



WESSEX

RESERVE FORCES' & CADETS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

We are Wessex RFCA

Some Words from our President

Chair's Report

Reserves

Royal Naval Reserves

Royal Marine Reserves

Army Reserves

Auxiliary Royal Air Force

Cadets

Royal Naval Cadets

Army Cadets

RAF Air Cadets

Combined Cadet Force

Engagement

Employer Engagement

Armed Forces Covenant

Employer Engagement Scheme

Gold ERS Awards RM Stonehouse

Communications

Armed Forces Day Cornwall

Lord-Lieutenant's Awards 2023

Estates

Finance

County Key Information Pages

Financial Return 2023-24

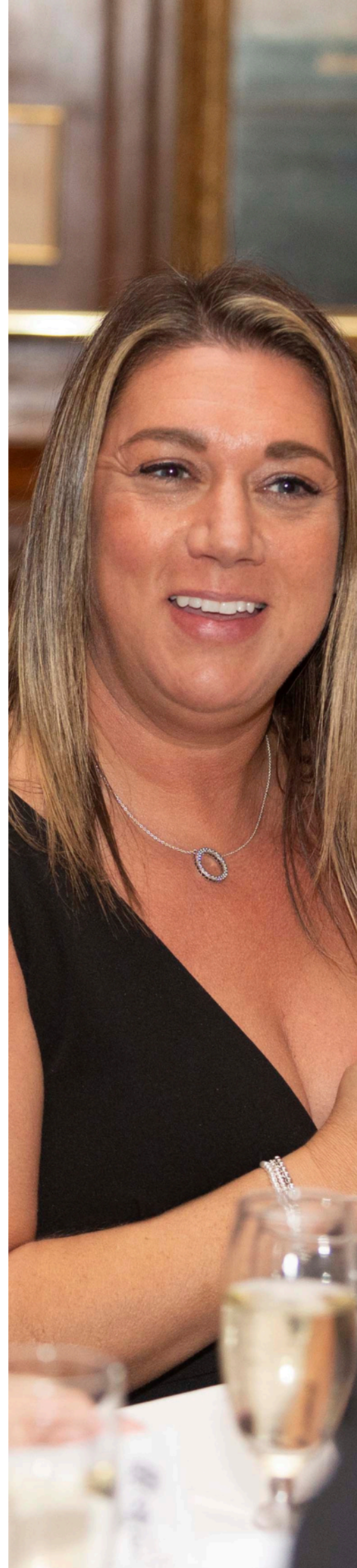


WE ARE WESSEX RFCA

The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) is an organisation which sits outside of the Service Chains of Command (an Arm's Length Body) but fully supports them in their activities. Wessex RFCA is one of 13 similar organisations across the country and has a footprint across the City and County of Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and the Channel Islands.

Underpinned by a vision to be the 'essential, effective and enduring partner that supports Reserves, Cadets and the wider Armed Forces community,' Wessex RFCA provides three primary pillars of support to Defence namely the delivery of engagement through our 'network of networks;' delivery and stewardship of a safe, compliant and functional Volunteer Estate (VE) and delivery of end to end support to Defence's Cadets and Youth programme.

Guided by an experienced and dedicated volunteer non-executive board, Wessex RFCA employs about 100 full-time personnel who are based either in its HQ in Taunton, or elsewhere within the region providing direct support to the cadet movement. It has an extensive volunteer membership of over 200 influential people drawn from the military, local authorities, business and the wider community who provide that critical connection with society so enabling our reservists and cadets to prosper.



SOME WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It has been a tremendous honour to have been given this, my second year, as President of the Wessex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association. Having been in post as the Lord-Lieutenant for Dorset for over ten and a half years, I retired on the fourth of this month which puts me a full week outside my 'sell-by-date' by the time of the AGM. To me the Wessex RFCA, along with the nation's other RFCA's, is an essential factor in the defence of our country and will become an ever more vital factor as we move forward into the deteriorating and uncertain defence landscape developing in Europe and across our world. Our defence assumptions since the cold war have been jolted into a rude awakening by recent events and action is needed further secure our country and its citizens against aggression.

However, more pertinent to the task at hand, there have been a great many achievements this year, many of which are reported in this excellent Annual Report produced by the team. I commend this to you and know that the Chair, Robert Wharton, will highlight the key successes in his Report at the AGM. At that meeting, I also look forward to hearing about the work the association has done to revise its strategic approach ensuring we remain relevant to those we are here to support and serve.

I know our Reserve Forces are an integral part of our national military capability and I have been delighted to see that Reservists from across the West County have been supporting operations abroad and in the UK such as supporting the training of Ukrainian Reservists. I am aware that recruiting and retention within our Armed Forces is a challenge so delighted we have chosen to focus on them during our insight briefing taking place at our AGM.

It is great to see our Cadet Forces continue to flourish and I am pleased numbers are now back above pre-COVID levels. I remain in awe of our adult volunteers and professional support staff who are instrumental in enabling the cadet experience and I encourage you all to take any and every opportunity to thank them for their enthusiasm and dedication.

The study into management of the Volunteer Estate we heard about at last year's AGM has now concluded and as I am sure you are all aware, as recommended within that study, we have now transitioned to the new model. This means an external contractor, Vivo Defence Services, is now responsible for maintaining our estate. While this does represent a significant change, I am cautiously optimistic it may ultimately benefit our reserves and cadets while also allowing our team to better manage the estate and assure the contract.

You will all be aware that the nations finances are stretched so will not be surprised to hear that our association has had to find some savings. In addition, we have had to find additional funds to pay for necessary statutory work on the estate, such as installing new fire doors. Despite this, we have been able to complete some impressive projects around the South West benefitting our reserves and cadets though as our reserves are depleting, I anticipate development projects in the future may necessarily be on a more modest scale.

I have been amazed by the breadth of activity conducted by our engagement team and I draw your attention to the articles in this report, perhaps most notably around employer engagement. As you will see, record numbers of companies are signing the Armed Forces Covenant and working up through the Employer Recognition Scheme. Maintaining that 'licence to operate' for our reserves and cadet force adult volunteers, both amongst employers and within the wider community, is vital and a key role for our membership.

I know my fellow Lord-Lieutenants are much looking forward to hosting their South West awards ceremonies this year and I will be sorry not to be in post by then. They are a highlight of the year and great opportunities to bring parts of the community together to celebrate the amazing achievements of our reserves and cadets as they receive their meritorious service awards. They are also an opportunity to present the Silver Employer Recognition Scheme certificates and meet our new Lord-Lieutenant Cadets.

I will close by reinforcing how grateful I am to our volunteer members for their valued support. Thanks also to the professional team in Taunton and through the counties for their professionalism and commitment. I know these are uncertain and challenging times but am confident your association is well placed to flourish as a force for good across the region. I have enjoyed my association with the Wessex RFCA tremendously. I will miss my connection with such a dedicated group of hard-working individuals in support the defence of our nation. It has been a tremendous honour.



