



MERCHANT NAVY
WELFARE BOARD

ANNUAL REVIEW

2023

About Us

The Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) is a registered charity formed by the UK Government out of the ‘Seamen’s Welfare Board’ in 1948 following the end of the Second World War. Based in Southampton, the Board is the umbrella charity for the UK Merchant Navy & Fishing Fleets. Its Council of Management has an equal number of trustees representing ship owners, maritime trade unions and voluntary organisations.

We have 45 maritime charity constituent organisations who provide a plethora of services that support the welfare of seafarers, fishers and their dependants. Additionally, we have 15 Port Welfare Committees (PWCs) within the UK, and a Seafarers’ Welfare Board (SWB) in Gibraltar. As appointed by the Maritime Coastguard Agency in 2021, the Board is the UK’s National Seafarers’ Welfare Board. It also provides grants, training, welfare support and projects for its supporters to enhance the lives of seafarers.

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WHO’S WHO

- Patron:** The Lord Prescott
- Vice President:** Robert Courts MP
- Chair:** Captain Andrew Cassels
- Vice Chair:** Mark Dickinson
-
- Chief Executive Officer:** Stuart Rivers
- Deputy Chief Executive:** Sharon Coveney
- Communications & Media Manager:** Joel Holt
- Grants & Impact Manager:** Celia Jackson
- Port Welfare Committee Manager:** Sarah Edward
- Port Welfare Committee Manager:** Susan Atkinson
- Training & Welfare Manager:** Helen van Gass
- Projects & Welfare Coordinator:** Aiden Harvey
- Executive Assistant:** Nicky Cantello



STAY IN CONTACT

- 8 Cumberland Place,
Southampton,
Hampshire,
SO15 2BH
- enquiries@mnwb.org.uk**
- mnwb.org**
- 02380 337799**
- @MNWBUK
- @Merchant Navy Welfare Board
- @TheMNWB
- @mnwb_uk

Cover image: MNWB’s supporters attend its annual conference at the Harbour Hotel, Southampton during its 75th year. Photo by Stuart Martin.

Chair’s Foreword

CAPTAIN ANDREW CASSELS
CHAIR



Driving welfare standards

ANDREW CASSELS RECOGNISES THE CONTRIBUTION OF OUR CONSTITUENT MEMBERS IN HELPING US DRIVE WELFARE STANDARDS

On behalf of my fellow trustees, I am delighted to introduce the 2023 Annual Review, a year in which we had many achievements.

At the top of that list was marking 75 years since the Merchant Navy Welfare Board was formed by the UK Government to oversee the provision of welfare for merchant seafarers and fishers. Since then, the Board has been active in support of its 45 constituent members, 15 Port Welfare Committees, a Seafarers’ Welfare Board in Gibraltar and indirectly to many thousands of seafarers, fishers and their families who need welfare support.

At the 75th anniversary celebrations in the Palace of Westminster, attended by more than 100 supporters including the then Maritime Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton, we announced and welcomed Robert Courts MP as our Vice President. Robert has previously served as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Transport and we are delighted to have his expertise in this newly-created role.

Our vision remains “to be the UK’s representative voice and driving force for the welfare of merchant navy and fishing communities” with a mission “to improve the lives of seafarers and fishers by raising welfare standards in collaboration with our stakeholders”. This strategic plan has guided and informed our activities in 2023 and I am pleased to report that we have made strong progress towards its goals which you will read about in this Review.

To this end, we have developed the National Seafarers’ Welfare Board (NSWB) into a structure administered by the Board, but with the maritime charities firmly in the driving seat. With just the last couple of pieces to put in place, the NSWB will provide a coordinated voice of the sector, by the sector, direct through to UK Government.

In our capacity as the NSWB, the UK Government invited us to lead a joint national

project to investigate the sustainability of funding to ensure maritime welfare provision across the UK. The UK Port Welfare Provision report is a ground-breaking document for both the sector and the UK Government. It details the state and cost of the provision of port-based welfare in the UK and informs UK Government on their conformance with the recommendations in the MLC 2006.



The Board’s trustees are drawn from all walks of life within the maritime charity sector with representation from ship owners, unions, our constituent charities, ports, and accountancy expertise. A better-informed Council I couldn’t wish for. Our strategic directions are formulated and communicated by these 14 trustees but, without the input from the 367 volunteer members on our Port Welfare Committees and the execution by the Board’s nine members of staff, nothing would change.

I would also like to recognise our ambassadors, our 45 constituent member organisations and the many other associated organisations for their hard work and support during what has proved to be a busy and very successful year. Our success is directly attributable to their support and hard work - thank you.

Chief Executive Officer's Introduction

STUART RIVERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Marking a maritime milestone

STUART RIVERS REFLECTS ON AN ACTION-PACKED 75TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

In 2023, we marked a significant milestone as we commemorated our 75th anniversary at the Palace of Westminster.

We were joined by parliamentarians, constituent members, trustees, staff and representatives from across the maritime sector, including ambassadors and Port Welfare Committee chairs. During this momentous occasion, we unveiled our UK Port Welfare Provision Report, outlining the extent and cost of welfare provision in the UK and calling for a more sustainable model of funding.

The report was based on new data received from charities working on the frontline detailing the welfare provision in each port. And there were some surprises! Charities planned to spend £4.8 million on port welfare in 2023 in support of 44 seafarers' centres, a fleet of 77 vehicles to transport seafarers, 39 mobile broadband units, 133 paid welfare staff, 239 volunteers and hundreds of thousands of seafarers.

Together, with our constituent members, we are supporting the entire maritime sector by ensuring that those working at sea receive the best possible welfare support that we can provide. Through the collaborative effort of our 45 constituent organisations, shipowners, ports, unions, and the UK Government, we have propelled the sector forward, ensuring seafarers' welfare remains at the front and centre of our objectives. Highlights of 2023 include:

- Receiving the prestigious Commercial Collaboration of the Year award from the Association of Charitable Organisations. This was for our partnership with Vodafone to provide 13,500 SIM cards to Ukrainian seafarers during the war with Russia in 2022.

- Piloting a mobile seafarer centre, which operated successfully in Southampton port during the summer and Christmas period.
- Hosting a comprehensive two-day Seafarers' Welfare Conference aimed at enhancing welfare services for seafarers. The conference focused on volunteering, funding innovations, and reviewing how the entire welfare sector could be more effective.
- Welcoming former Maritime Minister, Robert Courts MP, as our new Vice President. Mr Courts has a heart for the welfare of seafarers and is an advocate for the UK's maritime sector.
- Delivering our seafarers' survey results, highlighting the continued need for better internet connectivity and access to shore leave.
- Cementing our role as the UK National Seafarers' Welfare Board (NSWB) by establishing a clear structure for raising welfare standards across UK ports. Through the NSWB, we oversee 15 Port Welfare Committees (PWCs) across the UK and a Seafarers' Welfare Board in Gibraltar, with a combined membership of over 360 sector-wide volunteers, support serving and retired seafarers and their families, and engage with Government and the MCA.

