

UK Branch Conference Report **2024**



Contents

3 Executive summary	22 Governance and representation
4 Organising	28 Operations
10 Professional, Technical and Legal	32 Welfare
16 Communications, Campaigns and Digital	38 Awards and obituaries

Executive summary

There's never a dull moment at Nautilus, but we all prefer it when the 'exciting' times involve positive developments rather than major setbacks for our members.

At the last UK Branch Conference in 2022, we were still reeling from the mass sackings at P&O Ferries earlier that year, and that crisis was understandably dominating our work. However, this time we are able to report on more good news and progress from our UK teams.

The fallout from P&O Ferries continues, of course, but we have been working hard to close legal loopholes and end the practice of 'fire and rehire' (see pages 8, 14 and 17).

We have seen success from challenging negotiations at Carnival UK and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co – and the strongly-supported industrial action by members at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is catching the attention of the new UK government (see pages 4, 14 and 18).

As a professional association, our standard-setting work in the UK has seen progress on cadet training and in developing a regulatory framework for autonomous vessels (see pages 11 and 12).

We have an enviable record of retrieving wages owed to members, and we have had exceptional success with this in the superyacht sector in the last two years. Notably, we won large pay awards for members on sanctioned Russian vessels (see pages 7 and 14).

Another achievement in this sector was the launch for beta-testing of the Nautilus Sea Service Record, a fully-digital way of recording and validating sea time endorsed by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (see page 7).

In fact, we have become much more 'digital' all round than we were two years ago, as you can probably tell from the artificial intelligence theme of our 2024 UK Branch Conference. Be sure to listen to our award-winning podcast Off Course and regular video broadcasts on our YouTube channel NautilusTV (see pages 21). And don't forget that we offer the opportunity for members to attend our forums online, with people often logging in from their vessels.

At the core of any successful organisation is its staff, and at Nautilus we aim to be the best. We were delighted this year to be awarded Gold by



Investors in People (see pages 30). Alongside this, we have been improving our working environment, with London staff now based in rented offices at ITF House in Borough, and Wallasey staff moving into a brand-new head office being developed at Mariners' Park (see pages 29 and 32).

Finally, I have recently had the honour of being elected president of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for 2024-2025, which is the first time a representative of our Union has held this position (see pages 23). We are one of the TUC's smaller affiliate unions, but we have often punched above our weight in the UK trade union movement, and I will be proud to continue making our members' voices heard at the highest level.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dickinson'.

Mark Dickinson
General Secretary
Nautilus International
November 2024

Organising

Since the last UK Branch Conference, the UK Organising cluster, through the teams of Membership & Recruitment and Industrial, has been responsible for supporting around 14,000 Nautilus members.

Our work includes recruiting new members and retaining existing members through providing good value for their subscriptions. We aim to provide first-class service to members who contact us for support, and to negotiate the best terms and conditions possible in members' workplaces.

Negotiations and industrial action

Carnival UK

In November 2023, Carnival UK gave notice that it planned to restructure the working arrangements of nearly 1,000 maritime professionals across its P&O Cruises and Cunard fleets.

In advance of meaningful negotiations, the company gave notice to the UK government through HR1 notification that it intended to make redundancies and reengagement commensurate with the cohort impacted if negotiations failed. This was a threat to fire and rehire maritime professionals.

We swiftly responded to this and achieved a freezing and resetting of the working relationship. After protracted talks, a negotiated settlement was agreed that protected the incomes of the cohort and delivered a reduction in contracted working days.

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company

Throughout much of 2023, Isle of Man Steam Packet Company refused to negotiate over changes to its live-aboard policy. The company position was that no additional recognition should be given for the change, whereas members' lives and livelihoods were being fundamentally altered from the previously agreed terms and conditions of employment.

Not managing to achieve agreement, the company threatened fire and rehire, and we responded to this by balloting members for



Martyn Gray
Director of organising

Credit: David Wainwright

industrial action – achieving a mandate under Isle of Man legislation.

The company announced at 17:08 hrs on Friday 22 December, the last weekday before Christmas 2023, that it was firing and rehiring its entire officer cohort. We therefore supported members who took industrial action short of a strike from Wednesday 27 December onwards.

By Wednesday 3 January 2024 the company had halved its operations due to the impact of our industrial action, and by Friday 5 January had withdrawn the terminations pending talks facilitated through the Manx Industrial Relations Service. This led to a negotiated settlement resulting in compensatory leave for the loss in home time from the contractual changes.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary

In 2024, members at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) voted, for the first time in nearly 120 years of the organisation's history, for industrial action. This was in response to 14 years of real terms pay cuts and a significant increase in workload, both of which had led to a recruitment and retention crisis.

We organised the first ever maintained picket and full withdrawal of labour for RFA officers on 15 August 2024, after continued government intransigence in dealing with the

Trade union representatives at TUC Congress 2024 make their views heard on the RFA campaign for pay reparations



Organising work by Nautilus staff and members



/...Organising

dispute. This followed action short of a strike from 1 June 2024.

Further action was held in partnership with the RMT union on 3 September and over the weekend of 20-22 September, with results of a November re-ballot overwhelmingly in favour of more action.

Superyacht sector wage recovery

The need for our Union has never been more apparent in the superyacht sector, where the challenges facing crew are a far reality from the luxurious illusion in which the industry conceals itself.

