

THE SEVENTY-SIXTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE

PORT
WELFARE
COMMITTEE

HONG KONG
2024 – 25

PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE

Port Welfare Committee

(1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Chairman : Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois - Hong Kong Shipowners Association

Members : Mr CHAN Kam-foo - Hong Kong General Chamber
of Commerce

Captain Firoze Minoo MIRZA

Mr LAU Mang-tak - Merchant Navy Officers'
Guild – Hong Kong

Captain CHOW Tak-chor, William - Hong Kong Seamen's Union

Dr LO Chiu-sing, Patrick - Department of Health (ex-officio)

Ms NG Soo-wah, Louise - Labour Department (ex-officio)

Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy - Marine Department (ex-officio)

Secretary : Ms CHIU Kwok-yi, Lisa - Marine Department (ex-officio)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Port Welfare Committee (The Committee) would like to express our sincere gratitude to all parties who have contributed to this annual report.

We would like to acknowledge our heartfelt thanks to the Reverend Canon Stephen Miller, Senior Chaplain of The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers, and Reverend Rebecca Holm (until 31 December 2024) and Reverend Margith Pedersen, Port Chaplains of the Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong, for their contribution to the articles describing the impressive work accomplished by these two seafarers' welfare agencies in an attempt to advance the welfare of all serving seamen.

Our appreciation also goes to Senior Treasury Accountant / Finance and Treasury Accountant / Internal Audit of the Marine Department of the HKSAR as the Treasurer and the Honorary Auditor of the Committee for compiling and auditing the financial statements annually.

The Committee would also like to thank the Secretariat for their efforts in compiling this publication.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To co-ordinate on behalf of Government arrangements in Hong Kong for social and recreational welfare of all serving seamen, with the exception of those who are residing in Hong Kong. The term "serving seamen" shall be construed to mean "those seamen visiting the port and those temporarily residing here, consequent upon discharge for health or other reasons, awaiting re-engagement or repatriation".
2. To allocate any grants or monies which the Committee may receive from all sources for the social and recreational welfare of seamen.
3. To obtain information on developments and facilities in connection with seamen's welfare in other ports, and to take appropriate action in the light of this information.
4. To take such other action as it may see fit to promote the welfare of visiting seamen, including action in conjunction with other social and recreational bodies.
5. To publish an annual report and audited accounts.

REPORT

Introduction

Established in 1947, the Port Welfare Committee (the Committee) is a non-statutory body which co-ordinates social and recreational welfare services for visiting seafarers. The Committee has been



recognised by the Inland Revenue Department as a charitable institution or trust of a public character since 1961. The membership of the Committee is a tripartite representation of government departments, representatives of employers' associations (i.e. the shipping trade) and employees' institutions (i.e. the seamen's unions), which is concerned with the welfare of visiting seafarers on ships calling at Hong Kong. The Committee aims to ensure that proper arrangements are made to safeguard the social and recreational welfare of visiting seafarers of all nationalities.

Seafarers' Welfare Agencies

2. It is an international common practice for major ports to provide support to seafarers away from home for prolonged periods at sea. Such services include social and welfare provisions alongside onshore facilities such as affordable accommodation of reasonable standard and other recreational facilities. In Hong Kong, such support services are provided by The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers (The Mission) and Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong (The Church). These two seafarers' welfare agencies derive their income from the services they offer, such as restaurant facilities and accommodation. In addition, the Committee's subventions are one of their sources of funds.

Finance

3. The Committee relies upon yearly donations from the shipping and commercial community for its financial resources. With appeal letters sent annually to the community, the Committee receives their generous contributions for the noble cause of supporting our visiting seafarers. The total amount of donations collected in Financial Year (FY) 2024-25 was HK\$55,000. Each year, the Committee allocates the donations to the two aforementioned seafarers' welfare agencies. In view that the issue of mental health of seafarers had begun to attract more attention of the shipping industry since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and that the resources for mental health services at sea were generally limited, a subvention of HK\$50,000 was granted to The Mission and HK\$5,000 to The Church with a focus on strengthening the counselling services for the seafarers in FY 2025-26. The two agencies would report their enhanced counselling service in the FY 2025-26 in the next yearly Annual Report which will be issued by September 2026.



Port Statistics

4. Hong Kong is an international maritime centre and a regional hub port. It is one of the busiest ports in the world. In 2024, vessel arrivals at the



Hong Kong port amounted to more than 100 600 and the Hong Kong port handled 13.7 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs¹) of containers in the year, totaling 177 million tonnes of cargo. There were 9.47 million cross-boundary ferry and cruise passenger journeys in the year.

