



Children's Sailing Trust

Impact Report 2024



We place great importance on listening to the children and young people we support. Their voices guide our work and shape how we measure our impact, fostering genuine partnerships with individuals and communities. By truly hearing them, we can drive meaningful and lasting change.

Registered Charity Number 1165396
www.childrenssailingtrust.org.uk

Key Statistics



89%
told us that they feel more
confident on the water



90%
thought the sessions were
fun to take part in



53%
found that they were more
active as a result of the sessions



100%
of teachers felt that children
were more ready to learn
after the sessions



75%
said they enjoyed
making new friends
during their sessions



100%
want the opportunity to
access our sailing again

Star Facts

78 young people who attend SEND provision took part in our charitable sailing programmes at Trevassack Lake

442.24 hours of volunteering (approximately equal to 11 weeks' work) on the water

1,268 children and young people accessed the water through holiday courses and multi-activity days with an additional 304 attending one-off activity group sessions

6 Assistant Instructors completed their training

226 places were offered through the Cornwall Council Time 2 Move Holiday programme

426 primary aged children sailed with us as part of our charitable sailing programmes with 130 of these being fully subsidised

8 Staff and Volunteers gained RYA Powerboat Level 2 Certificates

Our Trinity House funding (for children on Free School Meals), funded two RYA Stage 2 courses, two Saturday Club sailing courses, one RYA Stage 4 and one Power Boat Level 2 Course

36 local children applied for our TK Foundation funding, all achieved RYA Stage 2 (having only started sailing with us this year) and 10 achieved their RYA Stage 3



Children's Sailing Trust

Same as we've ever been

Since 1997, Children's Sailing Trust (CST) has been dedicated to transforming lives by providing accessible learning opportunities through sailing and water-based activities. Our mission is to empower children and young people to build confidence, resilience and competence, offering pathways to internationally recognised qualifications while fostering a lifelong love for the water.

Operating on the Helford River and Trevassack Lake, we deliver 16 weeks of sailing each season for children aged 8 to 11, and up to age 25 for those in SEN settings. Over the course of three years, a child can experience up to 120 hours of tuition, with many achieving RYA Stages 3 and 4. During the holidays, our skilled instructors run bursary-funded and paid sailing courses, ensuring that our core charitable work continues to flourish.

In 2024, we proudly employed nine young people who first discovered sailing with CST as children - a testament to the enduring impact of early experiences on the water. This vision, championed by our founder, John Green MBE, remains at the heart of everything we do.

We are not mental health specialists; we are sailors, kayakers and paddleboarders yet the feedback we receive from parents, carers and teachers highlights how our sessions improve the physical and mental well-being of the children and young people we support. This aligns with the growing evidence behind 'Blue Health' - the profound benefits of being near water. For John Green MBE, this was clear from the beginning by bringing children onto the water simply to experience the joy and freedom it provides.

As you will hear, we create fun, safe and engaging water-based activities that children love. They tell us how happy and confident they feel, how much they enjoy learning new skills outdoors and how meaningful it is to build friendships along the way. Parents and carers share stories of transformation and teachers highlight the positive impact on learning and social development.





We are so proud of all the children and young people we have worked with in 2024.

All of them showed courage and determination to reach their own goals.



142 'Tried Sailing' Certificates Awarded



205 RYA Stage 1 Certificates Awarded



28 RYA Stage 2 Certificates Awarded



10 RYA Stage 3 Certificates Awarded

15 children took part in waterborne activities to work towards gaining skills such as building upper body strength, confidence and resilience.

28 children worked at their own pace, as you will read about later, gaining their Wave 1 Certificates.

[River Regatta Film](#)

[Lake Regatta Film](#)



Building Back Confidence

The 2024 charitable programmes have seen some challenging conditions on both the Helford River and Trevassack Lake, testing the skill and resolve of our sailing groups. Some students have thrived, whilst others have struggled, either refusing to participate or losing confidence in what new-found skills they had gained. Please note, names have been changed to protect privacy.

An example of this is Sarah. Very worried about even climbing into a boat, let alone sailing out onto the estuary to learn new skills, Sarah became a part of a small group who are taking things much more slowly than the rest of the class, continuing with tacking drills where the boat is held in the water by the instructor. The development of this is to secure the boat with a long rope, so they can sail out a short distance and then tack, with the confidence that if something goes wrong, the instructor on the other end of the rope will be able to pull the boat back to shore. Sarah is now getting used to being in the boat but is still worried about moving around in the boat and steering. The teachers on session are very involved with the small, shore-based group and are pleased with the development they are making, despite it being in far smaller increments than that of the main group.