As you can see, the MNWB team has worked hard to deliver on so many projects this year and I am grateful for their hard work and commitment. I also thank our Chair, Capt. Andrew Cassels, and the whole trustee board for their support; they are a diverse group of experts from the sector who add real value to our work.

Partnerships

SHARON COVENEY - DEPUTY CEO



Collaborating with the sector

SHARON COVENEY EXPLAINS THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN AIDING SEAFARERS

As a leading maritime charity, our partnerships with like-minded welfare charities have gone from strength-to-strength this year enabling growth, knowledge, expertise, and innovation.

Maritime Charities Group (MCG)

Founded in 2003 by the MNWB, the MCG fosters collaboration across the maritime charity sector. It does this by sharing information, commissioning research, supporting the education and welfare of seafarers and their families and by the promotion of best practice within the maritime charity sector.

The MCG is an alliance of eight major seafaring charities in the UK including; The Seafarers' Charity, MNWB, Trinity House, Nautilus International, ITF Seafarers' Trust, Seafarers' Hospital Society, Lloyds Register Foundation and TK Foundation.

The aims of the MCG are to:

- Encourage best practice
- Share information on grant applications and, where appropriate, the funding of grants for major projects
- Share data and information among the members
- Promote harmonisation of grant making procedures
- Jointly fund projects and research of overall benefit to maritime charities

Merchant Navy Fund

The Merchant Navy Fund was set up by Merchant Navy Welfare Board and The Seafarers' Charity; two long-established charities who recognise that many of those with a Merchant Navy background increasingly want to see their donations and legacies used specifically in support of British Merchant Navy seafarers and their families.

Since 2012, the Merchant Navy Fund has received donations, legacies and corporate support, with over £700,000 awarded in grants to support UK serving or retired merchant navy seafarers and their families. This year saw about £95,000 in grants awarded to seafarers in need.



Merchant Navy Medal

The Merchant Navy Medal provides an opportunity for the industry to recognise in a worthy and public manner, meritorious service by British registered merchant seafarers.

The Medal is awarded annually, without bias towards age or rank, to those eligible seafarers who are judged to have made a worthwhile contribution to merchant shipping, its operations, development, personnel, welfare or safety, or who have performed an act of courage afloat.

The Board is the secretariat of the award which is organised by the Department for Transport who awarded Merchant Navy medals to 11 mariners last year, pictured above.

Working Groups

The MNWB co-ordinates a number of regular working groups including the 'Serving Seafarers Working Group', and the 'Older Seafarers & Families Working Group', who meet three times a year. In addition, should a specific concern or matter arise, further working groups are formed to discuss actions required, such as when the pandemic arose, and the war in Ukraine began (Seafarers' Welfare Crisis Working group).

Department for Transport

In 2022, MNWB was awarded £2.1 million by the Department for Transport to be made available to maritime charities and organisations to support the maritime sector, specifically around seafarers' welfare and skills. 15 UK charities and organisations have been funded, some received more than one grant. A total of £1,920,858 has been awarded to support 34 UK projects across two workstreams: Skills & Diversity and People.

Seafarers' Welfare Conference

SUSAN ATKINSON
PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE MANAGER



Industry experts gather for conference

MAJOR ISSUES AFFECTING MARITIME CHARITIES WERE TACKLED AT CONFERENCE, SUSAN ATKINSON REPORTS

MNWB held its well-attended bi-annual Seafarers' Welfare Conference at the Harbour Hotel in Southampton.

The conference addressed challenges charities faced including volunteer recruitment, fundraising and finding beneficiaries.

It also highlighted the benefits of working in collaboration with MNWB and each other to provide synergy, mutual support, and a stronger voice. The conference in November was attended by trustees, staff, constituent members and PWC members.

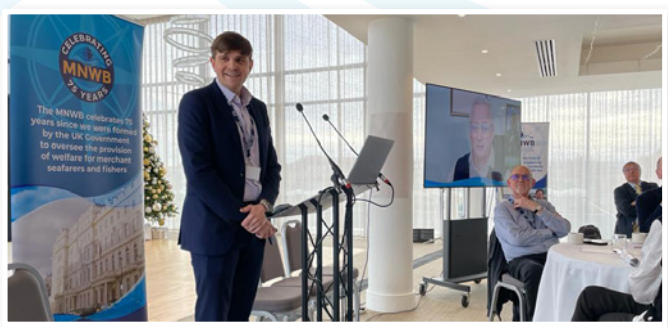
MNWB staff presented on several topics. Deputy CEO Sharon Coveney introduced the Ambassador Programme and delegates heard from the ambassadors on the work they had done to raise awareness of MNWB and constituent members to organisations involved in the maritime industry. Celia Jackson, Grants & Impact Manager, presented on the results of the Constituent Member Survey, and Joel Holt, Communications & Media Manager, presented on how to raise your charity's profile using targeted media strategies and campaigns. There was also a presentation from The Seafarers' Charity CEO Deborah Layde and Seafarers

Hospital Society CEO Sandra Welch on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Attendees were also treated to two masterclasses by guest presenters Helen Tourle of National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Ashley Scott of Marriott Scott Consulting as well as evening entertainment from Southampton Salty Sea Dogs. Helen presented on recruiting and retaining volunteers which covered areas such as the challenges in recruitment, motivations for volunteering as well as barriers to volunteering. Meanwhile, Ashley presented on funding innovations which included the variety of different ways to source income.

On the final day of the conference, our CEO Stuart Rivers presented on MNWB vision, mission, strategic priorities and communication which was followed by an interactive workshop where delegates discussed what was right, wrong, confused and missing from the maritime charity sector.

The conference wrapped up with Stuart encouraging delegates to keep the conversations going for collaborative working as the maritime industry working together is a louder voice to enact change.



Projects

SHARON COVENEY - DEPUTY CEO
AIDEN HARVEY - PROJECTS & WELFARE CO-ORDINATOR



Creating impact through powerful projects

SHARON COVENEY AND AIDEN HARVEY HAVE DELIVERED A SUCCESSFUL NUMBER OF PROJECTS

MNWB creates, operates and administers numerous projects to benefit and enhance seafarers' welfare.

MIFI PROJECT

Over the course of 2023, the Mi-Fi devices have collectively used 63 TB of data!

The UK Port Welfare Mi-Fi Partnership Project was initially launched as a pilot project back in May 2019 and has since developed into the project it is today. We currently have 38 devices under the project, each benefitting from unlimited data allowances each month.

