



ANNUAL REVIEW 2024/25

SEA
CADETS

WELCOME FROM HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL



As Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps I have been delighted to meet many of the remarkable, confident, resilient and skilled young people who are part of this organisation. Through the tireless efforts of volunteers and employees, sea cadets across the country have access to challenge, adventure and learning which in turn delivers life-long skills and opportunity.

Opening the Stonehaven Sea Cadets building gave me a clear sense of how improved facilities can transform opportunities for young people, whilst providing a welcoming space for the wider community. That same spirit of investment and renewal was evident at the Midlands Boat Station in Birmingham, a national residential centre for boating excellence which will now be accessible to thousands of cadets, schools and youth groups.



2024 also marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day, during which Sea Cadets played a central role in national and international commemorations. I was struck by the dignity of those cadets who accompanied our veterans to Normandy and who stood vigil at Bayeux War Cemetery. It was an honour to witness Cadet Corporal Madison carry the Torch of Commemoration on behalf of the youth of the Commonwealth – a duty she performed with courage and reverence, reflecting the discipline instilled through her cadet training.

The D-Day 80 voyage also demonstrated the immense value of our flagship, TS Royalist. I am grateful to all who supported the successful campaign for her ten-year refit. Having commissioned her in 2015, I am delighted that she will continue to inspire and challenge young people through the experience of life at sea for many years to come.

The achievements set out in this review are a testament to the strength of the Sea Cadets family – volunteers, employees, supporters, and above all the cadets themselves. Together, they ensure that this unique organisation continues to enrich lives and contribute positively to our society. I also extend my gratitude to our generous supporters – particularly the Royal Navy – whose contributions helped make 2024/25 a pivotal year of renewal and growth.

I was honoured to succeed my late mother, HM Queen Elizabeth II as Patron of Marine Society & Sea Cadets in 2024, and it is my privilege to serve as Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps. I look forward to supporting its ongoing success.

HRH The Princess Royal
Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps
Patron, Marine Society & Sea Cadets (MSSC)



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR



2024/25 saw Sea Cadets maximise our resources for the development of our young people, finding efficiencies and new funding sources to increase our budget for cadet activities by almost 7%. Our incredible volunteers adapted superbly to our twin priorities of enhancing safety and safeguarding while implementing a revised training programme – improving cadets' wellbeing and access to activities. While the changes had a temporary impact on recruitment, cadet numbers grew back to over 14,000 in the final quarter – re-establishing the positive trend since the 2020 pandemic low of 13,000.

Our long-term growth ambitions echo the government's Strategic Defence Review in planning for a 30% increase in cadet numbers by 2030. And the operational achievements and investment shown throughout this review mean our charity now has a strong and sustainable platform for future expansion. Guided by our Future Ready Strategy, we remain fully committed to helping more beneficiaries access the unique mix of non-formal education and adventure we provide. This was demonstrated by our opening of a record 52 new sections during the year – with the majority in marginalised or deprived areas, and supported by Department for Culture, Media & Sport funding.

The Strategic Defence Review also acknowledged our crucial role in instilling young people with strong values, a sense of community, and an appreciation of the Royal Navy's contribution to our society and security. Indeed, we were hugely grateful for the Royal Navy personnel and facilities which allowed us to provide so many amazing opportunities for cadets in 2024/25, from offshore voyages to summer camps. Thanks to the generosity of every partner and supporter, no cadet had to miss out because of their personal circumstances, and all had a chance to discover new passions.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our Admiral, HRH The Princess Royal, for graciously agreeing to become our Patron. Her Royal Highness's unstinting support and encouragement continues to inspire us all to go 'above and beyond' in enriching cadets with skills, qualifications and experiences. Finally, I pay tribute to our outgoing CEO, Martin Coles CBE, whose 15 years of transformational leadership did so much to strengthen and modernise our organisation for the benefit of cadets, volunteers and employees. As Guy Holloway takes over the helm, we look forward to building on those foundations by helping even more young people to fulfil their potential in the years ahead.

Jeremy Penn
Chair, MSSC

INTRODUCING SEA CADETS



I was delighted to become CEO of Marine Society & Sea Cadets in May 2025 – an organisation with a pedigree in nautical training dating back to 1756. The Sea Cadet Corps we know today was formed with the Royal Navy in 1942 – not just to recruit new personnel, but to instil cadets with a sense of duty to their fellow citizens.

The intention was to create the community leaders who would be needed to rebuild the country – and that social responsibility remains central to everything we do. We're enormously proud to be a highly visible force for good in neighbourhoods across the UK – whether cleaning beaches or rivers; supporting veterans and Armed Forces charities; or providing bands and ceremonial displays at public events.

But with our proven track record in changing lives through non-formal education, the best way we can serve communities is by inspiring and developing their young people. That's why I'm passionate about helping Sea Cadets to grow – to ensure that our uniquely relevant and exciting brand of learning can create even more of the committed citizens our country needs.

Guy Holloway
CEO, MSSC

WHAT WE DO

Sea Cadets inspires **14,000** nine- to 17-year-olds through challenge and nautical adventure, guided by the customs and traditions of today's Royal Navy. Thanks to the dedication and expertise of **9,000** volunteers, around **400** units across the UK deliver unique opportunities for fun and learning that give our cadets a head start in life, whatever their backgrounds.

CHALLENGE AND ADVENTURE

Our online Sea Cadets Portal empowers each cadet to shape their own training journey. With over **500** engaging modules covering a huge range of topics, we aim to help everyone discover new talents they can excel in. For many, this means the land-based adventure training and fieldcraft provided by Royal Marines Cadets detachments based within **160** Sea Cadets units.

Our network of **eight** boat stations offer the rowing, dinghy sailing, powerboating and paddlesports Sea Cadets is known for, with nationally recognised qualifications available in all disciplines. Cadets can also experience the thrill of our racing keelboats, or join a week-long voyage on a yacht, powerboat, or our flagship TS Royalist – thanks to an offshore fleet supported by the expertise of the Royal Navy.

Once skills are mastered, cadets can put them to the test in local and regional competitions renowned for their camaraderie and offering the prize of a place in our national finals – from our spectacular regatta at the Royal Victoria Dock, to our epic band competition at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich.



Sea Cadets
inspires

14,000

nine- to
17-year-olds

THE SEA CADETS FAMILY

Alongside the training and qualifications which build self-confidence and resilience, the welcoming environment of the Sea Cadets family gives young people new friends, role models, and support networks while developing teamwork and communications skills.

We know that this formula has a major impact on cadets within just six months – at which point they have a sense of improved wellbeing, feel positive about their post-18 destinations, and are motivated to contribute to their communities.¹

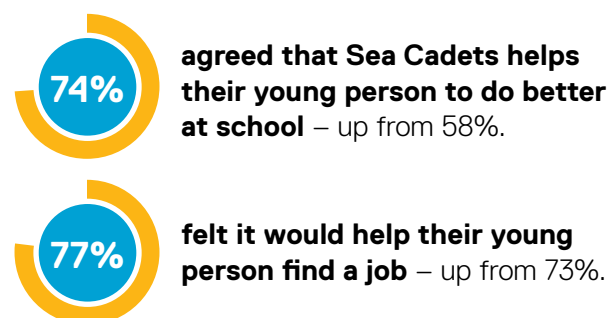


MAKING AN IMPACT

Our 2024/25 Impact Survey² confirmed that:



The parents and carers we surveyed also had a positive opinion of our impact:



1. Andrew Weston & Ben Bridge, MSSC: Length of stay and impact briefing (2023).
2. Based on responses from 2,337 cadets and 3,444 parents/carers.