CHAIR'S REPORT

ALL CHANGE, all change please, but this is not the last stop". The words heard as guests left a dinner in The Castle Hotel Taunton in November 2023 to dine out our departing chairman and chief executive. And yes, it has been a year of considerable change since you, the membership kindly (!) put on me the mantel of being Chair of this historic Association. So let us review the year.

Firstly, I thank our previous chair and chief executive for their long and hard work for the Association. Lance Ranson handed over at last year's AGM in September and Steve Hodder retired at the end of the same month. The new Chief Executive was not due to start in post until early January 2024.

Your Board

So as you might expect the mice ran amok while the cat was away and at one of the first meetings in November 2023 consisting of mostly the representatives from our seven counties it became very clear that there was a strong undercurrent for change in how we operated as a board and the activities we did or did not undertake in promoting our Association. Luckily the new Chief Executive was invited to attend our December board meeting as a guest and it then became clear that that was going to be the start of a unique opportunity for a new chairman and a new chief executive to start at the same time with a fresh set of four eyes on new ways forward. At this point considerable thanks must go to Hannah



Owen, as deputy Chief Executive, and indeed all the staff at Mount House who held the ship on a straight and steady course for some 3 months until January when Brigadier Neville Holmes started.

The year started with lots of unanswered questions and doubts about the future some of which I am delighted to say we have resolved successfully. Probably the most pleasing was to have it confirmed that, the possible proposal that the 13 national RFCAs should become part of a "non-departmental public body" was to be put on hold. However, it was clear that the Future Defence Infrastructure System (FDIS) would continue to go ahead. More on that below. The year has ended, however, in a very positive fashion with FDIS implemented and your board having reviewed the whole strategy and purpose of the Association.

Reserves

The reserve units in our area continue to go from strength to strength and many have been able to get reservists onto mobilised operations and to do what the reserves were formed to do which is support our regular counterparts in all of the 3 services and where possible to see active service. The reserves nationally continue to be heavily engaged in assisting training of Ukrainian troops. However, the “package” offered to aspiring recruits continues to need change, improving and speeding up in order to stop a very considerable number of recruits dropping out through lack of the ability to process them quickly enough to match their enthusiasm. It is still the position that we are losing more reserves out of the back door than we can sign up successfully through the front door. The “package” is under review at MoD level and of course the new government has a full strategic defence and security review reporting in April next year.

Cadets

The world of cadets has recovered well from the interruption of Covid and is very well recruited. Much thanks must go to our permanent staff for their unrelenting support to the cadets and those staff remain the backbone of our work in the seven counties. However, it is the cadet adult volunteers who give up so much of their free time to help train and enthuse the cadets, for without those people the cadet movement would struggle to survive. I urge everyone to do anything they can to support those amazing volunteers and recruit more of them.

Estates

This is the area that probably has taken most of the energy of management this year. The FDIS programme involved much work at Council level and organisational issues across all of the 13 RFCAs. A very comprehensive explanatory programme was produced for staff to start to understand how their roles would change, and it was only February that they were able to visit the helpdesk to get a better understanding of how the process would work. Somewhat obviously this caused disquiet and uncertainty within the team for the early part of this year. I am happy to report that now all has been understood and settled. In very simple terms our “customers” will call into a central hub with an estates problem at their site and subject to various financial criteria the central hub will instruct the approved contractor (VIVO Defence Services in the case of the South-West) to carry out the repair works.

Our team will monitor, and quality assess those works (whereas their previous job was to actually get the works carried out). The principal difference is that the works carried out by the contractor will be done on the basis of “fix first time” rather than the previous policy of “fix on fail”. Because Vivo will be paid direct by DIO, this means that where our financial turnover at RFCA last year was approximately £12 million we will end up next year as a business of approximately £7 million turnover.

Engagement

Our engagement team have had a really cracking year, so much so that we are needing to find ways to limit their work to manageable levels. The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) and Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS) are national successes, and the Southwest had particular success with Falmouth Armed Forces Day being the one of the highlights of the year. Thanks to all the team led by Rachel Brannagan. We have reformed the structure of the engagement committee and Stephen Whitbourn in particular has organised some very interesting and successful visits for employers. Our organisation of the Lord-Lieutenant's awards remains a very large part of our work in the autumn, and it has been pleasing to see the increase in the number of reservists put forward for awards. Please see the separate engagement report.

Finance

The current year required us to find some cost savings in our budget which we did without blood being spilt. However, even before the change of government we had been put on notice that the next financial year is going to be considerably more difficult with further cuts to our revenue. Since been put on notice we have had a change of government, and a strategic defence review started. There is little doubt that we will become more dependent on our regionally generated income and in particular that from the lettings of our "alternative venues".

As yet we do not know how extensive any impact of budget cuts may be. The other side of this coin is that in the past year we have successfully completed new buildings and modernised joint cadet centres in a number of places, Keynsham in particular, but we may well be faced with difficult decisions about how to keep places open and operable in a safe and secure manner given possible future financial constraints.

The Future

While strictly not a part of the review of last year I have already referred to the work done by the board in looking at the purpose of our existence and how we execute that. While there will be a separate slot at the annual general meeting on this subject I must take the opportunity to thank Air Commodore John Bessell and his strategy working group who have put in an enormous amount of time in the spring and summer to produce a report on which we will brief members at the AGM. The intent is to have a complete revised modus operandi by the end of the year which will coincide with the quinquennial review of the Association as a whole and its membership.

RESERVES

As at 1 January 2024, the total strength of the national Part Time Volunteer Reserve (PTVR) was 32,650. Of this number, approximately 3,300 are based in the South West. Reservists continue to serve in support of operations and tasks worldwide including the NATO enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia; leading the UK's contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (Op TOSCA); on Maritime security operations; and in support of our broader Defence Engagement activities. Within the UK, Reserves have taken the lead in the training of Ukrainian reservists in Op INTERFLEX.

It is therefore clear that the reserves remain a key part of our nation's military capability and as you will read, Reservists from all three services from across the South West are doing their bit. But, as you will also read, recruitment and retention is, in some areas, a challenge. The Council of Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (CRFCA) External Scrutiny Team report from 2023 stated that: 'there are some green shoots of optimism that indicate that the health of the Reserve can be stabilised' but that '...alongside addressing the growing challenges around retention, the focus on inflow remains vital.'

