

2020 Sailing report

No-one will be surprised to read that 2020 was very different for the sailing group too. In early March we cancelled the meeting scheduled for late March in the Sainsbury's community room and then of course lock-down soon followed afterwards.

Our face to face winter meetings, which would normally stop in the spring, moved onto Zoom and continued throughout the summer. For a while we held them fortnightly to keep boredom at bay. The topics have been broad with many members contributing, with subjects as different as sailing personalities to some passage planning exercises.

On the water there was no lock-down guidance at first but that changed after a particular boater (NOT a member of this group) went out of Portsmouth harbour, got into trouble and had to be rescued. The Queen's harbourmaster promptly closed the harbour for leisure boating and all marinas were instructed to lock owners out.

In the summer as lock-down eased then some sailing was feasible for a few. In June it was single households and no overnight stay on boats. That suited one couple who are members, and they found the Solent was deserted even at weekends since so many other sailors travel from other parts of the country. In July the rules changed to allow two households to sail together and to stay overnight, so the Solent and surrounding harbours were instantly very busy. But everyone was courteous and helpful and it was feasible to ensure social distances were maintained.

Each one of our members has a personal approach to risk and safety and for some of us that meant not sailing at all throughout the season, but others felt able to get out and about. Day sailing within the two-household rule or short trips staying overnight, were the most popular. The government's tightening to the rule of 6 was for us strangely (given cases of Covid were growing) a relaxation on who could sail, but no-one filled a boat with 6 people.

October was the last sail for most since November brought lock-down and even though sailing was feasible again in December we only had one trip in the group not least because it was cold, wet and windy. The Zoom calls continued monthly and in the spring of 2021 we will have talks on an Irish Sea passage and more sailing personalities.

Most importantly we will soon start to plan the activities for sailing in 2021.

The sailing group will accept new members in 2021 and despite the unusual season we had two fresh members in 2020 too.