ENHANCING THE SEA CADETS EXPERIENCE

Our amazing volunteers and employees worked tirelessly in adapting to a revised training programme for 2024/25, ensuring we could provide the widest possible range of cadet activities.

DELIVERING HANDS-ON TRAINING

We were delighted to be able to fund the return of a full programme of offshore voyages which, thanks to the outstanding support of the Royal Navy, allowed us to deliver a combined **9,546** days at sea for **1,591** cadets – up by **15%** on 2023/24. Along with our provision of inshore sailing, rowing and paddlesports opportunities, this kept boating time just above our historic benchmark at **30.2** hours per cadet.

“

The voyage on TS Jack Petchey helped me to develop my independence, gain a nautical skill set and work towards my Gold DofE. We were so lucky to have amazing volunteers who gave their time to make the experience so enjoyable.”

Cadet Tigerlily, Stonehaven Unit

We also delivered **56,802** days of beyond-unit training, enabling **65%** of cadets to forge new friendships and develop specialist skills outside their comfort zones. This was up by an incredible **20** percentage points on the previous year – made possible by a record **45%** of training being delivered by our remarkable district teams.

By raising the proportion of district-level training from just **26%** pre-pandemic, we have been able to bring in-demand experiences within the reach of every cadet – diverting time and money previously spent on travel into activities and equipment.

“

My two days of keelboating was such an amazing experience. I even got the opportunity to go race sailing! Thanks to the instructors and volunteers for one of the best camps I have ever been on.”

Cadet Melissa, Wigan Unit

423,523
boating hours
delivered for
cadets

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Having prioritised cadet activities and experiences in the context of limited resources, we still delivered **32,939** qualifications (at an average of two per cadet) including **1,103** Level 1 & 2 BTECs in Teamwork & Personal Development and **523** Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. Our DofE participants volunteered a combined **20,098** hours in their communities, at a social value of **£128,581** – up from 17,758 hours at a value of £93,709 in 2023/24.

Navigation, meteorology and piping were incorporated into unit training to increase the uptake of these core skills. Cadets also benefitted from the **50** engaging new learning modules and **30** updated sessions added to the Sea Cadets Portal website – which was enhanced to allow course directors to provide even more online support.



“

The best thing about the Sea Cadets Portal is the ability to find such a range of courses. I think that without it, I wouldn't have gone on nearly as many courses as I have.”

Cadet Jack, Penarth Unit

2024/25 also saw the Portal become a vital source of maritime career inspiration for cadets, promoting appropriate job opportunities and vacancies as well as the highly relevant courses and apprenticeships of our sister organisation, Marine Society.

552 cadets attended careers awareness fairs and webinars with employers including UK Sail Training, the Merchant Navy, and the Royal Navy. Hundreds more enjoyed close interaction with maritime facilities and employers during some memorable visits – including to the cutting-edge simulators of the Maritime Centre at Liverpool John Moores University, and the launch of Maersk's latest low-emissions container ship.



FEEDBACK ON THE SEA CADETS EXPERIENCE FROM THE 2024/25 IMPACT SURVEY

84%

of cadets said they had taken part in lots of different activities.

86%

found their Sea Cadets training engaging.

89%

felt they get useful qualifications from Sea Cadets.

72%

of parents/carers thought Sea Cadets would help their young person join the maritime sector.

“

I love Sea Cadets as it opens up amazing opportunities from being in bands to going offshore on TS Royalist. The courses are great: this year I passed my powerboat licence; I've been adventure training and shooting; and I'm working towards becoming a dinghy sailing instructor.”

Royal Marines Cadet Imy, Greenwich Unit

INCREASING SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

IMPROVING THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

We managed to keep volunteer numbers in line with recent years and are hugely grateful to the **9,000** dedicated adults serving our cadets and communities. They included **1,750** volunteers recruited in 2024/25, meaning our national Volunteer Support Team had a busy year implementing a more efficient digital onboarding process. They also succeeded in streamlining promotions and medal applications – reducing the time taken to recognise volunteer achievements by up to **75%**.

We reached a landmark figure of **30%** of national volunteer training delivered virtually, with bite-sized modules preserving more of volunteers' time for cadets. New online training included a mandatory health & safety course, accompanied by comprehensive new guidance to help volunteers plan and deliver safer activities. Meanwhile, our volunteers continued to play a huge part in promoting our approach to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – guided by a mandatory EDI training course, new volunteer EDI Officers, and more resources to help them ensure every young person feels included.

CAMPAIGNING TO TRANSFORM VOLUNTEERING

Because we always need more volunteers to support the growing demand for what we offer, we launched a major national campaign for statutory volunteering leave in February 2025. Charities including The Scout Association, Girlguiding and St John Ambulance signed our letter to Sir Keir Starmer calling for everyone in the UK to be given 35 hours of paid volunteering leave each year – something already offered to MSSC employees. With significant public and cross-party political support for the campaign, we hope the idea will become reality and transform vital community and youth services including Sea Cadets units.

“

I joined Whitehaven Sea Cadets as a cadet when I was 12 and loved it, and the opportunities it gave me. I became a volunteer at 18 to help others make the most of the same opportunities. It's great to see cadets develop skills and grow in confidence while they are with us. Many keep in touch with the unit and it's always nice to hear how Sea Cadets helped shape their careers and lives.”

CPO (SCC) Stuart McCourt BEM, Whitehaven Unit
(British Empire Medal recipient 2024)



9,000
adult volunteers
support our
cadets

DELIVERING ON FUNDING & FACILITIES

REVITALISING OUR FLAGSHIP

Thanks to the efforts of our fundraisers and the generosity of our supporters, we raised **£3.2m** to support our essential work. This included **£1.3m** to help transform facilities and equipment at our units across the UK, and almost **£600k** for the ten-year refit of our flagship TS Royalist. As one of the UK's few remaining platforms for tall ship sail training, we're hugely grateful to all those who helped secure its future.

The sheer variety of training and challenge TS Royalist provides makes it unrivalled in the field of youth development, having given almost **10,000** young people (**35%** funded by bursaries) a life-changing voyage since it was commissioned in 2015. The first part of the refit saw her masts and rigging renewed over winter, with engine and equipment upgrades due before the 2026 sailing season.



“

Sea Cadets' offshore bursary gave me an amazing opportunity to take part in a voyage on TS Royalist. I got to learn how to sail a proper sailing ship and the sense of pride and achievement I gained is immeasurable. It has given me a great boost to my confidence, and I now feel able to take on different challenges.”

