

West Sussex Schools & Youth Sailing Association Regatta to be hosted by Felpham Sailing Club – September 2026

Objective: to inspire 150 young people to “believe in yourself” through a sailing regatta and inspirational speakers and activities.



Programme:

Thursday 17th September – a talk & video presentation by the Sussex Underwater team about the wealth of sea life in the sea off Bognor Regis

Friday 18th September – talks by Jazz Turner (award winning para sailor) about her sailing round Britain solo record in 2025, and Hannah Mountain about her participation in the 2025 Fastnet race on the yacht Boracic.

Saturday 19th September – Regatta Day 1 + evening karaoke

Sunday 20th September – Regatta Day 2 with prizegiving hosted by Jess Breach, England Ladies Red Roses Rugby World Cup top try scorer in the 2025 Womens' Rugby World Cup, and former member of Felpham Sailing Club.

Event Sponsors:



SMRsolicitors



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Event description

Felpham Sailing Club (FSC) will host the 32nd annual West Sussex Schools & Youth Sailing Association (WSSYSA) Regatta in September 2026. This event attracts teams of young people from across Sussex to compete in the sport of dinghy racing on the sea, in a weekend regatta.

We are expecting 150 youth participants from over 12 clubs and schools from across Sussex. We will host a series of events and speakers that will be inspirational for all participants and their families, and some fun stuff too.

The event is for sailors aged under 19 on the last day of the event. We will have three race areas and four racing fleets (Fast, Medium, & Slow handicap, and a Rookie Fleet). The Rookie Fleet is aimed at encouraging youngsters into the sport of dinghy racing by making it fun and exciting.

Besides the coaching & Regatta racing we hope to inspire the youngsters through several talks and activities. On Thursday 17th September, Sussex Underwater, led by Bognor resident Eric Smith, will give a presentation with video informing and inspiring our young people about life underwater on the Bognor Rocks, just off our beach. Eric lobbied for many years to create the Sussex in-shore trawling ban. This has created a resurgence of sea life and kelp right in our playground. Eric was featured in David Attenborough's 2025 film and book "Ocean". Their video gives an amazing insight into what is below the waves, out of sight for most. <https://sussexunderwater.uk/>

On Friday 18th September there will be a talk given by Jazz Turner. Jazz is a world recognised para-inclusive sailor, having sailed around the UK singlehanded in June 2025, and in doing so became the first female solo disabled wheelchair-bound sailor to achieve this feat. She was recently nominated for the Rolex World Sailor Award. In February 2026 Jazz was awarded the Yachtsman of the Year award for 2025 by the Yachting Journalist Association. Her story is both humbling and inspirational.

Also, on that evening, Hannah Mountain (Felpham Sailing Club member) will tell us about her exciting and exhausting experience taking part in the 100th Fastnet race in 2025.

Over the Regatta weekend, a team of national race coaches will be offering race coaching, free to participants, using video recording of racing action, and delivering feedback on a large screen. By providing coaching at the Regatta we aim to inspire and develop dinghy racing skills.

This is a community event with visiting clubs and volunteers participating to make the event happen. To ensure safety we will need a fleet of at least 12 safety boats. Felpham SC has four. The Felpham Sea Scouts will help by bringing two, and the balance will come from visiting clubs bringing a further six crewed powerboats.

To help support the event, and such a large group of people (many families will come along supporting their children), we will erect a marquee at the Sailing Club. This will form the focal point of land side activity. The talks by Jazz, Hannah and Sussex Underwater will be held in the marquee. We anticipate well over 300 people attending. The event will be a huge effort by club members volunteering to ensure that it is safe and fun.

On the Saturday there will be a free karaoke evening for all.

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After racing each day all participants will receive free, a pot of hot pasta and cakes to refresh tired bodies.

This event is planned to inspire participants and be a celebration of youth sailing. Each participant will receive a medal, a certificate and a branded gift (a baseball cap). There will be about 60 trophies to present. Jess Breach will present the prizes at the Prizegiving on Sunday. Jess is a former youth sailor at Felpham SC and was a regular WSSYSA Regatta participant. She plays rugby for Saracens & England Ladies Red Roses team playing every match for England in the recent Rugby World Cup (September 2025), and was the top try scorer in the victorious team. She has 57 caps for England and is currently the all-time joint third top try scorer for England.

This plan of course depends on good weather. In the event of adverse weather preventing sailing we will offer, on the day(s) lost to sailing, Plan B. Rather than abandoning the day(s) and the event, Plan B will offer shoreside competitions such as relay races, team games, beach games and individual challenges, as well as board games, quizzes, treasure hunts and non-competitive activities. Offering Plan B has never been done before in the history of this regatta, in fact this approach to any sailing regatta is unique.

Whatever the weather visiting families can enjoy crazy golf, tennis courts, and self-cook BBQ on the adjacent council run facilities, as well as enjoying the facilities of the club, its hospitality and a wonderful beach. Refreshments will be available from the Club and neighbouring cafes including Boathouse, Lobster Pot and Beachcroft Hotel.

Regatta themes and objectives

*Aligned with the regatta theme of “**believe in yourself**” we aim to fulfil the following objectives:*

Inspiring young people

Participants and their families will be invited to attend inspirational events, meet, and talk to:

- Jess Breach, international womens’ rugby star
- Jazz Turner, a record breaking, world recognised, para inclusive sailor
- Hannah Mountain, crew member in the 2025 Fastnet Race
- Eric Smith and the Sussex Underwater team, leaders in creating awareness of sea life on the Sussex coast

Each of our guests have in their own way taken the initiative to believe in themselves and achieve great things.