The devices are in the hands of port chaplains and ship welfare visitors across the UK, both of whom take them on-board vessels as part of the ship-visiting that the seafarers' welfare organisations undertake. This allows the crew free and easy access to the internet - allowing them to contact their friends and family back home, download films or simply spending their downtime surfing the internet. Feedback from the seafarers and welfare organisations is overwhelmingly positive.



VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME (VRP)



The Vehicle Replacement Programme (VRP) is funded by the Department for Transport, Trinity House, TK Foundation and MNWB, with the programme already secured until the end of 2024. There are currently 65 vehicles in the fleet dotted across the UK, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. The vehicles, which include cars, MPVs and minibuses, are used to allow the seafarers' welfare organisations to do their work in a safe, reliable vehicle as well as transferring seafarers from ports to the nearest towns, shopping centres or seafarers' centres.

The programme gave out grants totaling £72,000 helping towards the cost of 5 new vehicles for the welfare societies.

MOBILE BUS CENTRE

In August, we trialled a mobile seafarers' centre project in the port of Southampton. Recognising that many crew working on fast turnaround ships have little shore leave and might not have the opportunity to go into town, we hired a converted bus with a volunteer driver from the Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust. The bus had free Wi-Fi, cold drinks and snacks, and chaplains from the Mission to Seafarers,



Stella Maris and Sailors' Society participated in the trial. The trial attracted good media interest on the day and brought home just how little time seafarers have for shore leave.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) PILOT PROJECT

Chief Executives Deborah Layde (The Seafarers' Charity) and Sandra Welch (Seafarers Hospital Society), both pictured below, helped launch the new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Pilot Project at our conference in November.



Their presentation included a thought-provoking exercise which illustrated the wide range of diversity within the room. Jointly-funded by the MNWB, The Seafarers' Charity and Trinity House, the project hopes to advance the culture of EDI across the maritime welfare charities by hosting a series of UK wide presentation sessions during the Board's Port Welfare Committees.

MNWB AMBASSADORS' PROGRAMME

Working alongside our dedicated staff team, the Board's Ambassadors have helped to raise awareness and understanding of the work of the MNWB as the National Seafarers' Welfare Board throughout 2023.

In June, we held our in-person Ambassadors' Programme meeting at the Union Jack Club. Deputy Chief Executive Sharon Coveney and volunteer consultant Susan Newcombe were joined by then MNWB's four Ambassadors, Neil Atkinson, Jerry Drewitt, Alèxe Finlay and Martin Phipps who have visited several of our

constituent organisations to promote theirs and the Board's work. The programme was launched in February 2022 and has been extremely positive, so much so that this year, maritime professionals Stephen Gudgeon, Gordon Foot and Paul Hayes, pictured below, were appointed as new volunteer ambassadors.



Towards the end of 2023, Jerry and Alèxe stood down from their role as ambassadors as they plan for their retirement. Special thanks are extended to them for their invaluable contribution to the programme and the work of the Board.

C188 WORK IN FISHING CONVENTION GUIDE

In 2023, Trinity House awarded MNWB £15,000 towards the development of the Board's C188 Training Project. The project included the translation of the easy-to-use guide entitled "Work in Fishing Convention (C188) - Everything you need to know but were frightened to ask into six languages commonly spoken by fishers working in the UK: Chinese (Traditional - Taiwan), French, Indonesian, Korean, Spanish

and Tagalog. The guides are now available to download from MNWB's website and have been distributed electronically to the Board's PWCs. Updates have been made to the medical chapter to reflect the new ML5 medical requirements for fishers and the MCA is currently reviewing the guide and the script for the online training.



Grants

CELIA JACKSON
GRANTS AND IMPACT MANAGER



Striving for welfare improvement

INVESTMENT IN WELFARE IMPROVEMENTS IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

A key priority for MNWB is to provide capital grants to its constituent members.

The amount made available for grants annually is based on the overall return from the investment portfolio after deducting revenue costs and services to constituents. Under the Small Grants Programme, the Chair and Chief Executive are authorised to allocate individual grants of up to £5,000 throughout the year, up to a total annual limit of £50,000. Grants over £5,000 are voted on throughout the year by MNWB trustees.

In 2023, MNWB was proud to award **£96,916.43** in capital grants and **£37,100** to jointly funded projects.

£134,016 TOTAL AWARDED

15 grants were provided to 10 organisations to support capital projects for serving and retired seafarers and fishers. MNWB also partnered with other maritime funders in 2023 to provide the Vehicle Replacement Programme and MiFi Partnership Project.

158,556 SERVING SEAFARERS

The greatest reach in 2023 was to serving seafarers, who benefitted from grants to individual organisations as well as partnership projects funded by MNWB and other funding partners.

400 FISHERS

The MNWB grants programme also supports fishers, with The Fishermen's Mission and Stella Maris having the greatest focus in this area.

206 RETIRED SEAFARERS

Grants to accommodation providers have had a significant impact in 2023, with The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society, The Merchant Navy Association and Nautilus Welfare Fund supported.

MNWB grants to Nautilus Welfare Fund for new dining room tables and chairs for the dementia wing at the Mariners' Park Care Home, replacement flooring and vital signs machine

Case Study by Andrew Jones, Director of Welfare and Care

Mariners' Park Care Home is a 36-bed home consisting of residential, nursing and EMI needs. Historically most of our residents were residential but social care is changing and the majority of residents entering the care home now have high end nursing needs including advanced dementia or come to us to receive palliative care.

Maintaining effective infection control measures is crucial for the health and safety of residents which means removing carpets and replacing fabric furniture with wipeable furniture to allow staff to instantly be able to decontaminate and disinfect. This also helps with odour control making our care home smell lovely and fresh.



Clinical observation machines allow for continuous and non-invasive monitoring of patients' vital signs, such as heart rate, temperature, blood pressure and oxygen saturation. This enables us to identify potential issues promptly, initiate timely interventions and prevent medical emergencies.

One of the significant advantages of this machine is the ability to detect subtle changes in patients' health conditions. By acting as an Early Warning System (NEWS) our machine alerts us to potential complications even before patients show significant symptoms, improving their chances of recovery.

MNWB grant to The Mission to Seafarers for Improvements at Falmouth Seafarers' Centre ahead of Tall Ships 2023

Case Study by Penny Philips, Falmouth Centre Manager

The MNWB grant for The Mission to Seafarers in Falmouth has made such a huge difference to our offering both during the Tall Ships 2024 event and since.

Installing the double-doors at the back of the centre has given much better access from the summerhouse and garden area and has also provided an additional fire exit.

The new door between the main centre and the chapel means both front and back wooden doors are now of the same design - giving a much more uniform look to the centre (previously we had a second-hand white plastic door).

Having a fridge in the summerhouse has meant that we have been able to provide 'cold' soft drinks and water during Tall Ships and throughout the summer months. The new patio roof has improved the whole look and feel of the garden, as much more light is coming through which gives seafarers a much brighter area to enjoy.



DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT GRANTS AWARDED IN 2023

In 2022, MNWB was awarded £2.1 million by the Department for Transport to be made available to maritime charities and organisations to support the maritime sector, specifically around seafarers' welfare and skills.

15 UK charities and organisations have been funded through the DfT grant programme in 2022/23, some have received more than one grant.

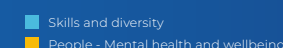
A total of **£1,920,857.70** has been awarded to support **34 UK projects** across two workstreams:

Skills & Diversity: Plugging skill gaps, broadening the pool of talent, providing an equal opportunity for all and fostering creativity. **Total of £648,994 awarded in 2022/23**

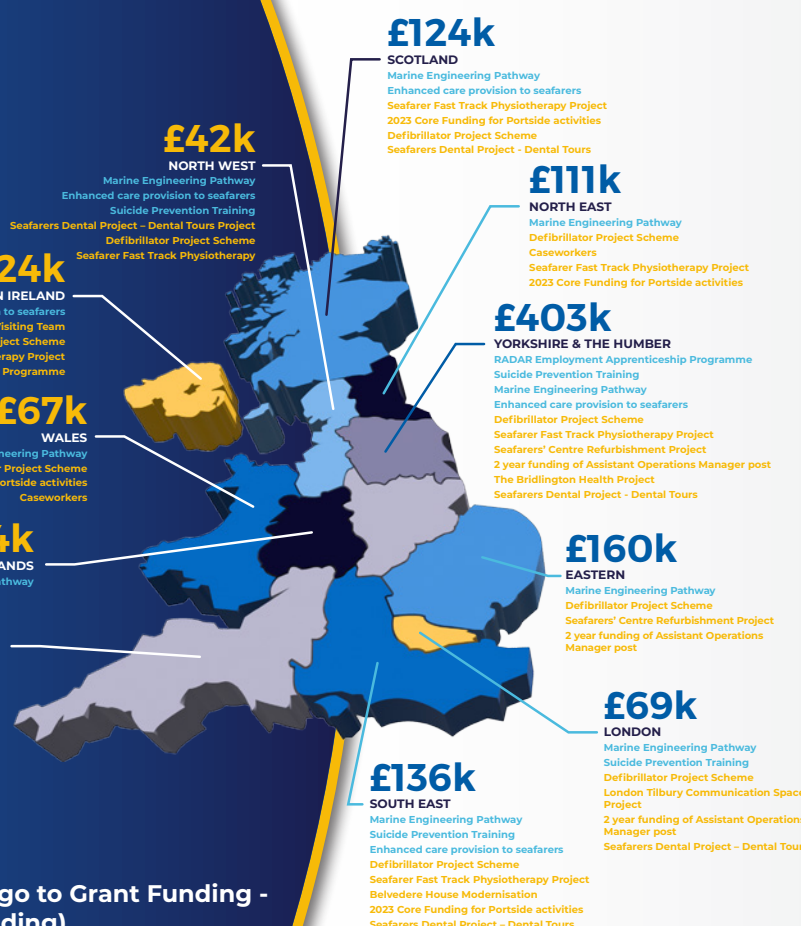
People: Research into, and support for UK programmes to alleviate seafarer and fishers' mental health and wellbeing. **Total of £1,271,863.70 awarded in 2022/23**

Department for Transport & Merchant Navy Welfare Board

MAKING AN IMPACT 2022/23



For more details on grants awarded in 2023, please go to Grant Funding - Merchant Navy Welfare Board (mnwb.org/grant-funding)



75th Anniversary Special

JOEL HOLT
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA MANAGER



Championing seafarers for 75 years

CELEBRATING OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY IN WESTMINSTER WAS A FITTING TRIBUTE

For 75 years, MNWB has been at the heart of championing, protecting and enhancing the lives of seafarers.

So, there wasn't a more fitting way to mark the milestone with our supporters than at a flagship event in the Palace of Westminster at the end of 2023.

We were thrilled to be joined by more than 100 people including MPs, Ministers, Lords, government officials, trustees, ambassadors, constituent members, Port Welfare Committee chairs and individuals from the wider maritime sector.

The then Maritime Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton delivered a speech alongside our new Vice President Robert Courts MP on the hugely-important role seafarers play in the UK's prosperity. Chair Capt. Andrew Cassels compèred the event which also saw our CEO Stuart Rivers launch our UK Port Welfare Provision Report, a ground-breaking report into the welfare provision for merchant seafarers and fishers.

Talking at the time, Mr Rivers said:

"For 75 years, the MNWB has been at the forefront of working with maritime charities and organisations to ensure welfare services are available to all UK merchant seafarers and their dependants."

"Providing connectivity, transport and centres to millions of seafarers and fishers who spend months away from their friends and family is crucial to their welfare."

"Seafarers keep the global economy alive, and they are an asset to any shipowner."

The Board held its first meeting on 31st March 1948 which was attended by the then Minister of Transport, the Right Honourable Alfred Barnes MP.

Since then, we have been active in our support of our constituent members.

While we stopped running Merchant Navy hotels, we do support seafarer centres in our ports, provide essential training, run the Seafarer Support telephone and on-line referral service, manage Port Welfare Committees, and run projects on behalf of the UK maritime charities' sector.



The timeline of our 75-year history

1948 - In March 1948, MNWB was formed

1968 - A new MN Club opens in Milford Haven.

July 1970 - MNWB opens a new club at the Isle of Grain.

1980 - MNWB closes its Middlesbrough hotel due to fall in demand and rising costs as well as MN Hotels in Swansea and Cardiff.

1986 - The MN Hotel at Southampton is sold due to its ever-declining usage.

1993 - The Board has very few financial reserves and the London hotel is losing heavily.

1998 - The Board initiates four Working Groups to examine the current and future welfare needs of seafarers and their dependants.

2005 - The Board sets up a successful project to install facilities for internet access in 21 seafarers' centres throughout the UK.

2007 - The Board produces Port Welfare Information leaflets for many ports in its network.

2009 - The Seafarer Support programme is established.

2015 - A new port levy scheme is established in the Port of Tyne.

2021 - The Board signs an MoU with the MCA formally recognising MNWB as the National Seafarers' Welfare Board.

1963 - MN Hotel opens in Lodge Road, Southampton.

March 1969 - April 1970 - Modernisation of MNWB's Lancaster Gate Hotel, London.

1976 - An article in the Daily Telegraph states that seafaring is expected to increasingly become a job for developing countries.

1982 - MNWB Chair, Mr W G D Ropner writes in a letter to the Shipping Minister, Mr Iain Sproat: "Without adequate finance, it seems certain that both the quantity and quality of welfare provided to merchant seafarers in the UK must suffer."

1991 - Operation of the MN Club at Milford Haven ceases and it is handed over to the British Sailors' Society.

