



# Welfare Watch



## Welcome back to our newsletter!

I'd like to begin this edition of *Welfare Watch* by extending our thoughts to the seafarers and families whose lives continue to be deeply affected by the escalating conflict in the Middle East. The level of fear, uncertainty and disruption they are facing is profound, and as a community committed to their welfare, we stand in solidarity with all those enduring such distressing circumstances.

In the newsletter this month, we share important updates that reflect the resilience, collaboration and dedication across the maritime welfare sector.

We begin with the launch of our revamped Ship Welfare Visitor training platform, now strengthened with an increased focus on the Maritime Labour Convention and enhanced security awareness. This refreshed training reinforces the essential support our frontline welfare members provide every day.

We also highlight this year's MNWB Annual Awards for Services to Seafarers' Welfare, where we recognised exceptional individuals and organisations supporting seafarers and fishers across the UK. It was a privilege to welcome HRH The Princess Royal, our Patron, to present the awards.

This edition also introduces the Merchant Navy Pledge — a new national initiative jointly funded by MNWB, Trinity House and the Merchant Navy Association — marking an important milestone in strengthening recognition and opportunities for those who serve, and have served, at sea.

In addition, we share the positive results of a MNWB-funded games room renovation at the Port of Hull, and reflect on our Deputy CEO's participation in the Southampton Maritime Action Forum, where discussions centred on policy, skills and the future of our sector.

Our Member Feature this month focuses on Care Ashore, whose accommodation provides invaluable support for seafarers and their dependants.

We also highlight Port Welfare Committee Manager Alex Houghton's visit to Warsash Maritime School, where he introduced cadets to our Seafarer Support service.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing commitment to improving the lives of seafarers and fishers. I hope you find this edition both informative and timely as we step into Spring.

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

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**Revamped training platform unveiled**

# Revamped training platform unveiled



**The MNWB has unveiled a revamped version of its popular Ship Welfare Visitor Course, which is now FREE.**

The refreshed training course has a new platform and revitalised format, that places emphasis on The MLC 2006 (Seafarers' Bill of Rights), C188 (Fishers Rights) and coverage of the International Ship Port Security Code.

Project lead and MNWB Deputy Chief Executive Sharon Coveney said the training “underpins vital welfare support by ensuring every visitor knows what to expect when they step on board”.

Delivered in partnership with NAMMA and approved by ICMA, the course is free for all NAMMA and ICMA members and continues to be widely used by major welfare charities, including Stella Maris and The Mission to Seafarers.

[Read more](#)

# Landmark pledge to recognise seafarers



**Leaders, frontline workers and volunteers from across the maritime welfare sector were celebrated as MNWB presented its Annual Awards for Services to Seafarers' Welfare.**

The event took place at London's Trinity House, which saw a record number of nominations following the relaunch of the awards.

This highlighted the exceptional efforts of individuals and organisations working tirelessly to support seafarers and fishers across the UK.

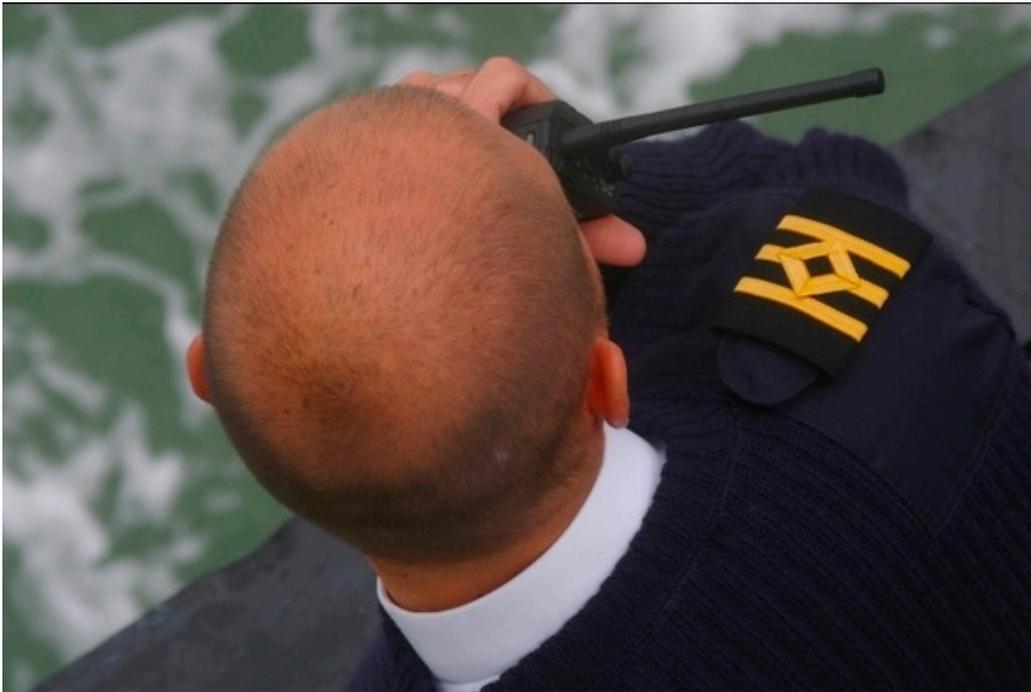
HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of the MNWB, attended the ceremony and personally presented the awards to six recipients before addressing guests with a thank you speech.