William started confidently on the River but was involved in a capsize where the Optimist dinghy, he and a friend were sailing, inverted and he was briefly caught under the boat. Despite never being in any danger, William was anxious about getting afloat again. His next session was moved to Trevassack Lake, which gave us the opportunity to slowly rebuild his confidence. Two instructors were able to sit with him on the pontoon, one in a Tera dinghy, one holding it firmly to shore. The instructors were then able to encourage and reassure William that sitting on the boat was no different from sitting on the pontoon. At first, he would move either his hands or bottom onto the boat, but then anxiety would have him quickly coming back onto the pontoon. Eventually, with much reassurance, we were able to get him aboard the boat, which we then held a little way from shore, to show that the boat was still level and safe. Eventually, the instructors were able to release the boat and one of them took William for a short 'out and back' sail. From there, he gained enough confidence to sail with the instructor for the rest of the season.



Throughout all our charitable programmes, in almost every group, there were many more examples like these young people struggling with confidence and resilience, to the point where they are essentially incapacitated. With some of the children, we can spend time with them helping them get over their fears. In other cases, teachers and volunteers have the skills to help the young people develop. However, with staffing levels on mainstream groups sessions being at RYA ratio, it is impossible to help everyone. With Special Educational Needs groups, where traditionally we would see this kind of anxiety, we are able to run with more instructors and more staff and volunteers who expect to be encouraging and reassuring rather than purely teaching.



Simon's Sailing Season

Simon attends a mainstream school that uses Trevassack Lake for sailing. He first started sailing with us in summer 2023. At that point, we were unable to offer RYA Certificates at Trevassack Lake, as we weren't a registered training centre with the RYA, but we were able to use the Stage 1 syllabus to teach students. Simon's parents are both in low-income employment, with his mother being a teaching assistant.

Simon was quite nervous at first, especially when the wind was strong. It took time to build confidence in his ability, but he showed great promise. He then came back to CST in the spring of 2024, completing eleven 2 hour school sessions with us. He impressed his instructors with his dedication and skills and was invited onto our funded RYA Stage 2 course on the Helford River during the summer holidays. The change of environment from Lake to River didn't trouble Simon. He thrived in the larger space, the feeling of adventure fuelling his imagination and allowing him to develop his confidence and resilience in a way that other sports had never achieved.

Having gained his RYA Stage 2 Certificate, Simon was keen to do more. Thanks to the TK Foundation, we were able to invite children from the summer courses back to take RYA Stage 3 at Trevassack Lake (now RYA Registered). Simon was one of the first to book the course and spent two days at the lake, joyously building his skills, both in sailing and in leadership, helping other students gain confidence with their new skills.

Simon's mother has spoken of how being able to wear his glasses whilst sailing, on the surface a very simple thing, has meant that being out on the river where you are often a long way from land, hasn't been the scary experience it might have been. This is something that has sometimes held him back in other sports. Taking part in these sailing sessions has added to his confidence and in turn his competence. Simon's mother also reports that he is more confident with his classmates, as making friends on sailing courses has developed his social skills and that discussions about sailing are now part of everyday conversation at home!



We asked children how the sessions had helped them

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I have experience with sailing already but I enjoyed the opportunity to develop these skills whilst having a great time

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“

I enjoyed being outside having fun and learning to do something new

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“

I made new friends, learnt different parts of the boat, learnt about the wind

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“

I was nervous about being outside of a pool but I was able to overcome my fear having capsized

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“

It helped improve my sailing and helped me feel more confident. It helped me lead the group in my boat as I was the oldest and knew more than others and so I had to do it!

”

“

It was my first time on a boat and I loved being on the water and capsizing. I can't wait for next year.

”



We asked parents and carers what we can do to improve our sessions



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The weather meant he was a little disappointed he did not get to sail a larger size boat on the second day. But this is not the fault of CST who were incredible, and really encouraged him. He left feeling like he was, in his words, “the best sailor ever, even better than Dad”.

”

“

I'd like to see the sessions remain the same. They are great, the instructors are brilliant, so much is gained from sailing with the Trust.

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Maybe try swapped partners a bit more during the sessions.

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“

Try and ensure a variety of activities are covered over the sessions - which is what usually happens.

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“

CST are perfect - always positive and flexible and work in tune with our students.

”

“

Nothing at all! Great instructors, Great communication, Great to be able to be power boated from the Helford down to Porth Saxon! Amazing opportunity for my daughter and she loved it! - Thank you. She now wants her own boat!!

”

“

Just continue to offer this amazing service!