Cadet Hannah, Redditch Unit



ENHANCING OUR BOATING COVERAGE

Onshore, our beyond-unit training capacity was expanded with the official opening of our residential Midlands Boat Station in October 2024. Located at Edgbaston Reservoir in Birmingham, the state-of-the-art building completes Sea Cadets' nationwide boating coverage after a decade of investment – filling the last gap in a network of **eight** boat stations and **38** unit boating hubs.

Offering regular waterborne training and activities to **1,500** cadets in and around the city, the boat station will deliver **30,000** boating sessions and **1,000** residential places each year. It is also becoming an important community hub for local charities and youth groups, unlocking boating opportunities for **340,000** nine- to 17-year-olds outside of Sea Cadets.



WORKING WITH THE ROYAL NAVY

Sea Cadets continues to benefit immensely from the long-standing support of the Royal Navy, which typically provides around half of our annual funding through the grant-in-aid, along with secondments of experienced personnel and extensive use of facilities and equipment.

EXPERIENCING THE ROYAL NAVY

A key theme of our Future Ready Strategy is to closely reflect today's Royal Navy within the Sea Cadets Experience. We're therefore particularly grateful for the generosity of all those serving personnel who hosted an incredible range of visits to ships and training establishments – including the privilege of several hands-on experiences onboard HMS Prince of Wales.

Our training team at HMS Raleigh ran **11** District Naval Experience weeks at this renowned Royal Navy training establishment at Torpoint in Cornwall. These events ensured around **300** cadets got to meet serving personnel and sample a realistic experience of Navy life, even taking part in many of the initial training activities provided for recruits – from firefighting and sea survival to the famous obstacle course.



HMS Raleigh also generously hosted three of our Area Summer Camps, which are an ideal way for cadets to accelerate their development in exciting new surroundings. Eastern Area's trip highlighted the opportunities on offer, with **145** cadets enjoying mountain biking, adventure training, mechanical engineering, and leadership courses supported by 81 volunteers and the Royal Navy Engagement Team. The highlight for many is being able to get on the water in such prestigious surroundings, with dozens of qualifications earned in sailing, powerboating and rowing.

“

The cadets absolutely love coming and boating from Jupiter Point on summer camp at HMS Raleigh. They get to see what the Royal Navy does down there and feel like they're a part of it.”

Lt Cdr (SCC) Sean Stevens RNR, Eastern Area Training Officer

A welcome innovation for 2024/25 saw a pilot Engineering Challenge Day organised with the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Royal Navy Air Station Yeovilton. Tasked with designing, building and demonstrating a working airframe model, five Sea Cadets teams competed with groups from across the other Royal Navy Cadet Forces – providing the perfect atmosphere for creativity and problem-solving. As well as enjoying the chance to discuss engineering careers with experienced Royal Navy professionals, cadets were thrilled to be presented with certificates by Brigadier Ged Salzano MBE RM, Commander Royal Navy Cadet Forces.

“

Sea Cadets has shaped my future and solidified my aspirations to join the armed forces as an officer. We get invaluable exposure to the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines, as well as opportunities to speak with ex-service personnel and current serving members.”

**Royal Marines Cadet Kieran,
Wolverhampton Unit**



THE IMPACT OF ENGAGEMENT

The wealth of Royal Navy experiences provided in 2024/25 meant we exceeded our target to give a fifth of cadets the opportunity to meet serving personnel – with **35%** gaining insights and inspiration from this close engagement. We also held **five** Royal Navy careers webinars, covering everything from the RN Medical Branch to the Royal Marines, and delivered RN Careers Awareness briefings to **305** volunteers.

The value and relevance of the Royal Navy to cadets was clearly demonstrated in our 2024/25 Impact Survey. **75%** of cadets said we made them feel connected to the Royal Navy and/or Royal Marines, while **75%** of parents/carers felt Sea Cadets would help their young person join the service. Cadets also scored their trust of the Royal Navy as **8 out of 10**, just below their trust in Sea Cadets volunteers – 16% of whom are serving or former Royal Navy personnel.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

We were proud to continue to help the Royal Navy reach into neighbourhoods across the UK in 2024/25. As well as **72** school engagement visits, thousands of cadet days were spent raising awareness and profile at community events and parades – including many in areas where the Royal Navy has no other representation, reflecting the Strategic Defence Review’s aspiration to “reconnect Defence with society”.

We look forward to enjoying even closer engagement with the Royal Navy and our colleagues across the Royal Navy Cadet Forces. Inspired by these partnerships, we remain determined to play our part in connecting diverse communities to our Armed Forces while developing the skilled citizens and defence personnel of the future. Working together, we can strengthen the UK’s society, security and prosperity, while giving every young person an opportunity to discover and achieve their full potential.



75%

of cadets said we made them feel more connected to the Royal Navy/ Royal Marines

CREATING YOUNG LEADERS

GIVING CADETS A VOICE

The Cadet Voice programme continued to thrive as an effective and engaging way to help cadets shape their own experience. We met our target for **50%** of units to be holding regular Cadet Voice forums and are well on course to reach 60% in 2025/26 – empowering more young people to improve Sea Cadets by voicing their ideas and concerns.



Planned and facilitated by cadets, our 2025 Cadet Conference moved to a hybrid format which greatly extended its reach. Almost **1,000** cadets joined in online from their units or homes, while the 31 young people of our National Cadet Voice teams led workshops and Q&A sessions with senior management.

Cadets' influence over the national charity was also enhanced by the creation of two new Cadet Trustee Committee Member roles, appointed to bring a youth perspective to our policy committee. And we continued to provide National Cadet Voice members with training and resources to help them represent their peers, with cadets now regularly involved in confidently interviewing candidates for senior or cadet-facing employee roles.

“

The role provides a platform to represent the diverse backgrounds within the organisation, ensuring it remains inclusive, accessible, and responsive to all. Watching Cadet Voice flourish and seeing the impact it has on improving cadet experiences has been really amazing.”

Cadet Trustee Dianne, Canterbury Unit

Almost
1,000
cadets joined our
Cadet Conference
online



INFLUENCING NATIONAL DEBATES

With a new government in office, 2024's autumn party conferences were a chance for eight senior cadets to advocate on behalf of Sea Cadets and their peers. As well as meeting the new Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard MP, and former Safeguarding Minister Mims Davies MP, the cadets hosted panel discussions in venues packed with influential decision-makers. Making the case for improved support for youth development charities and practical apprenticeships, the cadets received praise from many elected politicians and charities including The Children's Society and The Outward Bound Trust.



“

My role in the National Cadet Voice Team has improved my public speaking by giving me opportunities like the Labour Party Conference. This has given me the confidence to do presentations at school as well as conduct interviews – skills I'm sure will help me in future.”

Cadet Megan, Loughborough Unit



Another of our Cadet Voice members helped kick off our cadet-led input to the National Youth Strategy in Parliament in March 2025. Aged just 13, Cadet Anannya of Feltham & Hounslow Unit confidently addressed the MPs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Affairs on cadet concerns from climate change to mental health. Explaining how Sea Cadets has given her confidence, skills and support, Anannya called on the government to help organisations like ours “get more volunteers and grow, so we can help more young people and communities to work together.”