1995 - The Board raised funds to plant a tree in the National Memorial Arboretum for every British merchant ship lost in World War Two - a total of 2,517.

2002 - The MN Hotel in Lancaster Gate closes and is sold to developers. The Board accepted £6.75m and suddenly has reserves of around £10m+. The Board relocates to Southampton.

2006 - The Maritime Labour Convention is adopted by the ILO.

2008 - The Vehicle Replacement Programme is established.

2014 - The UK government ratifies the MLC and it comes into force.

2019 - The MiFi pilot project is launched.

2022 - The Board gives out 13,500 SIM cards to Ukrainian seafarers visiting UK ports and is awarded £2.1m from DfT.

Images: Mark Dalton

Media and Lobbying

JOEL HOLT
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA MANAGER



Force to be reckoned with

GAINING INCREASED PUBLIC EXPOSURE HAS ENSURED THE BOARD'S PROFILE CONTINUES TO GROW

The MNWB's communications presence achieved great results for its members and supporters in 2023 to be recognised, by many, as the leading welfare charity for maritime.

Over the past 12 months, the Board has been at the forefront of gaining national media exposure, reaping the rewards of marketing and media campaigns, delivering a lobbying strategy to gain political exposure, driving traffic across its social media platforms and website.

Press engagement

For the first time, MNWB received coverage in national outlets BBC News and Financial Times.

We have also featured prominently in key regionals on the South Coast including BBC South Today, ITV Meridian, BBC Radio Solent, Daily Echo, Wave

105 FM, Heart FM and Capital Radio - becoming the go-to maritime charity for interview requests in the South.



STANDOUT STORIES

Top UK food retailers launch probe into mistreatment of migrant fishers
Financial Times

Seafarers Survey launched by leading maritime charity
ITV 1

From Deckhand to Wheelhouse – supporting careers in fishing
BBC News & BBC Radio 6 Music

New defibrillator scheme launched
Southern Daily Echo

Charity converts bus into seafarer centre
BBC Radio Solent

Government called to roll-out welfare levy
Wave 105FM

Received over
300 pieces
of coverage across print
and digital publications

60
broadcast
mentions



50% increase
in followers across social media platforms

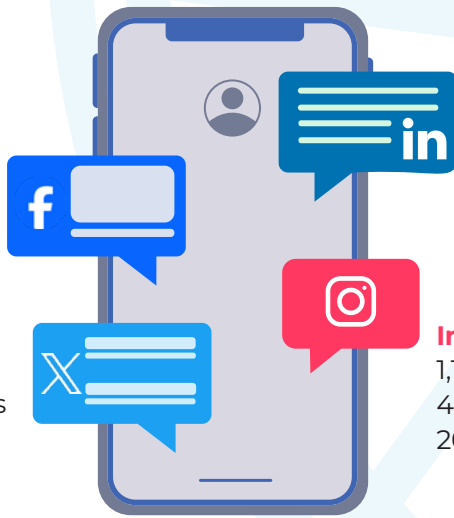
SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook (@TheMNWB):

Total of 4,629 followers with over 4,000 likes. Over 400 new followers gained this year with the second trial of the mobile seafarer centre bus post gaining a reach of 10,000.

X (@MNWBUK):

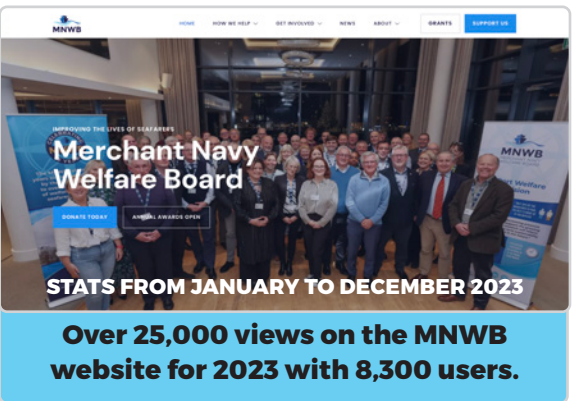
Total of 3,085 followers. Over 450 new followers gained this year and we hit the 3,000 mark for followers halfway through the year.



LinkedIn (@Merchant Navy Welfare Board): Total of 1,890 followers. Over 750 new followers gained this year with 448 page views.

Instagram (@mnwb_uk): Total of 1,153 followers with a total reach of 4,924. This year we have gained 200 new followers.

WEBSITE



We gained extensive media coverage after launching our new mobile seafarer centre bus – a pilot project that ran twice in Southampton port during the summer and the festive period.

Implemented and drove a lobbying strategy to gain the attention of parliamentarians with the launch of the UK Port Welfare Provision Report at our 75th anniversary event in Westminster attended by 100 people including the then Maritime Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Leader of the House Penny Mordaunt.



2023 success stories



We were named winner of the Commercial Collaboration of the Year at the Association of Charitable Organisations awards following the Board's 2022 campaign to deliver 13,000 SIM cards to Ukrainian seafarers in the height of the war with Russia.



We have received a lot of press coverage and publicity from the £2.1m grant from DfT as the stories on people, mental health and skills captured the nation's hearts.

Led on a highly-effective national print and digital ad-campaign to raise awareness of Seafarer Support which culminated in 200,000 page impressions and 600 page views on the site over a two-week period.



LOBBYING

MNWB's big campaign of the year came in October when it called on UK Government to



introduce a welfare levy during its 75th anniversary drinks reception in Westminster.

The launch of the UK Port Welfare Provision Report found that only 10 of the 120 (8%) ports in the UK have a voluntary levy scheme in place. MNWB estimates

that if every port paid £100 per visit based on 100,000 visits per year, this would generate £10 million pounds into the welfare sector.

In attendance were over 100 guests including parliamentarians, journalists, constituent members, MNWB ambassadors, Port Welfare Committee chairs and organisations from the wider maritime sector. The then Maritime Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton gave a speech as did our newly-unveiled Vice President Robert Courts.

Additionally, the MNWB continues to attend the Maritime and Ports All-Party Parliamentary Group to grow its political engagement and ensure seafarers' welfare is prioritised by government officials. It aims to host a dedicated session on welfare next year.

Port Welfare Committees

SUSAN ATKINSON
PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE MANAGER



Network unites sector

SUSAN AND SARAH TRAVELLED ACROSS THE UK TO HOST 48 MEETINGS TO PROMOTE WELFARE SERVICES FOR SEAFARERS

MNWB maintains a network of 15 Port Welfare Committees covering all UK ports and a National Seafarers' Welfare Board in Gibraltar.

With a combined membership of 367 and each one meeting three times a year, the committees serve as a crucial platform for regional maritime partnerships to monitor and improve the quality of welfare services for seafarers.

Bristol

The round of meetings started with a visit by Cory Brothers to promote their support of seafarers where members were involved in a dragon tossing photo opportunity. Other highlights from 2023 include the appointment of a new volunteer ship welfare visitor to regularly visit Sharpness Docks, plugging a much-needed gap as well as the grant application by QVSR to turn the Bristol seafarer centre into a 24-hour facility.



