



## Welcome back to our newsletter!

**It's been a busy start to the year, with plenty of momentum across the MNWB and our member network as we continue driving improvements to seafarers' welfare.**

We are excited to host our first standalone Annual Awards for Services to Seafarers' Welfare at Trinity House on 18 February.

With 80 guests attending — and the honour of welcoming our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal — it promises to be a truly memorable occasion. It offers a wonderful opportunity to showcase the outstanding work taking place across our sector, celebrating individuals and organisations who consistently go the extra mile. We look forward to seeing you there.

Looking ahead, MNWB will be at Seawork Exhibition 2026, where we have secured a stand under the Seafarer Support banner. We're calling on members who would like to take part to get involved and help highlight the strength of our collective support network.

Our Ambassador Programme has also kicked off the year with a series of member meetings, helping strengthen partnerships and gather valuable insights. Alongside this, we're asking you to help shape our training offer for 2026 by completing our short survey — your feedback is essential to ensuring we provide the right development opportunities.

This month's staff spotlight includes our meeting with Southampton Itchen MP Darren Paffey, following our outreach to 650 MPs, which has produced a strong response so far. Meanwhile, MNWB Ambassador Gordon Foot is once again fundraising — this time through an Arctic challenge supporting seafarers facing homelessness.

As we continue through February, hopefully the rain will ease and we can look forward to brighter days as spring approaches.

Enjoy the rest of the month — and enjoy the read!

**Stuart Rivers**  
**MNWB Chief Executive**

## Awarding unsung heroes



**The MNWB Annual Awards for Services to Seafarers' Welfare is taking place as a standalone event at Trinity House on February 18th.**

These awards shine a spotlight on the exceptional people across the maritime industry who go above and beyond to support seafarers' welfare.

The recipients this year are recognised across these five categories:

*Innovation Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, Most Collaborative Organisation, Team Member of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year.*

We're also honoured that our patron, HRH The Princess Royal, will be joining MNWB trustees and members for this special event.

[Register](#)

## MNWB coming to Seawork 2026



**The MNWB is calling on its members to be part of its stand at Seawork 2026.**

Taking place at Mayflower Park in Southampton between June 9-11, this will provide a great opportunity to collaboratively raise awareness of the support available to seafarers.

The stand will sit under the *Seafarer Support* banner, with representation from MNWB member organisations.

Any member wishing to join us, please get in touch below.

[Get involved](#)

# MNWB Ambassador Programme



**MNWB has kicked off 2026 with its Volunteer Ambassador Programme, with both John Hood and Gordon Foot making visits to our members.**

The programme assigns each of MNWB's 47 member organisations a dedicated high-profile ambassador to strengthen relationships and encourage closer collaboration across the welfare network.

In December, ambassador Gordon Foot visited Safer Waves and QVSR, exploring how MNWB and members can pool resources to better support seafarers.

More recently, John Hood has met with members in Scotland including Erskine, Sailors' Orphan Society of Scotland, Scottish Nautical Welfare Society, Scottish Veterans Residences and Vector 24, discussing ways to extend reach and boost support for Merchant Navy seafarers and their families.

[Meet our ambassadors](#)



# We want to hear your suggestions



**We're planning next year's training and want your views.**

Your input will help us offer the training that matters most to you.

Tell us what courses you'd like to see by completing our short survey below.

[Complete the survey](#)

## MNWB Spotlight: Darren Paffey MP pays visit to HQ



**Southampton Itchen Labour MP Darren Paffey visited the MNWB office at the end of last year to learn more about the Board's work supporting seafarers and their families.**

He met with Stuart Rivers, Sharon Coveney and Joel Holt, discussing how stronger collaboration can enhance welfare services and ensure those at sea receive the support they need.

MNWB has also written to 650 MPs to highlight key welfare issues and is organising ship visits for parliamentarians in the coming months.

Members who want to share information for MPs ahead of these visits are encouraged to get in touch.

[Get in touch](#)

## **Member Feature: Gordon Foot Nordic Challenge for QVSR**

**In each newsletter, we will be promoting our members in this section. If you want to share anything you have been up to, please don't hesitate to reach out and we can feature you.**



**MNWB Ambassador Gordon Foot is preparing for an eight-day Arctic hiking challenge to raise awareness of seafarer homelessness and support QVSR.**

His route, starting August 2nd, will take him between remote mountain huts inside the Arctic Circle, helping generate vital funds for QVSR's 175-bed seafarers' rest home in East London and its centres across the UK.

To learn more about Gordon's Nordic challenge — or to donate — click '*find out more*' below.

[Find out more](#)

## Seafarer Support is here to help

**Seafarer  
SUPPORT**

**Are you a serving or  
retired UK Seafarer?**

  
**0800 121 4765**

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

If you need advice or help with:

- ➔ Accommodation
- ➔ Training
- ➔ Support
- ➔ Health & Finance

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