has capacity for greater use. We have listened to member feedback and looking to refurbish the entire fleet over the winter so please consider hiring one when you need a boat next year.

The Environment

We are all aware of the need to respect the environment while enjoying the water and Club grounds. HISC has joined the pilot RYA Sustainability Scheme and is working with the Harbour Conservancy on environmental matters. Looking ahead, the Sailing Committee will communicate how we can all help. If any members would be interested in giving some time to lead this initiative, that would be wonderful!

Boat Park

The annual boat park tidy up, slipway clearance and mat relevening saw over 60 volunteers on the day which made it so much easier. A great morning combining work and a chance to socialise with other members. To top it all the Club provided a well earned lunch ! Thanks to everyone that attended and especially our working party leader Fiona Sayce.

Finally, thanks to the Sailing Committee, Fleet Captains, parents, members performing duties or just helping out and HISC staff for their support in making this year on the water so successful. It is a massive team effort, but it is very rewarding for everyone involved. Together, we ensure that HISC remains the club of choice for all ages and abilities.

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