The Workboat Association

WA NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026



"Marine Society and Sea Cadets honour Apprentices in their 2026 Annual Court. Seen pictured; Darrell Bate, MSSC Director of Maritime Training and Development with the Apprentices - who each received their award from MSSC President, Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

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Navigating Risk

At the AGM, we will introduce a collaborative series with Shipowners called "Navigating Risk." This series focuses on sharing insights and strategies for risk assessment through peer-led exercises. The first session will be at the AGM, followed by weekly online sessions every Monday. Attending 4 out of 5 seminars qualifies participants for a certificate of completion.

Click **HERE** to register

WA AGM Newsletter

The countdown to the Workboat Association AGM is well and truly underway! With the event fast approaching, we're looking forward to bringing members together for some great days of networking, discussion, and looking ahead to the future of our industry. To help get you ready for the AGM, we've put together an AGM Newsletter, with a few things to look out for regarding what will be happening across a jam-packed few days.

If you haven't registered but are interested in attending, please email **Jacqui**. For those who have registered, you'll be receiving a confirmation email in the coming days. Alternatively, if you have registered but can no longer attend, please let us know.

Click **HERE** to have a read.

5 Threatened English Maritime Apprenticeships Retained!

Many of you are aware that the industry has been recently united in defending against the proposal to retire 5 of the English Maritime Apprenticeships. Overnight we have officially heard that the decision has been made to retain all 5 programmes, though further detail on Skills England expectations are not fully known.

"News of the retainment of the five threatened maritime apprenticeships is more than just a victory — it is a testament to the relentless work of training providers, employers, and the apprentices whose commitment and achievement have earned this programme deep respect across the sector. From the quaysides and local communities to Whitehall and Westminster, this outcome belongs to everyone who stood firm when it mattered most. Thank you all." - Kerrie Forster, Workboat Association CEO.

The apprenticeships under threat were:

1. Seafarer Deck Rating
2. Small Commercial Vessel Crew Member
3. OOW Near Coastal
4. Marine and Boatyard Operative
5. Marine Pilot

For more information, please contact Kerrie Forster

MAIB Annual Digest 2025

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has published its 2025 annual digest of incidents. The MAIB examines and investigates all types of marine accidents to or on board UK vessels worldwide, and other vessels in UK territorial waters. The following report includes;

- an overview of accidents reported
- a summary of investigations started
- details of publications issued
- recommendations issued in 2025 and an update on their status
- updates on open recommendations made in previous years.

Click **HERE** to read.



Funding & Opportunities

Click **HERE** to read all of the latest funding and opportunities.



Official Log Book Charging and Modernisation Review

Click **HERE** to read the MCAS letter setting outproposals to review the provision of OLBs and Passenger Ship Supplementary Log Books,

Master 500 Apprenticeship

With the kind help of The Workboat Association, Fleetwood Nautical College is building on the success of its first ever course earlier this year by announcing a new intake for the Master 500 apprenticeship. **Ship's master – less than 500 gross tonnage near coastal / Skills England**
Starting 4th January 2027, this cohort will be for experienced seafarers only with a Master 200, YM ticket or similar.

Undertaking a Master 500 apprenticeship is a natural progression for a qualified Master 200 who is seeking to expand their professional capabilities, career opportunities, and leadership skills within the maritime industry. The Master 500 qualification enables individuals to command larger vessels, operate in more complex environments, alternative European ports and take on greater responsibility for vessel operations, safety, and crew management.

The apprenticeship provides structured learning that combines practical experience with advanced theoretical knowledge in areas such as navigation, ship stability, maritime legislation, risk management, and leadership. This supports the development of the higher-level competencies required for operating larger vessels and more demanding commercial activities.

For employers, investing in a Master 500 apprenticeship strengthens organisational capability by developing experienced maritime professionals who can safely manage larger and more diverse operations. For the apprentice, it creates a clear pathway to career progression, increased earning potential, and access to a wider range of maritime roles both nationally and internationally.

Ultimately, the Master 500 apprenticeship builds upon the strong foundation of a Master 200 qualification, ensuring the mariner remains competitive, highly skilled, and equipped to meet the future needs of the maritime sector.