Abandonment without pay is a particular issue. Through the work of the Organising cluster and our Legal colleagues, our members have had nearly £5 million in owed wages recovered since 2022.

2022	£2.75 million
2023	£1.3 million
2024*	£0.7 million

**2024 year to date figures*

Launching and managing Nautilus SSR

The UK Organising cluster is responsible for Nautilus SSR, our digital sea service record approved by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency. Launched for beta-testing in 2023, it is a vital tool for seafarers in the superyacht sector, providing a secure and efficient way to digitally document and verify their maritime experience.

This digital platform allows members to easily record and manage their seagoing history, including employment details, sea service details and more. Nautilus SSR streamlines the verification process for employment opportunities and regulatory compliance, making it an essential asset for the career of any worker in the yachting world.

Maintaining membership density in the Merchant Navy

Since 2022, the Union has maintained a membership density of over 70% among UK seagoing maritime professionals. This remarkable achievement underscores the invaluable support and representation that Nautilus provides to its members, ensuring their voices are heard and their interests protected.

Membership payments made easier

We have made it easier than ever for members to pay their subscription fees in the UK. With a variety of convenient payment options – including direct debit and online portals, telephone and invoice, and bank transfer – members can choose the method that best suits their needs.

This expanded and simplified process ensures that membership remains accessible and affordable, allowing maritime professionals to continue benefiting from the Union's invaluable support and services.

At the time of writing, over £50,000 of additional income in 2024 has been processed through making membership subscription payments easier.

Member processing and engagement reforms

We are working on a more streamlined and welcoming experience for new members. The Union is implementing innovative processes to expedite the joining journey, ensuring that all maritime professionals can quickly gain knowledge of our full range of services.

Additionally, we are committed to delivering more targeted and relevant communications to new members, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and connection within the maritime community.

/...Organising

UK salary-uplift statistics

Negotiations by Nautilus supported the following general uplifts in members' salaries:

	2022	2023	2024*	Compound change
MEAN	4.9%	6.7%	5.9%	18.5%
MEDIAN	4.5%	5.9%	5.5%	16.8%
MODE	3.0%	5.0%	5.5%	14.1%
MAXIMUM	10.0%	12.0%	12.7%	38.8%
MINIMUM	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%	5.6%

**2024 year to date figures*

Since the last Branch Conference, the members represented through UK collective bargaining are on terms and conditions that are on average 18.5% better. The work of the Nautilus Industrial team on increasing wages has meant that many members have been protected from some of the impacts of very high UK rates of inflation. In addition, membership subscriptions are comparatively even better value for money, as subscription increases from 1 January 2022 to 1 January 2024 were limited to 4% for 2023 and 5% for 2024.

Subscription rates in the UK are 9.2% higher since the last branch conference, with the value of Nautilus membership and our collective bargaining activity representing a consistent net gain for those we represent.

Seafarers Wages Act

The Seafarers Wages Act is a pivotal piece of legislation that has the scope to improve the pay and financial security of seafarers regularly working in UK territorial waters. Introduced by the UK government in response to P&O Ferries' mass terminations on 17 March 2022, the act aimed to address concerns about the exploitation of seafarers, particularly in terms of wages and working hours.

Nautilus played a crucial role in advocating for and delivering this vital legislation.

We worked tirelessly to highlight the challenges faced by those in the ferry sector on low pay, including instances of wage theft, long working hours, and poor living conditions.

Through direct contact and negotiations with government officials, and continued public awareness campaigns, we successfully convinced policymakers of the urgent need for stronger protections for seafarers.

This work continues with the new Labour government elected in July 2024 to solidify and enhance seafarer employment protections in the forthcoming employment rights bills. We are also pushing further for sectoral collective bargaining and an expansion of social partnership obligations in maritime.

Nautilus director of organising Martyn Gray speaking at the 2024 TUC Congress in support of workers' rights legislation

C2024
GRESS 2024

SECTION 1
PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE
AND WINNING A NEW DEAL

MISSION 01
Deliver freedom of association and
prevent another P&O
Ferries scandal

TUC

A NEW DEAL
FOR WORKING PEOPLE



A NEW DEAL
FOR WORKING PEOPLE

TUC

Director of communications, campaigns and digital Helen Kelly and general secretary Mark Dickinson visit the prime minister's office at 10 Downing Street as part of the Union's lobbying work



Communications, Campaigns and Digital

The Communications, Campaigns and Digital cluster supports the professional integrity of the Union through high quality journalism, lobbying of government and industry, and the promotion of Union policies.

This cluster also promotes the work of members and maintains the external reputation of the Union through public relations, campaigning and digital communication.

P&O Ferries: never again

Since the last UK Branch Conference in 2022, we have continued to campaign to prevent another P&O Ferries scandal from happening again.

The Conservative government in power until July 2024 introduced the Seafarers Wages Act and a voluntary seafarers' charter following the disgraceful mass-sacking of our members. While Nautilus welcomes both initiatives, particularly the Act, we have also been clear these are not enough to prevent another P&O Ferries from happening again.