Defence Reserves have been in some form of transformation for the last decade. In 2013 the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) review focused on 'down and in' and the growth and investment in the single Service Reserves. The Reserve Force 2030 review (RF30) looked 'up and out' at people, skills, capacity and society. Building on these foundations, and the Haythornthwaite (HRAFI) review, the Defence Reserve Campaign Plan (DCPR) aims to take a more expansive view of Reserves. The vision for the DCPR is "A fully recruited, resourced, and integrated Reserves who are trained, at readiness, able to mobilise at pace to deliver Defence Outputs, including warfighting, generating both mass and specialist civilian skills and connections."



ROYAL NAVAL RESERVES

The Maritime Reserves (MR) comprises the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) and the Royal Marine Reserve (RMR). The RNR is represented in the Wessex RFCA region by HMS Flying Fox in Bristol, HMS Vivid in Plymouth and HMS Pegasus in RNAS Yeovilton. However, with recent transformational changes the RNR's additional national footprint means many other RNR personnel reside and work in the region but maybe administered by national units elsewhere making this a significant representation for Employer Support across the seven counties.

This year the RNR has continued to support global RN operations and train to be prepared for individual augmentation to joint, UK and international exercises and operations alongside partner nations.

HMS Flying Fox is now predominantly a preparation training establishment for newly joined Phase 1 and 2 RNR officers and ratings, plus continuation training for

ratings, plus continuation training for General Warfare specialisations such as Seamanship, Amphibious Warfare, Submarine Ops who may train elsewhere but are administered by HMS Flying Fox and their parent unit, HMS Cambria in Cardiff.

HMS Vivid is also a Phase 1 and 2 parent unit for the South West as well as administering the nationally recruited ex-regular Engineer Branch.

HMS Pegasus is a source of retained ex-regulars who not only enable the RN to maintain uniformed expertise but also contribute the training and delivery of Fleet Air Arm functions "held in reserve".

Whilst by some measures the numbers might be few, the actual numbers, reach and contribution of RNR reservists who live and work in the South West is many, many more and WxRFCA is committed to supporting.



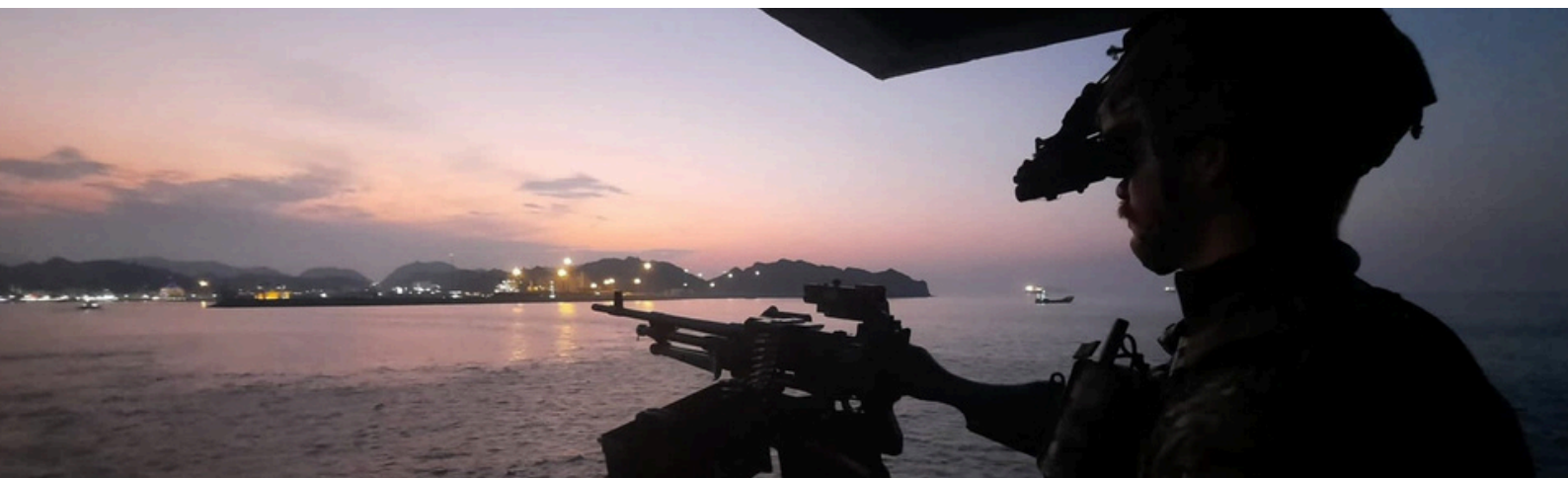
ROYAL MARINE RESERVES

The reservist element of the UK's Commando Force consists of four units distributed across the UK, with RMR Bristol covering the South West and Wales. The Unit consists of an HQ element of regular and FTRS ranks and the reservists parade at one of five detachments (Bristol, Plymouth, Lympstone, Poole and Cardiff). The HQ and Bristol Detachment are relocating from Dorset House in Clifton, Bristol into shared estate at HMS FLYING FOX in Bedminster. Initial moves have been completed, but substantial infrastructure work is required before suitable and compliant armoury, magazine, stores, and accommodation provisions are in place. The unit will continue to use and maintain facilities at Dorset House whilst supporting infrastructure planning and development alongside Wx RFCA Estates and Navy Infra under Project BRUNEL.

Alongside exercises in the UK and Cold Weather Warfare training in Norway, RMR Bristol was the Lead Unit for planning and running the pan-RMR live fire overseas training exercise in Cyprus in May 2024.

Ex COMMANDO PHOENIX (Ex CP 24) saw 68 exercising troops and enabling staff undertake challenging live fire tactical training. For the first time, Ex CP's logistical footprint was utilised to support the Royal Navy Reserve's Ex BLUE PHOENIX range package for 18 RNR ranks - a highly successful proof of concept to be developed further in 2025. The unit continues to work closely with employers, over 70% of which have attained at least a Bronze Award under the Employer Recognition Scheme.

RMR Bristol's mission is to recruit, train and retain Marines, NCOs and Officers that are ready for mobilisation for operations. Nine recruits will complete their 17-month recruit training pipeline and attempt the Reserve Forces Commando Course at CTCRM in October. RFCC passed, they will join the trained strength, 6 of whom mobilised in 2024 and either undertook Ships Force Protection Team duties in the Gulf or deployed with the Joint Counter Terrorist Training and Advisory Team in Africa or South Asia.



ARMY RESERVES

At the recent Army Reserves Conference, the CGS emphasised the critical need for readiness across both Regular and Reserve forces, citing Ukraine as a key example of the importance of a robust second echelon. He urged a unified focus on warfighting to ensure the Army's credibility and effectiveness.

Key Developments:

Financial Reforms: A new funding model for Reserve Service Days (RSDs) is being piloted, ensuring transparency and maintaining the core RSD budget for 2024/5. Each soldier is allocated 38.4 RSDs, with additional days for commanders.

