

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COURT OF THE MEMBERS OF MSSC HELD AT 11.30 AM ON WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2025 HELD AT TRINITY HOUSE & VIRTUALLY ON YOUTUBE.

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### Present

Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL  
(President, MSSC and Chair of the Court)  
Mr Jeremy Penn (MSSC Chair)

### In Attendance

Mr Guy Holloway (CEO)  
MSSC Senior Management Team

34 MSSC members

Leading Cadet Emily A'Barrow, cadet speaker was present.

Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE, special guest and speaker was present.

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### 01/25 Welcome

Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL, MSSC President and Chair of the Court, welcomed the audience to this year's Annual Court. He introduced Mr Jeremy Penn, MSSC Chair. The Chair introduced Mr Guy Holloway, MSSC Chief Executive Officer, Captain Neil Downing RN, Captain Sea Cadets, Leading Cadet Emily and welcomed the guest speaker, Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Martin Coles CBE, the previous CEO, for his 15 years of dedicated service to MSSC. The Chair thanked Captain Neil Downing, who will be stepping down from his role as Captain Sea Cadets in December 2025.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Trinity House for the use of its venue for the Annual Court.

Apologies were received from many Members, and these had been recorded. 34 were present meaning the Annual Court was quorate.

The Chair asked Members to note with sadness the passing of Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE. Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE was Chairman of the Sea Cadet Association from 1998 to 2004 and stayed on as a Trustee until 2005, he was then elected as a Vice President of the merged charity Marine Society & Sea Cadets. The Chair led the Annual Court in a moment of silence to reflect on his passing.

### 02/25 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the MSSC Annual Court held on 9 October 2024 and 7 November 2024 were confirmed as accurate and signed by the Chair.

### 03/25 Report and Accounts

MSSC Chair, Mr Jeremy Penn, presented the Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025.

Members were invited to receive the Report and Accounts, which had been approved by MSSC Council on 17 July 2025. The Accounts had been audited by MHA LLP.

The MSSC Chair expressed his thanks to:

- The Board of Trustees, the Senior Management Team and MSSC employees.
- Mr Andy Helliwell, Dr Kate Richardson OBE, Ms Deana Rouse MBE and Ms Honor Wilson-Fletcher MBE who are standing for election as MSSC Council members.

- Ms Christine Baldwin FRICS and Sir Jonathan Woodcock KCB OBE for their exemplary service as Council members as they step down.
- Ms Sharlize Munro-Labuda and Ms Dianne Gomes-Oldridge who are retiring as the first ever Trustee Cadet-Committee members.
- Mr Martin Coles CBE for his service as CEO to MSSC.

The MSSC Chair welcomed Mr Guy Holloway as the new CEO for MSSC.

The MSSC Chair highlighted how the Report and Accounts showed the charity reported a 25% increase in total income to £23.6 million, driven by property sales and strong MOD support, with £8.7 million raised by volunteers nationwide, while total expenditure reached £19.3 million and net reserves rose to £41.4 million.

No questions were raised at this point.

## **04/25 Retirements and election of MSSC Council members**

The Chair thanked the retiring MSSC Council members for their exemplary service.

The retirements of Ms Christine Baldwin FRICS and Sir Jonathan Woodcock KCB OBE were noted.

The resolution is Ms Leonie Austin, Ms Laurelle Brant and Mr Gareth Hampton who are retiring by rotation, be re-elected as Members of the Council. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Mr Andy Helliwell, a current committee member, is elected as a Member of Council. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Michael Schofield and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Dr Kate Richardson OBE, a current committee member, is elected as a Member of Council. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Ms Leonie Austin and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Ms Deana Rouse MBE, a current committee member, is elected as a Member of Council. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Michael Schofield and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Ms Honor Wilson-Fletcher MBE, a current committee member, is elected as a Member of Council. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

## **05/25 Retirement and Elections of MSSC Trustee Committee Members**

The Chair thanked the retiring MSSC Trustee Committee Members.

The retirement of Ms Sharlize Munro-Labuda and Ms Dianne Gomes-Oldridge were noted.

The election of Mr Rob Faricy in accordance with Clause 7.3 as a Trustee Committee Member was noted.

To note recruitment is underway for two new Cadet Trustee Committee members.

