



Gravesham Life Saving Club Handbook

September 2024

Welcome

First of all, a very warm welcome to Gravesham Lifesaving Club. The purpose of this handbook is to give you an introduction to the club, and The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK), the awards structure, and a little insight as to what is expected of you.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to speak to any Instructor or committee member. More about who's who later on.

Introduction to *RLSS UK*

The Royal Life Saving Society UK was formed in 1891 in an attempt to reduce the 2000 deaths through drowning in the UK per year. In 1924 the Society was granted a Royal Charter by King George V, and subsequently another by Queen Elizabeth in 1959.

Today, *RLSS UK* has branches throughout the World, teaching and promoting the aims and objectives of the Society.

In the UK there are around 50 branches. Gravesham is a member of the Kent Branch. Members of the club are active within the Branch and hold various Branch Management roles.

Club members are encouraged to become individual members of *RLSS UK*, this carries an additional annual fee.

History of Gravesham Lifesaving Club

The club was formed in 1977 initially as a method of training lifeguards at the Northfleet Pool. As time progressed the pool changed its name to the Cygnet Leisure Centre, and the club opened its doors to the public. Since then, the club has gone from strength to strength by developing a rookie section, a

competitive section, open water awards and promoting water safety and life support. All the Teachers and Committee members are unpaid and give their time voluntarily.

Swimming Assessment

As we don't teach people to swim, any new members *may* be asked to undertake a competency-based swimming assessment. This will usually be carried out over six lengths (150m) of the pool. Applicants should also be able to recover a brick from bottom of the main pool (1.5m depth).

Entry to any group is subject to completing the requirements to the clubs satisfaction. We are happy to discuss this with members or parents/guardians.

If there are any medical conditions that the teacher should know about, for example asthma, then please inform the teacher personally. (This information will be treated in the strictest of confidence). Please make sure this is also on Spond when registering.

Structure of the Club

The club meets on a Saturday afternoon at Cygnet Leisure Centre, Northfleet between 2pm-3.30pm. We also meet on a Sunday evening at Cobham Hall School, Brewers Road, Cobham, DA12 3BL. Please check with us regarding the times, but usually between 4.30pm-6.30pm.

We would ask any members to arrive a few minutes prior to the start times, so sessions can start on time.

The Water Based Awards

For our younger members aged 8-12 yrs, the club offers the Rookie programme. This scheme covers water safety, self-rescue, rescue and emergency response. As the Rookies proceed through the scheme, they gain badges and certificates. In addition to the core elements mentioned above, members also learn skills such as snorkelling, and body boarding.

For members over 12 yrs, we offer The RLSS UK National Lifesaving Academy awards, which are a suite of progressive awards that teach personal survival, first aid, CPR, rescue, and fitness skills to anyone aged 12 years and over.

Their aim is to teach candidates how to stay safe around water and how to safely assist others who may have gotten into difficulty in both aquatic and non-aquatic situations.

The awards are structured to teach foundational skills and then progressively build up the candidate's skills. On achieving the Bronze Medallion level of award, the candidate receives Recognition of Prior Learning hours towards the RLSS UK vocational lifeguard qualifications.

The awards are structured into three levels (Bronze Lifesaving Certificate, Bronze Star, and Bronze Medallion), and multiple environmental strands are available at the Bronze Star and Bronze Medallion levels.

The three award strands are as follows:

- **Pool** – completed in the swimming pool
- **Open Water** – completed preferably in non-tidal, inland open water sites
- **Beach** – completed on the coast, usually Sheerness

The Bronze Lifesaving Certificate is designed to teach the basics of staying safe in or around water. It provides the candidate with

basic water safety knowledge, basic aquatic lifesaving skills, basic CPR, and basic First Aid.

The two subsequent award levels (Bronze Star and Bronze Medallion) are divided into three sections:

- **Lifesaving Theory**
- **Lifesaving Survival and Rescue Skills**
- **CPR, AED & First Aid**

Candidates will need to complete and pass all sections before moving on to the next award. Upon successfully completing the assessment, candidates will receive either a certificate or an e-certificate and medal depending on the award level.

