

N e w s R e l e a s e

For immediate release

24 May 2017

NATIONAL HERO ALEX THOMSON OPENS MARINE FESTIVAL

Gosport's star sailor Alex Thomson will officially open the Gosport Marine Festival on Saturday, May 27th. Invited to perform the opening, Alex said 'I'm delighted! I learned competitive sailing here and Gosport is the incubator for many of our finest ocean racers, men and women. With the Solent and the English Channel on our doorstep we are perfectly placed. If you just want to learn to sail for fun, or climb the ladder to world-class sailing, Gosport is THE place.'

The Festival begins at 9.30am with the parade of Sea Cadets from Gosport Town Hall and along the High Street to the Time Space. Here, at 10.00, Alex Thomson will officially launch the event and invite everyone to get on board. Throughout the day visitors will be able to get on the water free, to sail dinghies or yachts, rowing, kayaking, windsurfing and paddleboarding. Advance bookings were high but there will be some places available to visitors who just walk up to the registration tent. All the waterborne activities are led and supervised by experienced and qualified people, and buoyancy aids are provided.

For those who want to enjoy themselves without leaving the shore, there will be all-day live entertainment in the Time Space. There is a food festival and displays from local marine organisations on the Green, together with an art and craft exhibition in Trinity Church, activities for children too young to go afloat, visits to historic ships and more. A few yards away at the Cockle Pond/Model yacht lake there will be a display of model yachting and a chance for visitors to sail them too.

John Beavis, who organised the event with a team of volunteers said: 'This free Festival is for the community. It gives our young people a chance to go on the water and see the range of local marine activity for pleasure and for careers.' He continued 'The Festival is a family event, with activities for young children, going afloat for older children, those in their teens and adults; Wet Wheels will be providing rides for disabled people. There is something for almost everyone.' Details of activities and timings are at www.gosportmarinescene.org.uk

Alex Thomson is Gosport's most successful ocean racer. After his previous entry in the single-handed Vendee Globe (known as the Everest of ocean racing) he was made a Freeman of the Borough. Last winter as he circled the world once again, breaking numerous world records even though he was pipped at the post after losing one of his flying foils. He takes his enthusiasm for sailing into schools and community organisations. His daring keel and mast walks are to be seen on YouTube.

Councillor John Beavis MBE, former Mayor of Gosport, is the Council's adviser to Gosport Marine Scene under whose auspices the festival takes place.

The event is supported by Dean and Reddyhoff of Haslar Marina, Gosport Sea Cadets, Trinity House, Crewsaver, Marine Advertising Agency, ASTO, Wave 105, Radio Haslar, Andy Biggs Watersports, Lee-on-the-Solent and Stokes Bay Sailing

Clubs, Gosport Model Yacht and Boat Club, and many other activity providers. It takes place under the auspices of Gosport Marine Scene, the marine business network.

ENDS

Media enquiries:

For further information and requests for interviews, please contact:

Mike Shepherd

Tel.: 023 9252 2044; or mobile 07786 265 455

Email: mike@marineadagency.com

GMF Chairman contact details:

John Beavis

Tel: 023 92793 063; or mobile 07952 199288

Email: johnw.beavis@gmail.com

Notes for Editors

About Gosport Marine Scene and Gosport:

Organiser of Gosport's: Marine Business Network, Gosport Marine Festival June 2015, Talent & Career Programme

Gosport Peninsula is a centre of excellence in ocean racing, sail training, marine tourism and trade.

Gosport is the home of: Alex Thomson Racing & Hugo Boss, Clipper Round the World Race, Global Ocean Race, Sail Training International, ASTO, Ocean Youth Trust South, Lee-on-Solent RYA Onboard, Toe in the Water . . . just for starters