¹ A twenty-foot container is the notional standard of “box” of modern cargo logistics. The standard has given rise to the basic measure for container ships and port traffic, the twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU).



Employment

5. The shortage of manpower is a subject of concern of the maritime industry in Hong Kong. The government and the industry have joined hands to train up local seafarers to help alleviate this shortage. A scheme titled “Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme” (the Scheme) was set up in 2004 with an initial funding of \$9.0 million. An additional amount of \$19.2 million was granted by the government in 2009. The Maritime & Aviation Training Fund injected more fund in 2025 totaling for \$32.512 million up till March 2025. As at the same date, 728 young persons joined the Scheme with 334 deck cadets and 126 engineer cadets reaching the standard of Class 3 Certificate of Competency (CoC). Among the above cadets who obtained Class 3 CoC, 114 deck officers and 51 engineer officers had obtained Class 2 CoC; and 70 deck officers and 24 engineer officers had obtained Class 1 CoC. The results were both encouraging and promising.

The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers²



Background



Established in 1856 in the United Kingdom, The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers (formerly titled The Sailors Home and Missions to Seamen) is an international charitable institution for all seafarers.

The Mission is committed to promoting spiritual materials and moral welfare of seafarers through provision of chaplaincy services, accommodation and recreational facilities. Being inter-denominational in character, The Mission has been working in ecumenical partnership with other denominations, including Apostolatus Maris, German Seamen's Mission and Church of Sweden Abroad. These denominations use the Mariners' Club in Kwai Chung as a base for their ministry in the port.

Of more than 100 chaplaincies of The Mission worldwide, the port chaplain in Hong Kong was established in the late 19th century. The Mission was recognised as a statutory corporation by the Government in 1930.

In May 2018, The Sailors Home and Missions to Seamen was retitled The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers under the Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers Incorporation Ordinance (Cap. 1042). The Mission, in lieu of The Missions, connotes that it serves seafarers of all nationalities, creeds and genders.

² <https://www.themarinersclubhk.org/>

6. With the contribution of the Mission, the following paragraphs describe its meritorious work in FY 2024-25 –

Reaching-out to Seafarers

7. In FY 2024-25, the Chaplaincy team visited 6 480 ships anchored in Hong Kong. The Mission continued to provide shop to ship service but such service is now phasing out as shore leave is once again returning to pre-pandemic levels. Instead, the Mission arranged to take members of the crew on a day out by its launch which could accommodate up to 20 passengers for a trip. Seafarers were happy to have a short break from the daily routine of on-board work and activities as shown in photos below.



Provision of Internet Support

8. The Mission noted that more vessels calling in Hong Kong now are fitted with “Starlink”, which provides seafarers with high-speed internet access on the water. The need for data SIM cards, however, still seems to have remained the same. In this regard, the Mission will monitor the situation about the “Starlink” usage and the demand of data SIM cards.



Shuttle Service

9. In FY 2024-25, the Mission provided transport services to 4 488 seafarers from their vessels to either its drop-in-centre in Kwai Chung or to shopping centres in Kwai Fong, Tsing Yi and Tsim Sha Tsui.

Sharing of Festive Joy

10. Christmas is one of the most joyful festivals treasured by the seafarers. In December 2024, the Mission distributed over 11 000 presents to seafarers when their vessels called in Hong Kong. Also, the Mission shared mooncakes during Mid-Autumn Festival and small gifts to Chinese Seafarers at Chinese New Year.



Facilities

11. The Mission operates two Mariners' Clubs: one is located right in the centre of "container port city" at Kwai Chung, while the other is located in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) which is in the heart of the tourist area of Kowloon.

12. The Kwai Chung facility is accessible for seafarers whose vessels are often only in port for a matter of hours. 5 381 seafarers have used the facilities in the centre in Kwai Chung.



13. The TST Club is an ideal location for seafarers who are leaving or joining their vessels and require accommodation as it is close to shopping malls, night markets and downtown activity in tourist nightlife. In March 2018, it was closed for redevelopment. The newly renovated TST Club will open in September 2025, which provides 75 guest rooms for seafarers, a gymnasium and a swimming pool, a coffee lounge and a bar, as well as a restaurant, functions rooms and a church.



Counselling Services



14. The issue of mental health of seafarers has attracted more and more attention of the shipping industry since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the rising needs for more counselling services for the visiting seafarers, the Mission has in the year strengthened the services by providing an additional chaplain who is a trained counsellor and specialist in suicide prevention.

Hong Kong Seafarers' Awards 2024



15. The Seafarers Awards are established to commend companies that have excellent welfare provided to their seafarers by conducting surveys among the seafarers. The Mission held the Seafarers' Awards 2024 in January 2025.