Recalibration of Equivalence: Efforts are underway to prioritise role-specific military training for Reservists, enhancing capability and retention.

Strategic Reserve: The Strategic Reserve is being revitalised to better utilise ex-Regulars with recall liabilities, supporting both the first echelon and regeneration efforts.

Recruitment: Conversion from application to enlistment remains a challenge, with a current rate of 13.8:1. Initiatives like digital marketing and Op STARMAN aim to boost recruitment, which is at 51% of the target.

Retention: Despite challenges, some units, particularly in the Southwest, are seeing positive recruitment and retention trends.

Reserve Unit News

6th Battalion The Rifles

- Awarded GOLD in Cambrian Patrol.
- Five members participated in Ex CYBER MARVEL, a multinational Cyber Warfare exercise in Estonia.
- Salamanca Band and Bugles performed across Europe, including the 80th D-Day celebrations at Pegasus Bridge.
- 27 reservists mobilised for Op INTERFLEX to train Ukrainian soldiers.
- Upcoming two-week exercise in Spain from Nov 2-17, 2024.





Royal Wessex Yeomanry

- Preparing for Ex WESSEX GAZALA (Aug 24 – Sep 8) with 11 Montana National Guard members visiting as part of MREP.
- 11 regiment members trained on M1A1 Abrams tanks with the 1-163rd Cavalry Regiment.
- Participated in an RTR range package, Op CABRIT, and an inter-Squadron Troop Test.
- Engaged in sports competitions and expeditions, including skiing, sailing, rugby, and triathlons.

6 Army Air Corps

- Focused on FARP (Forward Arming and Refuel Point) training for Apache and Wildcat helicopters.
- Qualified personnel on UAS for Ex KRONOS HUNTER in Cyprus (Sept 2024).
- Conducted urban operations training and adventure training in Bavaria.

39 Signal Regiment

- Supported NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps on Ex STEADFAST JUPITER in Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania, providing TacCIS Voice Communications.
- Deployed 105 personnel to Cyprus for Ex KRONOS HUNTER, featuring dismounted combat training, cultural tours, and team-building activities.

165 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC

- Close quarter battle, GPMG, and bayonet training was delivered by those who had recently conducted FIBUA training with Regular Infantry units.
- SMC operations working the Anvil Point to relieve 17 Port and Maritime Regiment of weekend port duties

RAF RESERVES

This year sees the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) celebrates its 100th year - with optimism and endeavour. It was a privilege to be present for the Centenary Dinner at the RAF College Cranwell with representatives from our own 505 Wessex Sqn. Look hard and you will see many female faces – a healthy reflection of change in the RAuxAF, and the sustained efforts to recruit greater diversity to reflect our modern society. Just out of sight too was the magnificent Reservist band.

Originally scheduled for the historic College Hall Officers' Mess (think Sandhurst or Dartmouth but newer!) infrastructure challenges caused relocation. This is not washing dirty linen, rather evidencing that infrastructure pain is being spread across the estate. This matters as every station is suffering. And that suffering is felt by Reservist and Regular alike. We can make all the hotel jokes in the world but in an

increasingly joint endeavour, pan domain approach in the increasingly technical dependency we look for in our reserves. There is no substitute for taking the people on the journey. 100 years ago, as now, the RAuxAF is all about people. Reservists are no less committed, no less industrious and remain pivotal to success. As the Agile Combat Employment concept sees a return to dispersal, the race to find more talent is on, and the investment in the training, infrastructure and flexibility of employment cannot come soon enough.

Earlier in the day Air Chief Marshal the Lord Peach gave a global security tour de force. The scale of the challenge explained the enlightened thinking from both the last and present CGS highlighting the changing context and required response. As a Reservist myself, and as a Defence provider, I see much that plays to the challenges they identify. And more than can



be mentioned here. Achievements are legion – the Whole Force approach is becoming a state of unconsciousness. Therein lies a danger as there is much still to do to attract and retain the people that are essential to every plan.

Sticking at 2.5% of GDP (whenever it is reached!) may well cap the ambition of the erstwhile SDR team. If pronouncements on the size of the black hole inherited from the last administration are a guide, the competition for additional funds will be every bit as tight as it has ever been. Conversely, it is perhaps less likely that the Reserves will be raided given the essential strength in depth in a gig economy. My sense is that the focus will remain on squeezing that little bit more from what we have. And therein may lie some opportunity for Wessex RFCA to assist, and thus the thrust within our new strategy. Critically, all the Reserves need increased attention and visibility. It is my hope that restructuring will add the surprisingly-absent Board focus, in the form of a Reserves Sub Committee to the Board, and a willingness to promote all the services selflessly – this is after all about national over the parochial. Volunteers are sought!

505 (WESSEX) Squadron RAuxAF

Parochially in Wessex, the eagle-eyed will spot the first use of the new Sqn Flag. Use granted, it marks a degree of permanence. And pride. The Sqn is rightly-proud given another busy and achievement-laden year. Cpl Chelsea Piddington, RAF Logistician of the Year, beat her regular counterparts. Mobilised multiple times, she epitomised the spirit and ability of the Sqn, and RAuxAF. In addition to the callups and RSDs given in support tasks, and the hours spent on the road to RAF Brize Norton for training, extraordinary people still found the time to give to the broader fabric of Station and beyond. From the increasingly popular Pilot Gig racing to serious equestrian endeavour, all symbolize the sense of competition and enterprise that a well led (ex RLC and RN!) Sqn stand for. They are great indeed. It will





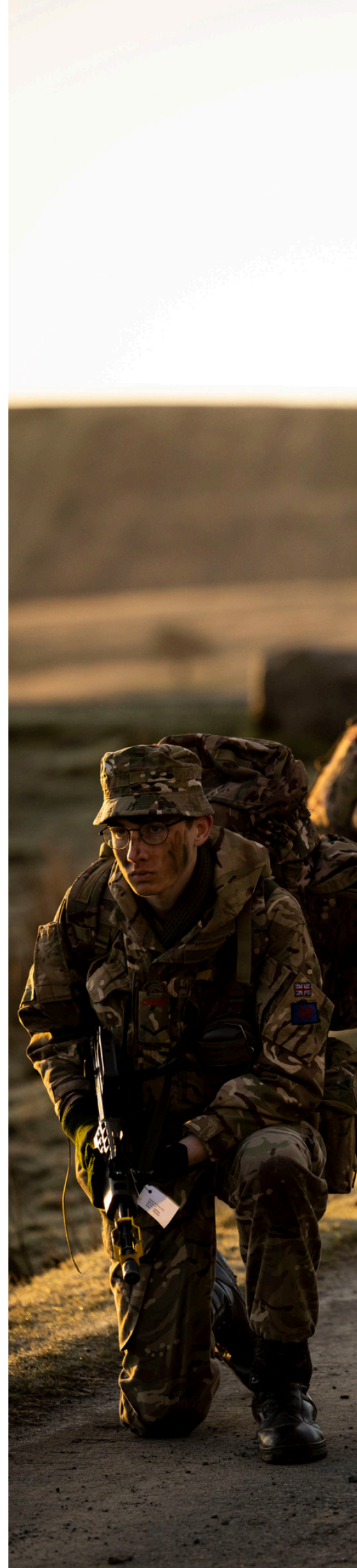
soon be time to give form to our imminent new Wessex RFCA strategy. What the Reserves do is clear. What we do for them - advocacy in particular - will say much about our relevance and utility as an Association. We might help them reach new recruits, and shape employers to be more receptive to the needs of Reservists. And the manifest benefits employers receive in return including the amazing personal and leadership training all our Reservists under. But it is about as close as it gets!