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP QUALITIES: CADET FEEDBACK FROM THE 2024/25 IMPACT SURVEY

76%

Sea Cadets has made me feel that other people can count on me – up from 70%.

75%

Sea Cadets has helped me to stand up for things I believe are right – up from 67%.

78%

Sea Cadets has made me better at listening to the views of others – up from 71%.

“

Throughout my time in Sea Cadets, I have had many opportunities to develop my leadership skills – giving me the chance to grow as person. Teaching junior cadets and helping them reach their goals has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my cadet career.”

First Sea Lord's Cadet Joshua, Immingham Unit

SEA CADETS IN ACTION

2024/25 provided cadets with opportunities to experience some incredible national competitions and events. Here are just some of the highlights:

SUMMER 2024



48 cadets departed on three of our offshore vessels for the **D-Day 80 voyage to Normandy**, with TS Royalist joining Royal Navy warships in escorting the United Kingdom's veterans across the Channel. Cadets were thrilled to meet the present crew of HMS Medusa – the first allied vessel to reach Omaha Beach in June 1944 – and felt hugely privileged to speak with D-Day veterans at several important ceremonies.

“Marching at Pegasus Bridge was an incredible honour. Standing where such significant history took place gave me a deeper appreciation of sacrifices made during D-Day. It was truly humbling to walk in the footsteps of heroes.”
Cadet Sarah-Ellen, Long Eaton Unit

July's **Inter Service Cadet Rifle Meeting** at Bisley saw our North West Area 'A team' finish second in the overall 'Champion Unit', while Petty Officer Cadet Amelia was named best individual cadet – the first Sea Cadets 'top shot' since 1984.



A successful **Naval Wings Programme** ended with three outstanding sea cadets receiving their Gold Wings badges after a dynamic week at RNAS Yeovilton in August. The cadets relished the challenge of extended flights in the Grob 115 aircraft, supported by the dedicated team from 727 Naval Air Squadron.

The **National Band Competition** returned in August, with the historic Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich providing a stunning venue. South West Area deservedly triumphed as the Best All-Round Band, led by Torpoint Unit's dedicated brothers, Leading Cadet Chris (Best Drum Major) and Petty Officer Cadet Will (Best Musician).

“Having come second at the last band competition in 2019, winning the overall band prize as well as best musician makes the band's countless hours of practice all worth it - it has to be a highlight of my cadet career.”
Cadet Will, Torpoint Unit



Our yachts, TS Sir Stelios and TS City of London, competed in August's **ASTO Small Ships Race** for 12- to 25-year-olds. Although light winds meant the 150km course from Guernsey to Poole took a demanding 36 hours to complete, our cadets showed great skill and determination to finish in the top five in their class and win the prize for youngest crew.

“We were exhausted when we finished but also filled with a sense of huge achievement. The voyage was fun, and at times excitingly challenging, but the best thing was making new friends from across the country.”
Cadet Jamie, City of London Unit

AUTUMN 2024

Our **National Sailing Regatta** in September saw our top sailors gather at Southport to tackle the usual mix of testing conditions. An exceptional all-round display from Southern Area's team earned them The Navy League Trophy as overall champions, but every cadet contributed to the special camaraderie that makes this competition so popular.



Over 400 cadets and volunteers overcame wet and windy conditions to put on a magnificent show for our **National Trafalgar Day Parade** in October. The watching crowds enjoyed a spectacular display of precision drill and musicianship in Trafalgar Square, which also won praise from VIP guests including the then Veterans Minister Al Carns DSO OBE MC MP.

“The cadets could have let the poor weather bring us down, but the purpose of the parade helped us push through. We are Sea Cadets for a reason, a little water can't stop us!”

First Sea Lord's Cadet Ashley, Dunbar Unit

Our teams of cadets and young volunteers demonstrated life-saving skills under pressure at the **National First Aid Competition** in Bury in November. Milton Keynes Unit's excellent teams won both Sea Cadets categories, with their young adults also achieving bronze medals in the Inter-Service competition.

“The competition was totally different to anything I've ever done, and experiencing the venue and getting to meet all the other Cadet Forces was amazing.” **Cadet Katie, Scunthorpe Unit**
(runners-up in the Sea Cadets competition)



WINTER 2024/25



December saw cadet teams from Crewe, Newark, Stroud and Swindon units announced as the winners of the **Sea Cadets CGI Innovate Challenge** – organised with global IT company CGI to encourage imaginative new ways to learn about information systems. As well as awarding each team a £1,000 digital grant, CGI's offices hosted a day for cadets to explore cutting-edge tech.

“The experience provided me with unique opportunities to connect with people working in technology – further deepening my interest in the field and significantly enhancing my knowledge and soft skills.”

Cadet Georgia, Stroud Unit

SPRING 2025

Barrow and Scarborough units proudly represented Sea Cadets at the **keel laying ceremony for HMS Dreadnought** – the Royal Navy's state-of-the-art submarine under construction at BAE Systems' shipyard. With terrific music provided by our band, the March event saw cadets impress VIP guests from the government and Royal Navy.



A SPECIAL YEAR FOR ROYAL MARINES CADETS

CELEBRATING A HISTORY OF SERVICE TO THE NATION

With 2024 marking the 360th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Marines, our cadets were delighted to be included in a number of anniversary celebrations during the year – beginning at the Tower of London in March, alongside the Royal Marines of 47 Commando. September's annual Royal Marines Family Weekend then saw cadets given a guided tour of the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, where they met the then Commandant General Royal Marines, General Sir Gwyn Jenkins KCB OBE ADC, and performed an arena drill display for the crowds.



Many more cadets were able to mark the October celebrations with a historic Trafalgar Parade to mark the 125th anniversary of Windsor & Eton Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets – founded with a donation from Queen Victoria in 1899. To honour the milestone, His Majesty King Charles III graciously permitted the parade to muster within Windsor Castle, where Zulu Company Royal Marines Cadets formed their first 96-person Guard for many years as a tribute to 360 years of the Royal Marines.

“

The RM360 voyage improved my teamwork and leadership skills. It was a really good opportunity to build relationships with other cadets and reflect on the work of the Royal Marines.”

Royal Marines Cadet James, Northampton Unit



To mark the official anniversary on 28 October, our powerboat TS Jack Petchey embarked on a special week of Royal Marines-inspired missions codenamed 'Exercise Coastal Guardian'. Cadets tackled amphibious scenarios which simulated delivering aid, assisting in 'search and rescue' operations, and mounting a beach assault. The latter involved rendezvousing with Army units at sea, before providing an escort to the beach 'assault area' and boarding a motorised pontoon for the final landing!

Amidst all the action, cadets found time for a moving ceremony at the Warsash memorial to the Commandos who played a leading role on D-Day. With the week uniting 'blue' and 'green' in mutual respect and friendship, the voyage confirmed the value of our 'one ship, two colours' philosophy of collaboration.





THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

The highlight of the Royal Marines Cadets calendar is the Gibraltar Cup at CTCRM Lympstone, where the best teams from each of our six areas go head-to-head in the ultimate test of their tactical skill, navigation, and endurance. The May 2024 competition was particularly special, thanks to the Royal Navy giving cadets the chance to experience a flight in a Merlin helicopter.

A new award was also introduced, with Cadet Lance Corporal Isabelle of Chislehurst Detachment becoming our first-ever Best Individual Medic, while Cadet Sergeant Gemma of the Scarborough team was named Best Section Commander. Overall, the famous cup was won by an outstanding Jersey Detachment – the perfect way to celebrate their 75th anniversary.

“

Being at Lympstone was such an amazing experience and the opportunity to meet and speak with serving Royal Marines was incredibly interesting. I learned that teamwork is essential, and seeing everyone's strengths come together to navigate through the competition was so rewarding.”

Royal Marines Cadet Isabelle, Chislehurst Unit

59

new or updated
learning modules
developed with
volunteers and the
Royal Marines Cadets
Support Company



PART OF THE COMMUNITY

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

With **55%** of Sea Cadets units located within areas of relative economic disadvantage (compared to 33% for other youth groups)¹, we want to make Sea Cadets even more accessible to the young people who could benefit most from our activities. And this includes welcoming more girls and young women, with the proportion of female cadets increasing from 37% to **38%** during the year – a positive trend upwards from 36% in 2023.

We are also making progress with our aspiration to reflect the communities we represent by embracing the diversity which brings so much to our national life and culture. **14%** of our cadets identified as part of an ethnic minority group in 2024/25 – up from 10.7% in 2021 and approaching the UK's overall ethnic minority proportion of 18.3%.

Our 2024/25 Impact Survey also confirmed we are continuing to engage with higher-than-average proportions of young people who may benefit greatly from the inclusive welcome of the Sea Cadets family: **8%** of cadets identify as autistic, while **13%** of cadets aged over 12 identify as non-heterosexual – almost four times the overall national percentage in both cases; **6%** of our cadets are looked after children – more than eight times the national proportion.



BROADENING HORIZONS

Throughout the summer of 2024, our On The Water outreach initiative gave a first taste of boating and water sports to **966** disadvantaged children in London, Birmingham and Liverpool – a **24%** increase on last year, supported by the programme's return to Merseyside. **82%** of participants were affected by at least one form of marginalisation, with **31%** from 'extremely economically disadvantaged areas' and 10% impacted by disability; we also welcomed almost **100** looked after young people – up from 15 in 2023.

As well as fun and friendships, the programme's **2,878** activity sessions helped **132** young people achieve recognised qualifications – up from 64 in 2023. **87%** of young people said they really enjoyed taking part, with **74%** saying On The Water was their only chance to try boating activities (up from 66%). **86%** of parents/carers said it had made their young person more confident.



“

It gave me a brilliant start to my summer holidays. I learned a new skill, gained a qualification and met new friends.”

First-time On The Water attendee, Birmingham

1. Based on comparison with National Youth Agency data from the National Youth Census (2023)



ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

Sea Cadets units helped improve their local environments and boost community pride with hundreds of litter picks during the year. Many events were inspired by our Earthshot environmental learning modules, including Warsash Unit's massive beach clean along the Solent Way – where 43 cadets, volunteers and supporters removed a huge range of rubbish to promote World Earth Day in April 2024.

June then saw units mark the second year of The Big Help Out community volunteering initiative, with highlights including Rushden Unit's kayaking clean-up of the River Nene; Rickmansworth & Watford Unit clearing a section of the Grand Union Canal; and South Shields Unit restoring Commonwealth War Graves.

REMEMBERING OUR ARMED FORCES

Our units represented Sea Cadets at hundreds of Remembrance parades and services, including at our first-ever plot in the Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance. Petty Officer Cadet Millie of Cheshunt Unit attended its official opening, proudly representing the 53 former sea cadets who died in service during conflicts.



Sea Cadets units were also proud to contribute to hundreds of D-Day 80 anniversary events in June 2024. Several cadets even had the honour of carrying the national Torch of Commemoration alongside D-Day veterans, with many more giving readings or musical performances at civic ceremonies, or acting as standard bearers for the Royal British Legion.

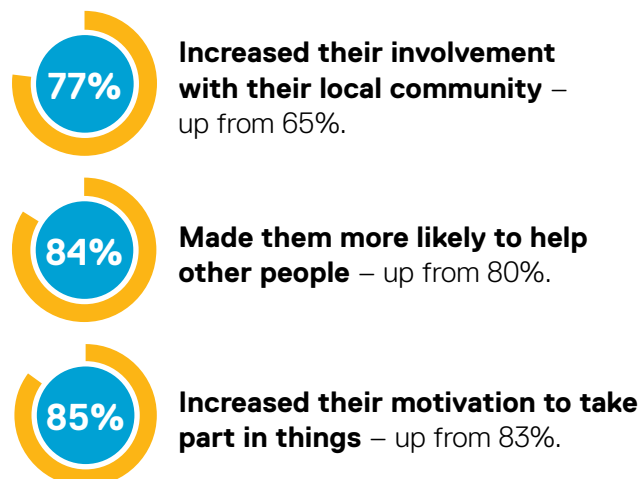
“

I was privileged to light the D-Day 80 beacon on top of Bolton Parish Church on behalf of the mayor. As cadets, we are taught about what these people endured for us. It is really important to us to pay our respects to the fallen, and to the few of that amazing generation who are still with us.”

Royal Marines Cadet Murphy, Bolton Unit

CREATING COMMITTED CITIZENS

Our 2024/25 Impact Survey found that our young people felt that Sea Cadets has:



GOING FOR GROWTH

With our stretched resources focused on providing the best possible experience for cadets, we were unable to maintain our recent progress in growing their numbers. However, a fantastic response from units to our Growth Challenge initiative saw a surge in recruitment from December – keeping cadet numbers over the 14,000 watermark (**14,031**, down 1.5% on 2023/24), with **5,696** new cadets joining during the year.

Given that sustained inflation since 2020 has reduced the real value of our regular funding by **25%**, it is a testament to the efforts of our volunteers and Growth & Development Workers that cadet numbers are within 5% of the pre-pandemic high of 14,670.

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

To tackle our waiting lists and build capacity for long-term growth, we exceeded our targets for expansion by opening **35** new Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets sections and **17** Junior sections in 2024/25. 33 of the senior sections were supported by government funding for youth development provision in areas of relative deprivation – helping us to increase our presence in ‘left behind’ communities around the UK.

By opening a total of **87** sections in the past two years, we have increased our overall capacity by almost **10%**. This will allow us to accommodate many more cadets each year while supporting the Strategic Defence Review’s aim for “a 30% expansion of Cadet Forces by 2030”. We look forward to making efficient and effective use of the government support and funding that the review states will be needed to deliver this expansion. We also hope to capitalise on any growth in interest resulting from the review’s ambition to “develop a greater understanding of the Armed Forces among school pupils.”