Mandatory seafarers' charter

We have been campaigning for a mandatory seafarers' charter which would enforce minimum standards in the UK ferry sector reflective of local conditions, not international minimums. This campaigning work led to support from the cross-party Transport Select Committee – then chaired by Iain Stewart MP – which recommended a mandatory charter in its inquiry report **Maritime 2050: objectives, implementation and effects**. The idea also received backing from the (now) secretary of state for transport Louise Haigh MP and deputy prime minister Angela Rayner MP.

We have worked with our colleagues in the RMT union and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to ensure a mandatory seafarers' charter is delivered early in the Labour government's term of office. Nautilus and the RMT met with the new maritime minister Mike Kane MP within a week of his appointment to discuss the delivery of the charter. These discussions are currently ongoing.



Helen Kelly
Director of communications,
campaigns and digital

Employment Rights Bill

Nautilus has also been campaigning for legislative changes in the Employment Rights Bill, introduced by the government in October 2024, to end fire and rehire, compel companies to consult, provide unions with injunctive relief and to ensure shipowners are obliged to inform the secretary of state for business ahead of any mass sacking.

There is more on the fallout from the P&O Ferries mass sackings in the *Professional, Technical and Legal section of this report*.

Fighting fire and rehire and supporting fair pay

Over the last two years, the Communications, Campaigns and Digital cluster has been supporting the Organising cluster with industrial disputes.

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company campaign

During members' industrial dispute with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, we issued regular press statements and

/...Communications, Campaigns and Digital

engaged with the local Manx press, Manx radio, BBC North West, ITV Granada and others. We used press statements to stress the threat of ‘fire and rehire’ as a clear example of the unreasonableness of the company’s management. The clear messaging and positive engagement with press led to coverage that was generally supportive of our members during the dispute.

We also engaged with and provided regular briefings to members of the Isle of Man Tynwald, particularly the members of the House of Keys, who consistently raised questions about the actions of the company with the chief minister and treasury minister. This helped to keep attention on the dispute and build pressure on the Manx government to apply pressure on the company, and led to a meeting between Nautilus and the treasury minister prior to Christmas 2023.

RFA dispute

The cluster has also been actively involved in supporting industrial and organising colleagues in the fair pay dispute between our members at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and the Ministry of Defence. We have crafted clear public messaging, issued press releases and fostered engagement with the press and politicians – including a briefing on the industrial action sent to all 650 MPs in September 2024.

See the Organising cluster’s section of this report for more on industrial action.

Charting a Just Transition

At the Nautilus International General Meeting in October 2023, we launched the **Mapping Our Maritime Future** survey of members of Nautilus Federation affiliate unions. The survey asked a range of questions on issues of decarbonisation and automation of the maritime industry. It was designed to give Nautilus strong quantitative evidence to support our work for a fair and human-centred transition to net-zero carbon emissions, putting members’ views at the heart of our work. Nearly 1,000 maritime professionals across the Nautilus Federation membership responded to the survey.

The results have been stark and show there is work to do. Over half of respondents did not believe that net-zero by 2050 is possible. Despite this, nearly two-thirds of respondents supported efforts to decarbonise. The report has set out clear recommendations that call for more to be done to define and communicate the Just Transition, for maritime professionals to be consulted by employers, for a coherent maritime automation strategy and for training support for maritime professionals to upskill.

The report with full recommendations is available to all members in the Resources section of the Nautilus website. We organised a live webinar on 18 September 2024 for members of Nautilus Federation affiliate unions to get a breakdown of the research findings, and a recording of that webinar is now available on our YouTube channel Nautilus TV at www.youtube.com/@nautilusint

The **Mapping Our Maritime Future** report is just the first step, Nautilus will continue to work both internationally and nationally to put the recommendations into practice. We are grateful to all members who participated in the survey.

Building political support

Nautilus has continued to build relationships across the political spectrum, meeting with MPs across all parties to further the aims of our members. Since the last UK Branch Conference, Nautilus has attended party conferences of Labour, the Conservatives, the Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats.

We have developed a strong relationship with the current maritime minister Mike Kane MP, who visited Mariners’ Park in February 2024 while still in opposition to view the new building and to engage in a roundtable discussion on the rights of seafarers. Nautilus and Maritime UK also co-hosted a Welcome to Maritime parliamentary reception on 2 September 2024, the eve of Merchant Navy Day. Sponsored by the maritime minister, the event had 40 MPs in attendance.

Offshore Wind Workers Concession

Working with Kingston-Upon-Hull East MP Karl Turner and our colleagues in the RMT

Communications, Campaigns and Digital work by Nautilus staff and members





Maritime Barometer

2024

Nautilus International polling on the UK public's attitudes to the maritime industry and maritime careers



61%

of working-age adults definitely would not consider a career at sea

45%

of UK adults believe that goods transported by air freight cause the most environmental damage



You can download the full **Maritime Barometer 2024** report from the Nautilus website at: www.nautilusint.org/resources

/...Communications, Campaigns and Digital

union, we were successful in pressuring the UK government to end the Offshore Wind Workers Concession (OWWC), a visa loophole that allowed companies operating in the British offshore wind sector to import labour from abroad – undermining jobs, pay and conditions for UK workers. Nautilus successfully argued that the OWWC was failing to ensure a level playing field. In April 2023, the then government announced it would not be extending the concession.

