

9 March 2010

MESSAGE FROM CAPTAIN SEA CADETS – REBRANDING

I write to inform all members of the Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), volunteers, cadets and staff about the re-branding of the Marine Society & Sea Cadets which we aim to roll out starting on 26 April 2010.

Re-branding is an emotive issue in any organisation, but perhaps more so given the strong emotional attachment that SCC members have to what is such an excellent and long established organisation. I fully appreciate that this affection only grows stronger the longer you have been in the Corps, so as someone who has been in post for such a short period I am mindful of the sensitivities and hence my reason for forewarning you of this imminent and potentially significant change.

To reassure you, your senior volunteers, the Senior Staff Officers (SSO), have seen the change as have your National Sea Cadet Advisory Council (NSCAC), the Area Officers and Business Management Directors and their comments have been taken onboard where practical to do so. The general consensus of these groups is that this change is a positive step for the Corps. However, I appreciate that some will welcome the change more than others and that is only natural given the diverse group of people we seek to represent from junior cadets to very senior and long serving volunteers, and the new audiences we wish to engage with.

While I cannot give you the designs at this stage I will reassure you this is an evolution not a revolution building upon our heritage, pedigree and our unique relationship with the Royal Navy, while at the same time recognising that we must compete in a modern and dynamic environment.

This fresh new look will present the Sea Cadets in a modern, vibrant light with the purpose of appealing to new volunteers and young people. I often hear

comment that the SCC is a best kept secret however, I am aware that this is not actually the case. We achieve an incredible amount of media coverage from the great work that Units do on a daily basis, with on average 33 million opportunities every month for people to see or hear about us in the media, what we do is certainly no secret. However, I think for many people we are hidden as they hold an outdated view of us and the new look is a step towards establishing ourselves more firmly and raising our profile.

May I assure you up front, that there is absolutely no intention to alter uniforms of the Corps or to dilute our proud traditions and linkage to the Senior Service. To that end, I have personally briefed senior members of the Royal Navy up to Admiral level and they are comfortable that the change the MSSC Trustees have endorsed is a positive one.

In April, I will write to you again and provide the specific details of the changes, along with a complete starter pack of rebranded materials including stationery, marketing leaflets and gizits.

The launch pad of the new look will be the new upgraded website. Apart from new functionality and design Unit websites will in essence remain the same. We have taken onboard feedback about the current system and are developing a better system for you that includes a gallery function and additional pages.

Unit websites are a crucial external facing PR tool, and often the first contact someone will have with us, so it is important that we present a unified, national identity. As such we need to keep the websites at their best, and there will be guidelines to help you use them. In future only MSSC provided websites will be linked to the main website.

The various templates for stationery, business cards etc will also be provided in April on the T&A site. We will be asking you to dispose of all stationery and

marketing materials with immediate effect as these will be supplied to you initially by HQ at no cost.

For big ticket items like Unit signs, Area and locally produced goods such as T-shirts and polo shirts there will be some flexibility on when we ask you to change. However, we will encourage you to do so sooner rather than later and any items you are looking to produce or use from April 2010 will need to be in the new look. Guidelines, and templates for these items, like T-shirts and other materials including boat and vehicle stickers, banners and pop ups will be on the website to make it as easy as possible for you to produce correctly branded materials.

Some of you may wonder how the re-branding has been funded to date. May I assure you that this has been achieved by the HQ marketing and communications team making efficiencies in their existing budget over a two year period so no additional funding has been required from other areas of MSSC business.

For the brand refresh to be successful we must all make positive steps to move over to the new look as swiftly as possible. Change is never easy to embrace, but I ask you one and all to embrace this latest change which I am very confident is a further positive step in the ongoing modernisation of the SCC as a vibrant youth organisation with strong and enduring links to the Senior Service. Please do not ask for further information at this stage from either your Area staff or myself, as this will be provided to you in April when we are ready.

I trust that you will appreciate this note and the fact that as your Captain Sea Cadets I am giving you a heads up and due warning of this important change to your Sea Cadet Corps.

CSC