

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

**Members' Meeting at Stokesley Town Hall
Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 10.00am**

Summary of Speaker's Presentation

Our visiting speaker was Colin Harrison of the RNLI, coxswain at Staithes Lifeboat Station, who gave a presentation about the history and operations of the RNLI.

A retired solicitor, Colin is the fourth generation of his family to serve on Staithes lifeboat. This legacy continues as both his son and daughter are also currently crew members.

Colin gave a detailed overview of the RNLI, and stressed that all its activities are aimed to support its founding and core mission, simply, to save lives at sea.

There are currently 238 operational stations in Great Britain and Ireland run predominantly by volunteers, with only paid personnel based at remote stations on a rota basis. The majority of stations operate two boats ; one inshore, and one offshore. The service had its origins in the Isle of Man where it was founded by Sir William Hilary in 1824 after he had witnessed numerous shipwrecks around the shores of the island. It has always remained independent of Government thereby maintaining full control of budgets and direction

The first boat design developed was essentially a self righting rowing boat – a sole surviving example, “The Zetland”, is displayed in Kirkleatham Museum – in stark contrast to the current fleet comprising state of the art designs and technology.

The RNLI also manages lifeguard activities in order to coordinate all sea rescue activities.

Crews spend much of their time training and practising to maintain competency, and to master the latest techniques.

In addition, crews and support volunteers are much involved in prevention/awareness schemes, and in raising of funds.

The RNLI's total expenditure in 2024 was £194 million, and revenue was £200 million raised by donations and fundraising activities.

Following several questions and thanks from the Chairman for an interesting and passionately delivered presentation, Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Colin for his talk and his dedication to saving lives at sea with a heartfelt round of applause and a donation.