CADETS AND YOUTH

There have been a number of significant events in the past 12 months, Armed Forces Day National Event (AFDNE) held in Falmouth; The King's Coronation festivities, and the annual round of Summer Camps, that has seen the Cadet Forces across the SW having taken a disproportionately large role in the Public Events; whilst simultaneously demonstrating outstanding agility and flexibility. Many of these events have highlighted the themes set out by the Cadet Committee.

- **Re-invigorating Inter-Cadet relationships and competitions:** The planned Cadet Field Gun 'demonstration' was delivered as part of AFDNE. Cornwall ACF and the RAFAC Section of Penair School CCF participated; to wide acclaim. The two teams had different marks of gun and conducted different practices. Neither of which mattered as the cadets who participated and the crowd of spectators (estimated at more than 300) clearly loved it!
- **Re-invigorating an interest in Cadet music and bands:** Armed Forces Day National Event also provided an opportunity to concentrate cadet bands and Corps of Drums as part of the parade and march past. Indeed; they provided a massively impressive contribution to the theatre of the single-Service marching contingents; and continuity to the 'celebratory' aspects of day.

Conservatively; the ratio of cadet musicians to the totality of the Regular and Reserve musicians was 2:1. The Somerset 'Silver Bugles' led the parade in full No1 Dress, on a very warm day, and after an exceptionally early start that morning was one of the highlights of my year; and of many of the spectators lining the route. Another feather in the cap for Maj Scott Bunker Somerset ACF. In addition, Wellington School Corps of Drums led the RIFLES Freedom of Wellington Parade on 17 June 23.





- **Sharing Best Practice:** The twice-yearly Joint Service Cadet Committee meetings provide a forum for all County Cadet Force Leaders and School Contingent Commanders to network, and share ideas and best practice. The Cadet Committee has facilitated more bespoke sharing, with support given to increase the number of MOD Sponsored cadets into the Ten Tors Challenge 2023 (TTC23). This was a huge success with 52 Cadet Teams applying for a place, and 44 Teams crossing the start line. This was more than 3 times the number in 2024. Following on from this success briefings were arranged for the Sea Cadet Corps, who had never entered a Team into the TTC, and have applied for 3 teams to enter TTC24.

Summer Camps 23

2023 saw a packed summer camp programme, with the SCC holding their Blue Jacket Camp at HMS Raleigh, the ACF having County Camps and the ATC taking part in the national Space at Cyber Camp at RAF Syerston. Almost all of the Summer Camps experienced some level of disruption during the planning or execution phases: Particularly the Army, where in three cases County ACF's and the Central CCF Camp were denied access to their originally planned training camps due to a late change to Army training priorities.

Where new Defence Training Estate locations could not be found Counties, and the Cadet Training Team successfully held their Summer Camps in the RFCA managed Cadet Training Centres.

Honours and Awards

Yet again the Cadet Forces made up the majority of Lord-Lieutenant Certificates of Meritorious Service Awards. There were 32 awards presented to adults who intrinsically support the South West cadet Forces. 12 were awarded to the SCC, 13 to the ACF, 5 to the ATC and 2 for CCF CFAVs. 2 Wx RFCA PSS were also recognised for the support that they provide to their respective counties. 30 Cadets were also appointed as Lord-Lieutenant Cadets in 2023.

ROYAL NAVAL CADETS

The Royal Navy's Cadet Forces (RNCF) comprise 4 elements, the Marine Society Sea Cadets (MSSC) which in turn comprises Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets; the Voluntary Cadet Corps (VCC) the RN recognised Sea Scouts and the Combined Cadet Force (RN) (CCF(RN)). As with other cadet organisations, all our flourishing with numbers above pre-COVID levels. Alas with most voluntary organisations, there remain some challenges recruiting and retaining adult volunteers but we remain blessed to have dedicated cohorts who deliver such a fantastic cadet experience. There are many highlights, but perhaps one witnessed by members of Wessex RFCA was the MSSC 'Blue Jacket' Summer Camp at HMS Raleigh. This provided a large number of cadets (c100 from total SWA c150) from across the region with hugely diverse and inspiring training and development opportunities which were enjoyed by all. Similar events have been taking place throughout the year across the region and we are grateful for all the support and advocacy we receive from the RFCA and its membership.

The Second Sea Lord (2SL) commissioned an independent review (IR) into the RNCF which concluded their research and

analysis earlier this year and 2SL has endorsed the review teams overarching priorities: to clarify the purpose of the RN Cadet Forces, to strengthen the structure of the HQ function, to improve the Care and Wellbeing wrapper across all parts of the enterprise, and to ensure the ongoing commitment of the Navy Board to our Cadet Forces. 2SL has written to the cadet chain of command that "The report shone an uncomfortable light on the extent to which we have disinvested in our cadet force structure and as such has made clear the need for a significant reset." To commence this work a new 1* position as Commander RN Cadet Forces has been established to provide a dedicated leadership focal point and lead on the implementation and embedding of the change activity necessary. The Independent Review team proposed 43 recommendations across the four priority areas which will take time but work has already commenced to look at safety and safeguarding policy and processes across the RNCF organisations, improved communication of RNCF activity and ways to increase engagement between RN cadet forces and other elements of the RN.



ARMY CADETS

Both Adult Instructor and Cadet numbers have increased and remain buoyant across the South West Region.

In the summer of 2023, many of the Army Cadet Counties were able to run full Summer Camps in DTE sites. Unfortunately, due to Operational Interflex, the training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, some Counties lost the booked DTE site, sometimes with little notice before they were due to go on camp. With some very imaginative organisation and an enormous amount of hard work by dedicated Adult Instruction, the cadets were able to attend demanding Military Skills camps together with adventure training packages. The Counties used Cadet Training Centres and local areas. The Cadet Training Team, also affected by the loss of their DTE site, held a 4, 1 week camp at Yoxter for the CCF. All the cadets that attended enjoyed an excellent package which was well delivered by the CTT. Some camps were also ran at Easter and during the October half term.