The apprenticeship is open to any full-time employee who works for an English based company. If you want to discuss how the apprenticeship works, the unique way it is funded and how it can help your business, please get in contact with Angus James at Fleetwood Nautical College, 07793 242365 angus.james@blackpool.ac.uk

MSSC Annual Court 2026

Marine Society and Sea Cadets honour Apprentices in their 2026 Annual Court. Seen pictured on front cover; Darrell Bate, MSSC Director of Maritime Training and Development with the Apprentices - who each received their award from MSSC President, Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

A copy of the award speech is available **HERE**

MCA Consultation: Aquaculture Navigational Safety

The MCA has opened a consultation on methodology for assessing marine navigation safety and emergency response risks of fin/shellfish and seaweed/algal farms. This draft MGN provides information on the methodology that can be used to assess the marine navigational safety and emergency response risks that may be posed to waterway users from Aquaculture sites. It does not introduce new requirements to those already in place, but is intended to direct the reader to the current relevant guidance and information as published by the relevant marine regulator.

Click **HERE** to read

UKHO seeks input to support changes to its Admiralty Standard Nautical Charts

The UKHO conducted user research on Admiralty Standard Nautical Charts (SNCs) and Small Craft Charts (SCCs) to support the long-term provision of paper charts through automated production. The survey focused on two changes: merging SNC and SCC into a single chart scheme and transitioning to pictorial updates instead of text-based ones.

Key findings from over 600 responses include:

- Changes must maintain coverage, confidence, and usability.
- Over 80% of respondents use paper charts alongside digital ones for various navigation tasks, with many relying on them as primary navigation tools.
- Affordability is a concern, particularly for leisure mariners, impacting access to necessary charts.

In response, the UKHO is conducting a pricing survey to determine acceptable price points for the new chart scheme, encouraging participation to help shape future pricing strategies. Click **HERE** to complete the survey

Registration is now open for the SMI Workboat Working Group Annual Seminar 2026.

This year's theme 'Future Workboats: Regulation, Autonomy and Supply Chain Opportunity' will bring together vessel owners, operators, shipyards, designers, technology providers, regulators and government stakeholders to explore the developments shaping the future of the UK workboat and small vessel sector.

Taking place on 26 November 2026 in London, the seminar will focus on:
The Government momentum driving frameworks and initiatives delivering safe innovation The growing role of autonomy and emerging commercial opportunities Future fleet requirements and what owners, operators and shipyards will need from the supply chain How UK companies can position themselves to support future capability, competitiveness and growth

Chaired by Noel Tomlinson (BMT), the programme features contributions from organisations including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), National Shipbuilding Office, Associated British Ports (ABP), Bibby Marine, UK Docks Marine Services and others to be announced.



The seminar provides a valuable opportunity to hear directly from industry leaders and policymakers, strengthen supply chain engagement and contribute to discussions on the future direction of the sector.

- Thursday 26 November 2026
- Informa HQ, London
- Registration from 10:30 | Seminar 11:00–15:45

Click **HERE** to Register.

SMI member rate will apply to all WBA members.

MCA Updates & Guidance

Now we have all of the MCA Updates & Guidance available on one document. Each moth these will become apart of the newsletter, so you can find everything in one place.

Click **HERE** to read

Workgroup Corner

This month has been bustling with preparations for the Technical, Safety, and Training workgroups, all set to convene during the AGM's Workgroup Wednesday. These sessions will be recorded and made available online shortly thereafter.

Subgroup Highlights

- **Pilot Vessel Subgroup**: This month, they gathered for a presentation by Barbara Charlton, focusing on the current topic of MOB recovery systems.
- **Daughter Craft Subgroup**: Last week, this group met to review their draft guidance (insert name here) and aims to launch the guide at the AGM.

Remember, all workgroup and subgroup agendas, minutes, and recordings are accessible on WA on Demand. If you'd like to join the WhatsApp community, please reach out to receive an invitation to the groups and email Lys at l.johnson@workboatassociation.org

News From Our Stakeholders

- Click **HERE** for the PSS Newsletter
- Click **HERE** for the IIMS News Bulletin
- Click **HERE** for the Seafarers' Charity News
- Click **HERE** for MSA Newsletter
- Click **HERE** for IMCA Newsletter
- Click **HERE** for SMI Newsletter
- Click **HERE** for The Nautical Institute
- Click **HERE** for White Ensign Newsletter
- Click **HERE** for UKHO Newsletter