Central & West Scotland



The tight-knit family on the C&W Scotland PWC sadly said goodbye to some valuable long-standing members in 2023, notably Mrs. Ina Bruce, who had served on the committee for over 15 years and Deacon Pauline Robertson from Sailors' Society. Members were treated to a fabulous venue on board the Fingal floating hotel in Leith.

East Anglia

This is one of the smallest PWCs but numbers steadily grew in 2023 and members welcomed back a representative from Gardline and someone from Peel Ports.

Haven

Members said goodbye to Cllr Doreen Savage who had clocked up 21 years of continuous service on the PWC, but the committee continues

to grow in numbers with 12 new representatives joining from various organisations in 2023. Members are looking forward to seeing the refurbishment of the seafarer centre in Felixstowe in 2024.

London & SE

Membership of this PWC has remained steady again in 2023. At the first meeting of the round in February 2023 Ruth Campbell, QVSR/MtS Chaplain outlined her plans for a crew lounge to service cruise ship and Ro-Ro crew who were unable to visit the centre in Tilbury. At the AGM in October Mrs Campbell reported that between 200-300 crew members had visited the centre daily since it had opened.

North & East Scotland

Mr Steve Murray, PWC Chair, made it his mission in 2023 to find interesting venues to host the meetings. This included a visit by the PWC Manager, Susan Atkinson, and MNWB Chair, Capt. Andrew Cassels, to the Peterhead Fish Market. A very early 6am start before the meeting at their offices later in the day.



Northern Ireland

The introduction of skilled worker visas to replace transit visas for fishers working within the 12-mile boundary continued to dominate the issues local fishers in Northern Ireland were facing, as well as the requirement for medical certification. Health & Safety concerns at ports was also raised following the death of a Filipino seafarer in February 2023.

South West

For 2023 Capt. Mark Killingback, PWC Chair, facilitated meetings in very different venues including Newquay Rowing Club, Plymouth Aquarium and Falmouth Lifeboat Station. Fishers' medical certification and difficulties in getting doctors' appointments were the main issues raised.

Port Welfare Committees

SARAH EDWARD
PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE MANAGER



Gibraltar Seafarers' Welfare Board (GSWB)

The Mediterranean Mission to Seafarers co-chaplains continue to provide a reassuring presence in the port and their efforts to engage with the cruise ships are proving fruitful with return visits requested. They are now tackling the challenge of how to support the crew on the many vessels that do not come alongside but are at anchor.

Humber

The Humber levy, revised in 2021, continued to do well - collecting on average £5,000 a month. By the end of 2023, over £197,000 had been collected and distributed to the three recipient societies (Mission to Seafarers, QVSR and Stella Maris) since it began collecting in January 2021.

Milford Haven

Meetings in 2023 have been dominated by discussions over how best to provide support to visiting seafarers including whether a centre is needed and if so where best to locate it. Members were pleased to welcome new representatives from the Port of Milford Haven and Dragon LNG. At the AGM we said goodbye to the long-standing Chair and former Harbour Master, Capt. Mark Andrews.



North West

The North West PWC continued to grow in 2023 with a new organisation, ISWAN joining their ranks. Health and safety discussions often dominate meetings and 2023 was no exception with safe access at the scrap berth of ongoing concern to members.

South Wales

Members welcomed a new organisation, Liberty Steel, to the committee and new representatives from Swansea Port Health and Cardiff City Council in 2023.

Tees

The Tees PWC strategy continues to evolve with a WhatsApp group now in operation for any issues arising on the river. Members welcomed new representatives from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

Tyne

Members were sorry to say goodbye to longstanding member and Stella Maris Port Chaplain, Paul Atkinson, at the end of 2023. Sr Mary Scholastica in Sunderland was recognised for her efforts in supporting seafarers with the Board's annual award which was presented to her at the Tyne AGM in November.

Southern

The lack of a seafarer centre in Southampton continued to dominate meetings in 2023 and so it was agreed that it would be best to take the discussions out of meeting. The first meeting of the Southampton Port Welfare Working Group was held in August with the local chaplains and relevant personnel from the societies. One idea was to have a mobile seafarers centre, and this was first trialled in August.

In December, the Board trialled the mobile seafarers centre again, this time with a festive feel!

The bus was decorated with Christmas decorations and there were treats and Christmas gifts on offer for any visiting seafarers. To top it all off, the Southern PWC Chair Martin Phipps dressed as Father Christmas. We picked a day when there were several car carriers and cargo ships in Southampton's Western Docks and this time we had lots of interest from seafarers. More than 30 seafarers came to see what we were



up to and got into the spirit of things, taking lots of selfies with Santa and his elves!

Welfare & Training

HELEN VAN GASS
WELFARE & TRAINING MANAGER



Delivering first-class support

FROM DELIVERING TRAINING COURSES TO PROVIDING CONTINUED WELFARE SUPPORT, OUR TRAINING AND WELFARE MANAGER HELEN VAN GASS HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF HELPING SEAFARERS

TRAINING

We started the year preparing the C188 - Work in Fishing Convention in person training. Convention 188 came into force on 16th November 2017 after being ratified by ten ILO member states.

It's applicable to all types of commercial fishing and establishes minimum standards that protect fishers in all aspects of their work.

The training took place in Southampton, Fraserburgh and Troon - and in all 70 people attended, from charities to fishermen boat owners and crewing companies.

Thanks to funding from Trinity House, translated versions of the guide are now available in the following languages; Chinese, French, Indonesian, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog.

In June, we facilitated an in-person Ship Welfare Visitors' course in London presented by Dr Jason Zuidema, the General Secretary at International Christian Maritime Association and Executive Director at North American Maritime Ministry Association.

In 2023, the majority of training courses remained online, and the iHasco courses have proved extremely popular with MNWB constituent organisations, several of which have been granted administrator access to the platform so that they can manage their own training schedule. In total, 1,042 different course registrations were made by 449 active users. There are 185 different courses available to our members varying from Active Listening to Understand Your Role in Care.

Over 200 people from around the world registered for The Ship Welfare Visitor Course during 2023, with 100 badges being issued.



We delivered over
£60,000
worth
of training to our constituent
members in 2023



WELFARE

Our Seafarer Support helpline is a free confidential telephone and online referral service helping to support serving and former UK seafarers in times of need.

The Seafarer Support platform acts as a unique 'central source of information' for the entire UK maritime charity sector. The website signposts users to the most up-to-date information on 150 maritime charities that offer support to UK seafarers and their dependants.

