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From deck to wheelhouse: new grant scheme available to support next generation of skippers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The [Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(CFPO\)](#) has announced a new grant support scheme in partnership with the [Merchant Navy Welfare Board \(MNWB\)](#) that will enable a cohort of fishermen to develop higher-level skills and sought-after qualifications to progress their fishing careers. This is a welcomed grant and will serve as a catalyst for helping fishermen move up the ranks and meet the needs of the industry.

One of the biggest barriers fishermen face in obtaining higher level qualifications is taking time off from going to sea, but with the grant support from the MNWB, there are now funds available to cover loss of earnings, travel, accommodation and some basic living costs.

Joel Dunn, CFPO [Youth Board](#) member and skipper, explained:

“Working towards developing the necessary skills and knowledge to obtain a Class 2 qualification takes time and dedication - the course runs for 12 weeks. Given the current financial climate, three months in a classroom is a significant amount of time to not be at sea earning, so the financial support from the MNWB will be a major help and certainly encourage people to take on the challenge and upskill themselves.”

Setting out as a pilot project, the up-and-coming fishermen will enrol on higher-level courses throughout 2023 to work towards their Class 3 and Class 2 qualifications. To obtain the qualifications, trainees will need to develop skills in navigation, meteorology, stability, chart work, safety, and management, with the training taking a minimum of 12 weeks.

Chris Ranford, Chief Executive Officer of the CFPO, stated:

“The CFPO published a new fishing strategy in 2022 and developing people is a key theme within it. Cornwall has a long tradition of producing top-class fishermen and this project will ensure we continue to nurture the talent that already exists within the industry and really help build careers in fishing. It's not just about qualifications, this project also aims to improve people's confidence and ambition to carry on progressing.”

Sharon Coveney, Deputy Chief Executive of the MNWB, commented:

“We have so many talented and experienced fishermen who work tirelessly to land around 400,000 tonnes of fish each year in the UK. There's no escaping that being a fisherman is a physically and mentally demanding job with long hours and can be



unpredictable at times. Yet, it's one of the most rewarding sectors to work in providing high quality fish for millions of people. Now, more than ever, it's crucial we see more people coming into the industry as well as those making real progression. We are delighted to provide this grant that will play a major role in boosting careers in this industry at a vitally-important time."

The MNWB grant funding is available throughout 2023 and initially focuses on supporting CFPO members and their crew. If you would like to know more about this project, then please get in contact with the CFPO office.

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Notes to editors:

The [Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(CFPO\)](#) was established in 1975 by local fishermen in Cornwall. Today, they are proud to represent fishermen from all over Cornwall and beyond who make up one of the most sustainable and diverse fishing fleets in Europe.

The [Merchant Navy Welfare Board \(MNWB\)](#) is a registered charity formed by the UK government out of the 'Seamen's Welfare Board' in 1948 following the end of the Second World War. It is the umbrella charity for the UK Merchant Navy and fishing fleet that offers support and services to seafarers, fishermen and their dependents.

The [CFPO Youth Board](#) is made up of young fishermen, young people with an interest in the industry, and a host of maritime experts brought together to tackle the growing challenge of recruiting youth into the fishing industry.