Maritime manifesto

As the UK entered a general election campaign in June 2024, we released our Nautilus manifesto **Turning the tide: a mission to revitalise our nation's maritime sector** – a detailed plan for how the future British government could support the UK's maritime industry and its Merchant Navy seafarers. The full manifesto can be read in the Resources section of the Nautilus website; it includes sections on futureproofing skills and training, full protections for maritime employment, growing our industry and international leadership. It calls for, among other things, 100% government SMarT funding, one single national maritime training provider, a mandatory seafarers' charter, and a review to consider the scope of UK cabotage and how to tackle flags of convenience.

Our continued proactive political engagement, lobbying and campaigning will be based on this manifesto, and we will continue to work to revitalise our nation's maritime sector and Merchant Navy.

The Maritime Barometer

The third Nautilus International Maritime Barometer report, published in November 2024, makes evident the urgent need for concerted efforts to bridge the gap between the UK public's perception and the reality of the shipping industry.

With the industry poised for significant transformations driven by technology, regulations and sustainability goals, it is crucial to focus on attracting and retaining talent that is adaptable, diverse, and adequately rewarded.

It is heartening to see a considerable portion of the population showing support for political initiatives promoting the interests of the UK Merchant Navy, emphasising the need for Nautilus to continue its advocacy at various levels. This report highlights the vital role of the Merchant Navy in global trade and the career opportunities it offers.

As part of this work, the Communications, Campaigns and Digital cluster has recently released season 3 of its podcast **Off Course: A sideways look at life at sea**. In season 3 we speak with maritime 'influencers' – those seafarers making a huge splash on social media, to leverage their audience and reach. The podcast has also launched on YouTube and can be viewed at www.youtube.com/@nautilusint.

Nautilus won the TUC's Best Small Union Communications award for Off Course in October 2024. The podcast was also shortlisted for a Memcom 2024 award, and an Associations Excellence Award 2024.

NautilusTV

Over the last two years, we have greatly increased the audio and video content we provide to engage members and inform the wider public about the Union's work. Our YouTube channel NautilusTV is available at www.youtube.com/@nautilusint.

We launched our successful podcast Off Course during Maritime UK Week 2022 and have just begun a third series which is also a 'vodcast'. We have also recently launched a regular video magazine programme on NautilusTV – a YouTube programme with exclusive content featuring members, maritime professionals and prominent figures in the maritime industry. We encourage viewers to dive into insightful interviews, engaging discussions and first-hand accounts from the maritime world.

Since we started uploading the show and associated videos in February 2024, our videos at www.youtube.com/@nautilusint have received more than 16,000 views and the channel now has over 16,000 subscribers as well.

Governance and representation

The governance of Nautilus International is the responsibility of the Union's Council, but there are also national branch committees for the UK, Netherlands and Switzerland.

This report is the biennial update on the Union's activities from the UK National Committee to members and will be presented at the 2024 Nautilus UK Branch Conference for a vote of approval.

In terms of representation, we are taking the opportunity in this section to show how we amplified our members' voices over the last two years through our affiliation to union federations and industry bodies in the UK. These efforts have enabled us to gain even stronger influence with the incoming Labour government through a collective approach and strength in numbers.

Nautilus International Council

The Council of Nautilus International is elected from the membership, in keeping with UK trade union legislation. The Council consists of up to 32 elected full members plus the general secretary. Elections for members of the Council, effective from 2026, are to be undertaken on a five-yearly basis.

Following a recent change to regulations, all candidates for the Council now stand at the same elections, instead of the previous system of 50% standing every two years. This is another initiative to reduce costs. The members of the Council from the UK branch also serve as the members of the UK National Committee, along with the general secretary, appointed senior staff, and the Union's trustees.

UK National Committee

The UK National Committee has authority, delegated from the Council, to consider UK-relevant matters of policy and activity.

The UK National Committee will typically meet twice a year, with provision existing for additional meetings to be called if required.

The elected UK National Committee membership between 2023 and 2024 consisted of:

Mark Dickinson	General secretary
Iain MacKenzie	UK Council member and National Committee chair
Fraser Matthew	UK Council member
Stephen Gudgeon	UK Council member
Jessica Tyson	UK Council member
John Wainman	UK Council member
Dawn Franklyn	UK Council member
Russell Downs	UK Council member
Christine McLean	UK Council member
Catherine Wannell	UK Council member
Gary Calderwood	UK Council member
Alexander Day	UK Council member
Fraser McNally	UK Council member
Sean Turner	UK Council member
Allan Dickson	UK Council member
Richard Johnson	UK Council member
Terence Warner	UK Council member
Olu Tunde	Deputy general secretary
Charles Boyle	Director of legal services
Martyn Gray	Director of organising
Michael Smyth	Head of industrial
David Appleton	Head of professional & technical

Also entitled to attend:

Wilco Van Hoboken (Chair of the Council) and Trustees: **Lesley Mercer**, **Jim McAuslan**, **Steve Clinch** and **Theresa Crossley**.

/...Governance and representation



Garry Elliott
Head of governance

Representation at the Trades Union Congress

Nautilus represents members' interests as an active affiliate of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The Union takes part in a range of TUC conferences and events, and in 2023 and 2024 Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson was re-elected to the TUC General Council and sits on the Executive Committee.

TUC presidency

The 2024 TUC Congress elected Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson as its new president. Mr Dickinson will serve in the role for a year and preside over the TUC Congress in September 2025. He will also chair the TUC's General Council and Executive Committee. He becomes the first ever representative of Nautilus International or its predecessor unions to hold this role.