The welfare team is contacted directly by seafarers and their families in need of support or by external agencies that work on their behalf. Contact is made through either the Seafarer Support service or directly to the Board. The Board acts as the referral service for those Merchant Navy/ Fishing Fleet personnel seeking welfare support and/or financial assistance from other maritime charities. The calls, emails and web chats, via Seafarer Support and the board in 2023, showed a change from last year's enquiries.

In 2022, the top requests were for White goods, Daily living expenses, Brown goods, Mobility scooters, Funerals, Debt relief and Stairlifts.

NEED A LIFELINE?
WE CAN HELP!



Sometimes we need a little help navigating life's problems.

Seafarer Support is a free confidential telephone and online referral service helping to support serving and former UK seafarers and their families in times of need.

For information about financial support, accommodation, training, health and advice, visit the website or call us today.

seafarersupport.org
0800 121 4765

Seafarer
SUPPORT

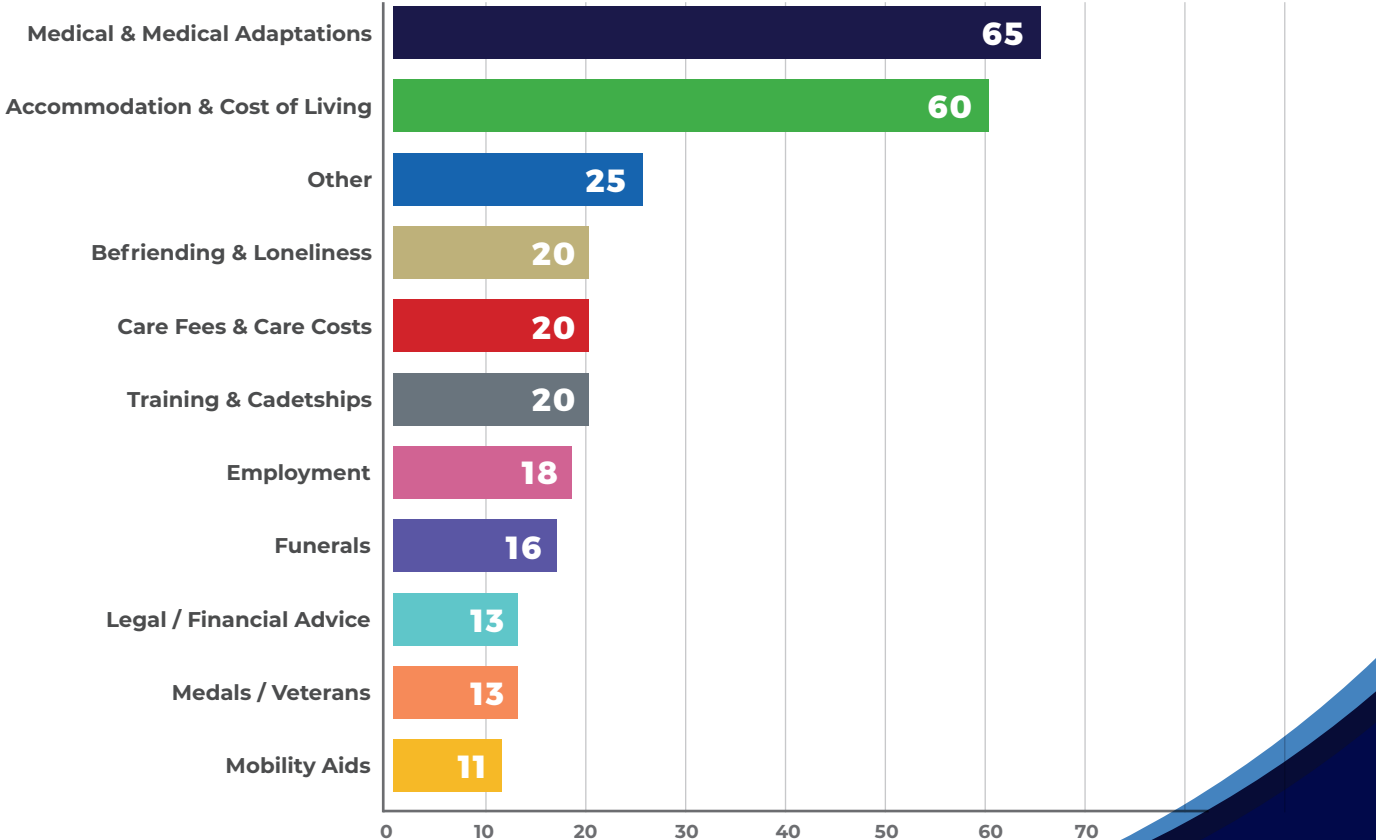
Whereas in 2023, the top 10 queries changed reflecting the NHS backlog and the cost-of-living crisis.

Not all the contacts resulted in requests for caseworkers, many of the callers are signposted to our constituent member charities and other services like Seafarers Link and Togetherall .

We requested caseworker assistance for 92 people and made 287 referrals to outside agencies and helped raise **£115,326.46** for our clients.

Find out more at: [Seafarersupport.org](https://seafarersupport.org)

WHAT PEOPLE NEEDED



Awards and Festival of Remembrance

NICKY CANTELLO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT AND OFFICE MANAGER



Flying the flag for Merchant Navy

PRESTIGIOUS EVENTS RECOGNISE UNSUNG HEROES

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE 2023

Five cadets and five serving officers were selected to represent the Merchant Navy at the Festival of Remembrance 2023 in the world-famous Royal Albert Hall.

Their presence underscored the Merchant Navy's dedication to honouring those who served, fostering connections with diverse attendees, and reflecting on the sacrifices made in times of conflict.

This representation not only honoured the legacy of maritime personnel but also emphasized the importance of remembrance in the Merchant Navy community, ensuring that the contributions of seafarers are never forgotten.

Throughout the event, ceremonial acts such as the laying of wreaths and the observation of

moments of silence were conducted to honour the fallen.

Personal testimonies from veterans and individuals were recounted providing powerful insights into the realities of war and underscoring the importance of remembrance in honouring the experiences of those who have served.

Musical tributes added emotional depth to the ceremony and provided a means for attendees to connect with the significance of the occasion.

We would like to thank the following for their participation – Shae Wallace, Amilia Busby, Louis Taylor-Brice, Thomas Welch, Ginny Treadgold, James Charles, Haydn Clarke, Loren Trevorrow, Sophie Platten, and Henry Andrews.



ANNUAL AWARD

Four recipients were chosen to receive our annual award.

Paula Daly, Robert Campbell, Sandy Nairne and Sister Mary Scholastica were the recipients of the 2023 Annual Award for Service to Seafarers' Welfare.

The annual award is given to individuals who have provided an exceptional level of welfare service to seafarers and fishers, either in a voluntary or professional capacity.

At the time, MNWB CEO Stuart Rivers commented:

"They are such dedicated ambassadors to the maritime sector and have given so much of their time and wisdom over many years of service."

"They are so deserving of this award and a huge congratulations goes to each of them."

