

PRESS RELEASE: Queenborough All Tide Landing

For fifteen years the All Tide Landing has served Queenborough well and become a landmark in its own right. It has brought trade in from visitors to local businesses, it has enabled fishing boats to take on and drop off fishing parties, it has enabled the council to operate at all stages of the tide when taking fees, and it has allowed people who would find using the concrete hard dangerous to be able to go sailing.

In recent years the costs of maintaining the All Tide Landing has increased dramatically, and the fact that all work that is done to the All Tide Landing is undertaken by an unpaid volunteer workforce that numbers under eight is stretching resources to breaking point.

Following a meeting held in Queenborough Yacht Club where the All Tide Landing was discussed in some detail it became apparent that support for the continuation of the All Tide Landing is now in question after this season.

Due to the number of times the police have been called to the ATL to deal with abusive teenagers who have also on occasion stolen dinghies from the ATL and caused criminal damage to yachts moored to the ATL, the volunteers are losing hope.

Threats and abusive behaviour from local teenagers has made volunteers reluctant to walk the length of the All Tide Landing alone to collect money. Much revenue has been lost this year as volunteers have felt that their desire to keep the ATL economically viable is not worth a confrontation with youths.

Though there are a number of signs warning people not to swim from the ATL this is generally ignored and last year Queenborough Yacht Club Trot Boat actually had to rescue an individual that had managed to grab a mooring buoy before being taken out into the estuary by the strong tide.

Damage to the ATL from large fishing boats left on the ATL with no one on board is a cost we can no longer cover. The Council, due to cut backs have stopped paying a contribution for mooring the council boat on the ATL; The All Tide Landing Committee has continued to allow the council boat to moor along side, even though the fees could have been recouped by hiring out the council berth to another organisation.

With escalating costs and limited volunteers prepared to put in very long hours throughout the year the All Tide Landing is not looking unviable. Unless financial support can be obtained it is the intention of Queenborough Yacht Club to decommission the All Tide Landing at the end of this season. It is believed that unless the harbour and All Tide Landing are both managed by the same organisation the All Tide Landing can not be policed.

As for the volunteers, some have spent many hundreds of hours working in sometimes dangerous conditions to repair the All Tide Landing. Other volunteers have regularly collected money from visiting yachts, some visitors have argued over the cost of mooring a few have even refused to pay.

These volunteers and members of Queenborough Yacht Club, who have worked and continue to work on the All Tide Landing rather than doing what they want, which in most cases is simply to go sailing.

The convenience of having an All Tide Landing is great but dwarfed next to the trouble it causes. It is regrettable that such a valuable asset to Queenborough will be lost, but the upkeep of the All Tide Landing should not be the responsibility of a few. Though owned by Queenborough Yacht Club access has always been available to the public with the only expectation being that they respect the All Tide Landing and the rules laid down for their own safety.

This year has without doubt been the worst year for trouble erupting on the All Tide Landing, and though we regret having to make the decision to decommission the ATL, the blame will have to fall on the individuals who feel they need to use the ATL without paying and intimidate the very visitors that have supported our local businesses.

We would welcome any suggestions from the local community into possible ways we could keep this valuable asset. Perhaps financial assistance or even pledging hours of work time to help with the maintenance. We are now asking the local community to save what we have but time is short, and unless we can cover the substantial cost of maintaining the All Tide Landing decommissioning is inevitable.

The final decision to decommission the All Tide Landing will be taken at the end of the season. Once it is lost, it is unlikely that any other organisation will ever reinstate it.

Eddie Johnson
Rear Commodore QYC