



Newsletter Summer Holidays 2026

There's results, and there are results

What a treat Cowes Week was for us at Plan B this year. Our annual entry into the iconic event was described as the best yet by one of our longstanding sailors, and it was a hard statement to argue against. The sun shone and the wind blew from day one of this seven-day regatta and Flame of Anor looked great with her new suit of Sanders sails. As it was the event's 200th anniversary year, it had an extra special feel, the entry list was good and our International Rating Committee (IRC) Class 5 was competitive. As always, we had a range of mixed ability crew changing throughout the week. A small number of "seasoned" sailors was intermixed with a range of crew, from the youngest at 12 years old to Plan B staff and supporters sailing for the very first time. This variety underpins the ethos of our Cowes Week entry each year and goes hand in hand with our experiential and inclusive approach to all we do. Racing against professionals, veterans and finely honed teams will always place us towards the rear of a fleet such as this. But throughout the week, our learning and teamwork grew and manoeuvres got slicker as we got into the flow of the sail training mindset. We had the pleasure of inviting a range of young people onboard that would benefit from Flame's calm and infectious approach. We also renewed a longstanding relationship with the fabulous Scaramouche Sailing Trust based out of London's Grieg City Academy school. Project coordinator Jon Holt kindly gave Plan B a shout out for our work in the education industry during their reception and presentation evening before he popped onto BBC News to continue promoting their campaign to get marine industry skills onto the curriculum. In the meantime, we were able to secure one of their pupils to become part of our crew for several days, which we hope will build once again into a regular placement. The week was as enjoyable as it was effortful. As we celebrated our final finish line and headed back to our home port of Haslar Marina, we consoled ourselves that although a victory on the results board was not ours, the win of achieving our goals, introducing more people to the sport and getting additional sailors on the water certainly was the result we wanted.





The year of the pop-up paddle boarders

Once again, our team of paddlers and watersports enthusiasts returned to the Hardway Green area of Gosport for this summer's much-anticipated community event. Our highly experienced team members have engaged hundreds of local children year after year and their slick operation was enhanced by the warm and gentle airs and ultra calm conditions on the harbour. Due to some pockets of anti-social behaviour in another area of Gosport, there was a police dispersal order in place at Hardway this year. That meant fewer of our usual participants were queuing up to use our free equipment and tuition. But the smaller groups were all engaged and supported out on the water safely. This allowed for more young people and families to access the opportunity and for Plan B curriculum students to come along and spend some informal time with staff in one of the most perfect environments for learning, bonding and enjoyment. Led by our Paddle UK head coach, skill-building activities such as vessel control, launch and recovery turns, reversing and self rescue - along with games such as follow my leader, limbo and ball tag - kept everyone busy. The sessions flew by with the flooding and ebbing of the tide. Kayaks and canoes remained a popular choice this year. But the excellent conditions and light winds allowed for more beginners to get out on the paddle boards safely for the first time. Although a small number spent almost as much time in the water as not, the fun of balancing, falling off and self-rescuing made the biggest splash and crowned 2026 as the year of the pop-up paddle boarders.



Music Matters becomes a tradition at Victorious

In August 2024, Music Matters team members were invited to bring their instruments, know-how and charm to support grassroots music for all within the kids area at Victorious Festival. Readers may remember how popular this was and what an honour and achievement it was to be recognised as a valuable asset to such a huge and popular event. That inaugural pairing was the two organisations testing the appetite for this level of engagement. The feedback from all stakeholders was positive, so last year's festival gave everyone the opportunity to return for the "proof" event to show that this was not a flash in the pan and Music Matters was not a one-trick pony. The number of people taking part grew, the word was out and there were almost as many returning participants as new enthusiasts being initiated by the team and given the opportunity to perform a live set in front of an impressive audience. It was almost inevitable, then, that this year, the invite was once again extended to host a tent, gather a team, invite beginners and seasoned musicians alike and entertain crowds. This cemented Music Matters as a "tradition" of the festival. The focus this year was on getting more people with instruments in their hands and creating a jam to make passers-by stop and gaze in awe at the talents of collective amateur players and performers as young as 10. It was a big hit once again. Feedback from this year was overwhelmingly positive and some returning musicians told us this was the highlight of their festival and the activity they had most been looking forward to. So, it sounds like this tradition is set to play for many more audiences to come.



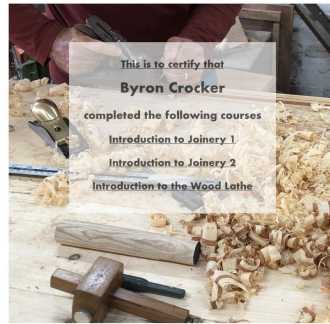


Ongoing support from the Sawdust Academy

Summer holidays may have begun, but for one of Plan B trainees, the lessons didn't stop there. Our own carpentry workshop closed its doors for six weeks, allowing our team to take part in other activities and enjoy some downtime. But we were lucky enough to access the incredible Sawdust Academy workshop to help student Byron learn new skills and experience further tool and machine use under the guidance of fabulous trainer Jon Carver. Jon has been a friend and supporter of Plan B's work since its inception and acted as a consultant on matters of boatbuilding and joinery. Having trained our workshop manager from a young age, he has never been more than a phone call away. So it is great that he can continue to support learning of the highest quality to help the next generation of Plan B trainees roll on into the future. Byron is a quiet and unassuming student, so to hear him voice his satisfaction for the course and see him smile as he recounted some of the tasks and activities he undertook speaks for itself. We would normally extend a huge thank you to Jon for his efforts, but the gratitude came directly from the student this time, as Jon's feedback to us was that Byron was a genuine pleasure to teach and that his conduct was exemplary. Thank you Jon, and well done Byron.



Certificate of Achievement



Sawdust Academy, Casemate St, Farnham, Surrey, GU14 9DL
sawdustacademy.co.uk



Feedback/quotes

There was so much feedback and more quotes than we could possibly record from our PuPs (Pop-up Paddlesports participants) this year so we have compressed them into laughter, shrieks, giggles and splashes...





This summer, we have also ...

... had some well deserved downtime, holidays, rest and recuperation.

Specific thanks to Jon Carver. Barnaby Wiener, Tessa and Jules, Simon, Dan, Gaby, Theo, Hamish, Artie, John and Rose, Mat Ward, Brian Nevill, Paula Padmore, Vikki G, Lily G and Wyndham.



Here is a wish-list of donations that would help Plan B students...

You have been very kind so far, thank you. We are always looking for: more bikes, scooters and skateboards; wood; musical instruments and musical equipment including digital mixers; cooking utensils and general kitchen equipment; tools (for engineering and wood working); art equipment of any sort; footballs; equipment for autumn sports such as skipping ropes and various exercise equipment; Lego or Meccano; games - that would be suitable for indoors learning please...



TEAM PROFILE: Gill Heron

After being with us from the beginning and over eight years in the Alternative Provision sector, Gill has stood down as student and family support to enjoy her leisure time and have a well deserved rest. She will always be a huge part of Plan B and we wish her all the best in her fabulous future.





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