Having fun in sport

Whatever we do, having fun is important. The event is a celebration of youth sailing. Although the event is competitive, we will ensure that as many young people as possible can participate, we will provide briefings and support, ensuring participants know what is happening, and when, and make sure that they are able to have fun with their friends. All participants will receive gifts helping the event be memorable. About half will receive a trophy of some sort.

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Encouraging getting into racing

The Rookie fleet is the place to start in Open Meeting dinghy racing competition. We will offer a programme of race coaching and training, and a mini regatta where the emphasis is on learning and having fun while building confidence, in a dinghy on the sea.

Achieving personal excellence in racing skills

A team of Race Coaches will provide pre-race coaching, video capture during racing, and post-race feedback. Jack Miller (National Coach for the RS Feva class) and Tim Hulse (National ILCA Training Manager) will provide coaching to the main fleets. Matthew Wright supported by Dan & Amy will be provide encouragement, training & coaching for the Rookie fleet.

There will be at three race areas, each with their own Committee boat. Experienced Race Officers will set appropriately challenging courses and run a regatta race series at a high standard. Results will be published promptly on-line.

Having fun whatever the weather

If the weather prevents sailing we will have an alternate programme of activities that keep participants active and engaged. Certificates and prizes will be awarded for individual and team achievements.

Understanding our playground and respecting our environment

The sea around Felpham is full of sea life, but we rarely see any of it. Sussex Underwater will come and give an illustrated talk on sea life around Bognor, explaining how the trawler ban has enabled sea life regeneration around Bognor.

Being part of a team

All participants will enter the event through a club, or school, and have a team manager. A minimum of four participants make up a team. The Team Prize enables all participants to contribute to their team's effort and help win the team trophy. Participants will feel a sense of identity and pride through their team. The Rookie fleet will have their own Team Prize.

Community involvement

This event brings youngsters, adults and families together from across West Sussex. Teams will bring along safety boats and volunteers to ensure that the event is able to run safely. Year after year this event brings young people and adult volunteers together to have fun on the water. Some youngsters start as Rookies, and carry on competing until they are 18, and then carry on as volunteers.

Inclusivity

The Regatta includes events specifically designed for Rookie sailors, some of whom may not have sailed on the sea before. On Saturday the Rookie fleet will be given sailing and race coaching enabling familiarisation and fun away from the race capable youngsters. The day will close with race training with flags on sticks to ensure that all can perform race starts and race around a triangle. On Sunday they will have their own mini regatta. By this means we will encourage the least experienced to have fun on the sea and take the first step into racing away from their home club.

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Getting started in Sailing

We will have a Laser 2000 with an instructor helm offering sailing experiences to family members of participants as an RYA OnBoard Taster session. This is aimed at those who are just starting out on their sailing journey. The sailing experience will last about an hour on the sea. Offered subject to weather conditions. A nominal charge of £5 per person will be made.

Ensuring a Safe regatta

We will have a range of measures in place to ensure that the event is managed and run safely for both participants and volunteers.

Safeguarding

We will have a range of measures in place to ensure that our participants feel safe, secure and can express their feelings safely.

Outline Plan for WSSYSA Regatta

Thurs 17 th Sept	Evening talk & video show by Sussex Underwater on “Sealife in our Playground” open to all participants and their families – no charge <i>Dinghy & powerboat deliveries possible</i>
Friday 18 th Sept	Talk in the evening by Jazz Turner on her “Round Britain record” and Hannah Mountain talking on her Fastnet Race. open to all participants and their families – no charge <i>Safety Boat Crews Meeting</i> <i>Club open in afternoon and evening for dinghy & powerboat deliveries.</i>
Sat 19 th Sept	Regatta Day 1 – 3 races back to back – first race 11am Rookie Coaching and Race Training from 11am Laser 2000 experience sails from 11am Evening Karaoke led by Moonbeams - open to all participants and families – no charge
Sun 20 th Sept	Regatta Day 2 – 3 races back to back – first race 11am Rookie Regatta – first race from 11am. Laser 2000 experience sails from 11am followed by prizegiving with special guest Jess Breach (England Red Roses rugby star)

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Entry fee

There will be a charge of £27 for a singlehanded dinghy & £46 for a doublehanded dinghy.

This charge will cover some regatta costs and provides for Regatta entry. Activities at the Regatta including the evening talks and the karaoke are provided free to participants and their families. Also, hot pasta pots will be provided after sailing along with squash, biscuits and cake. Together with the regatta prizes, the certificates, medals and branded baseball caps for all and the free events we hope to engender a warm welcoming and inclusive feeling at the Regatta. Participants come as part of a club team and compete for a team trophy whichever fleet they race in creating a feeling of team identity and inclusivity in their tribe.

Raffle

A raffle will be held with the draw at Prizegiving on Sunday. It is requested that each organisation participating contribute one raffle prize (preferably sailing related).

WSSYSA Regatta branded clothing

Fine Designs will once again be selling their range of tops which can be branded with your choice of logos, including a regatta 2026 logo and club logos

Contact: Event Director: Roger Belton
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<https://felphamsailingclub.co.uk/>
<https://www.wssysa.org/>

Photo credit: Roger Belton - WSSYSA Regatta at Felpham SC September 2019

V4.0: YTF sponsorship added. Entry fee fixed. Final changes.

V4.1: SMR Solicitors sponsorship added.