To find out more about the awards, click the links below.

[Read the story](#)

[View the gallery](#)

# Landmark pledge to recognise seafarers



The MNWB has begun developing a landmark Merchant Navy Pledge initiative and is calling on maritime organisations, industry leaders and seafarer advocates to help shape it.

Designed as a new national, voluntary framework inspired by the Armed Forces Covenant, the Merchant Navy Pledge aims to recognise the vital contribution of Merchant Navy seafarers, support their transition into shore-based roles, and ensure that retired seafarers receive the respect and access to support they deserve.

The project is collaboratively funded by MNWB, Trinity House and the Merchant Navy Association. It originated from an idea by Steven Jones, who is working closely with MNWB on this first-ever pilot - a truly groundbreaking moment for the Merchant Navy community.

We are keen to hear from organisations who believe in championing seafarer recognition, can share expertise and insight, and wish to play a leading role in building a framework that supports the UK's seafaring community.

Organisations that value the skills, dedication and contribution of Merchant Navy seafarers and who want to be part of shaping this national initiative are encouraged to get in touch.

[Contact us](#)

# MNWB responds to Middle Eastern conflict



**The MNWB is deeply concerned for all seafarers whose safety is threatened by the escalating conflict in the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding Middle Eastern waters.**

Our thoughts are with all the tens of thousands of seafarers and their families affected during this difficult time.

The pressures created by route disruptions and safety concerns add to the already challenging conditions seafarers face, impacting both their physical and mental wellbeing.

[Read more](#)

# Seafarers enjoy new games room



**Last month, seafarers calling at the Port of Hull were welcomed into the Hull Seafarer Centre by Stella Maris Senior Area Port Chaplain Anne McLaren, giving crews a much-needed break from life at sea.**

The newly refurbished games room — funded by a MNWB grant — quickly became a favourite spot. Seafarers enjoyed the pool table, table football and darts, making the most of a proper chance to relax and unwind during shore leave.

The renovation transformed the open-plan area into a bright, dedicated 24-hour recreational space, offering crews a vital place to switch off before returning to their vessels.

[Apply for a grant](#)

# Staff Spotlight: Deputy CEO attends Maritime Action Forum



**Deputy CEO Sharon Coveney attended the recent Southampton Maritime Action Forum, hosted by Carnival Cruise Line, alongside Labour MP for Southampton Itchen Darren Paffey and Lorna Wagner from Maritime Solent.**

The forum provided an important opportunity to hear industry leaders, government representatives and local partners discuss Southampton's key maritime priorities — including decarbonisation, innovation, skills development, people and safety.

With thousands of seafarers passing through Southampton every year, MNWB continues to highlight the vital importance to government of their wellbeing, safety, and access to reliable support services.

MNWB is in the process of meeting with a number of MPs to ensure seafarers are at the heart of maritime policy and local initiatives as the sector evolves.

# Staff Spotlight: Deputy CEO attends Maritime Action Forum



**MNWB member Care Ashore has accommodation available for seafarers.**

Set within their beautiful 250-acre Springbok Estate in Surrey, Care Ashore offers accommodation for anyone who has worked at sea, as well as dependants of former seafarers.

Find out more about the accommodation and how to apply.

[Find out more](#)

# Seafarer Support highlighted at Bon Voyage event



**Port Welfare Committee Manager Alex Houghton recently attended the Bon Voyage event at Warsash Maritime School, where he introduced cadets to our *Seafarer Support* service.**

for their first training voyages. He highlighted *Seafarer Support*, our free, confidential telephone and online referral service offering guidance to serving and former UK seafarers and their families — covering everything from accommodation and training to health and financial support.

“It was really great to meet with the cadets, who were excited about the opportunity to go to sea, although they were also aware that they will face challenges along the way,” **said Alex.**

“They really appreciated the maritime welfare offer available through Seafarer Support and other organisations. Many thanks to Warsash Maritime School for inviting us to speak with the cadets.”

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