## **06/25 Retirement and Elections of Vice Presidents**

The Chair noted that there are no retirements.

The resolution is that Sir Jonathan Woodcock KCB OBE is elected MSSC Vice President with an immediate effect. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Mr Conrad Blakey OBE RD JP is elected as MSSC Vice President. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Mr Martin Coles CBE is elected as MSSC Vice President. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Ms Leonie Austin and was passed by all Members present and voting.

The resolution is that Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou is elected as MSSC Vice President. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

## **07/25 Appointment of Auditors**

The resolution is that MHA LLP be re-appointed as MSSC's Auditors for a further year. Proposed by Mr Jeremy Penn, seconded by Mr Stuart Curl and was passed by all Members present and voting.

## **08/25 Chief Executive Officer's report**

Mr Guy Holloway, MSSC CEO, began by saying it was an honour to deliver the first report as the new Chief Executive of the organisation, having joined in May following five years at the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. His career has focused on improving outcomes for young people, making the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) a compelling next step, given its strong values, deep tradition, and life-changing impact on youth. The CEO expressed a personal connection to the charity's mission and a desire to learn sailing, a passion shared by his family.

The CEO said after travelling the country and seeing the work firsthand, it became clear that the organisation's greatest strength lies in its people—particularly its passionate, dedicated volunteers. He paid tribute to the outgoing CEO, Martin Coles CBE, for his 15 years of transformational leadership and for introducing a future-ready strategy guiding the organisation to 2028. Gratitude was also extended to the senior management team for ensuring a smooth transition.

The CEO said a key development during the year was welcoming Brigadier Ged Salzano MBE RM as Commander of the Royal Navy Cadet Forces, which has deepened ties between Sea Cadets and other Royal Navy Cadet forces. The organisation also had the honour of engaging with the First Sea Lord, General Sir Gwyn Jenkins and looks forward to welcoming the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE.

The CEO said one of the year's highlights was the D-Day commemorative trip to Normandy, involving Sea Cadet powerboats and the flagship TS Royalist, which escorted veterans across the Channel. This spirit of renewal was also reflected in the TS Royalist's 10-year refit and strong performance in the 2025 Tall Ships Race. Other notable returns included the National Band Competition and aviation training, along with new enhancements in the Royal Marine Cadets programme.

The CEO said the HRH Princess Royal's continued support as Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps was deeply appreciated, especially her role in opening new facilities in Stonehaven and the long-awaited Midlands Boat Station. The Marine Society also experienced a landmark year, with a fourfold increase in apprenticeships, a 25% growth

in income, and a 70% rise in digital library usage. The "Coming Ashore" mentoring programme also saw significant expansion.

Scholarships and bursaries continue to make a difference, with 79 seafarers supported through the Nautilus Slater Scholarship. The organisation has also taken on management of the JW Slater Memorial Fund. While Cadet numbers remained steady, feedback showed strong outcomes, with high percentages of cadets reporting improvements in teamwork, community engagement, and academic performance.

The CEO said 1,500 cadets experienced life-changing offshore voyages, and the number of cadets benefiting from "Beyond Unit" training rose to 65%. Vocational learning also saw growth through increased BTEC and Duke of Edinburgh participation, with cadets contributing over 20,000 hours in community volunteering. New online learning modules, including 59 for Royal Marine Cadets, were rolled out as part of a revised training program.

The organisation navigated financial pressures and inflation by refining its offer and increasing efficiencies, supported by volunteers and cadets. Safety and safeguarding were strengthened through new guidance, and 45% of cadet training is now delivered at the district level—up from 26% in 2020. Volunteer burdens were eased by enabling 30% of national training to be completed online.

The charity's capacity expanded with 35 new Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets sections opened, 33 of which were supported by government funding. These efforts reduced waiting lists and expanded into areas of deprivation. The goal for 2025–26 is to parade all new sections and open an additional 17, contributing to the ambitious Strategic Defence Review target of 30% cadet growth by 2030.

The CEO said to support this growth, volunteer recruitment is critical. The organisation has launched a campaign advocating for 35 hours of statutory volunteer leave for UK adults and is streamlining onboarding processes. Retention strategies include improved training, simplified promotion pathways, new mentoring programs, and better engagement through the National Sea Cadet Advisory Council.