Resuscitation Awards

In addition to the pool-based programmes, the club also offers training in Resuscitation and basic first aid. Successful assessments in Life Support will lead to the Life Support or Life Support 3 qualifications.

Life Support establishes an effective level of skill and knowledge in basic Life Support, including diagnosis and treatment of choking, bleeding and Shock.

Life Support 3 is designed to establish excellent levels of knowledge and ability to administer basic life support to casualties of all ages and in a variety of emergency situations. This is the highest life support award.

The two Life Support qualifications are all land based, and no pool work is involved.

Courses are run over a varying period of time, with either continuous assessment by the Instructor, or final independent assessment once students have reached the required standards, however there may be some flexibility to allow for students varying standards and abilities.

For all awards successfully passed, Certificates are issued. As with all Club activities, parents and family are actively encouraged to come along and spectate at training sessions, competitions etc. The beach days are an excellent social activity.

The Club is also very proactive in promoting schemes within the community including the RLSS UK 'Save A Life' series, which teaches basic life support skills to treat babies, children and adults suffering choking and cardiac arrests. We also currently manage 2 public access defibrillators in Gravesham and help with many other schemes in North Kent.

Training Sessions

Depending on whichever course you are on will dictate the structure and format of the session. However, generally the sessions will be broken into two, a dry session, learning resuscitation and associated skills and a pool session, where stamina and water rescue skills are taught.

The club provides approved training manikins for teaching resuscitation techniques, and these come in a variety of sizes to represent babies, children and adults.

Attire

We would ask members to adhere to our clothing guidelines. Boys and men should wear trunks or shorts, and girls and women should wear a one-piece costume. Bikini's are not permitted.

For the water work elements of the assessment, clothing needs to be worn, so in preparation for this, members need to bring with them, to every session full length trousers and a top with full length sleeves that can be worn in the pool. Rookies should bring a tee shirt with them for the pool sessions.

For safety, all jewellery should be removed before the start of any session. Also, the club cannot be responsible for personal belongings, so we would ask that any valuables are left at home.

Finally, please use the lockers provided, or bring all your belongings onto poolside with you. The changing rooms at Cygnet Leisure Centre are still used by the public, and there have been instances of thefts from the changing rooms.

Management Committee

At the Annual General Meeting of the Club, which takes place in January of each year, the club members present elect an Executive Committee. The committee meets regularly throughout the year to oversee the day to day running of the club and manage its affairs effectively. The posts on the committee are:-

Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Hon. Secretary (Club Admin)
Hon. Treasurer
Competitions Co-ordinator
Junior Representative
Club Representative
Club Representative
Public Relations Officer
Training Co-ordinator
Membership Secretary
Safeguarding Officer

*Details available via website
of all post holders.*

Competition / Lifesaving Sport Awards

The main focus of the club is teaching of lifesaving, however in recent years a small expansion has occurred into the field of competitive lifesaving. Events are held all year round in varied fields such as life support, skills, speed and open water. Members have been successful in recent years and have been selected to represent Kent against other branches. It must be pointed out that, to compete, members must be in possession of a current lifesaving qualification, dependent upon the competition, and be in current membership of *RLSS UK*.

Spond

Our membership, and most of the club communication is via the app **Spond**. Push notifications go out to mobile phones to remind members of the forthcoming sessions, and to enable a reply indication attendance. All future planned sessions are available to see in the app.

Website

The club's website can be found at www.glsc.org.uk. If you have any comments or suggestions please let us know at GraveshamLSC@hotmail.com The website is update regularly with news and events about the club.

Facebook

The club can be found on Facebook – 'GraveshamLSC' is a closed group and a great way to communicate with members. Regular discussions or questions are posted by all members. You will also find items such as the Club Constitution, Codes of Conduct, and Competition guides in the *Files* section.

Insurance

While you are undertaking club activities you are insured through our club for Public Liability Cover. You are strongly advised to seek information about personal liability cover that is either arranged by the club, or you arrange yourself. RLSS UK Individual membership should be considered. Details via RLSS Direct.

Finally

Thank you for taking the time to read this brief introduction to the club. It is by no means exhaustive, and if you think of anything else you would like to see included, please feel free to talk to any of the instructors or committee members. Also, if you are unsure about anything covered here or would like further information please ask.

Thank you