Roles of recipients

Robert Campbell, Caretaker / Volunteer, Northern Ireland Fishermen's Mission

Paula Daly, Mission Area Officer, The Fishermen's Mission

Sandy Nairne, Deputy Chair, Seafarers' Hospital Society

Sister Mary Scholastica, Nun-in-charge / Stella Maris, Welfare of seafarers at the Seamen's Centre Port of Sunderland



Image: Robert Campbell being presented with his award by Susan Atkinson from MNWB



Image: Sandy Nairne being presented the award at our annual conference by the Lord Mayor of Southampton Cllr Valerie Laurent. Photo: Stuart Martin.



Image: Paula Daly from The Fishermen's Mission with her award



Image: Sister Mary Scholastica receives her award from MNWB's Sarah Edward

Financial Summary

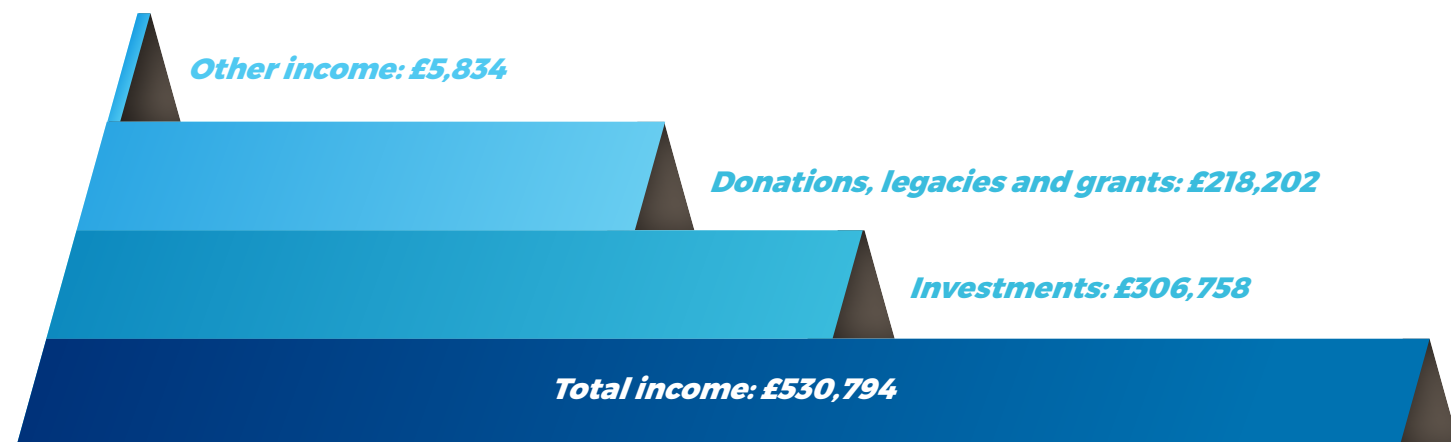
A great deal was thrown at the world economy and financial markets during 2023 – making it a challenging year. But, despite this, the MNWB still received a healthy amount of **£530,794** in income. Of this, **£306,758** was in investments

which was up on 2022 by **£58,868**. While the MNWB does not actively fundraise, the Board is always extremely grateful for any donations and legacies received.

DATA FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023

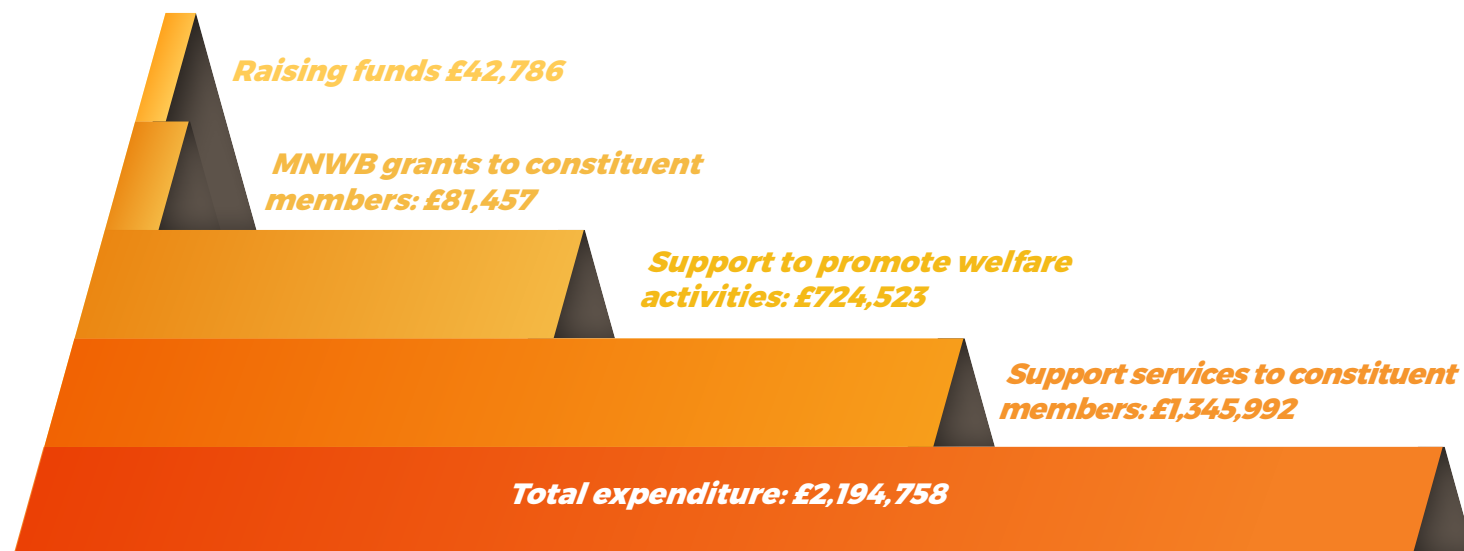
TOTAL INCOME: £530,794

(*2022: £4,115,906)



TOTAL EXPENDITURE: £2,194,758

(*2022: £3,645,117)



*The level of income received in 2022 was unprecedented due to a grant from Department for Transport (DfT) for £2.1m to support seafarers' welfare, skills and diversity and a Gift in Kind from Vodafone UK's charities.connected scheme, totaling £1,560,000.

**Our expenditure in 2022 of £3,645,117 was also unprecedented as funds from the DfT grant were spent on grants supporting the work of our constituent members and wider maritime sector.

Constituent Members

THE MNWB HAS 45 CONSTITUENT ORGANISATIONS WHICH PROVIDE WELFARE SERVICES TO SEAFARERS, FISHERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS.



The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons, with Chair Capt Andrew Cassels and CEO Stuart Rivers at MNWB's flagship 75th anniversary event in the Palace of Westminster.



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Editor Joel Holt – joel@mnwb.org.uk

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