The CEO said achieving 30% cadet growth will require rethinking the learning experience—offering flexible training times, collaborating across sectors, and reaching new demographics. It will also mean learning from existing successful units and the wider cadet community, while ensuring individual cadet experiences remain high quality.

The organisation will enhance the cadet experience by investing in new equipment, including Trinity 500 rowing boats and regional hub air rifle centres. The Marine Society will also continue its momentum by increasing apprenticeship opportunities and launching a new "RYA Yachtmaster" course in partnership with the offshore team.

The CEO said delivering on these ambitions will require substantial investment and efficiency, but recent progress proves the organisation can adapt and thrive. The fundraising strategy has already increased income from £2.2 million to £3.2 million, including £1.3 million to transform cadet units. Future plans involve expanding corporate sponsorship, launching new fundraising appeals, and strengthening partnerships with funders and alumni.

The CEO said the loyalty and support of the community are vital. Special thanks were extended to trustees, new members, and especially to the volunteers who are the heart of the organisation. A final tribute was paid to Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE and the Royal Navy for their continued support, and a heartfelt thank you was given to Captain Neil Downing for four years of outstanding service and leadership.

The CEO ended by saying that 2025 marks 70 years of the Royal Marine Cadets and introduced a video that spotlights their incredible offer to young people.

The Chair thanked the CEO for his first Annual Court address that highlighted the richness of the work done by the organisation and for showcasing the Royal Marine Cadets video.

## **09/25      Sea Cadet presentation**

The Chair introduced Leading Cadet Emily.

Leading Cadet Emily said her five-year journey with Sea Cadets has been filled with opportunities and experiences she never imagined possible. Joining as a shy 13-year-old, she has grown into a confident 17-year-old, shaped by the support of her peers, staff, and especially her mentor Abby, who has been with her through the highs and lows. Her time at Torpoint Sea Cadets helped her overcome her nerves and discover her passion and confidence, thanks to the unwavering dedication of the unit's volunteer staff.

LC Emily said her involvement in national and local drill competitions has been one of the highlights of her cadet career. She particularly reflected on the 2024 season as her favourite, as her team retained the title of National Drill Competition champions in the stunning setting of HMS Raleigh. The event was made even more memorable by the presence of the HRH The Princess Royal, who not only presented the trophies but also invited Emily and another cadet to assist in the royal banquet room—an honour that left a lasting impact.

LC Emily said one of her most transformative experiences was sailing on TS Royalist during the International Tall Ships Races. She described the excitement and challenges of sailing across the English Channel, night watches, braving poor weather, and even racing a ferry. Despite seasickness affecting many on board, her crew finished second out of nearly 40 ships—an achievement she remains incredibly proud of. These voyages gave her not only adventure but also the chance to represent Sea Cadets and the Royal Navy abroad, engage in teamwork, and build international friendships.

LC Emily said music has also played a pivotal role in her cadet experience. Having joined the Torpoint Sea Cadets Band to learn the tenor drum, she became an active part of the local and area bands. Performing at prestigious events like National Armed Forces Day and the Dartmouth Regatta, Emily found her passion and talent in music. In 2024, she was thrilled to be named the third-best solo drummer in her area and was part of the unit that became National Band Champions after a stunning performance at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich.

LC Emily said that her time with Sea Cadets has not only provided amazing memories but has also helped shape her future. After a week spent with the Royal Marines Band Service earlier this year, she was inspired to pursue a career in music within the armed forces. She has since applied to join the Royal Marines Band Service and is currently preparing for her audition in January 2026. Her time with Sea Cadets gave her the confidence and skills to chase this dream, and she's determined to succeed with the support of her family and unit staff.

LC Emily ended by saying that being a Sea Cadet is about more than uniforms and parades—it's about life-changing experiences, personal growth, and discovering one's own potential. She thanked everyone who has supported her, and she emphasised the importance of continuing to support the Sea Cadets programme so more young people can have access to the same incredible opportunities. Her story, though unique, is just one of many in a community that helps shape the future of its youth.

The Chair thanked LC Emily for her inspiring presentation.

## **10/25 Marine Society Prizes**

The Chair introduced Mr Darrell Bate, Director of Maritime Training & Development, to present the awards.

