



# Post-event

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## UKFSC 2022 – A long time coming

Finally, after a two-year delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Kingdom Firefighters Sailing Challenge (UKFSC) took place from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.

Crews were keen as mustard to get back on the water for this, the 17<sup>th</sup> UKFSC event. In fact, 31 crews turned up for it, down slightly from the 35 who intended to compete, again COVID still influencing the daily lives of so many, including the emergency services crews hoping to join in.

UKFSC is a charitable firefighter sporting event, and a great number of serving and retired firefighters take part every year, but there are many other participants from other emergency services who compete alongside them. Crews from the Ambulance Services, Police Services, RNLI and others regularly join the action to help raise money for charity while enjoying their passion for sailing.

31 offshore sailing yachts were chartered from Fairview and Sunsail, and most were crewed to the maximum of 8 people on each yacht. With the addition of the race committee, support crew and sponsors, there was around 260 people taking part this year.

It was great to see Biale Mewy from Poland attending again. It was uncertain if the Polish firefighter crew were able to make it this year due to ongoing events in neighbouring Ukraine, but happily they were able to get a much-needed break to join in. In addition to Biale Mewy, most crews this year were returning from previous years, many with the same, regular crew members, who continue to support the event year after year. UKFSC was very pleased to welcome again the returning sponsor entries from WH Bence and Absinthesis (FIA inc. ColdCut Cobra) and they were joined by a new sponsor entry, The Sprinkler Boys (Domestic Sprinklers) as a great addition to the event.

The pre-event activities saw crews from all over the country arriving on the Sunday evening to collect their yachts ready for an early start for the practice day on the Monday in and around the Portsmouth area of The Solent. After a day of practice in light winds, the yachts were moored up in Gunwharf Quay for the UKFSC opening ceremony, which took place in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. This was a new venue for the opening ceremony, and it gave everyone a chance to enjoy some sailing history as well as the local pubs in Old Portsmouth.

The first day of racing followed on the Tuesday with a fantastic day on The Solent just off Cowes, with an overnight stay at Bucklers Hard on the delightful Beaulieu River. A well-deserved fish and chip supper and live music from our regular band Snatch Rescue was enjoyed by all, washed down with generous amounts of donated beer and wine. Again, this was a new venue for the event, and it was a hit with people new to the Beaulieu as much as it was for those who have enjoyed it before.

More races on the Wednesday took place off Cowes, with crews mooring up in Cowes Yacht Haven for the Gala evening and prize-giving, where everyone was treated to a brilliant after dinner speech from the highly respected local yachtsman, Tom Cunliffe. His pilotage video on YouTube having been carefully studied by many of the skippers prior to the event made him a familiar face and his stories during his speech made the evening.



### Publicity article 3 for UKFSC 2022

Racing on Thursday saw the final passage race back from Cowes to Portsmouth take place in fluky conditions. The starting order of the yachts for this race was based on their performance over the previous two days, and the crews with the slowest yachts set off first and the quickest yachts started last. The idea being that everyone finishes at the same time outside Portsmouth. That didn't happen of course, and yachts finished hours apart from each other, mainly due to the changing winds throughout the race but it was a great fun to close the event, all the same.

UKFSC is a charitable organisation focussed on raising funds for charities close to the hearts of the emergency services and others taking part in the event. Sponsorship and charitable donations have enabled UKFSC to make donations in excess of £125,00 to date.

The UKFSC committee is very proud to be working with **WH Bence, EMILY, ColdCut Cobra, Domestic Sprinklers, Barker-Mill Foundation and FireSport UK**, our corporate sponsors, who ensure that we can make such considerable donations to charity. Crew entry fees, donations of raffle prizes and the money raised from raffle ticket sales contribute also. Our key supporting organisations include **Elliot Brown, Fairview, Latesail, Sunsail and Elvis and Kresse**, all of whom donated fantastic prizes for the raffle, with the first prize again this year being an Elliot Brown (RNLI) watch.

**Charitable donations** from this year's event have so far been made to:

- Anthony Knott Appeal £525
- Nomad Sailing £100
- India Club £52.50
- The Royal national Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) £1050
- The Firefighters Charity (FFC) £2000
- Sea Change Sailing Trust (nominated by our guest speaker, Tom Cunliffe) £1000
- The Royal Free Hospital (nominated by the winning team, West Yorks 2) £1000
- Further funds are still to be distributed, including money raised by the Absinthesis (FIA inc. ColdCut Cobra) team
- Plans are underway to provide life-saving defibrillators and associated training for West Cowes and Bucklers Hard marinas

The UKFSC event has always taken the safety and well-being of its competitors seriously and all activities are thoroughly risk- assessed. This year saw the inclusion of a new position on the UKFSC committee, that of COVID Officer, and we are grateful to Ian Pullen from London Ambulance Service (LAS) for taking on the role.

A great deal of effort is required to run this event annually and the organising committee and support crew is made up entirely of serving and retired emergency services volunteers. All keen sailors, they work tirelessly behind the scenes to make this special event enjoyable for everyone. After some 10 years of running the event, many of the current committee will be standing down this year to make way for new talent and the continuation of the successes the past years have achieved. The UKFSC especially thanks the following volunteers who are stepping down for their dedication and hard work over the years:

Mick Norman (Chair)  
Dave Sharman  
Pip Dwyer  
Gary Pyle  
Bex Sims



## Publicity article 3 for UKFSC 2022

Well done to everyone who competed in the UKFSC 2022 event. The final results are as follows:

The top three teams overall in the **Spinnaker** class:

Position	Team Name	From	Skipper
1 <sup>st</sup>	West Yorks 2	West Yorkshire FRS	Phil Harney
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hampshire Zero	Hampshire FRS	Alex Rhodes
3 <sup>rd</sup>	West Sussex FRS	West Sussex FRS	George Wright

The top **Asymmetric** class team overall:

Position	Team Name	From	Skipper
1 <sup>st</sup>	Cambridge	Cambridgeshire FRS	Mark Couper

The top **White Sails** class team overall:

Position	Team Name	From	Skipper
1 <sup>st</sup>	Siren Sisters	Women in the Fire Service	Sue Antonelli

The top **Sponsor** entry:

Sponsor Team	From	Skipper
Absinthesis	FIA inc. ColdCut Cobra	Peter Clarke

The top places in the **Passage Back Race**:

Spinnaker Class	From	Skipper
West Yorks 2	West Yorkshire FRS	Phil Harney
Asymmetric Class	From	Skipper
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire FRS	Mark Couper
White Sails Class	From	Skipper
Siren Sisters	Women in the Fire Service	Sue Antonelli

If you would like to find out more about UKFSC, or you would like to help organising, supporting or sponsoring or if you want to take part in the sailing, please make contact through any of the links below, a committee member will answer your query or put you in touch with someone who can.

Further information can be found using any of these links:

Website: <http://www.ukfsc.org.uk>

Twitter: @ukfiresailing

Facebook: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/ukfiresailing/>

LinkedIn: UKFSC.

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### Notes to editors

Dates for UKFSC 2023 are provisionally set for **8-11 May 2023** and the event will be launched at the Emergency Services Show in September 2022 and confirmed officially on the UKFSC during the show.

Full results for UKFSC 2022 can be found [here](#) on the UKFSC website.

Many images are available for publication in high resolution, on request and via the link [here](#) on the UKFSC website.