

Saturday 23 September 2017

Girvan set to welcome new £2.1million Lifeboat

Girvan's Mersey class lifeboat to be replaced with state of the art Shannon class all-weather lifeboat, 1st on the West coast of Scotland.

When Girvan lifeboat station had its coastal review a couple of years ago, it was announced that our Mersey class lifeboat 12-37 'Silvia Burrell' was nearing the end of its 25year operational life, and to this end it would be due to be replaced.

At the time of announcement the RNLI had developed a new lifeboat, the Shannon class all-weather lifeboat coming in at £2.1million was seen as a fitting replacement for the Mersey and Tyne class lifeboats and a step towards the RNLI's goal of an all 25knot fleet, the Shannon being powered by the vast twin Hamilton water jets as opposed to more traditional propellers giving it more increased manoeuvrability and the ability to operate in shallower waters, ideally suited to Britain's vast and rugged coastline.

With a top speed of 25 knots and a range of 250 nautical miles, the self-righting lifeboat is ideally suited for offshore searches or equally rescues in calmer shallower waters, her twin Scania 650hp engines provides enough power to tow large vessels – and her waterjet technology allows her to manoeuvre in shallow waters, much easier than with traditional propeller seen on our current lifeboats.

The team at Girvan lifeboat station as a whole were delighted to be given the news that a Shannon lifeboat would be the replacement for 'Silvia Burrell' to which the hard work began.

Funding for new lifeboats come in many guises, from donations made by the public, to bequests from wills or indeed benefactors, in our case the latter applies to which we are eternally grateful.

Girvan's new Shannon lifeboat was funded by The John & Elizabeth Allan Memorial Trust.

Professor James Allan's (The John & Elizabeth Allan Memorial Trust) interest in the RNLI began as a child when he went to Fraserburgh on holiday with his family. Prof Allan and his sister Elizabeth met the lifeboat crew there and on returning a year later, Prof Allan was delighted that the crew remembered them.

The trust has funded two Atlantic class lifeboats, one to be stationed at Enniskillen, to be named after the children of his doctor and another B Class, to be stationed at Harwich to be named after the children of his stockbroker, as they have both been an enormous support to him. They have also funded the Seahouses Shannon class lifeboat and named it after their parents to show their gratitude to them and Girvan Shannon class which will be named after his sisters, and with this we can advise that

Girvan's new Shannon all-weather lifeboat 13-23 will be named 'RNLB ELIZABETH AND GERTRUDE ALLAN'

Professor James Allan is a very modest, kind-hearted and thoughtful man and despite his continuing ill-health, he has made his support for the RNLI a priority.

Work on Girvan's new lifeboat started at the RNLI's new All Weather Lifeboat centre in Poole, Dorset on 19th September 2016, after many months hard work she finally rolled out of the (ALC) for official launch on the 5th September 2017, she is currently at Poole undergoing several weeks of sea trials prior to being accepted into the fleet, the 23rd Shannon class lifeboat to date.

Lifeboat crew as you may be aware are primarily volunteers, albeit apart from the full time mechanics/coxswain's who are on station, Girvan is no exception, our crew now face several weeks of intense training to add to their already high level skillset to prepare for the arrival of the new lifeboat.

This begins in earnest as soon as trials are complete with crew travelling down to Poole for training from late October through to December, the crew alongside an RNLI staff coxswain will continue training whilst on the 460 mile passage back to Girvan with the new lifeboat, currently although timings could alter we anticipate the arrival of Girvan's new Shannon Class all-weather lifeboat to be on Sunday December 10th

With the new lifeboat having an operational lifespan of 25 years, the hull and wheelhouse are good for 50 years, the arrival of a towns new lifeboat is cause for great excitement as well as celebration and for some will be a once in a lifetime experience to participate and witness the arrival of a new lifeboat, to which we hope you will come down to join and support us in this milestone for Girvan and indeed Ayrshire, This will be the 1st Shannon Class lifeboat on the West coast of Scotland and indeed the 2nd of its type in Scotland to date, further details and updates will be released in the run up to the proposed date.

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For more information on the RNLI please visit www.rnli.org.uk. News releases and other media resources, including RSS feeds, downloadable photos and video, are available at the RNLI Press Centre www.rnli.org.uk/press

Key facts about the RNLI

The RNLI charity saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates over 230 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and has more than 100 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK. The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its

rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824 its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 137,000 lives. The RNLI is a charity registered in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.