87

sections opened
in the past
two years

5,696

new cadets joined
during the year



ACHIEVING GROWTH IN 2024/25: OUR GOLD BURGEE WINNERS

The ultimate prize for an ambitious Sea Cadets unit is to be awarded a Gold Burgee (pennant) recognising significant growth. Here's how some of our units succeeded in 2024/25:



Stafford & Rugeley Unit worked tirelessly to increase the number of nine- to 12-year-old cadets they can develop. They even opened a second Junior section in February 2025, which is already growing thanks to their social media promotion building major interest in the local community.



Newark Unit launched the first Royal Marines Cadets Detachment in its history and saw an incredible 85% increase in overall cadet numbers in 2024. As well as their Gold Burgee, their efforts were also recognised with the 'Community Group of the Year Award' from Newark & Sherwood District Council.



Ross-on-Wye & Monmouth Unit achieved an outstanding 70% increase in cadet numbers, thanks to their committed volunteers, instructors and supporters. Their growth enabled their first multi-activity cadet training weekend; supported an impressive return to competitive drill; and allowed them to resume community engagement activities.



Dover & Deal Unit's growth and development initiatives included a partnership with Cinque Ports Sailing to help deliver more sailing sessions in Dover Harbour. Their growing strength has also seen them share boating resources with neighbouring units and local schools, getting even more young people on the water.

“

Growth is a key theme for our unit as it enables us to provide more young people with opportunities to develop confidence, skills, and friendships. Expanding through our new Junior section and revitalising our space have been key milestones in building capacity and creating an inspiring environment. With regular encouragement from the Growth & Development Team we have felt more supported to plan and implement changes effectively.”

SLt (SCC) Alleisha Lewin RNR, Commanding Officer of the Gold Burgee-winning Malvern Unit



LOOKING FORWARD: OUR GOALS FOR 2025/26

Our goals for 2025/26 are centred around delivering or supporting growth while increasing our capacity to inspire and develop our cadets. As ever, these aims also prioritise support for our volunteers and employees – the people who make everything we do possible. Together, we will work to ensure Sea Cadets remains a modern and resilient charity which can deliver lasting change for even more young people.

OUR OFFER

More engaging training and activities for cadets

- Update 30 sessions on Programmes Online based on cadet feedback
- Six new Regional Shooting Hubs operating alongside 125 new Air Rifle Centres and Unit Drill Hubs

More training delivered at district level

- Over 45% of beyond-unit training delivered at district level
- Proportion of cadets engaged in beyond-unit training increased by 5%

Increasing engagement with Cadet Voice

- Proportion of units holding regular Cadet Voice Forums increased to 60%

Increasing engagement with the Royal Navy

- Over 30% of cadets given the opportunity to meet serving personnel
- Two specialisations/proficiencies updated to reflect today's Royal Navy
- Virtual Spotlight sessions delivered by the RN Attract Team
- Pilot Royal Marines Experience course delivered

Raising awareness of maritime careers

- At least two regional careers fairs held
- Maritime careers embedded in cadet training programme
- Level 1 Maritime Studies course enrolment launched for cadets

OUR PEOPLE

Increasing support for volunteers and employees

- Volunteer mentoring programme framework developed
- District leadership & management course enhanced
- At least 30 employees provided with leadership & management training

INCLUSION & GROWTH

Offering Sea Cadets to more young people

- A net increase of 1,500 cadets achieved
- At least 17 new sections opened

Increasing support for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

- Virtual EDI training course delivered to all volunteers
- Area EDI leads appointed and trained
- A new and inclusive Sea Cadets Promise launched after full consultation

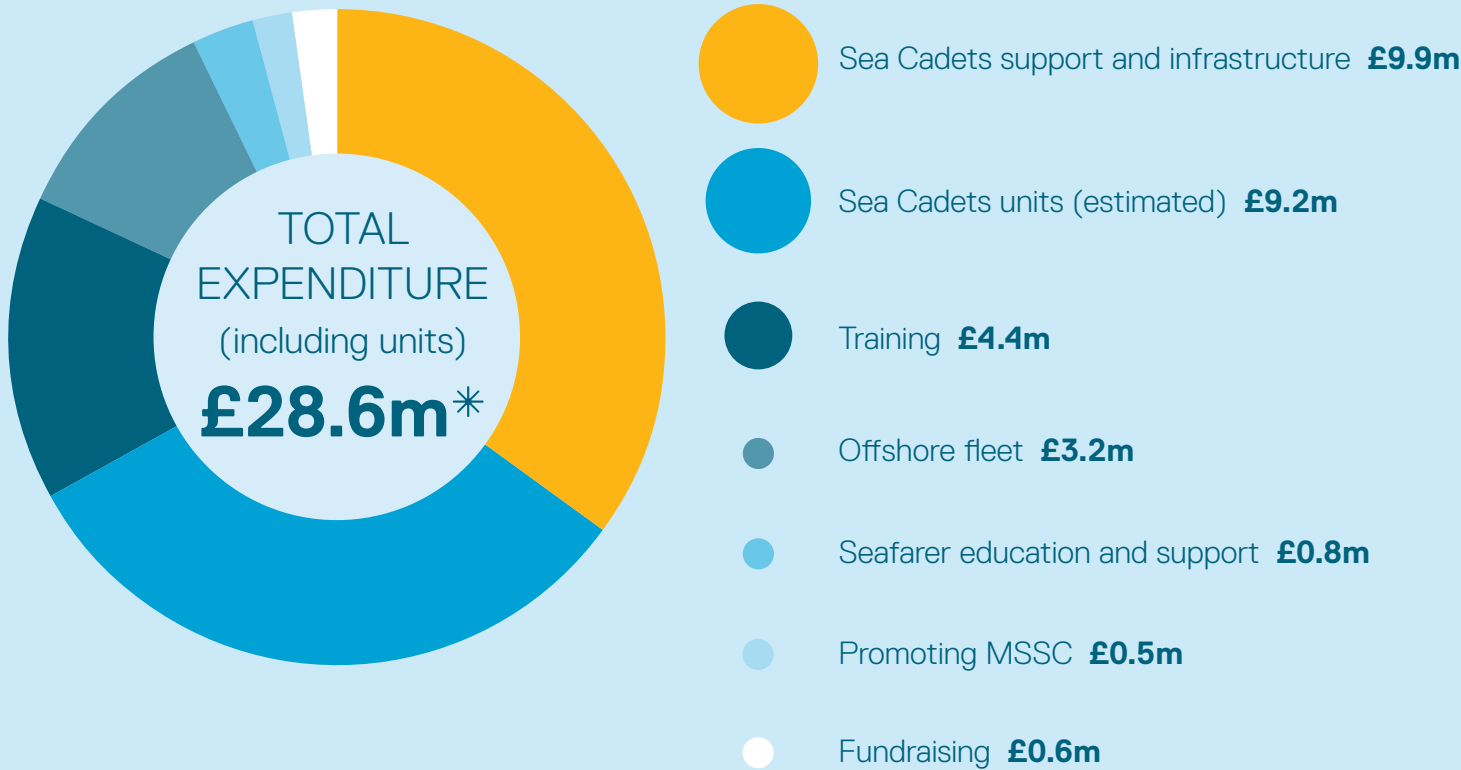
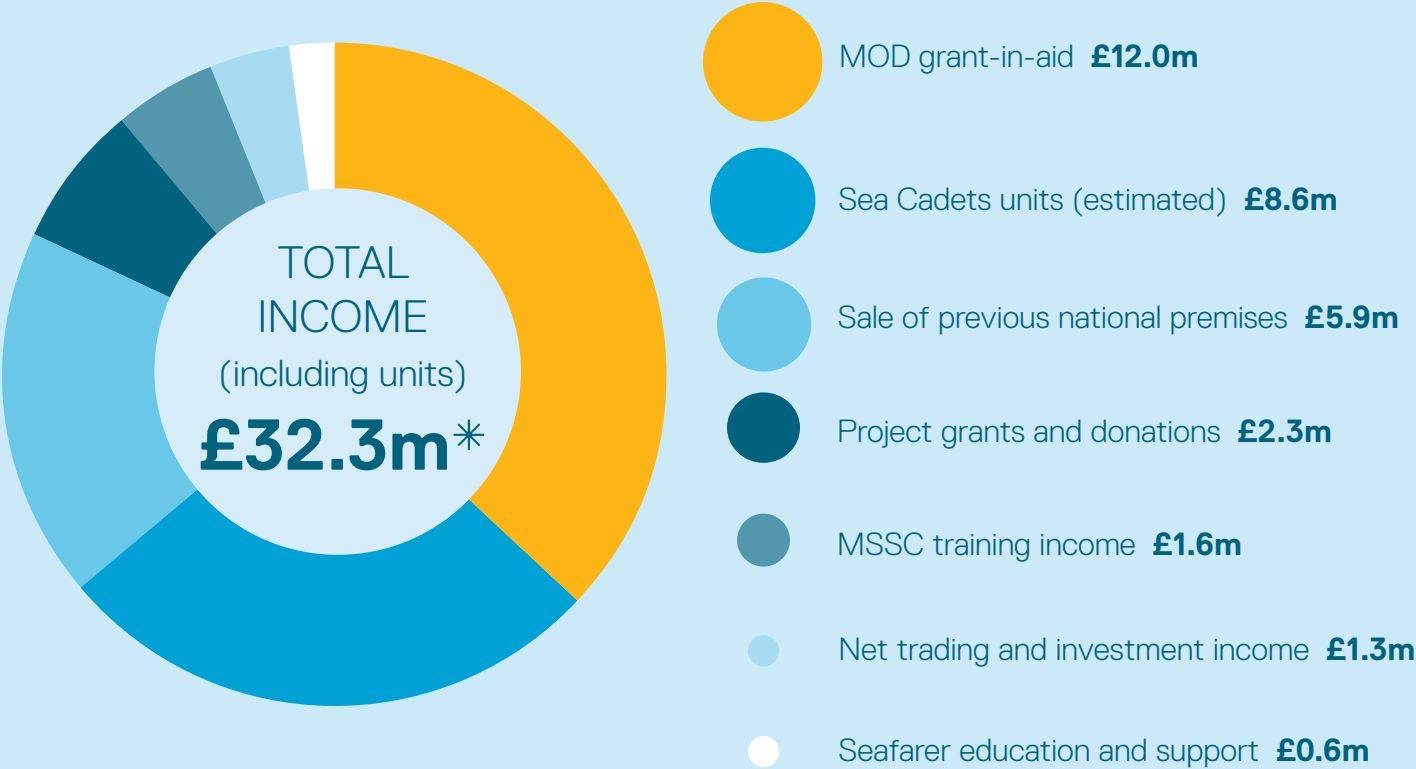
ENABLERS

