



IMPACT: 2023-24



Annual General Meeting 2024:
Reports and Accounts

**SEA
CADETS**

BURNHAM-ON-SEA & HIGHBRIDGE



Charity Registration
No. 273886

Image credit (front cover): Louie Wagstaff

Cdt1s Oliver and Grace sailing an RS Quest dinghy at Cheddar Reservoir

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OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

261 courses
attended by
cadets

386 course days
attended

11,710 km travelled

£1,245 in **Offshore**
Bursaries arranged

Current average length of service: **27.5 months**

21 Junior Sea Cadet
qualifications earned

2,884 boating hours

4 Bronze DofE
Awards Achieved

Rolling 6-month average attendance
rate: **69.4%**

259 cadet
qualifications
earned

139
Unit-led
activities
(non-
parade
night)

7 cadets
offshore aboard
TS Royalist, TS Jack Petchey
or the yachts

3 **Silver** DofE Awards
Achieved

398 course requests submitted

Average of
68.7 hours
afloat training per cadet

OUR PEOPLE

OUR PRESIDENT

Name

Commodore Mike Knott CBE

OUR TRUSTEES

Name

Role in 2023-24

Cllr Carol Roberts	Chairman & Trustee
Mrs Marie-Claire Ladd	Vice Chairman & Trustee
Mrs Jo Harvey	Secretary & Trustee
Mrs Haley Leader	Treasurer & Trustee
Mr Peter Nicholson	Facilities Manager & Trustee
Miss Kelly Rowe	Trustee
Mr Paul Latham	Trustee
Mrs Hazel Fear	Trustee
Lt (SCC) Dom Gregory RNR	Commanding Officer & Trustee
Ms Victoria Evans	Trustee (co-opted January 2024)

Since the end of the 2023-24 financial year a number of personnel changes have taken place:

- Cllr Carol Roberts resigned as Chairman to resume the role of Trustee with effect from 10 April 2024
- Ms Victoria Evans was elected as Chairman and Trustee with effect from 10 April 2024
- Mrs Haley Leader resigned as Treasurer and Trustee with effect from 5 May 2024
- Martyn Cockram was co-opted as Trustee in the role of Treasurer with effect from 12 June 2024
- Mrs Marie-Claire Ladd resigned as Vice-Chairman and Trustee with effect from 9 May 2024
- The Vice Chairman post remains gapped

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Unit Trustees wish to thank the following individuals and organisations for their financial assistance within the year:

Website (embedded links where available)

[Amy's Wax Cottage](#)
[Ashley Edwards Funeral Directors](#)
[AXA Group](#)
[The Barratt Foundation](#)
[Bloom Glass Painting](#)
[The Body Shop](#)
[Brean Parish Council](#)
[Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council](#)
[Burnham-on-Sea Lions Club](#)
[Burnham-on-Sea 123 Moose Ladies Circle](#)
[Chic Woodturning](#)
 Crochet Crafts
 Decorative Ornaments
 Felted Decorations
 Flamingo Paperie
[The Foyle Foundation](#)
[Groundwork UK](#)
 Handmade Items
 Handmade Knits
 Hand-painted Decorative Items
[Hazel's Stained Glass](#)
 Home-made Preserves
 Home-made Preserves, Pickle and Jams
 Julie Baker Flowers
[Katie's Crafts](#)
 Knitted and Beaded Items
 Mac & Co
[Marine Society & Sea Cadets](#)
[Maundrils Farm](#)
[Rachel's by Rachel Rosemary](#)
 Recycled Handmade Sewing
[Rotary Club of Burnham-on-Sea](#)
[Sam's Fudge](#)
 Sandra Nicholson
 Somerset & Dorset Branch – [Marine Society & Sea Cadets](#)
[Somerset Community Foundation](#)
[Tasha's Flowers](#)
[Tools Vehicle Electrics](#)
[The Ulysses Trust](#)
[Usborne Books](#)

Individual/Organisation

Amy Randle
 Ashley Edwards
 David Bennett

 Ms Fisher
 Sian Vowles, Consultant/Ambassdor
 Katie Watts, Consultant
 Joan Jackman Fund (Legacy)

 Sandra Nicholson, Lady President
 Nic Sawyer
 Felicity Kirkby
 Julie Baker-Flowers
 Ms King
 Margaret Major, Independent Partner

 Maureen Hughes
 Anne Kingston-White
 Louise Taylor
 Hazel Fear
 Wendy
 Richard Cooper

 Katie Studley
 Linda Britton
 Leah Street

 Rachel Horler
 Rachel Rosemary
 Aileen Newton

 Sam Northcombe

 Rear Admiral Tim Lowe CBE, Chairman

 Tasha Browning
 Tony Hall

 Sandra Underhill

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

*Image: Louie Wagstaff
Cdt1 Finley sailing his Topper*

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual Review of Burnham on Sea and Highbridge Sea Cadet Unit.

Our year whilst successful has not been without challenges. You'll note from these Accounts and the reports contained within that our team of instructors continues to grow and develop, being a medium-sized Unit within the eighth largest District (of 50 nationwide) based on headcount.

Post-Covid we remain challenged to find sources of funding that help keep the lights on without putting excessive pressure on our members. Many of my peers at Sea Cadet Units around the country are faced with similar issues, indeed with the recent *Refining Our Offer* programme announced by the MSSC National Support Centre it is clear that this funding gap caused by this year's almost runaway inflation levels has left all of us struggling to make ends meet.

Notwithstanding this, the show still needs to go on. With our new-to-us mountain bike fleet we are breathing new life into these important assets that will help expand and reinforce a fitness for life ethic amongst our cadets.

We continue to work our way through the redevelopment of the Unit HQ ensuring that it remains in good shape for future generations of cadets. I am heartened by the progress made in the last seven and a half years and the potential for the future.

Alongside changes in my personal circumstances I have decided that the end of this financial year is the right time for me to pass the baton of chairmanship on to someone else: I will not be standing for re-election as a trustee at this AGM. Instead, I plan to cycle round Britain with my husband, Kevin, and enjoy retirement whilst keeping an eye on progress and supporting the Unit as much as I can from afar.

I thank every one of the trustee team for their advice over the years, their support and trust as we've made some difficult decisions. I have every trust that they will continue to support the incoming Chairman and continue to put our cadets at the heart of every decision made.

I wish you well.

Councillor Carol Roberts
Chairman & Trustee

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Image: Louie Wagstaff

AC Oliver, Cdt1 Oliver, Cdt Denver & Cdt1 Grace sailing the RS Quest

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TRUSTEES REPORT

Introduction

The Sea Cadet Unit at Burnham on Sea and Highbridge is one of over 400 other Units and was founded in 1971.

We provide training, activities and qualifications for our young people not available elsewhere, providing a level of skill, self-confidence and leadership that will give our members the best possible head start in life.

We encourage members to support themselves and each other with the aim of fulfilling their potential in whatever path their future takes them.

Management

The Unit Management Team (UMT) meets monthly to discuss opportunities and challenges relating to Unit Management and growth.

This growing team comprises people from all different walks of life and professions which enables each to bring their individual skills, enthusiasm and ideas to ensure continued success for our cadets and unit.

Concerns

The Unit relies entirely on donations and active fund-raising for specific projects and the continued support of our local community to keep the doors open and lights on.

Grant applications to external funders are becoming increasingly challenging to find and generally rely on match-funding to achieve which in turn is beginning to stretch our resources. Grants towards unrestricted funds for help with day-to-day operating expense are not generally available making our locally-driven fundraising a critical income stream.

We are building a reliable base of external hall-users whose contributions mitigate the income gap, however this cannot be at the expense of our core Cadet users.

Progress

The Commanding Officer ensures the day-to-day smooth working of the Unit and is quick to identify areas in need of support. The UMT pass on our thanks and gratitude for his continued diligence and dedication to our cadets, instructors, volunteers and the wider community.

The Unit's dedicated Fundraising Team have now been in place for just over two years, working hard to arrange successful fundraising events on behalf of both the Unit and partner charities such as Ladies Moose.

Phase 1 of the Unit's redevelopment project is now virtually completed, with just the final finishing touches being made to the fitout prior to starting Phase 2 and breaking ground on the new classroom capacity.

The Unit continues to be an active member Cheddar HUBS and use this facility regularly to enhance the sailing experiences of our Cadets. The HUBS team are presently undertaking the due diligence necessary to be able to seek RYA Recognised Training Centre status. If approved our newly qualified instructors will be able to offer certificated training in all five inshore boating disciplines.

In the last year the Unit has developed or recruited four RYA Dinghy Instructors and one RYA Powerboat Instructor. In the coming year we intend to add at least three RYA Start Windsurfing Instructors and a further RYA Powerboat Instructor

Volunteers and Cadets

Our cadets are enthusiastic and continue to take part in the varied educational activities and training put together by our instructors. They take personal pride in our Unit and represent us at every opportunity, many giving presentations to local community groups. We believe our cadets are proud of their achievements, proud of their Unit and communicate this with passion whenever asked to do so.

In turn the trustees are extremely proud of our cadets and are amazed at their achievements both at District, Area and National levels, often testing their skills and knowledge against those of larger units. Our successes continue to be reported in local media and our activities are regularly promoted in local magazines.

The trustees wish to thank all of our volunteers their continued dedication, support and hard work and welcome newer members of the team.

We believe our Unit to be happy and successful place due to an incredible team, each working tirelessly to provide exciting and engaging activities to encourage self-confidence, leadership, teamwork and followership enabling our cadets to thrive.

Finance

The Team continues to work hard to find sources of income to cover core costs.

Fundraising events are held regularly and are well-supported by our community, although it would be great to see more people at these events.

We recognise there are many reasons why parents may not be able to support all fundraising activities personally but we would encourage cadets, parents and volunteers to publicise these events at every opportunity amongst their own social circle and using their own social media presence.

Trustee Objectives for the year 2024/2025

Objectives for the coming year are:

- To conclude Phase 1 of our Unit redevelopment, undertake scoping work and break ground for Phase 2 of the Unit redevelopment
- To enhance the opportunities for our cadets learning
- To continue promoting the Unit hall as an outstanding resource to community and businesses for use as a meeting point and remote working venue.
- To continue with our joint fundraising activities with other local community groups

Risk Assessment

The major risks to which the charity/unit is exposed are continually reviewed and systems are put in place in order to minimise these risks.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16th July 2014 and the Financial the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as It applies from 1 January 2015.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a "true and fair" view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a "true and fair" view. This departure has involved following Accounts and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16th July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1st April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees by:



Cllr C Roberts
Chairman

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FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Image: Cat Newman/Burnham-on-Sea.com
Cdt Jake carries the Unit's Poppy at Burnham-on-Sea Remembrance Day Parade

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ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AT 31ST MARCH 2024

Charity Name

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet No.552 of the Sea Cadet Corps.

Charity registration number

Registration Number 273886

Charity Status

The charity is unincorporated

Principal address

Sea Cadet Unit
Cassis Close
Burnham on Sea
Somerset
TA8 1NN

Email: info@bhseacadets.org

Website: www.sea-cadets.org/burnhamhighbridge

Bank

Lloyds TSB Bank PLC

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BURNHAM-ON-SEA & HIGHBRIDGE SEA CADET CORPS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet Corps for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet Corps you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet Corps's accounts and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view', and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiners statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention with the examination giving me cause to believe in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in respect of Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet Corps as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to make a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

D WRIGHT
THOMAS WESTCOTT CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
80 OXFORD STREET BURNHAM-ON-SEA, SOMERSET TA8 1EF

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

Income and Endowments from:						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Subscriptions		8,719	-	-	8,719	7,012
Grants		-	-	7,888	7,888	7,940
Donations		459	-	3,167	3,626	1,580
Fundraising		4,208	-	1,112	5,320	4,602
Gift Aid		1,382	-	-	1,382	815
Payments & Refunds		2,003	1,428	-	3,431	9,067
Hall Hire		2,978	-	-	2,978	2,718
Total Income		19,749	1,428	12,167	33,344	33,734

Expenditure on:						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Redevelopment		-	(14,692)	-	(14,692)	(1,254)
Unit Maintenance		(371)	(2,800)	(88)	(3,259)	(2,159)
Unit Infrastructure		(3,685)	-	(5,859)	(9,544)	(11,480)
Replace & Restock		(523)	-	-	(523)	(2,096)
Transport		(3,356)	-	(1,300)	(4,656)	(5,513)
Watercraft		(20)	-	(1,160)	(1,180)	(5,754)
Cadet Activity & Resource		(1,211)	-	(2,164)	(3,375)	(4,144)
Fundraising Trading		(314)	-	-	(314)	(2,242)
Uniform & Badges		(439)	-	(211)	(650)	(885)
Total Expenditure		(9,919)	(17,492)	(10,782)	(38,193)	(35,527)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Increase/(Decrease) in investments	-	5,707	-	5,707	(11,802)
Reserve movements	(29,630)	29,630	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	(19,800)	19,273	1,385	858	(13,595)
Net Movement in funds	(19,800)	19,273	1,385	858	(13,595)

Reconciliation of funds:	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Funds brought forward	205,710	80,355	3,461	289,526	303,121
Funds Carried Forward	185,910	99,628	4,846	290,384	289,526

BALANCE SHEET AT 31st MARCH 2024

Fixed Assets	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Tangible Assets	5	170,751	-	-	170,751	170,751

Current Assets	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Investments	6	-	83,873	-	83,873	76,738
Cash at bank and in hand		15,578	15,755	4,846	36,179	42,457
		15,578	99,628	4,846	120,052	119,195

Creditors	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year	7	(419)	-	-	-	(420)
Net Current Assets		15,159	99,628	4,846	119,633	118,775
Net Assets		185,910	99,628	4,846	290,384	289,526

Funds of the charity:

Unrestricted income funds						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Balance brought forward		205,710	80,355	-	286,065	298,566
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		9,830	(16,064)	-	(6,234)	(699)
Transfer between funds		(29,630)	29,630	-	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) on investment revaluations		-	5,707	-	5,707	(11,802)
Total unrestricted funds		185,910	99,628	-	285,538	286,065

Restricted income funds						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Balance brought forward		-	-	3,461	3,461	4,555
Restricted funds		-	-	1,385	1,385	(1,094)
Total unrestricted funds		185,910	99,628	-	285,538	286,065

Total Funds						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Total funds		185,910	99,628	4,846	290,384	289,526

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

1. Accounting Policies

Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the second edition of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis of Preparation

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadet Corps meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are the amounts derived from the receipt of subscriptions, gifts and grants falling within the charity's ordinary activities.

Voluntary Income

Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts are included in full when received.

Capital Grants

Capital grants are credited to the balance sheet on the date of when they are received. These are credited to incoming resources in line with the fixed asset policy noted below.

Revenue Grants

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the date when they are received. If they relate to a specified future period they are deferred.

Governance Costs

These are costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity which relate to the general running of the charity as opposed to those costs associated with fundraising or charitable activity.

Judgements and Estimation of Uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements required management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Fixed Assets

All fixed assets are initially recorded at cost. Assets costing less than £250 are charged to resources expended in the year they are purchased. All additions have been included in the Profit and Loss Account under the Watercraft heading. This is in line with the accounting policies issued by MSSC and represents a change of accounting policy.

Fund Structure

Unrestricted funds are funds which have no restrictions placed on their use and are available as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside for specific purposes at the discretion of the trustees. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the funder. Direct and support expenditure which meets these criteria are to be identified to the fund together with a fair allocation of other costs.

2. Transactions with Trustees

There were no transactions with trustees during the period, other than incidental.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS AT 31ST MARCH 2024 (continued)**3. Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

4. Grants

<i>Grants</i>		
	2024	2023
	<i>Total Funds £</i>	<i>Total Funds £</i>
Somerset Community Fund	1,500	3,000
MSSC	3,500	500
Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council	400	1,500
Co-operative Community Fund	-	1,640
Mrs Fiona Griffiths	-	500
Arnold Clark Automotive	-	500
Burnham-on-Sea Rotary Club	300	300
Barratt Foundation	1,500	-
Groundwork UK	188	-
Flo Axa	500	-
	7,888	7,940

5. Fixed Assets

	Furniture and equipment £	<i>Total £</i>
At 1 April 2023	170,751	170,751
At 31 March 2024	170,751	170,751
Depreciation	-	-
Net Book Value		
At 1 April 2023	170,751	170,751
At 31 March 2024	170,751	170,751

The Unit has been valued for insurance purposes in the year at £500,000.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS AT 31ST MARCH 2024 (continued)

6. Investment Portfolio

	2024 £	2023 £
Investment portfolio brought forward	76,738	111,613
Investment additions	1,429	1,927
Investment disposal	-	(25,000)
Investment revaluation	5,706	(11,802)
	83,873	76,738

7. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals	420	420
	420	420

8. Related party transactions

The charity was under the control of the trustees throughout the year. There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year.

9. Gifts in Kind and Volunteers

During the year the charity benefitted from unpaid work performed by volunteers.

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Image: CPO (SCC) Phil Connock
OCs Felicity & Tom sprinting across the finish line of the 2024 Ten Tors event on Dartmoor

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VOICE OF THE CADET

ORDINARY CADETS FELICITY & TOM

Tom says:

I recently became one of two Unit Cadet Voice representatives. I think Cadet Voice is an opportunity for cadets to share their views about what they think the Corps does well at, but also more things they would like to see in the future to further their Cadet Experience.

My role has allowed me to gain insights from other cadets about their experiences and pass this message on to the Somerset & Dorset District Cadet Voice team. Additionally, its been highly beneficial for finding out about courses I'd not previously known exist.

Cadet Voice has introduced me to new aspects of the Cadet Training Programme. This year the first Cadet Voice competition showcased the best of the Sea Cadets within South West Area with the intention of raising awareness of Cadet Voice within all Units.

Being able to speak with authority on behalf of other cadets is invaluable. It has aided me personally in discovering opportunities like the Ten Tors programme. I completed the training for this event although sadly not selected for the final team. Yet despite this it was an enriching experience.

My confidence has been massively enhanced when engaging with new people – which is part of the core purpose of Cadet Voice.

Felicity says:

Cadet Voice enables cadets to give their honest thoughts, views and ideas on the Cadet Experience and provides a feedback channel to the Unit Commanding Officer, District, Area and then National teams. These can range from course improvements and suggestions to potential improvements to our advancement syllabus – the Cadet Training Programme.

If changes to training courses are driven by cadets then this helps everyone have a say in what happens. It makes changes much easier to accept.

Cadet Voice has been around a while but not all cadets in every unit seem to see the benefit. Hopefully over time cadets will warm up to the idea of sharing their thoughts as many already do. It helps us as District representatives understand and pass on what cadets really want from their membership. Our contributions become more effective and the whole process gives the Chief Executive in London a better understanding of how we want our Sea Cadet Corps to develop in the future.

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Image: Hollie Williams
Junior Sea Cadets undertaking paddlesports training at Cheddar Reservoir

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COMMANDING OFFICER'S REPORT

In 1789 Benjamin Franklin wrote to Jean-Baptiste Leroy that “...nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

In no way did Franklin invent the phrase: Daniel Defoe coined a similar expression in his book *The Political History of the Devil* (1726) fifty years earlier, although Franklin certainly popularised the phrase with which many of us are so familiar. Indeed, the phrase was also used more recently in popular media in the film *Meet Joe Black*, a 1998 movie directed by Martin Brest.

In *Meet Joe Black* - loosely based on the 1934 film *Death Takes a Holiday* – Death, played by Brad Pitt, comments wryly, “Death – and taxes? What an odd pairing...”.

I would offer a variation of this in reviewing the last year and anticipating the year to come: that there is nothing more certain in life than death, taxes and change.

Change is clearly my personal addition to Franklin’s famous phrase. Change comes to us all and managed well makes us stronger. Managed badly, however, and it leads to uncertainty, distraction, loss of focus, confidence and engagement. Something true in the world of work as well as cadets.

I look back at my last 21 years of volunteering and I can see a Sea Cadet Corps unrecognisable today compared to when I started all those years ago.

Returning to the Sea Cadets as an adult volunteer we were struggling to understand the concept of what was then called CRB, now DBS, checks and wrapping our heads around this new concept of “safeguarding”. Twenty-one years later we’re far, far wiser, better trained and alert to problems. And much better equipped to be able to intervene early if our cadets experience issues and give suitable, practical support wherever possible.

21 years ago the Corps had 12 training centres all over the country each delivering training 7 days a week for 50 weeks a year – and those courses were all full. We now have just four, plus a half-dozen Area boat centres, mostly due to the tightening up of school attendance rules.

Our aging, disparate fleet of offshore vessels comprised of a variety of MoD/RN cast-offs have been fully replaced in the last 20 years with new, purpose-built training ships and yachts crewed by professional seafarers and serving Royal Navy officers and ratings on secondment.

The necessary changes demanded of delivering the Sea Cadet Offer in the 21st century have resulted in heavy drawdowns of personnel as the organisation merged with the Marine Society in 2004. The charity has become, and remains, one of the most efficient in the UK with just 2% of total income spent on the National Support Centre and staffing.

The efficiency of the national charity enabled us to adapt quickly to the national Covid lockdown in March 2020 and ensure that cadet training remained available to those wishing to engage remotely. At Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Unit we were fortunate to be one of those first Units to develop a digital delivery channel and keep our cadets engaged. Our response and recovery led the UK as Units

returned to parading face-to-face in 2021. Yet despite this we suffered from a recruitment hiatus which is evident in the Unit's management statistics even now and will remain so for several years to come.

Perhaps the most challenging part of keeping up with change is convincing everyone within the organisation that change is necessary, proportionate and – most importantly – positive.

As I write this in early April 2024 the Unit is bracing itself for the election of a new Unit Chairman. A massive role to fill with huge responsibility.

Our outgoing Chairman took the reins in October 2016. In 2017 the failing nature of the then-trustees had put the Unit mere weeks away from permanent closure. Carol turned the ship around with grit and determination. Almost all of the Trustees were replaced within two years and she built a vibrant and energetic team which continues to grow and leak enthusiasm from every pore. The Unit became financially stable, and with the financial aid from government during Covid was able to pour valuable resources into the Unit for the benefit of cadets now and for decades to come.

Carol has more than earned her retirement from the Chairmanship of the Unit. Long hours, huge commitment, little thanks and ultimate responsibility is the hallmark of the role and she's worn it well. I think Carol is quite rightly looking forward to leaving behind the unending stream of grant applications that keep the Unit going to enjoy retirement with her husband.

On a personal level, Carol has been the bedrock of support on which I've been privileged to build my command. She's been consistent – and present when needed with sage advice over the years. I'm deeply grateful to her.

As we look forward to building new working relationships with our new Chairman – whomever that may be – we look in turn to the new opportunities that will arise as well as delivering on the planned improvements already in the pipeline.

In reviewing our successes in the last financial year I've come up with the following list. By no means is it exhaustive.

- Award of a 2023 Burgee efficiency flag, representing the hard graft of everyone in the Unit to work smart, work hard and exceed our own very high expectations
- The development of a small team of Topper sailors who have gate-crashed the otherwise closed community of competitive Topper sailing and turned it upside down with their success after only a year or so of sailing experience. Cadets Fin, Brooke and Oliver are all making great progress with Cadet Fin in particular expected to race in the World Topper Championships in Spain in late Summer 2024
- We're making great progress in completing Phase 1 of our planned redevelopment. Thanks to some committed effort from Mr Williams and PO Hayes the containers are now fitted out with racking and storage for a large number of training assets. The next step is to find homes for the remaining equipment currently in the existing Boat Store and prepare this for extension and conversion

We do, however, have challenges to face still. We're growing which is great, however that success also places pressure on all parts of our training infrastructure requiring even more effort to just keep up.

THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S ROLE

The role of the Commanding Officer (CO) is to deliver training opportunities in support of the Unit's Charitable Purpose as defined in the Unit Constitution, specifically:

- *Offer young people a structured environment in which to develop*
- *Provide access to education and training*
- *Provide opportunities for young people to obtain a range of qualifications*

I hope that the information presented within this Impact Report will help you determine how successful I have been in meeting my brief.

The overall theme of this report is that our Unit is changing and adapting to the challenges of the future. Our people are taking on huge new responsibilities as is entirely right for a learning organisation. Our commitment to our cadets and volunteers remains unchanged. We are not satisfied with good when we aspire to be the best.

We adapt.

We improvise.

We overcome.

And we do all this – can *only* do all this – together.

Lieutenant (SCC) Dom Gregory BSc(HONS) LCGI Royal Navy Reserve
Commanding Officer

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Image: ITCA/Kate Kirkby
Cdt1 Fin competing in the Topper World Championships in Spain earlier in 2024

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ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

We limit our impact on the environment both within our community and on a wider level wherever possible by taking the following measures:

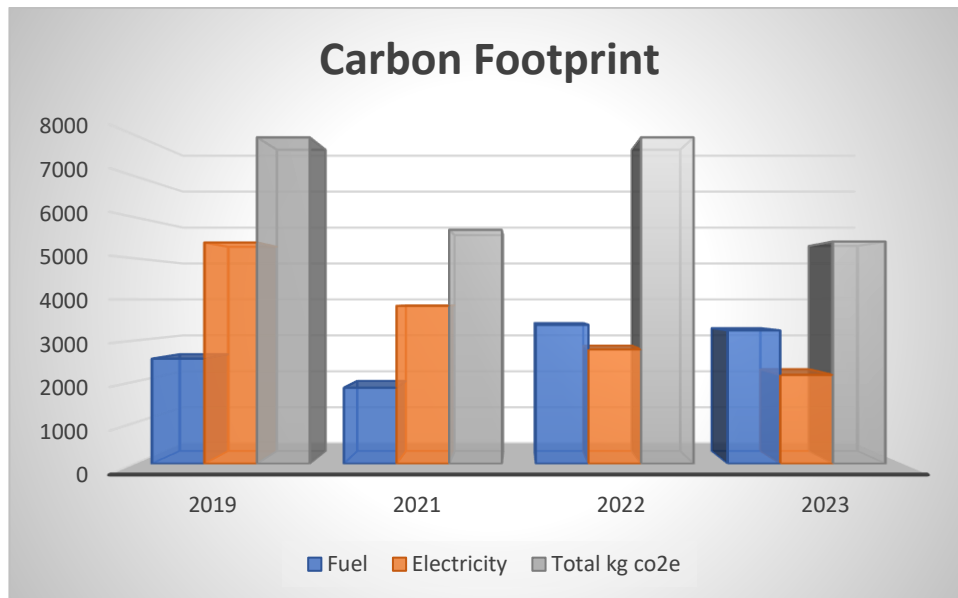
- We encourage the use of Unit transport where possible to reduce multiple journeys by car and thereby reducing overall harmful emissions
- We maintain the Unit minibus to ensure that it remains as efficient as possible for a vehicle of its age
- We're actively planning for the eventual replacement of the Unit minibus with an electric/hybrid solution once technology catches up with our ambition, recognising that this may take two or more vehicle replacement cycles to occur
- We commission infrastructure improvement works to reduce our environmental impact where necessary, appropriate and at a cost the Unit can reasonably afford
- Our waste disposal arrangements include a "Recycle at Depot" commitment from our contractor
- We aim to use products that are sustainable and have minimal impact to the environment wherever we can
- We avoid travelling to the Unit more than we need, utilising remote-working technology to complete admin tasks
- Our training offering includes modules and sessions that focus on environmental responsibility and encourage cadets to be trailblazers in environmental leadership

The Marine Society College enable cadets and volunteers to undertake their award-winning [Environment@Sea](#) e-learning (amongst many other topics) in the same way as any professional seafarer at no personal cost.

We aim to reduce our carbon footprint and are slowly and steadily achieving this.

- Since 2019 we have reduced our overall carbon footprint by around 30%
- Between 2019 and 2021 we completely replaced the lighting within the Unit in all compartments to install power-efficient LED units
- In late 2022 we replaced the heating system servicing around 90% of the existing building, secured funding to complete this project alongside the planned redevelopment. This has had a substantial, positive and ongoing impact on our electricity use, driving down usage and in turn ensuring that we're not overpaying for the energy we use

Our planned redevelopment will include account further carbon-reduction measures as we get into detailed design.



- Fuel emissions have slightly decreased compared to FY22/23 despite nearly a 40% increase in distance travelled. We think this is due to the vehicle running more efficiently following heavy investment in defect repair in the last 12 months
- Electricity usage has decreased due to a combination of lower day-time usages from external hirers and the first full-year's use of the new heating system

Following assessment of the MSSC *Future Ready* strategic plan the Trustees are keen to continue focussing on the downward drive and have the following aspirations:

Short Term:

- Creation of a nature garden at the front of the building to enclose the existing grassed area and re-lay the footpath to the door. This will include a variety of cadet-led environmental projects such as the introduction of wildflowers and development of an insect hotel.

This is further intended to improve soft security measures for the building and also provide a key facility to improve cadets' – and the wider community's – welfare and mental health as well as form a key element of our Junior Sea Cadets' training offer.

Mid Term:

- Begin feasibility study into reducing the use of Calor gas for cooking and hot water systems
- Identify a transition plan to install sources of renewable energy to power – and improve – external lighting within the rear compound, containers and side of the building

Longer Term

- Looking further ahead the Unit's aim is to extend electricity self-generation/storage capacity to become entirely carbon neutral. Deadline for delivery is not yet agreed but is our goal to drive towards carbon neutrality in affordable, incremental steps.
- There is not currently a realistic, affordable hybrid or fully electric transport package to replace the Unit minibus. It is likely that the next vehicle will continue to be diesel powered, however the generation after that may have a suitable lower/nil-emission vehicle available that will enable the Unit to further drive down harmful emissions.

We expect cadets to be heavily involved in supporting the national and local initiatives as well as coming up with their own ideas for local action via the Cadet Voice programme.

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Image: PO (SCC) S Silman

Cadets from Somerset & Dorset District Sailing Team supporting Cdt1s Fin (l) and Brooke (r) at the National Sailing Academy in Portland

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EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Sea Cadet Corps, and Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Unit in particular, is open to all.

We do not discriminate or limit access to membership or activities on the basis of perceived differences in gender, sexuality, ability, disability, learning needs, religion or skin colour.

Every cadet is different, has their own expectations of where their cadet careers will lead and their own personal challenges that with support can be overcome.

Every adult volunteer brings unique skills and attributes that elevate our Unit from good to great.

Yet despite our best efforts to broaden the scope of our membership and enable access to all where we reasonably can we understand that there is a long way to go before our membership truly reflects the composition of our society: our journey has only just begun.

Our Unit aims match those of the wider Sea Cadet Corps:

- Fully reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community we serve
- Remove barriers to inclusion, both real and perceived
- Become more equitable

In understanding what we mean by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) we have to understand these terms. We are fully cognisant of the public perception of ED&I issues within the armed forces: the media have run many stories over the last few months denigrating the different branches of UK Armed Forces' approach to their own changes and bemoaning the apparent cost of these initiatives.

It's critical for us all, however, to understand that in complete contrast to the rather negative spin in the media representation of ED&I development within the Armed Forces, ED&I is critical in delivering a bigger pool of intelligent, better trained, better motivated and tenacious people at the heart of UK Defence.

Within the UK Cadet Forces we understand very clearly that to remain relevant to the young people we aspire to serve we must reflect both their concerns and the culture of our local communities. This is quite literally an existential issue that we must adapt to and culturally embed through the organisation at all levels.

With MSSC guidance still under development this Unit takes inspiration from the work already undertaken by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and Paddle UK (P-UK) – formerly British Canoeing – and we currently understand ED&I to be:

Equity

Allowing everyone to receive the treatment and environment they need to thrive.

Diversity

Embracing individuality and celebrating differences across all communities

Inclusion

Creating an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome and valued

In relation to **Equity** we sincerely hope that we already deliver on this to our existing membership. Yet we cannot ignore that as our demographic changes in the future we will need to adapt, invest and change further to ensure that no-one is left behind.

Diversity poses a significant issue within the Unit. At 31 March 2024 our Unit is exclusively white British. We do not fully reflect our local community despite our aspiration to do so.

We must do more to understand what real or perceived barriers are in place that prevent potential cadets and adult volunteers joining from other faith or cultural communities and seek to break down those barriers so that all our cadets' lived experiences match our aspiration.

We are on a positive track to be fully-inclusive to all our members. Our Unit is probably the first in the UK to appoint a Neuro-Diversity Champion to help us make the cultural and attitudinal shifts necessary. But that's just fluff unless we back up these token efforts with actual results.

We know we have cadets on strength who have a variety of special educational needs. We adapt our training where we can in order to ensure our training is accessible. **Inclusion** should not be about identifying what our cadets *can't* do, it should be about identifying what they *can* do and maximising the opportunities available to everyone.

Case Study:

Some time ago we received a call from the Sea Cadets' National Booking Support Team asking whether we could enable a cadet from another Unit outside of Somerset & Dorset District to take part in a Paddle Explore course at Cheddar Reservoir. This cadet had suspected epilepsy and his home Unit had flatly refused to allow him to go afloat and take a full part in cadet life.

The Unit team have some experience in working with young people with additional needs and our Boats Officer didn't need to think too hard about her answer. Of course she said yes.

Clearly there were extra mitigations put in place for this cadet, a bespoke risk assessment created in partnership with the cadet's family, however at the end of the training activity the cadet felt wanted and valued by his instructors and peers and left having fully engaged with the course.

If that cadet's home Unit has set an example of everything wrong with the Corps, we hope that we were able to demonstrate what can be done well with just a little bit of thought.

We have much to do to educate ourselves on the topic of ED&I. We are already leading by example in many areas, but we also lag behind in many others. This change will take years to fully embrace and accomplish – certainly many more than this Commanding Officer has remaining in post, but the end will result in a better Unit with cadets who continue to demand the absolute best we can offer.

Our aspirations and goals remain as they were in last year's report:

- We listen to advice and guidance offered by community leaders where it leads to the further breaking-down of the physical, psychological or behavioural barriers that separate us
- We share our experience with the wider organisation and actively support wider adoption of policy amongst our members and peer Units
- We aspire to be exemplars of ED&I within the Sea Cadet Corps
- We continue to report on progress in future AGM reports.

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Image: ITCA

Cdt1 Fin competing in the 2024 Topper Nationals at the National Sailing Academy in Portland

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WELLBEING

This is a rapidly expanding part of our training offer made in recognition of the importance of the topic in maintaining a health psychological health amongst the cadet strength.

This comprises a series of Cadet Training Programme modules delivered by instructors within the Unit and developed by the Learning Team based at the National Support Centre.

The focus on Wellbeing is one of the Corps' direct responses to the Covid pandemic. Lockdown brought with it isolation, social distancing and many other restrictions which have since been lifted but left behind a legacy of worry and anxiety as we return to the new "normal" – whatever that is. We want cadets to be clear that they've lived through an historical event which will impact our country, and our lives for years and decades to come. The usual support infrastructures of school, peers and cadets were not as readily available as they were during the pandemic and individuals, no matter how resilient, continue to show the effects even a year after restrictions were lifted.

Yet despite this the whole Corps remains united as one team. We are inspired by our submariner brethren for whom isolation is business as usual. We take pride in being part of the naval family and being able to access resilience resources such as [HeadFIT for Life](#)¹. Over 1,300 cadets – a touch under 10% of the UK total responded to the Corps' first ever Wellbeing survey. Most showed a consistent level of wellbeing showing that the Unit and wider organisation's ongoing offering contributed to them coping better with lockdown, and providing some evidence that membership of the Sea Cadet had prepared them well for the stresses and uncertainties of lockdown.

An additional clear outcome was that migration to virtual learning resulted in an improved e-learning offer compared to other online offers, but it still couldn't replicate the value of face-to-face activity.



But we absolutely cannot take our sense of self for granted. Our mental health is a precious commodity and Covid has impacted everyone including our adult volunteers for whom Mental Health First Aid is now offered as an externally-recognised Level 2 qualification and additional support is also available via the National Support Centre.

Wellbeing is an ongoing development opportunity that will benefit from having a dedicated lead subject to the right person coming forward.

¹ <https://headfit.org/home/>

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Image: Cadet Vocational College

Former POC Philippa as a finalist in the Westminster Award hosted at the House of Lords

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STRATEGY REVIEW

This section looks at the three key strands that the Unit works within in terms of directing its planning and delivery of training and support.

FY23-24 wraps up the two-year **Post-Covid Regeneration** work that has guided us from near-shutdown back to business as usual.

An unwelcome development in June 2023 came the news that National Support Centres were facing a £2M shortfall in funding for an unknown period of time and would need to make deep and wide-ranging cuts – both temporary and long-term – in order to continue with being able to deliver the Cadet Experience to our members.

The final review, published in February 2024, was labelled **Refining Our Offer** and explained how National Support Centres planned to reduce the scope of the charity's operation but in limited areas whilst continuing to deliver on its key outputs.

This remains an ongoing challenge but the key threads of the Sea Cadet Corp's **Future Ready** five-year plan remain in place.

This part of the annual report looks at the impact of these strategic challenges on our local operation and forms the foundation of what will become our Unit's future Business Plan.

POST-COVID REGENERATION

In October 2021 the Unit Chairman and Commanding Officer published the Unit's post-Covid Regeneration Strategy. This strategy covered the 24 months from 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2023. Copies are available through the TIDE homepage.

In November 2022 we completed our first review of our performance against the plan, "**Measuring Success: First Review November 2022**", available to view via TIDE².

In November 2023 we concluded our regeneration strategy, "**Measuring success: Final Review November 2023**", the outcomes of which are also available to view via TIDE³.

We identified that we had met and exceeded all of our goals and, crucially, our stretch goals within the two-year life of this plan.

WORKSTRANDS

The key workstrands that tied together our regeneration strategy continue to take us forward as we change our focus into delivering the *Future Ready* strategy for our charity, focussed on the local conditions of the Unit.

² [Regeneration Plan 2021-2023 – First Review \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)

³ [Regeneration Plan 2021-2023 - Final Review \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)

Our **PEOPLE** work strand focusses on both Adults and Youth:

- We recognise that without a highly trained and skilled team of adult volunteers we cannot deliver the highest quality training to our cadets.

The **INNOVATION** strand looks at our digital offer and the physical resources of the Unit:

- Our continuing digital transformation and becoming less reliant on paper and automating simple functions, making relevant information available to those who need it in an accessible and easy to use way. We will work to encourage wider adoption of and local support to both the Cadet and Volunteer Portals
- We will continue to invest in the best equipment and resources we can afford. We will invest in our building to improve energy efficiency and external usage
- We manage the financial assets of the Unit wisely, seeking advice where necessary to get the biggest bang for the buck

The **TRADITION** strand is about ensuring we do not lose sight of who we are and who we represent:

- Rebuilding our links with like-minded community organisations and promoting our work through social media and local press
- We are actively working to re-establish positive engagement with the Royal Navy and wider maritime community

REFINING OUR OFFER

The *Refining Our Offer* package was the MSSC's corporate response to the immediate need identified in June 2023 to reduce expenditure in the face of soaring cost inflation. Faced with a significant income shortfall as a result of a reduced annual Grant In Aid settlement from MoD the national charity's trustees were faced with an unexpected funding gap of around £2M.

Four immediate actions were announced to help reduce the shortfall in the MSSC's FY23-24 budget:

- Immediate layup of the TS *John Jerwood* from June 2023 to 31 April 2024
- Immediate stop on ordering Class 1 and Class 2 uniform items – part of the adult and cadet's blues uniform
- Immediate stop on timed write-offs of Class 2 jumpers and trousers and extending the planned service life of these garments
- Cancellation of 2023 International Exchanges

From June 23 until February 2024 the National Support Centre undertook a full review and costings exercise so that we continue as a national charity to live within our means. We have had to swallow the bitter pill of a £2M shortfall in funding meaning a fundamental review of our training offer from 1 April 2024 onwards.

The underlying message from cadet and volunteer communications channels has been consistent and clear throughout this exercise: return uniform issue to cadets and volunteers and bring the *Jerwood* back into full service: look for savings elsewhere.

In February 2024 the results of this review were published:

- TS *John Jerwood* returned to service from 1 April 2024 with a full voyage programme being offered
- Class 1 uniform items returned to stock for adult volunteers
- Class 2 uniform items returned to stock but only for cadets with 12 months substantive service as senior (bluejacket) cadets, or those rated Cadet First Class and above
- Reduction in the scope of the Sea Cadet Experience to remove the **Navigation** specialisation and **Aviation, Piping, Scuba Diving** and **Meteorology** proficiencies
- Removal of the National Junior Sea Cadet summer camp in favour of reallocating the budgets to Districts for locally-focussed delivery
- Reduction in competition activity including the removal of swimming and 5-a-side football from the District and Area programmes as non-core activities
- Leading Cadet and Petty Officer Cadet advancement boards to be changed to single-day assessments and enabling Districts to facilitate these in lieu of Area provision
- Inbound international exchanges continuing to be facilitated, however outbound visits remaining on indefinite hold
- Full review of pricing for out-of-Unit training to better reflect actual cost incurred to the organisation but continuing to invest heavily to keep cost manageable
- Managed reduction of 10.5 FTE in National Support Centre staffing to promote efficient ways of working and further reduce core costs

At Unit level the greatest impact that cadets should see is the resumption of the issue of No1 (Blues) uniform to senior cadets, albeit delayed. There won't be quite as many training opportunities available as much of the development training can still be delivered using other channels rather than standalone courses. E.g. piping training is still an essential part of the Cadet Training Programme and part of cadet's advancement programmes.

We feel keenly the inability to issue Class 2 (blues) uniforms to cadets in their first year of service. Wearing the King's uniform is one of the privileges of SCC membership and one of those shared rituals that bind us together giving us all a sense of belonging. Notwithstanding this, if we hold a suitable uniform and there's a verifiable need for it to be issued to a cadet within this first year of service, issue it we will.

The return to full service of the TS *John Jerwood* from 1 April 2024 is very welcome and we're looking forward to 2024 being an exceptionally busy offshore season.

FUTURE READY

Future Ready is the MSSC's strategic plan for the period 2023-2028. Launched in April 2023 this document sets goals for both the Sea Cadet and Marine Society parts of the national charity.

The *Future Ready* Vision for Sea Cadets is **“Every young person launched for life”**. We know that membership of the Sea Cadets brings huge benefits to our young people⁴ and we are keen to extend this to as many young people as possible within our community.

Meeting this vision requires clarity of thought in relation to recruiting adults who represent all parts of our community as well ensuring they are well-trained and valued volunteers. Our cadets must be able to access the widest possible range of activities and be supported with their unique needs.

Our Sea Cadet Mission is **“Inspiring young people to achieve their potential through challenge and nautical adventure guided by the customs and traditions of today's Royal Navy”**.

The key part here is “today's Royal Navy”. For too long too many of our adult volunteers around the Corps hark back to times of yore: to the halcyon days of the Royal Navy of the 1950s – powerful and vast in number, and aside from being steam-powered, probably entirely imaginary. Today's RN is small, a transformed national leader in matters related to ED&I, and pioneers in the use of technology. For us as a national charity or local one to aspire to such a goal is a heady aspiration.

So how on earth do we start to meet these highest of goals? Well, let's start with our Core Values:

- **Respect**
- **Loyalty**
- **Self-Discipline**
- **Commitment**
- **Honesty & Integrity**
- **Courage**

These are not just the foundation of what makes us more than a uniformed youth club. These are building blocks of what set us apart from others and act as the standard of personal conduct that we think of as normal that others can only aspire to.

We recognise the importance of:

- formal education to develop our members' minds
- the value of adventurous activities, increasing levels of trust and responsibility recognised through our rank structure
- socialisation with others beyond cadets'-own peer groups, driving social mixing, inclusion and community
- the significance of today's Royal Navy in giving a collective sense of purpose and ambition

We achieve this by:

- non-formal educational opportunities in a variety of settings
- common rituals that bind us together

⁴ [SC Impact Report online.pdf \(sea-cadets.org\)](#)

We are proud of our long-term, measurable outcomes as identified by the LegaSea Report of May 2018:

- transferable life skills and accredited qualifications such as BTEC or DofE Awards at all levels
- improved physical health
- improved wellbeing and resilience
- reduced harmful or problem behaviours
- improved school attendance, engagement and attainment
- social responsibility and willingness to engage with others.

The key themes of the national *Future Ready* strategy delivery relate to Our Offer, Our People and Inclusion & Growth.

Our Offer

As a result of last year's unexpected and ongoing spending cuts our offer on a national level has led to a marked reduction in the range and number of training opportunities available and an overall drawdown in the Cadet Experience.

Notwithstanding this, at a local level we do intend to broaden the scope of what we can offer our cadets. We intend to:

- support Cheddar HUBS into becoming an RYA Recognised Training Centre. Doing so enables more young people to undertake qualification training more locally instead of having to travel to other boat centres like Weymouth
- train and develop enough adult volunteers to be able to offer Air Rifle training within the Unit to all cadets, as well as offer air-rifle coaching to neighbouring Units and partner cadet forces (Project ARSENAL)
- offer more Mountain Bike training and logged trips to cadets within the Unit and beyond
- make more use of District-led training activity to enable greater access to intermediate and advanced courses, together with regular advancement boards for senior cadets to progress with fewer unnecessary delays

Our People

To help deliver Our Offer we have already established a firm pipeline of instructional capacity within the afloat proficiency pathways and need to develop further our onshore provision. Our cadets and adult volunteers have qualified as:

- RYA Safety Boaters
- RYA Dinghy Instructors
- RYA Powerboat Instructors

Additional Dinghy Instructors, Paddlesports Instructors, Paddlesports Core Coaches, Paddlesport Leaders and Start Windsurfing Instructors in active development and planned to qualify later in 2024 and 2025.

We are actively negotiating to become one of around 100 Air Rifle centres within the UK and backfill some of the proficiency training opportunities lost during the *Refining Our Offer* review with new provision that's never previously been available to our cadets.

The Unit has been gifted a fleet of mountain-bikes which will enable us to stand apart from our peers and offer mountain-bike proficiency training as well as logged rides towards the next milestone awards. With four MIAS-qualified Mountain Bike Leaders at the Unit we have the tools and knowledge to ensure that every cadet can participate and improve their fitness and confidence.

The Unit Commanding Officer is now also appointed as District Training Officer, planning and delivering training to all eight Units within the District with the aim of delivering the highest-quality training to cadets and adult volunteers.

Inclusion and Growth

Inclusion is reviewed in much greater depth in the ED&I section starting on page 45.

Our growth ambitions are modest with a view to retaining our headcount at April 2024 levels, having grown by just under 10% from 1 April 2023 to the end of March 2024. Realistically, further growth will be limited by:

- the physical capacity of the building
- the number of qualified instructors regularly available on parade nights
- the effect of a reducing national birth-rate⁵ which reduces the pool of potential recruits to all youth organisations, increasing competition for the most engaging youth experiences

We ran for most of 2023 at surge levels in the Junior Sea Cadet section leaving the volunteers exhausted and this has also resulted in many of the cadets aging out and transitioning to the senior section at broadly the same time leading to overloads in the senior sections.

Future growth must be carefully managed as part of a holistic picture that includes investment in resources, people and equipment.

⁵ [Births in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/births)



Image: H Forbes

AC Towan undertaking Paddle UK Canoe Award training and assessment

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SUMMARY REVIEW

Our Unit is strong. It is well managed and resourced. Achieving this has taken huge commitment from the relatively small team of volunteers who strive so hard to offer a professional service to our stakeholders.

Looking ahead we can see cultural and societal challenges coming at us to which our Unit and wider organisation must continue to adapt to if we are to remain relevant to the communities we serve. What we do now to change in order to accommodate these is critical to the long-term survival of the charity.

We must continue to live within our means, cutting our cloth and expenditure despite inflationary pressures to ensure that we only spend what we must to deliver on our Charitable Purpose and continue to work hard to convince donors that their money is well-spent on people who are so deserving of that trust.

We are well-placed to rise to this challenge with an outstanding team of trustees, instructors and other volunteers without whom none of our cadets could achieve so much.

Our cadets go far beyond the minimum that's expected of them. They contribute to the Unit and wider society with enthusiasm and they absolutely embody the Corps' Core Values: they are a credit to themselves and it is our pleasure and privilege as Cadet Forces Adult Volunteers to serve them.



Burnham-and-Highbridge No 552 Unit of the Sea Cadet Corps is a charity
registered in England, 273886