UK Trades Union Congress 2023

The 155th TUC Congress took place in Liverpool in September 2023. Nautilus submitted two motions for Congress: **Tackling flags of Convenience and Growing Domestic Shipping** (amended and seconded by the RMT union); and **Charting a Just Transition for Maritime Professionals** (seconded by Prospect).

Nautilus also spoke in support of a composite motion on **Steel and National Security**

presented by Community and Unite the Union. All these motions were carried unanimously in a vote of delegates.

Angela Rayner MP, at the time deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, highlighted the plight of our members at P&O Ferries in her address to the floor. She confirmed that a Labour government would bring forward significant employment rights measures within the first 100 days of election and reaffirmed commitments to removing barriers to trade union organising.

Scottish Trades Union Congress 2023

Nautilus International submitted three motions at the STUC's 126th Annual Congress in Dundee.

P&O Ferries: a year of shame reminded Congress that on 17 March 2022, P&O Ferries dismissed 786 dedicated maritime professionals across its entire operation with no notice and no consultation. Delegates voted unanimously to continue support for Nautilus's Fair Ferries campaign, seeking to end the race to the bottom for seafarers employed in this strategically vital sector.

The motion **Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries: no to unbundling of services** asked Congress to note with concern calls for the potential unbundling of Scottish ferry services on the Western Isles ferry routes, as this could jeopardise what little resiliency presently exists in the system.

Delegates voted unanimously for the STUC and affiliates to resist all attempts at unbundling ferry services by the Scottish government, and that the Scottish government should invest in the vessels, infrastructure, and seafarer development required to operate a reliable and affordable national service.

Scottish Continental Europe Ferry Link called on the STUC and maritime and shoreside unions to continue their engagement and support for re-establishing a Ro-Pax ferry service from Scotland to Continental Europe that will secure and guarantee essential trade and commercial links whilst creating quality skilled jobs on



Members of the Nautilus UK Branch Committee in April 2024



Nautilus officials making members' voices heard at the UK and Scottish TUC



/...Governance and representation

decent terms and conditions for local seafarers, dockers and the wider maritime cluster. This motion was also carried unanimously.

UK Trades Union Congress 2024

The 156th TUC Congress took place in Brighton in September 2024. Nautilus submitted two motions: **Turning the Tide on Merchant Navy Decline and Support Maritime Employment** and **Deliver Freedom of Association and Prevent Another P&O Ferries Scandal**.

Nautilus also submitted amendments to, and spoke in support of, composite motions on **Labour Government and a Progressive Transport Agenda** (presented by ASLEF and the RMT) and **Industrial Strategy, National Security and a Workers' Transition** (presented by GMB, Unite and AEGIS). All these motions were carried unanimously in a vote of delegates.

An emergency motion on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary dispute was moved by the general secretary and seconded by the RMT general secretary. The motion was supported unanimously.

Congress discussed a wide range of issues, including the Just Transition, which is growing in importance across the UK trade union movement. Nautilus has shown with this that we are yet again ahead of the trend. Our key themes from our 2023 General Meeting and our previous motions to Congress helped to set early policy with the TUC and are now being mirrored closely by unions representing workers in other industries.

The conference was addressed this year by the new Labour prime minister Sir Keir Starmer. He confirmed the planned repeal of the 2016 Trade Union Act and the strengthening of employment rights.

Scottish Trades Union Congress 2024

Nautilus International submitted three motions to STUC in 2024, all of which were passed unanimously by a vote of delegates.

Charting a Just Transition noted that the maritime industry has already started the transition towards 'net-zero' with increasing investment in alternative fuels and new technologies and further automation of

vessels. The motion called on the STUC to press the Scottish government to invest in maritime training with a focus on skills in emerging sectors.

Devolve Employment Law and Outlaw Fire and Rehire

asked Congress to campaign for the end of fire and rehire as being legal mechanism of industrial relations in Scotland, should employment become a devolved matter. It also called for the Scottish government to take measures to lobby Westminster to remove the current reservation on employment under the Scotland Act 1998.

In **Future-proofing of Maritime Skills and Training**, the STUC was asked to campaign to future-proof skills and training by:

- working with key stakeholders for a just transition to net-zero in the interests of all workers, including maritime professionals
- working to ensure that all workers, especially maritime professionals, can access training, at no cost to the individual, so they can be equipped with any new skills needed at any stage of their career
- supporting efforts to encourage more young people to consider careers at sea and increasing diversity of the maritime industry

Wales Trades Union Congress Cymru 2024

The biennial WTUC Conference took place in May 2024 and Nautilus submitted two motions, both of which were carried unanimously.

Charting a Just Transition asked Congress to campaign to ensure decarbonisation and net-zero is achieved in a just, equitable and holistic way, guaranteeing no one is left behind and addressing existing systemic issues facing Welsh workers.

Outlaw Fire and Rehire noted the inadequacy of the 'statutory code' proposed by the Westminster government. It called on WTUC to campaign to outlaw fire and rehire and commit to support all affiliates who are facing threats by employers to fire and rehire those they represent,

/...Governance and representation

standing in solidarity with workers who are facing ever more callous employers seeking to drive down terms and conditions in Wales and elsewhere. The motion was carried unanimously.