Mr Darrell Bate introduced the Marine Society Apprenticeship Award Achievement. He read the citation for today's recipient, Erin Broad.

Mr Darrell Bate introduced the John William Slater Scholarship Award for Outstanding Achievement. He read the citation for today's recipient, Grant Guechdi.

## **11/25 Annual Court address**

The Chair introduced the guest speaker, Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE, at the reception following the close of Annual Court. The Chair expressed his delight that Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE was able to join the meeting despite a packed schedule, just nine working days into his pivotal new role in the Royal Navy.

Vice Admiral Beattie began by saying he was sorry for arriving late, joking about underestimating London traffic. He expressed gratitude for the invitation and the warm introduction. He began by congratulating the Marine Society and Sea Cadets for another strong year of providing cadets with opportunities in a safe environment while increasing engagement with the Royal Navy. He acknowledged long-standing relationships with some in the audience and looked forward to strengthening these and building new ones.

Vice Admiral Beattie referenced the Prime Minister's recent launch of a national conversation on defense and highlighted the serious and unpredictable threats facing the UK today, including cyber-attacks and modern warfare tactics. He emphasised that innovation and speed in adopting new technologies like drones and autonomous systems are now decisive in warfare.

The Royal Navy recognises the importance of investing in people and harnessing their talent, particularly in technological areas. The recent Strategic Defense Review set a clear direction, focusing on readiness, a NATO-first posture, and using UK defense as a driver of national growth. He reaffirmed that the Royal Navy, along with MSSC, values the role of cadet forces in building confidence, resilience, and leadership skills in young people, calling the cadet experience a powerful tool for social mobility.

Vice Admiral Beattie said that the Royal Navy is deeply committed to developing maritime awareness among youth, as reflected in the cadet charter between the Navy and MSSC. He explained that a recent independent review revealed the Navy had previously disinvested in the cadet force, prompting the creation of a new leadership role – Commander of the Royal Navy Cadet Forces – to reset and improve cadet support. Brigadier Ged Salzano MBE RM now leads this initiative, helping to clarify the Royal Navy Cadet Forces' purpose and ensure long-term commitment.

Vice Admiral Beattie said that the new direction aligns with the First Sea Lord's intent and the MSSC's future readiness strategy. The goals include inspiring young people, breaking down barriers to opportunity, delivering life and technical skills, and connecting cadets with the Royal Navy through a STEM-focused curriculum. This also includes building connections with maritime colleges, universities, industry, and promoting awareness of maritime careers, both military and civilian.

The Royal Navy is committed to supporting a wider network of youth organisations that help young people grow through maritime experiences. He stressed the importance of Sea Cadets being a fun, safe environment that offers adventure and lifelong friendships. To support this, the Navy has integrated its youth employment and STEM teams more closely with cadet organisations and increased specialist staffing.

Vice Admiral Beattie said there are broader ambitions to increase school and community cadet forces by 30% by 2030, aiming to reach 250,000 young people. The Defense Review emphasised the importance of cadets learning STEM skills and using modern technology. In this vein, the Royal Navy is transitioning into a “hybrid Navy,” combining traditional maritime strength with digital and autonomous tech such as uncrewed vehicles and AI-enabled sensor networks.

The Royal Navy is investing £2 billion in advanced platforms and autonomy to expand its capabilities while reducing cost. These innovations support joint and NATO operations and aim to maintain the UK’s technological advantage, especially in undersea warfare. He acknowledged that this ambitious plan requires significant resources, and while government funding is expected, increases may not be immediate.

The Royal Navy is also building partnerships with the private sector to support this expansion. A maritime STEM strategy is being developed, involving collaboration with national colleges and universities – particularly in Plymouth – and with the defense industry. These efforts aim to strengthen the cadet program through greater institutional support and influence.

Vice Admiral Beattie said that although the MSSC’s charity status allows for responsiveness, continued collaboration with Brigadier Ged Salzano MBE RM is essential to ensure cadet needs are met and that programs reflect both Royal Navy values and modern priorities. Only through harmonised efforts can they deliver value for taxpayers and meaningful opportunities for young people.

Vice Admiral Beattie ended by saying that he was sincerely grateful for everyone involved in supporting the cadets. He offered special thanks to the adult volunteers, recognising them as the lifeblood of the cadet movement. Without their selfless dedication, he said, there would be no cadets – and he ended with heartfelt thanks for their leadership and commitment.