Future

16. While The Mission will continue to promote spiritual wellbeing and moral welfare of seafarers through provision of chaplaincy services, accommodation and recreational facilities, they will also structure some mental wellbeing courses with the grant from the Committee to enhance the counselling service available to seafarers. More details of its enhanced counselling service will be included in the next Annual Report.

Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong³



DANISH SEAMEN'S CHURCH
HONG KONG

Background

The Danish Seamen's Church in Hong Kong is a branch of the Danish Churches Abroad that is under the Protestant (Lutheran) Church. For more than 40 years, the Danish Seamen's Church has sent chaplains and staff to Hong Kong for the purpose of providing church services, spiritual and welfare services to seafarers on board Danish flagged vessels. The Danish Seamen's Church is a private organization.

In 1979, The Church reached out to Hong Kong port and became part of the ecumenical partnership at the Mariners' Club. Since then, it has helped Danes in Hong Kong and seafarers from all nationalities with anything from Christmas presents to spiritual aid.



³ <http://www.soemandskirken.org/>

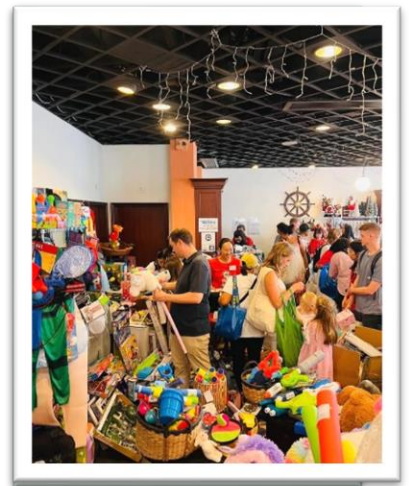
17. With the contribution of the Church, the following paragraphs describe its meritorious work in FY 2024-25 –

Funding

18. While salary of the chaplain and the assistant are paid by the Church itself, all other financial resources for the daily running costs are private donations from Danes living in Hong Kong, Danish companies and organizations as well as global container logistics corporations. The Church also earned some income from events like the annual Christmas bazaar.

Christmas Bazaar

19. Christmas bazaar is the primary way in which donors support the work of the Church and it remains the most important social event in the calendar of the Church. The last Christmas Bazaar was held on 16 November 2024 in Kwai Chung Mariners' Club when the Scandinavian corporations in Hong Kong were invited to contribute their good and merchandise towards tombola and lucky draws. The Church sells food and Christmas decoration with the help from community volunteers. All income is used for the continuing operation of the Church.



Small Kiosk

20. Other than the annual Christmas Bazaar, The Church also has a small kiosk in the Danish Room. The kiosk provides a wide range of Danish goods which are typically difficult to find in Hong Kong, including Danish candy and food that the Danish Seafarers are happy to buy when they arrive in Hong Kong. The income is used for the operations of the welfare services.



Welfare Services to Seafarers

Ship visits

21. Before the vessels arrive in Hong Kong, the Church will send them emails and get prepared if any help or assistance is required. It can be as simple as buying some games, medicines, sim cards, nutrition supplements, electronic items, or other “daily needs”. Especially at Christmas time, the Church helped buy, wrap and deliver Christmas presents to seafarers. After the vessel left, the Church will keep in daily contact with many seafarers online on WhatsApp and other platforms. In 2024-25, the Church has visited 151 Danish flagged vessels, and occasionally visited vessels sailing under others flags when the seafarers contacted them.



Children's events

22. Twice a month, the Church hosts Danish lessons and a playgroup for children in Danish Room. They are primarily for parents with children, who have Danish roots. Many marriages consist of mixed nationalities in Hong Kong. Children who were born and brought up in Hong Kong can know more about Danish traditions, eat Danish food, and learn Danish.



Shuttle service

23. Since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, many seafarers use shuttle service provided by the Church again. Seafarers are picked up in front of the vessel and transferred to the Mariners' Club or the MTR station. Return shuttle service is also available. The Church has provided transportation to 55 seafarers in the year. In April 2025, the Church has received a grant from ITF Seafarers Trust for acquiring a new car to facilitate the Church to conduct more visits to ships and provide transport services to more seafarers.



Newspapers and Books Delivery

24. Apart from provision of necessities, the Church has subscribed newspapers across the world and distributed printouts to the seafarers with the help of “Sea Health and Welfare”, which is an international seafarers’ welfare and assistance network. In supporting all seamen from different nationalities, the Church has delivered newspapers from various countries. Danish and English books are also provided when requested. The Church continues to collect books and DVDs from donors, so that the seafarers can enjoy reading.