”



We asked teachers to tell us about a 'stand out' moment for them this season

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Pupils partaking in the sailing sessions show more leadership skills when in school. This improves their self-confidence overall. Developing greater resilience, when they are able to conquer their fears during sailing.

Pupils pushing themselves in sailing sessions is good experience for challenges in class.

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“

Certain children who lacked confidence before attending really showed positive engagement and overcame challenges while taking part in the sailing.

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“

A quiet student who had never kayaked before went from a sailing boat to trying a double kayak to then have a go at a single: his confidence grew but also his assertiveness in that he prefers sailing and likes to pull on the ropes, knows how to do this at the right time and verbalises his preference to sail.

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“

Two students sailed who had never done this before and talked a lot about how brave they were to go out on the water. This has been used to give them confidence to try other new things.

”

“

A young lady that I bring with me, began last year by joining in group activities. We then convinced her to go onto a double kayak and then into a single. Once in the single, she struggled both physically (weak wrists and energy levels) and in confidence. However, on our next visit, she immediately asked to go in a single and did so every session. She built up her confidence, stamina and physical ability to move her Kayak even on a very windy day. She was so proud of herself, as were we!

”

“

One particular child has struggled with frustration and anger in all aspects of their life. Sailing has given them the resilience to persevere with difficult situations and to be able to reflect on their part in it.

”

“

One student is worried about any off-site activities and becomes very anxious. On the water though her anxiety levels drop and there is a noticeable calm.

”

The Next Generation

Our New Assistant Instructors

We are always looking to harness the enthusiasm of children who wish to progress their sailing learning beyond our core charitable offering. By seeking to secure bursary funding for such opportunities we continue to build on your donations and the learning of children and young people. This year, through funding from the Worth Waynflete Foundation, we were able to progress six young people to qualify them as Assistant Instructors. Hear what this opportunity has meant to some of them and their parents below.

“For me, sailing with Children’s Sailing Trust has really allowed my confidence to flourish. Before sailing became such a massive part of my life, I was a very quiet and anxious person. Not much would have convinced me to step out of my comfort zone. When I started learning how to sail, I felt as if I was suddenly free from all those stresses, in control and in a safe environment surrounded by like-minded instructors and young people. I am very grateful for all that the Trust has done to allow me to progress from a beginner sailor to an Assistant Instructor, to a qualified sailor becoming a Dinghy Instructor with a power boating license!”

Young person’s account

“Both my children have benefited hugely from Children’s Sailing Trust and are bereft when they can’t sail in the winter! Learning to sail is so much more than just an amazing skill to have, it has boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem in ways that nothing else ever has. I am so grateful to CST and all the dedicated people who work there. I am also delighted that my eldest child is now able to give something back to the Trust by volunteering and training to become a sailing instructor. I couldn’t have wished for a better outcome.” Parent’s account

“This is my second season volunteering as an assistant sailing instructor for the Trust. I thoroughly enjoy my time on the water helping and coaching the students and get great satisfaction seeing the students’ skills and confidence growing in all areas of sailing. I have learnt how to teach sailing and gain confidence while doing it. I was also able to do my powerboat licence as well and hopefully my Dinghy Instructor licence next year”

Young person’s account

“Volunteering with the Children's Sailing Trust really opened up a plethora of opportunities for me over the summer, enabling me to broaden my capabilities. I really enjoyed helping out with the on the water sessions and seeing the increase they made to childrens' spirits and confidence through the course of an activity. You really can see the principles of the trust building strongly within a group from beginning to end. Personally I feel as though this opportunity has allowed me to improve my own confidence not just as an instructor, but in all aspects of life. It feels great to be volunteering towards something I truly believe is a brilliant cause and to see the positive impacts it has on all involved.” Young person’s account.



With Thanks to our Supporters and Funders

To our individual donors who contribute significantly towards our fundraising needs each year, we thank you for your unwavering commitment.

To our local supporters, those who help us on the River, who share their facilities with us, and support our funding efforts, to those who swim at the Lake or have a coffee or lunch at our Cafe, we thank you all.

All this support helps us succeed in our mission, to provide accessible learning opportunities through sailing and water-based activities to all.

Our thanks also go to the Trust and Foundations that have supported us during 2024:

Cornwall Community Foundation | Goonhilly Wind Farm
Duchy of Cornwall Benevolent Fund
TK Foundation
RYA Foundation
Garfield Weston
Worshipful Company of Shipwrights
Kenneth and Susan Green Charitable Trust
Millennium Oak Trust
Worshipful Company of World Traders
Rodda's
3i Group Plc
The Lady Cobham Foundation
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Worth Waynflete Foundation

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