The Chair thanked Vice Admiral Paul Beattie CBE for his address.

## **12/25 Closing remarks**

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

The Chair read the following pre-submitted questions:

1. Can we have exact membership numbers by category, any trend year on year, and the annual turnover in terms of numbers?
2. Is anything new being considered to increase membership numbers?

The MSSC Chair answered:

1. There is a general decline in membership. Introduction of the ‘Friends of’ MSSC initiative is underway to create a broader base of supporter-membership, similar to other successful charity models.

There is steady recruitment each year, but this is offset by natural attrition (deaths, cancellations).

Current membership breakdown:

Total records: 657

Standard members: 355

Members Plus: 155

Life members: 111

Honorary members: 36

A challenge exists with identifying standing order payments which cannot always be reconciled with names.

Some memberships will be marked as lapsed to clean the database.

After reconciliation, the expected number of active and engaged members is approximately 350.

2. The Friends of Sea Cadets initiative is a key strategy for broadening engagement.

The CEO added that only about 5% of members responded to the annual court invitation, indicating a need for improved engagement.

Despite the new supporter model, constitutional membership remains important.

The audience asked:

1. That two years ago, an initiative was announced encouraging volunteers to become members after stepping down. However, nothing further has been announced.
2. 2026 marks 60 years since Sea Cadets first entered a military ship (Centurion) in the Tall Ships Race. The audience member expressed concern that no entry is planned for next year and asked if this could be reconsidered.

Daniel Mc Allister and the CEO answered:

1. Daniel McAllister – Director of Fundraising & Communications said this group is a key potential source of MSSC membership. A proactive system is being introduced using a new CRM. The system will soon generate automatic invitations for eligible individuals. Implementation is expected within the coming months.

2. The CEO said he will take the point under advisement. The Offshore team is reviewing plans for 2026–2027. The CEO said he will raise this issue at the next Senior Management Team meeting.

A member of the audience commented to remind attendees of the Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance:

- Plot included last year and again this year.
- New addition: cadets and staff who have died in service.
- Approximately five to six such individuals added.
- CEO and Captain will attend.
- The Field of Remembrance is open to public visits.

A further comment acknowledged the Merchant Navy Memorial service at the front of the building on Remembrance Sunday and thanked the MSSC and Sea Cadets for their presence and participation.

A final comment from a member of Maritime Charity Group promoted the Seafarers 2040 Report:

- Report covers full seafaring lifecycle and welfare needs.
- Initial launch occurred on 8 September 2025 at Trinity House.
- Next online feedback event is on 19 November 2025.

The MSSC President closed the meeting at approximately 12.34 pm. The MSSC President expressed his heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the event possible. Special appreciation was given to Trinity House for hosting the gathering, and to the planning and logistics team at headquarters, led by Daniel McAllister, the Communications Team and Tricia Smith, whose behind-the-scenes work was instrumental in its success.

The MSSC President thanked the MSSC Chair, Jeremy Penn for introducing the annual report, to the new CEO, Guy Holloway for inspiring opening words, and to Leading Cadet Emily for bravely sharing her story as a Sea Cadet. The MSSC President also acknowledged and thanked all retiring Council and committee members for their service, while warmly welcoming the newly elected Vice Presidents, Council, and committee members, wishing them success in their roles.

The MSSC President expressed his thanks to everyone supporting, enabling, and advocating for the Marine Society and Sea Cadets—both in the room and online. Recognition was given to the adult volunteers, described as the foundation of the organisation's ability to function and grow. Their recruitment is seen as critical to expanding the cadet experience for young people across the country.

The MSSC President said considering the government's ambition to expand cadet opportunities nationwide, he highlighted the challenges involved—namely the need for

funding, personnel, infrastructure, and equipment. Acknowledgment was given to those working at the unit level to deliver on this mission, with special thanks for their dedication and effort.

The MSSC President concluded with thanks extended to all attendees, both in person and online.

The MSSC President thanked all the speakers for their inspirational words.

The next Annual Court is scheduled for Wednesday 14 October 2026 at Trinity House.

**Signed:**  
**Chairperson**

**Date:**