Maritime UK

Nautilus International is a committed member of the industry body Maritime UK, and works in partnership with the secretariat and other member organisations to ensure the delivery of the UK government's Maritime 2050 strategy.

Nautilus is an active participant on a variety of sub-committees and working groups, with particular focus on the 'People' aspect of Maritime 2050. We also support the priority of Maritime UK, which is 'to have a talented and diverse workforce in every part of the sector, driving business growth, inspired to join us by a professional careers campaign, and well-trained to use their talents to the full'.

Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity Pledge

Nautilus International has signed the Maritime UK Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity Pledge, which was launched at an event at the UK Houses of Parliament to mark Merchant Navy Day 2024.

The pledge affirms our dedication to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, mental health status, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, feel valued, respected, and empowered.

To achieve the aims in the pledge, we, like all the signatories, have agreed to the following commitments:

Promote Diversity: Actively encourage and support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of a diverse workforce. We will strive to create teams that reflect the richness of our communities and the global nature of the maritime industry. We recognise and understand that diversity is both visible and invisible.

Foster Inclusivity: Cultivate a culture where all employees/seafarers feel welcomed,

included, and able to bring their authentic selves to work. We will implement policies and practices that ensure everyone has a voice and feels they belong.

Ensure Equity: Commit to fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals. We will address any barriers that may exist due to systemic inequalities and work towards eliminating discrimination in all its forms.

Support Mental Health: Recognise the importance of mental health and well-being in the workplace. We will provide resources, training, and support to create a mentally healthy work environment where employees/seafarers feel safe to seek help and discuss mental health issues.

Champion Gender Equality: Promote gender equality by supporting equal opportunities for all genders. We will work towards closing gender gaps, particularly in leadership roles, and ensure our policies and practices are free from gender bias.

Celebrate Ethnic Diversity: Recognise and celebrate the cultural richness that comes from ethnic diversity. We will work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities and ensure that our workplace is inclusive and respectful of all backgrounds.

Support LGBTQ+ Individuals: Foster a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ employees/seafarers. We will ensure that our policies and practices are inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and we will actively combat discrimination and bias against LGBTQ+ individuals.

Educate and Train: Provide regular training and education on diversity, equity, and inclusion to all employees/seafarers. We will ensure that everyone understands the importance of these values and knows how to contribute to a positive and inclusive workplace.

Accountability and Transparency: Hold ourselves accountable by regularly reviewing our progress towards these commitments. We will be transparent in our efforts and outcomes, and we will continuously seek feedback to improve.



Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson at the parliamentary event where the Maritime UK Diversity in Maritime Pledge was launched



The new Nautilus head office and retirement accommodation under construction at Mariners' Park

Operations

The Operations cluster is proud to serve Nautilus members by ensuring their Union is run smoothly and efficiently behind the scenes. Our work incorporates human resources (HR), information technology (IT), finance and facilities management.

UK office moves

In 2022 we successfully relocated the London office from The Shrubberies in South Woodford to ITF House in south central London. This has resulted in substantial financial savings, and was accomplished with minimal disruptions to the level of services to our members.

Meanwhile, the Shrubberies lease was successfully assigned to another institution, thereby eliminating the rent liabilities and other maintenance commitments.

As part of these changes, the Union's premises at Mariners' Park in Wallasey, Merseyside became the head office. The Council of Nautilus had agreed that the ageing Nautilus House at Mariners' Park was no longer fit for purpose, so a construction programme was started in 2023 on a new building which would combine modern offices for the Union with retirement apartments run by the Nautilus Welfare Fund.

The Operations cluster sourced and made available some £2.7 million towards the construction cost of the new building, which is expected to be fully occupied by the end of 2024.

IT support

Our IT team ensured that the London office staff were able to move to their new location in 2022 with minimal disruption. Staff were provided with flexible IT equipment to assist with the new hybrid working arrangement combining some homeworking with hot-desking at ITF House. This will be replicated in the new head office at Mariners' Park.

Other major projects for the IT team include an ongoing review of the Union's websites and CRM database.



Olu Tunde
Deputy general secretary

Financial management

The UK branch annual audit for the year 2022 and 2023 was successfully completed with a clean bill of health. This account was consolidated with the Netherlands and Switzerland branches, and the accounts were filed within the statutory deadline with the Certification Office.

On-time finance resources were made available to all departments in the Union, and we successfully changed the UK branch union investment manager from UBS to James Hambro & Partners.

A successful three-year pay agreement was reached with UK staff reps, covering 2023, 2024 and 2025. This agreement will assist in budget planning and gives a long-term view of the direction of the biggest cost for the organisation.

Credit union launch

We are at the final stage of rolling out a new benefit to Nautilus members: a partnership with CommSave, one of the biggest credit unions in the UK. This is a benefit our members have been seeking for some years, and will give them access to ethical savings and loans. Credit union membership is being offered first to UK members while we negotiate the path to include our other two national branches.

/...Operations

Investors in People

Nautilus strives to meet the highest standards in its personnel management, and we are proud to be part of the independent human resources accreditation scheme Investors in People (IIP).

Over the last two years, the UK branch has been at the vanguard of the successful IIP upgrade from Silver accreditation to Gold accreditation. The momentum is now building to Platinum accreditation.

