

Coalporters Amateur Rowing Club

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How many members there are in your club/society?

101

If known, where you draw your membership from – Are most of them from Southampton?

Membership is primarily drawn from across Southampton, with a small handful living in PO postcodes.

See the top five postcodes of our membership below:

Post Code	Count
SO19	16
SO30	9
SO32	9
SO15	8
SO18	8

What you are doing to promote your activity to diverse communities in Southampton and to increase membership?

We offer Explore Rowing membership, which is a learn-to-row programme to help novices of all ages get involved in the sport. The membership tariff is subsidised in cost (£25) and covers 12 sessions, and the membership lasts 3 months. This has helped bring new novice rowers into the club from many areas of Southampton, including locally.

Any expansion plans you may have

A significant amount of building renovation work has recently been undertaken. Work has included: roof improvements, new boiler system (energy efficiency), new toilets, overhaul of the Club Hall and corridor to the hall (used for hall hires as a function room), new double-glazing windows in the hall (energy efficiency), and new doors to the club.

Another significant project to expand the club is the Northam Bridge Arch Boat Storage area. This involved taking on one of the bridge arches, blocking up both ends, to extend our boat storage capacity. It also puts the area to better use, which prior to that was subject to a lot of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour under the bridge. This project has been the culmination of around four years of hard voluntary work by a number of our members, working in concert with the Southampton City Council and other relevant authorities. The work is due to finish in the coming weeks.

What you enjoy most about the River Itchen in Southampton?

The river offers plenty of space to row on. The river offers a mix of calm and rougher conditions, which is helpful for preparing other crews for all type of rowing races. It is also great to see a mix of ecology and wildlife, such as when we occasionally see seals and even dolphins in the river.

It is also nice to see other sports and boat users getting something out on the river too, such as canoeists/kayaks, paddle boarders and pleasure boats.

Issues / concerns that you have about the River Itchen in Southampton

There have been cases of fly tipped rubbish has been swept away by the river and then large pieces of debris can be found floating, at speed with the tide, up and down the river. This can be very dangerous to our members and damaging to our boats. Another is significant issue is rubbish and large rocks or debris that is on the river bed, which is hard to see other than when the tide is out, which is sharp and dangerous. Again, this is a danger to our members, but more likely, to the bottom of our boats.

The clearance of boat wreckages would also help with making the river more user friendly and safe.

I have personally seen people fly tip significant amounts of rubbish (wood from a kitchen suite) into the river. Despite ringing the police, they offered no support whatsoever and referred me to the Environmental Agency, who also did nothing. This situation seems crazy and clearly needs to be more widely addressed.

There can also be anti-social behaviour next to the river under Northam bridge. Occasionally antisocial behaviour is evident in front of our club house where we boat onto the water.

What developments / improvements you would like to happen to the River Itchen in Southampton?

Clearance of large sharp debris from the bottom of the river bed. This includes pieces of metal, the occasionally metal safe, trolleys, rocks, among other things.

Tackle the fly tipping and antisocial behaviour next to the river.

It would also be helpful to have another life ring in front of our club, to the ring of the boundary. Currently there are only rings on the bridge, however these have proved ineffective in a recent life-threatening incident with local river users (not members) drowning in a strong tide. Thankfully one of our members jumped into the water to save them and resuscitate them.

Lastly, it would be helpful if the SCC would help with the eroding concrete steps going down to the river. They need to be built back up to, particular at the bottom, where the river has eroded the concrete away over many years.

Any other comments that you would want to make about the River Itchen in Southampton

None