An ACF Leadership Conference was held at Tidworth in October for the ACF Commandants or their representatives. The Conference was opened by the Commander HQSW. It was an excellent opportunity for

the team to hold discussions face to face.

HQ South West organised a CCF conference which was held online and attended by Contingent Commanders, SSIs and Contingent Staff. Commander South West opened the conference. It focused on: Army Benevolent Fund, Central Camps, Regional Engagement, Engage to Inspire, Transport, Military Skills Competition and Combined Cadet Force Association. It was extremely well attended and positive.

The Annual ACF Conference was held in Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham and was attended by the Commandants, or their representatives from the South West and across the whole country. It was also attended by HQ Regional Command Cadets Branch, RFCA and ACCT UK. This was the first conference with Brigadier Gary McDade as Deputy Commander Cadets. It was very informative and there were discussions on: Resource and Finance, Lifestyle Medicine, Summer Camps, Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Non-Public Funds, Media and Comms and Leadership and Culture. There were also a lot of conversations in the margins. The conference was very well received and enjoyed by everyone who attended.



RAF AIR CADETS

One of the highlights of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) calendar is undoubtedly the amazing RAFAC National Air and Space Camp, hosted at RAF Syerston, which is the home of Air Cadet Gliding. Ostensibly this is a week-long residential camp for 284 Air Cadets who spend the week learning about Air and Space, ranging from aerodynamics and air traffic control, flying in pour gliders, to coding and robotics. They even had a Teams call for a question and answer session with a top scientist from NASA! On the Wednesday more cadets and adult volunteers arrive along with partners in industry, professional institutions and charities, families and friends to turn it into an inspirational day of celebration. Over 1,100 Air Cadets were treated to a wide range of STEM activities that included a British Airways Airbus A350 flight simulator and demonstrations of the technologies emerging in BAE Systems Tempest programme. With 74 businesses, professional institutions and charities on site, cadets were also able to explore

early career pathways into the Royal Air Force (RAF), the Armed Forces and Emergency Services, and a range of roles across the Air, Space and Cyber sectors. With helicopters and jet noise, amazing food from three Mobile Catering Squadron and the obligatory ice cream, everything combined to make this an amazing day.

Elsewhere, both Adult Instructor and Cadet numbers have increased and remain buoyant across the South West Region. Following on from last year's re-profiling of RAFAC National Activities; the focus has now moved on to delivering the agreed program of activities and addressing the combined challenges of financial and workforce constraints. The South West team have now implemented a plan to transition the Civil Service support toward a Regional 'functional' model in order to ensure continuity of support and resilience to the Wings and are already seeing the benefits of centralisation and standardisation of processes.



COMBINED CADET FORCE

This report highlights the significant presence and impact of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) in the Wessex region. Despite financial challenges facing schools, the CCF in the region maintains steady numbers of cadets, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs), and Civilian Assistants. With 59 CCFs and 6 partnership schools, including 27 in state schools, academies, or grammar schools, the CCFs in the region parade around 5,988 cadets, 460 CFAVs, and 106 Civilian Assistants.

A notable aspect is the establishment of 22 CCFs between January 2013 and 2022 as part of the Government's sponsored Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP). This program aimed to increase the total number of cadet units in schools across the UK to 500 by March 2020, with funding of £50 million allocated from Libor fines to support this growth. The CEP successfully achieved its target of 500 units six months ahead of schedule, indicating the programs

effectiveness and the demand for CCF opportunities among schools and students. The expansion of CCF units through initiatives like the CEP not only provides young people with valuable experiences and opportunities for personal development but also contributes to building stronger school communities and fostering positive relationships between students and educators. The commitment to growing the CCF presence in schools, particularly in less affluent areas, demonstrates a dedication to offering diverse and enriching experiences to a broader range of young people. Overall, the success of the CCF in the Wessex region and the growth achieved through programs like the CEP underscore the positive impact of cadet forces in schools and the value they bring to the development and well-being of young cadets.

The report from the University of Northampton highlights the significant



positive impact that the Cadet Forces have on the development of young people, adult volunteers, and wider society. It emphasises the importance of the skills and qualities that cadets gain through their participation in the Combined Cadet Force, such as self-discipline, leadership, self-esteem, confidence, and teamwork. The success of the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) in reaching its target of 500 units ahead of schedule is a testament to the dedication and commitment of schools, staff, volunteers, and cadets involved in the program.

The partnerships between schools and the Cadet Forces not only benefit the individual cadets but also have positive ripple effects on school communities and local areas. The improvement in student behaviour, discipline, attendance, and relationships between students and teachers are all tangible outcomes of the Cadet Forces' presence in schools. Overall, the continued success and growth of the Combined Cadet Force in the Wessex region are a testament to the positive impact that the Cadet Forces have on the development of young people and the wider community. The dedication and hard work of all those involved in the Cadet Forces are making a significant difference in the lives of cadets and the communities they serve.

Participation in summer camps organised by the Single Services is a valuable opportunity for CCF cadets to further develop their skills, experience new challenges, and strengthen their bonds with fellow cadets. The locations of these camps, such as Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth for the Royal Navy CCF, Yoxter in Somerset for SW ARMY CTT, and RAF Little Rissington for RAFAC CCF TEST, provide cadets with unique settings to engage in specialized training and activities. Attending these summer camps allows cadets to immerse themselves in a military environment, learn from experienced instructors, and gain hands-on experience in various aspects of military training.

The camps offer a chance for cadets to enhance their leadership abilities, teamwork skills, physical fitness, and resilience, all while building lasting friendships and memories. The opportunity to participate in summer





camps organised by the Single Services is a highlight for many CCF cadets, providing them with a unique and rewarding experience that complements their regular training. These camps not only offer valuable learning opportunities but also serve as a platform for cadets to challenge themselves, push their limits, and grow both personally and professionally.

ENGAGEMENT

Over the past reporting year, the Engagement and Communications team has experienced remarkable success, orchestrating numerous events and activities throughout the region. I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone on the team for their dedication and hard work.

The Employer Engagement (EE) team has organised and executed several events during this period. Notably, we introduced Armed Forces Business Breakfasts in Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Cornwall, Gloucester, and Somerset, which saw excellent participation from employers across the South West. These events attracted a diverse range of employers, from those unfamiliar with the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) to those who have achieved the Gold Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The team effectively leveraged Reservist speakers and supportive employers to advocate for the AFC and ERS and to bolster support for Reserves.

The growth of the AFC and ERS continues year after year, reflecting positively on our efforts. Covenant development is naturally progressing, thanks to our team's persistent engagement with the business community. As a result, more employers are now approaching us, eager to learn about and support the covenant. Our extensive network of employers, team members, and stakeholders all contribute to advocating for the covenant.