Facilities

25. The Church provides a meeting place, the ‘Danish Room’, in the Mariners’ Club, for seafarers to gather and mingle with each other. It is a good place for relaxation and conversation with fresh coffee on the jug provided. The Church plays an indispensable role in providing quality welfare services to the seafarers. Besides, the Church provides church services twice a month in Mariners’ Club, including blessing of marriages, baptism and confirmations. After the church services, participants would have lunch together to enjoy warm fellowship time.



Future

26. In September 2025, the Church will have a new assistant and a new interim Port Chaplain. For the coming year, the Church would endeavour to visit all Danish flagged vessels and offer spiritual and material assistance to all visiting seafarers on board. The Church is also working on a brochure which will be distributed to visiting seafarers to assist them enjoying the best time ashore in Hong Kong. With the grant from the Committee to enhance the counselling service available to seafarers in FY 2025-26, the Church will design a pamphlet to introduce the available counselling services for visiting seafarers and distribute it during ship visits. More details of its enhanced counselling service will be included in the next Annual Report.

List of Donors ^{Note}
Port Welfare Committee in 2024-25

1. Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Limited
2. Chellaram Shipping (Hong Kong) Limited
3. Cheoy Lee Shipyards Limited
4. Interocean Shipping Company Limited
5. NS United Shipping (H.K.) Company Limited
6. Ruttonjee Estates Continuation Limited
7. Taiship Company Limited
8. Teh-Hu Cargocean Management Company Limited
9. Tindall Riley (Britannia) Hong Kong Limited
10. Unique Shipping (H.K.) Limited

^{Note} The list is arranged in alphabetical order



Total donations received in 2024-25: HK\$55,000

The Committee endorsed in March 2025 the following amount of subventions be granted to the two seafarers' welfare agencies –

The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers	HK\$50,000
Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong	HK\$ 5,000

PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

HONORARY AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE ('the Committee')

(Operated by the Marine Department, of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ('HKSAR'))

With the appointment of the Treasury Accountant/Internal Audit of the Marine Department as the Honorary Auditor of the Committee according to the Standing Accounting Instructions (SAI) 1975 (6) of the Government of HKSAR, we have audited the attached financial statements of the Committee set out on pages 2 to 4, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 March 2025, and the statement of receipts and payments for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

The financial statements were prepared by the Secretariat of the Committee, which managed the fund of the Committee. In accordance with SAI 1975 (4), the public officer responsible for the management of a non-Government fund shall cause a statement of receipts and payments to be prepared for the fund for each of its accounting periods and at least once a year.

We conducted our audit in accordance with SAI 1975 and Accounting Circular No. 2/2016, including complying with the independence requirement.

In our opinion, the financial statements were properly prepared from the books and records maintained, and reflected fairly the receipts and payments of the fund of the Committee for the year ended 31 March 2025.



Ms SIU Nga-ying, Vanessa
Treasury Accountant / Internal Audit
Marine Department
Date: 22 Sep 2025

**PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	<u>2025</u> HK\$	<u>2024</u> HK\$
RECEIPTS		
Annual donations	55,000	120,000
	<u>55,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>
PAYMENTS		
Grant to The Sailors Home and Mission to Seafarers	50,000	110,000
Grant to Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong	5,000	11,000
	<u>55,000</u>	<u>121,000</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	0	(1,000)
RETAINED SURPLUSES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR	27,974	28,974
RETAINED SURPLUSES AT THE END OF THE YEAR	<u>27,974</u>	<u>27,974</u>

The annexed notes form an integral part of these financial statements.

**PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank	27,974	27,974
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>27,974</u>	<u>27,974</u>
<i>Representing:</i>		
RETAINED SURPLUSES	<u>27,974</u>	<u>27,974</u>

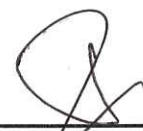
The annexed notes form an integral part of these financial statements.

We certify that the statement of receipts and payments has been properly prepared and reflects fairly the receipts and payments of the Fund.

Approved by the Committee on



Chairman
(Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois)



Treasurer
(Mr MAK Ho-pong, Bon)

**PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Reporting entity

Port Welfare Committee is a Committee operated by the Marine Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Committee's registered office is located at 21/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

The Committee is a non-profit making body and its principal activity is to ensure that proper arrangements are made to safeguard the welfare of and provide recreational facilities for visiting seafarers of all nationalities.

1. Basis of preparation and accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and are prepared on a cash basis. Moreover, the financial statements are prepared on the assumption that the committee is a going concern.

2. Taxation

No provision for taxation is necessary as the Committee is exempted as a charitable body.

3. Committee Members' emoluments

The Committee Members did not receive any emoluments from the Committee.