Delivering essential support

- TS Royalist flagship 10-year refit completed, fully funded via appeal
- Updated Trinity 500 rowing boat in production and available to units
- Updated Unit Review process implemented
- £2.8m fundraising delivered



FINANCIAL REVIEW



*estimated

Finances of Marine Society & Sea Cadets activities

Raising funds is vital for supporting our 384 Sea Cadets units, each a charity in its own right. Including income generated by these independent units (based on the latest available results), total estimated income for Marine Society & Sea Cadets' activities in 2024/25 was £32.3m. Total estimated expenditure on all activities in the year was £28.6m, with 93% of this expenditure going on Sea Cadets activity.

INCOME

Total income of the MSSC charity, excluding units, amounted to £23.6m (23/24: £18.9m), an increase of 25% on the previous year, reflecting the receipt of £5.86m from the sale of our previous national headquarters at 202 Lambeth Road. Donations and legacies were down by £1.99m, mainly due to the £2.1m received for our Midlands Boat Station in 2023/24.

We remain sincerely grateful for the continued financial support provided by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) grant-in-aid, which increased by £0.4m to £12m. Our charity also continues to receive significant support in kind from the MOD, whose premises host Sea Cadets' stores, six area offices, three training centres, offshore offices and berthing, and ad hoc training activities.

MSSC was also provided with 11 Royal Navy personnel on loan from the MOD and we are hugely grateful to the Royal Navy for providing fuel for our offshore vessels, along with various uniforms and specialist stores items.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure was £19.3m (23/24: £18.6m) excluding units, as we continued to deliver a wide range of activities for over 14,000 cadets. The cost of safeguarding and supporting Sea Cadets activity and infrastructure increased by £244k, with the majority of this delivering a Royal Navy Armaments Security project. The cost of supporting Sea Cadets' offshore fleet increased by £335k due to the 10-year refit of TS Royalist.

BALANCE SHEETS AND RESERVES

Total net assets/reserves of the charity (excluding units) at 31 March 2025 were £41.4m (23/24: £37.4m). Of this, £15.3m (23/24: £15.3m) was comprised of tangible and intangible fixed assets – 33% of which was the offshore fleet.

Total funds at year-end included £14.4m (23/24: £16.5m) of restricted funds, along with £23.9m (23/24: £18.2m) in endowment funds invested to provide long-term income for the charity.

There were also £1.9m (23/24: £1.2m) of designated funds for cadet outreach and boat station development. After accounting for £0.6m (23/24: £0.6m) of fixed assets, this left unrestricted funds comprising free reserves of £0.7m (23/24: £0.8m).

MSSC does not retain MOD monies as part of its reserves. It remains the aspiration of the charity to increase its level of free reserves to safeguard its activities in the event of any shortfall in public funding.

THANK YOU

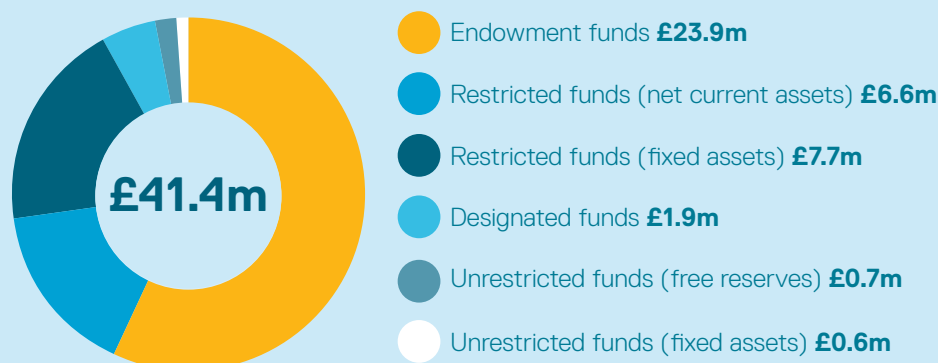
MSSC would like to thank the many unit chairs, treasurers and other committee members who, together with our cadets, instructional volunteers and our many supporters, raised an estimated:

£8.6m to support individual Sea Cadets units

We also remain sincerely grateful for the ongoing assistance of our many other supporters, a number of whom are listed later in this review.