This year, we held some extraordinary signing events. Noteworthy among them was the Archbishop of Canterbury signing on behalf of the Salisbury Diocese at Salisbury Cathedral, and a memorable evening aboard HMS Richmond where South West Water signed the covenant with Brigadier Jock Fraser as the co-signatory.





These are just two of the many events we hosted over the past 12 months. The team's hard work in organising these events, from meticulous event management to maintaining a steady stream of interested employers, is truly commendable. Emily, Jon, and Leanne's passion and determination are evident in the high numbers of AFC and ERS they have secured.

The Silver ERS Awards were integrated into the Lord-Lieutenant's Awards and meticulously planned by the Engagement and iHub teams. We made several improvements to streamline the event processes, which were previously quite time-consuming. The feedback from our guests was overwhelmingly positive.

The Gold ERS Awards took place at RM Stonehouse in Plymouth, providing a stunning historical backdrop. The RM Stonehouse team were exceptionally accommodating, ensuring the event was a success. Employers were highly complementary of the excellent food and the recognition they received. The evening extended late into the night, with many staying at the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth, which generously offered us significant discounts.

Throughout the reporting period, we maintained a busy schedule of community and employer events, coordinating with Wessex 43 Brigade and the Heritage Trust for their handover of trusteeship to Headquarters South West. A ceremony at Longleat Memorial Arboretum, attended by HRH Prince Edward, the 8th Marquess and Marchioness of Bath, and the Lord-Lieutenant for Wiltshire, Mrs. Sarah Troughton, was a highlight. This poignant event honoured World War II veterans and their families, and we were proud to be a part of it.

2023 was marked by the Falmouth Armed Forces Day, National Event. Planning for this event began over a year in advance, led by Cornwall Council with support from the Cornwall Covenant Partnership Board.

Our Head of Engagement and Head of Communications were deeply involved from the outset. We aimed to maximise engagement opportunities and supported a range of activities throughout the year and during Armed Forces Week. We participated in the Armed Forces Covenant Conference, supported national communication campaigns, co-planned the Cornwall Armed Forces Careers Fair, and engaged with local units and the public during the Armed Forces Day weekend. It was an unforgettable and spectacular weekend.

Our communications team has been instrumental in supporting all engagement activities, consistently updating our internal communications (Wessex Word), newsletter, website, and social media channels. Their efforts have significantly increased our social media engagement, likes, and follows, which is fantastic to see



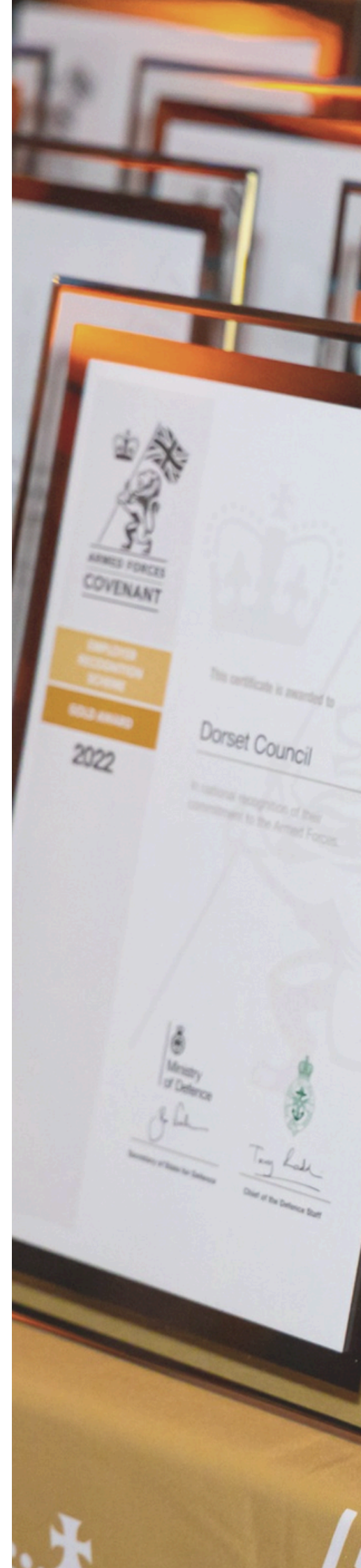
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Our Employer Engagement Team have had a tremendous year, with high numbers of Armed Forces Covenant's being signed by employers in the South West and ever increasing numbers of applications for Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

Year on year, the team are seeing an increase in awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme Awards which is fantastic and great to see so many supportive employers in our region. We now have more employers that are advocating on our behalf which helps by encouraging business to business engagement but also gives the team the opportunity to have warm introductions to supportive employers.

A number of momentous Armed Forces Covenant signings were organised by Emily and Jon, and supported by our military colleagues across the region. A signing event was held at Salisbury Cathedral, with Salisbury Diocese pledging their support with the Archbishop of Canterbury as one of the co-signatories. During Armed Forces Week, at the National event in Falmouth a signing was held on board HMS Richmond for South West Water. We appreciate the support given to the team by our military colleagues, notable thanks to the ships company of HMS Richmond for hosting the signing event.

Our Silver Awards were held at the Lord-Lieutenant's Awards Ceremonies across the region and were well received by our employers. Our Gold Awards were held at RM Stonehouse, Plymouth; employers were invited to attend the historic venue and presented with their awards by Rear Admiral Ivan Finn. The co-ordination of these events couldn't happen without the help of cross-functional teams and we very much thank all the staff involved in helping to co-ordinate the events.





In 2024, additional criteria was introduced for Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, the new criteria has a specific mention of support to the Cadet movement. This is a slight change on the previous criteria. For the Silver Employer Recognition Scheme Award, employers are now asked to demonstrate support to the Cadet movement by providing proactive support to individual cadet and/or to local cadet units. For the Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Award, employers are now asked to be an exemplar in demonstrating support to the Cadet movement. This could be through mentoring cadets in employment skills, by providing guaranteed interviews for cadets or by direct investment in equipment for a local cadet unit, or by funding and sponsoring competitions, events and specific activities for cadets, such as overseas expeditions. The employer will also promote volunteering with the cadet forces from the workforce by providing additional leave for employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

The team worked tirelessly, specifically during the nomination phase of the 2024 Employer Recognition Scheme Awards, with the new criteria came new processes which were challenging and, with an extremely high number of applications the task was significant. Between April 2023 and March 2024 200 Armed Forces Covenants were signed in the South West. This is an increase of 36 on the previous year. In 2023, 76 Employers were awarded Bronze, 38 Silver and 22 Gold.

