

IPO staff answer SOS from Newport Sea Cadets

The day before Christmas Eve last year brought heartbreak for the local charity, as 18 inches of floodwater poured into their HQ, undoing recent renovations to the building overnight. Uniforms, office equipment, kitchen amenities and a great deal of the training and sporting equipment were ruined, leaving the cadets' facility just off the newly built Riverbank Avenue unable to open and in need of significant work.

When Trustees from Newport Sea Cadets put out a call for help, staff at the IPO jumped at the chance to offer their assistance, initially offering to donate some surplus chairs and desks from the IPO premises in Newport.

But that was just the beginning. When the IPO staff members learned the full extent of the damage, they seized the chance to help get the building open again and help restore a degree of normality for the cadets, aged from 10 to 18.

It was then 'all hands on deck', as a squad of volunteers from the IPO grabbed paint-brushes and donned their overalls, helping make things ship-shape again with a full repaint of the building's exterior.

With the weather fortunately on their side, the team managed to get the whole job done during just one day in September.

Newport Sea Cadets Group Secretary and Treasurer Ann Bowen said:

We acquired the building in 1953 and trace our history back to 1900, making us one of the oldest – if not the very oldest – Sea Cadet units in the country. Being run entirely by volunteers, we are totally reliant on our own fundraising to cover the costs of maintaining our building and purchasing equipment for the cadets. It was an enormous effort in the first place to secure the funding we need to carry out our renovations. When we suffered such dreadful damage and losses in the flood, we feared our insurance would never cover all of it. It just couldn't have come at a worse time.

When the IPO first got in touch with the kind offer to donate some old office equipment we were naturally delighted. But they've gone so much further than this, and I cannot begin to thank the volunteers from the IPO enough – their efforts have been truly amazing. This work has really transformed the way our building looks, so it's something we can take pride in again.

The IPO says that encouraging staff to embrace local volunteering projects is a central part of what helps make a brilliant place to work. Previous

volunteering projects have seen IPO staff carry out litter-picks in and around Newport, helping with conservation work in the Brecon Beacons, and doing work to support the Prince's Trust.

IPO Chief Executive Tim Moss said:

This is a great example of a project that will make a real difference to wellbeing within the community. Encouraging our people to get involved in projects such as this one and 'give something back' is a big part of helping make the IPO a brilliant place to work. I am thrilled to see volunteers from the IPO making a such a positive impact, and I'd like to congratulate all our people who came to the aid of Newport Sea Cadets at a time of need.

IPO staff member Julia Appleby, who volunteered on the project said:

I am proud to have given something back to the local community and so pleased that I had the chance to do this through my job. We're all very grateful to Ann and the team at Newport Sea Cadets for keeping us stocked up with cups of tea – I'm pretty sure that helped us manage to smash painting the whole building in one day! I'll definitely be looking for other opportunities to volunteer through work in the future and will encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Notes to editors:

1) Newport Sea Cadets come from a range of backgrounds and are united by the goal of becoming the "best version of themselves" through activities and adventures that promote "teamwork, respect, loyalty, self-confidence, commitment, self-discipline and honesty", in a safe environment. They are supported by 11 volunteer staff and 6 committee members, who according to the Sea Cadets' website share a commitment to "helping young people launch well in life today". Sea Cadets offers youngsters a wide range of activities not all confined to the water – from sailing, windsurfing and powerboating – to rock climbing, camping, and music.

2) Newport Sea Cadets dates back to 1900, originally under the name of Maindee Church Lads' Brigade. It acquired its current HQ in 1953.

3) [The Intellectual Property Office \(IPO\)](#) is an executive agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It currently employs around 1,600 staff, mostly based at the Newport HQ.

4) The [IPO's published strategy 2018-21](#) sets out a range of measures with a goal of making the IPO a brilliant place to work. This forms part of the IPO's overall strategy to make the UK the most innovative and creative country in the world.

5) More information about [Newport Sea Cadets](#) is published online.