This financial review is intended to give an understanding of the overall summary financial position of MSSC for the 2024/25 financial year and is based upon the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025. These are available to download from our website ms-sc.org or from the Director of Finance & Digital at the MSSC National Support Centre.

TOTAL NET ASSETS/RESERVES (FUNDS) INCLUDING UNITS



THANK YOU

A huge thank you to our MSSC donors, who have helped us to realise our vision of equipping young people to launch well into life.

Your donation means that no young person has to miss out on gaining the skills they need because they can't afford it.

STATUTORY FUNDERS

Ministry of Defence
Department for Culture,
Media & Sport

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATES

BGS Cayzer Trust
BMT Group
Corporation of Trinity House
EBM Charitable Trust
Education & Skills Funding Agency
Foreland Shipping Ltd
Gosling Foundation Ltd
ITF Seafarers' Trust
Jack Petchey Foundation
Kilfinan Trust
London Insurance Market Trust
Merchant Navy Welfare Board
Michael Uren Foundation
RNVR Officers' Association Ltd
Square Rigger Club Charity
Stelios Philanthropic Foundation
Worshipful Company of Gunmakers
Worshipful Company of Ironmongers
Worshipful Company of Management
Consultants
Worshipful Company of Master
Mariners
Worshipful Company of Salters
Worshipful Company of Shipwrights
Worshipful Company of Stationers
and Newspaper Makers
Wyfold Charitable Trust

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Mr Charles Conrad Blakey OBE RD JP
Mrs Cate Bell
Mr Edward Bell
Mr Nicholas Ferguson



People, honours and committees

PATRON OF MSSC & ADMIRAL OF THE SEA CADET CORPS

HRH The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO
GCStJ GSO CD

PRESIDENT OF MSSC

Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr Jeremy Penn (Chair)
Ms Léonie Austin (Vice Chair)
Ms Christine Baldwin MRICS
Miss Laurelle Brant
Mr Stuart Curl –
appointed 7 November 2024
Mr John Denholm
Mr David Derbyshire –
retired 7 November 2024
Mr David Dingle CBE
Mr Gareth Hampton
Mrs Kirsten Hopkins
Mr Alan Marsh MBE FICS –
retired 7 November 2024
Mr John May CVO OBE DL –
retired 7 November 2024
Mr Stephen Peck –
appointed 7 November 2024
Dr Kate Richardson OBE –
appointed 7 November 2024
Mr Jonathan Robertshaw
Mr Michael Schofield
Mr Steven Smith OBE
Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Woodcock
KCB OBE

COMMITTEES

Finance, Investment, Remuneration & Audit
Committee (Chair: Stuart Curl)
Policy Development & Nominations
Committee (Chair: Léonie Austin)
Safety, Safeguarding, Inclusion &
Risk Committee (Chair: Stephen Peck)
National Sea Cadet Advisory Council
(Chair: Steven Smith OBE)

VICE PRESIDENTS

Mr Tony Allen
Dr Louise Bennett
Vice Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn KCVO CB
Rear Admiral John Borley CB MA CEng MIEE –
retired 30 October 2024
Ms Liz Cassidy
The Reverend Canon R J Christianson
Mr David Derbyshire

Mr Michael Everard CBE
Mr Simon Figgis
Dr Sheila Fitzpatrick MBE
Commodore Ian Gibb MBE FNI MRIN FRSA FRGS –
retired 16 July 2024
Mr Andrew Given
The Rt Hon The Lord Greenway Bt
Rear Admiral Sir Jeremy de Halpert
KCVO CB FRIN
Mr Eric Hutchinson
Mr David Jeffcoat
Commander John McK Ludgate RD DL RNR
Mr Alan Marsh MBE FICS
Mr Alex Marsh
Mr John May CVO OBE DL
Sir Alan Massey KCB CBE
Captain Sir Ian McNaught KCVO MNM FNI
Lord Jeffrey Mountevans
Captain Nigel Palmer OBE MNM
Dame Mary Richardson DBE
Captain David M Robinson MBE EXC FNI FRSA
The Earl of Romney
Mr Clive I de Rougemont
Mr Richard Sayer
Rear Admiral David Snelson CB FNI
Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE DL
Sir David Steel KBE DL
Mr Patrick L M Stewart MBE LLB WS
Mr Christopher C Thornton –
resigned 28 October 2024
Mr Henry Thornton
Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE
Commodore W Walworth CBE RFA MNM
Mr Colin Wilcox
Mr Robert Woods CBE

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive:

Martin Coles CBE FRICS ACI Arb –
retired 15 May 2025
Guy Holloway –
commenced 16 May 2025

Captain Sea Cadets:

Captain Neil Downing RN

Director of Finance & Digital and Company Secretary:

Jenny Howard

Director of Young People, Volunteer & Business Support:

Paul Wilkinson

Director of Sea Cadet Learning:

Heather Williams

Director of Fundraising & Communications:

Daniel McAllister



Director of Human Resources:

Petrina Brooker

Director of Maritime Training & Development:

Darrell Bate

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2024

British Empire Medals for voluntary service to young people were awarded to:

WO2 (SCC) Ben Mearing BEM RNR,
Hertfordshire District Warrant Officer,
Eastern Area; CPO (SCC) Bob Pearce
BEM, National Ceremonial Training Officer;
and Lt (SCC) Ron Perchard BEM RNR,
Jersey Sea Cadets, Southern Area.

We also congratulated MSSC Vice
President, Captain Sir Ian McNaught
KCVO MNM FNI, on his promotion to Knight
Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

THE KING'S NEW YEAR HONOURS 2025

British Empire Medals awarded to:

WO1 (SCC) James Bryan BEM RNR, London
Area Sea Cadets; Mrs Gail Cramp BEM,
Chair of Sunbury & Walton Sea Cadets,
London Area; Mr Roy Heppenstall BEM,
President of Newton-le-Willows Sea
Cadets, North West Area; and CPO
(SCC) Stuart McCourt BEM, former
Commanding Officer of Whitehaven
Sea Cadets, North West Area.

We also congratulated MSSC Vice
President, Mr John May CVO OBE DL, on
being made a Commander of the Royal
Victorian Order in recognition of his global
leadership of The Duke of Edinburgh's
International Award.



Produced by MSSC
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Marine Society & Sea Cadets, a charity registered
in England and Wales 313013 Scotland SCO37808

Patron of MSSC & Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps:

HRH The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO GCStJ GSO CD

President of MSSC:

Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL