

Welfare Watch



Welcome back to our newsletter!

Welcome to June's edition of *Welfare Watch*.

It's been a fast-moving and impactful few weeks for MNWB. We've been out in front - building influence with Government, working alongside our members across the sector, and continuing to push seafarers' welfare higher up the agenda where it belongs.

Our recent engagement with Ministers and Parliament shows real momentum. These conversations matter. They give us the chance to highlight the realities of life at sea and press for meaningful change. It's encouraging to see progress, particularly with new proposals aimed at strengthening protections for seafarers - but we'll keep pushing for more.

At the same time, we're seeing the strength of our network in action. Whether at Seawork or through the day-to-day work of our members, there is a clear, shared

commitment to improving lives. That collective effort is what drives real impact.

We're also on the edge of something important with the Seafarer Pledge - launched to highlight the essential role seafarers play in sustaining global trade, supporting national resilience, and enabling everyday life.

Supporting our members remains central to everything we do. That's why it's important to highlight the role of Johnny Dowling. As Business and Sustainability Lead, he is there to help you grow income, strengthen fundraising, and build resilience for the future. I encourage you to make the most of that support.

I also want to recognise the efforts of individuals like MNWB Ambassador Gordon Foot, whose upcoming Arctic challenge is not only inspiring but shines a light on important issues like seafarer homelessness while raising vital funds for Queen Victoria Seafarers Rest (QVSR).

And while we talk about strategy and influence, we must never lose sight of the practical support that sits at the heart of our work. Services like Seafarer Support are critical - providing direct, confidential help to those who need it most. That immediate, human support is what welfare is all about.

None of this happens without you - our members, partners, and supporters. Your work, day in and day out, makes a real difference. Thank you.

Stuart Rivers
MNWB Chief Executive

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LAST CHANCE to register for webinar



Time is running out to join a webinar focused on an initiative that recognises the vital contribution of seafarers and aims to raise standards across the maritime sector.

The Seafarer Pledge, honouring our Merchant Navy, highlights the essential role seafarers play in sustaining global trade, supporting national resilience, and enabling everyday life.

Join this one-hour webinar, hosted by Marketing in Maritime, this **Friday, June 12th at 11am** to find out what signing the Pledge involves, the support available to organisations, and the timeline for the initial pilot phase.

The Seafarer Pledge will lead into a celebration event on 1 July at Norton Rose Fulbright, London, marking the next stage of the initiative's rollout. Anyone interested in attending please email mnpledge@mnwb.org.uk

[Register for the webinar](#)

Ministerial visits for MNWB



Over the past month, MNWB has strengthened its engagement with UK Government, building key relationships to support seafarers' welfare.

Chair Captain Andrew Cassels met Maritime Minister Keir Mather MP and Labour MP for Thurrock Jen Craft at Tilbury Seafarers Centre, where he outlined the sector's key challenges and priorities, including the Seafarer Pledge, the MiFi project, and MNWB's national leadership role.

The visit brought together key partners, including Alexander Campbell, CEO of QVSR, who operate the centre.

And last week, MNWB CEO Stuart Rivers and Head of Marketing and Communications Joel Holt met with the Chair of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee and MP for Brentford and Isleworth, Ruth Cadbury.

They highlighted MNWB's role as the umbrella body for the UK's Merchant Navy and fishing fleets, representing 47 member charities and driving forward support for seafarers across the sector.

[Find out more](#)

Proposals to protect seafarers welcomed

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Thousands of seafarers are set to be better protected under new proposals announced by the UK Government that seek to cement proper rest periods, fairer pay and stronger rights and protections in law.

Following the introduction of the national minimum wage equivalent for seafarers in domestic waters, the new laws would guarantee minimum rest periods and fair pay for every seafarer working on frequent crossings between the UK, France and the Channel Islands, extending protections beyond UK territorial waters for the first time.

Responding to this news, MNWB CEO Stuart Rivers said:

“We welcome today’s announcement as a positive step forward for seafarers. Welfare should be at the heart of every decision affecting people who work at sea, because behind every crossing, every shift and every journey is a person whose wellbeing, dignity and family life matter.”

[Read the story](#)

Diving into action-packed Seawork



Throughout the week, MNWB has been in full force, alongside eight of its member organisations, at Seawork.

Seawork is a three-day exhibition focused on building networks and strengthening international relationships, attracting thousands of visitors from more than 60 countries.

Joining MNWB on the stand have been Care Ashore, Seafarers' Christian Friend Society, The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, The Seafarers Hospital Society, Sailors' Children's Society, and Safer Waves.

Deputy CEO Sharon Coveney also took part in the Seawork Cardboard Boat Regatta, which followed a World Cup theme. Flying the Merchant Navy flag as part of *Sink or Swim FC*, Sharon joined the race in true Seawork spirit.

Promoting seafarers' welfare at open day



MNWB will be exhibiting at the Portsmouth International Port Community Open Day, representing the Southern Port Welfare Committee as part of the port's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The event will feature interactive stands from port partners, alongside a range of ships and vessels to explore, as well as machinery and cargo handling equipment on display.

It will also highlight the work of port teams and seafarers, showcasing the important role the maritime industry plays in Portsmouth.

The open day takes place on Saturday, **13 June from 10am to 4pm** and entry is free.

[Find out more](#)

Nominations open for Annual Awards



Nominations for the MNWB Annual Awards for Services to Seafarers' Welfare 2026 are now open.

Since 1988, these awards have recognised individuals who go above and beyond to support seafarers and fishers.

Following a refresh in 2024, this year introduces a new **Rising Star** category.

- Lifetime Achievement
- Most Collaborative Organisation
- Rising Star
- Team Member of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year

Additionally, there will be a President's Award, which will feature outstanding success. Captain Sir Ian McNaught, our President, will present this.

Submit a nomination today.

Staff Spotlight - Johnny Dowling



We want to make our members aware of our colleague Johnny

Dowling, MNWB's Business and Sustainability Lead.

Johnny supports members with developing and growing their income streams, offering both advice and practical help. He is also the main point of contact for any fundraising queries, providing tailored guidance and resources.

Members are encouraged to get in touch with Johnny for support, ideas, or questions.

[Contact Johnny](#)

Member Feature: Gordon's epic 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 epic eight-day Arctic hiking challenge to raise awareness of seafarer homelessness and support QVSR.

His route, starting in less than two months on August 2nd, will take him between remote mountain huts inside the Arctic Circle, helping generate vital funds for QVSR, which provides a safe haven for up to 175 active and retired seafarers, veterans and others in need of a home in Poplar.

Gordon is hoping to raise £8,000. Help him reach his target by sponsoring below.

[Support Gordon](#)

Seafarer Support is here to help



**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

[Visit Seafarer Support](#)

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