Part of this work on enhancing our human resources provision involved completing the Change Programme that commenced in 2018, which was interrupted by the pandemic. All recommendations are now being implemented, including establishing



a competence framework, a re-evaluation of job descriptions and the implementation of a standardised recruitment process.

A celebration of our IIP Gold accreditation and all the Union's achievements was held in Liverpool in September 2024, with staff from all branches in attendance. Staff were able to visit the new head office building in Wallasey and get to know each other better at a celebration dinner in a Liverpool hotel.



Deputy general secretary Olu Tunde leads a visit by maritime minister Mike Kane and other dignitaries to see the new building at Mariners' Park



Welfare

In the UK, Nautilus International provides welfare support to retired seafarers and their dependants through the Nautilus Welfare Fund, a registered charity (no. 218742) administered by the Union.

Also known as Nautilus Welfare, the charity is based at the Mariners' Park estate in Wallasey, northwest England. Situated on the banks of the River Mersey and overlooking the iconic Liverpool waterfront, the Park offers independent retirement accommodation and a care home for residents who need a higher level of nursing support.

In addition, Nautilus Welfare operates its own domiciliary care service – Nautilus Care – which is registered with the UK Care Quality Commission.

In the wider UK community, the charity runs a highly successful Caseworker Service, in which grants and benefits professionals visit retired seafarers to help them claim the financial support they are entitled to.

Nautilus Welfare has five main objectives, and the last two years have seen strong progress in meeting these, as seen below.

Provide good modern accommodation

The new Nautilus House building

Thanks to a combined multi-million-pound investment from Nautilus International



Andrew Jones
Director of welfare and care

and Nautilus Welfare, we have constructed a state-of-the-art new building known as Nautilus House that offers 27 two-bedroom retirement apartments and new premises for the Union's head office at Mariners' Park. The old Nautilus House (an ageing office block next door to the new site) has now been demolished, and residents and staff members are moving into the new building in autumn 2024.

This investment in Mariners' Park won in the 2022 Mersey Maritime Industry Awards – cited that year as 'the most significant deal in the maritime industry within the Liverpool City Region and greater North West'.

Other building and refurbishment work

Nautilus House is just the latest in a long list of developments aimed at keeping Nautilus Welfare at the forefront of meeting the welfare needs of seafarers and their dependants, whilst also contributing to the charity's long-term sustainability.

We are pleased to report, therefore, that the last two years at Mariners' Park have seen the following work:

- a four-bedroom extension of Mariners' Park Care Home, taking the number of registered beds from 32 to 36
- refurbishment of the balconies at Trinity House Hub

Drone shot
of the care home
at Mariners' Park
April 2023

Credit: Nautilus International



Caseworker
Gwen Rayner
receiving the
Lord Lewin
award in 2023



Landscaping
Mariners'
Park



Caseworker
Ruth O'Brien



Caseworker
John Norris,
MNA,
east coast



Summer fayre
2024



Mersey river
view

/...Welfare

- full redecoration of the entrance area of the care home, main dining/communal area and flooring
- carpets in the home being replaced with vinyl flooring
- sanding down and repainting of benches on the estate
- refurbishment of independent-living properties that have become vacant
- replacement of fire doors
- replacement of thermostatic valves across the estate

Gibson House

There has also been progress on the Gibson House project across the road from the Mariners' Park Care Home. We sold the Gibson House site in 2019, as the retirement accommodation in the Victorian building no longer met modern standards for supported housing and would have proved prohibitively expensive for us to upgrade. In the last two years, work has been proceeding well on the refurbishment of the development by its new owners, and Gibson House is now near completion as a standard housing complex.

Work is yet to start on the new apartment buildings planned for the rest of the Gibson House site, but Nautilus has nomination rights for the new 26-apartment scheme which will be built as part of this development. This will extend the accommodation options available to ex-seafarers and their dependants.

Provide quality care services

Mariners' Park Care Home

A change of management in 2023 saw registered nurse Grace Holley appointed as the registered manager of Mariners' Park Care Home. New systems and processes have been implemented at the home, which include a Quality Compliance System (QCS) and an Electronic Medication Administration Record (eMAR) system.

The changes have reduced the agency fees for the care home dramatically and feedback from families and residents on the care being provided has been excellent.

Nautilus Care

Mike Clarke has been appointed as the Nautilus Care manager, and a new QCS and electronic person-centred software have been implemented into our domiciliary care service.

Nautilus Care achieved a 'Good' rating in the most recent Care Quality Commission inspection.

Specialist physiotherapy and nursing

Nautilus Welfare has been able to offer 12 hours of physiotherapy services each week to the residents of Mariners' Park, with the physiotherapist completing residents' moving and handling assessments and care plans to improve health, safety and pain management. This early intervention and diagnosis can help improve the outcomes of musculoskeletal problems, reducing the risk of falls and increasing independence. Nautilus Welfare is grateful for the support of The Seafarers' Charity in making this possible.

Thanks to the support of the Seafarers' Hospital Society, the Charente Group and Trinity House, we have also been able to extend our Admiral Nurse service, funding a specialist nurse who supports residents and their family carers to cope with the challenges of living with dementia.

Social and enrichment activities

Our men's activity coordinator post was supported by The Seafarers' Charity, but unfortunately the funding was withdrawn in early 2024, leading to the retirement of the longstanding post-holder Roger Cliffe-Thompson. We are now seeking to incorporate the men's activity programme into the wide range of activities and social events provided for all residents at Mariners' Park. Residents have continued with their activity calendar, supported by staff from the Nautilus Care team and the activities coordinator from the care home.

Listening and responding to residents' feedback is important to ensure services remain relevant. In addition to the residents' annual questionnaire, regular feedback meetings are held through the residents' forum.

/...Welfare

Ensure an effective advice, information and grant service

In 2022 and 2023, 66 mariners and their dependants received grants from the Nautilus Welfare Fund to meet essential expenses, including household repairs, replacement white goods and support with debt.

During this period, 1,509 ex-mariners and their dependants were assisted by the Nautilus Welfare Fund Caseworker Service, which employs six expert advisers based in Hull, Glasgow, Cardiff, Tyne and Wear, Merseyside, and Portsmouth/Southampton.

The caseworkers visit clients in their own homes to help them access the state welfare benefits they are entitled to, as well as health, housing and social care support. In 2022 and 2023 the caseworkers generated £2,418,501 in benefits and grants for clients.

Ensure the charity is financially viable

Securing grant funding for service development is an important part of Nautilus Welfare's work. The charity regularly benefits from revenue support from The Seafarers' Charity (formerly known as King George's Fund for Sailors and Seafarers UK), as well as Trinity House, Seafarers Hospital Society and the Merchant Navy Welfare Board, and we are grateful for the generosity of these fellow charities.

In 2022 £485,956 in grant funding was secured and in 2023 £1,938,529 (including £1.5m for the new Nautilus House).

Nautilus Welfare operates robust monitoring systems, including monthly reviews and quarterly scrutiny by the Nautilus Welfare Committee, which reports to the Nautilus International Council as the charity's Managing Trustee. There is a full independent annual audit, plus the submission of the annual return to the Charity Commission.

Ensuring high occupancy of the 123 properties and the care home is essential, and the charity works diligently to promptly fill any vacancies. Our financial performance for 2022 and 2023 is shown below.

2022

Income £3,368,033
Expenditure -£3,954,755
Investment losses -£746,827
Net expenditure -£1,333,549

2023

Income £5,301,793
Expenditure £4,293,741
Investment gains £282,468
Net income £1,290,520

Work in partnership with other maritime charities

Nautilus Welfare works closely with colleagues in the wider sector to develop and enhance service provision for seafarers, sharing funding of new initiatives and continuing essential services.

The charity is an active member of the Maritime Charities Group (MCG) and is involved in promoting greater collaboration across the sector.

The MCG incorporates eight major charities: ITF Seafarers' Trust, Seafarers Hospital Society, LR Foundation, The Seafarers' Charity, Merchant Navy Welfare Board, The TK Foundation, Trinity House and Nautilus Welfare.



Nautilus staff and Mariners' Park residents contributing to the success of Nautilus Welfare



Radio officer's club



Awards and obituaries

Bevis Minter Award

Since the last UK Branch Conference in November 2022, Nautilus has twice awarded the annual Bevis Minter Award for the Most Worthy Cadet. The award recognises outstanding achievement by Merchant Navy cadets in overcoming difficulties during their study, and has now been given a higher national prominence by becoming part of a suite of awards offered by the industry body Maritime UK.

The **2023 Bevis Minter Award** went to Warsash Maritime School cadet **Molvipa (Molly) Takhiansok**, who was sponsored by Princess Cruises during her training. She had to complete her cadetship during the coronavirus pandemic as well as overcoming other personal challenges.

The **2024 Bevis Minter Award** was taken by another Warsash cadet, **Scarlett Barnett-Smith**, who was sponsored for her training by the Port of London Authority and Trinity House. Warsash Maritime School nominated her for 'fantastic work over the course of her studies to raise the profile and awareness of maritime and the shipping industry, and for being such a successful role model for young women in maritime'.

Obituaries

In the last two years, Nautilus has said goodbye to a number of members who had served faithfully on the UK Branch Committee, the Nautilus Welfare Fund Committee or the Councils of our UK predecessor unions. These members were **James Cameron, John Davies, Robert Doyle, Anthony Fell, Malcolm Graves, John Roberts** and **Willie Williamson**.

Obituaries of these members can be found in the Letters to the editor section of the Nautilus website: www.nautilusint.org/en/news-insight/letters-to-the-editor

If you would like to pay tribute to a fellow member who has died, please email telegraph@nautilusint.org



2023 Bevis Minter awardee **Molvipa (Molly) Takhiansok** carrying the red ensign at the Annual National Service for Seafarers



2024 Bevis Minter awardee **Scarlett Barnett-Smith** at the Maritime UK award ceremony

Head office

Nautilus House
Wallasey CH45 7AE
T: +44 (0)151 639 8454

London office

Nautilus International
ITF House
49-60 Borough Road
London SE1 1DR
Tel: +44 (0)20 8989 6677

Nautilus Welfare Fund

Trinity House Hub
Webster Avenue
Mariners' Park
Wallasey CH44 0AE
Tel: +44 (0)151 346 8840

follow us on...



www.nautilusint.org

UK Branch Conference Report 2024
edited by Sarah Robinson and produced
by June Cattini-Walker

Cover image:
Smart shipping using automation
Credit: Getty Images

All image credits throughout report:
Nautilus International, except where otherwise stated

Published: November 2024