Employers were given the opportunity to attend a number of events during the last reporting period. The team, innovatively came up with idea of hosting business breakfasts, these were held throughout the year across most of our region and supported by local Regular and Reserve personnel who gave their time to support us with briefings and Armed Forces Covenant Signings. Some of the other events held were;

- Defence Academy Shrivenham – Behind the wire tour & briefing
- Pass Out Parade at Wyvern Barracks
- Ten Tors – Behind the wire tour, briefing and lunch

Our team also attend the Armed Forces Day National Event, supporting wider engagement with the rest of the team and our stakeholders in Cornwall. A great weekend of engagement with some positive outcomes and new relationships forged.

Emily and Jon also supported employers with their own events/briefings/open days. They are often asked to present to employer boards, networks, and other organisations that are interested in pledging their support to Defence by signing the Armed Forces Covenant. Some notable presentations were provided for the NHS by Jon Beake and to Councils in the region by Emily. These presentations are really helpful to be able to create a wider understanding of our employer work but also to advocate what we, the RFCA do. A big thanks to them for their work on this.

Employer support requests for the team have been minimal, any requests received were not complex and easier to resolve.

A well done and thank you to Jon, Emily and Leanne and, also to Siobhan and Cheryl who help to communicate and promote the excellent work of the employer engagement team.



ARMED FORCES COVENANT

To those who proudly protect our nation, who do so with honour, courage, and commitment, the Armed Forces Covenant is the nation's commitment to you. It is a pledge that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.

The covenant focusses on helping members of the armed forces community have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen. This support is provided in a number of areas including:

- education and family well-being
- having a home
- starting a new career
- access to healthcare
- financial assistance
- discounted services



Covenants signed
April 23 - March 24

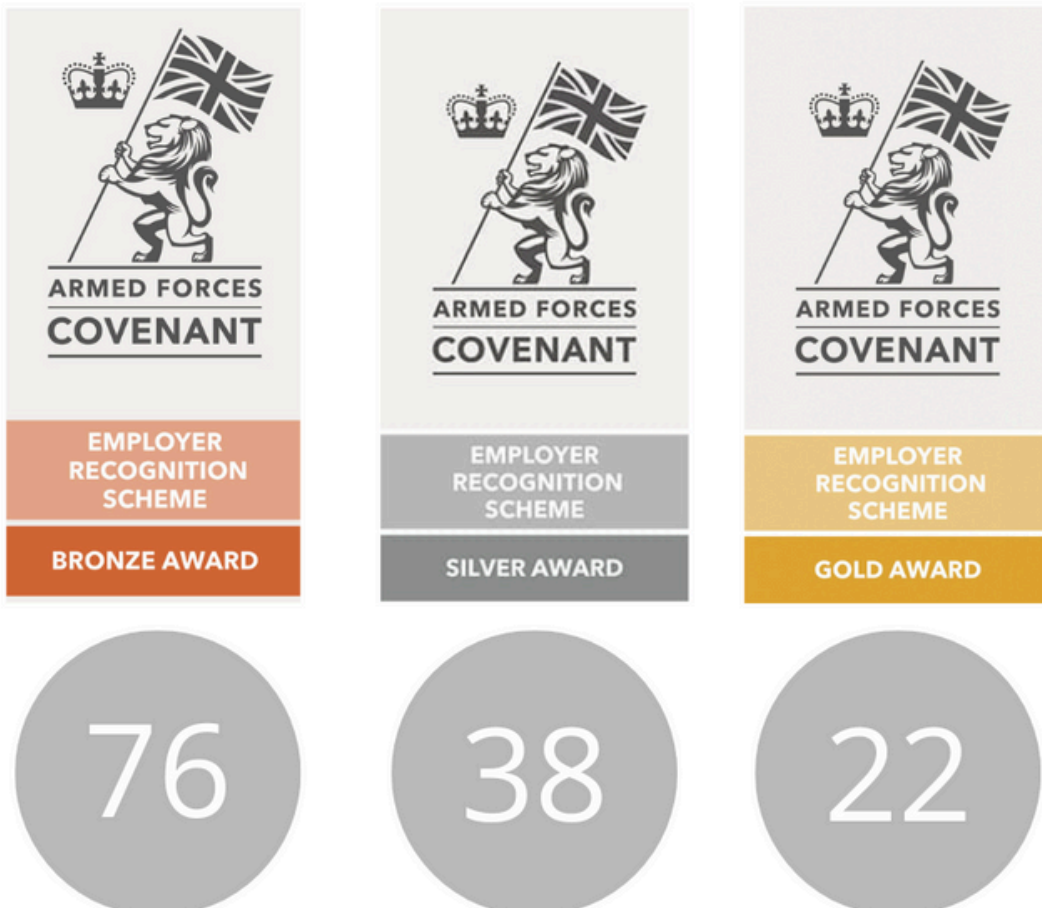


EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

The Employer Recognition Scheme was launched in 2014 by the then Prime Minister David Cameron to recognise employer support for the wider principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and the full spectrum of Defence personnel. This includes Regulars, Reserves, service leavers, cadets and cadet force volunteers, spouses and wounded, injured and sick.

The scheme recognises and rewards UK employers for their support to Defence personnel, and encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to Defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their support with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The following Employer Recognition Scheme Awards were awarded in 2022;



GOLD ERS AWARDS RM STONEHOUSE

In November 2023, 17 organisations in the South West were awarded the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award at Royal Marines Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth.

Representing the highest badge of honour, Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards are presented to businesses that employ and support those who serve, veterans and their families.

Organisations across a range of sectors including transportation, education, finance, and healthcare were recognised in the awards.

Minister for Defence People, Veterans and Service Families, Dr Andrew Murrison said:

“I would like to thank all the organisations that have been recognised in this year’s awards. I’m delighted that we have seen so many organisations recognised with a gold award. Their continued support demonstrates the unique benefits and strengths that our Armed Forces community can bring to the workplace.”

The 2023 Gold award winners in the Wessex region are;

- i3Works LTD
- Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
- Retain Limited
- Plymouth City Council
- Katie Mills Independent Funeral Service
- University Hospital Dorset
- NHS Dorset
- C3IA Solutions Limited

- North Tower Consulting
- Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust
- WCS Group, Marlowe Compliance Services
- Ruralink
- Systems Engineering & Assessment (SEA Group LTD)
- Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- SQEP Ltd
- Nationwide Engineering Group
- Chemring Countermeasures UK (CCM)

Councillor Sue Dann, Plymouth City Council’s Cabinet member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD, said: “The Armed Forces are part of Plymouth’s DNA – they are at the heart of Plymouth and central to our history, our present and our future. “As a Council, we are immensely proud of our Armed Forces community and the value it adds to our city.

“As one of the city’s largest employers, we develop our internal people policies and procedures to support the Armed Forces as well influence other organisations in the city. This work includes leading a citywide Armed Forces Covenant interest business group and working with businesses and partners to secure employment for veterans and those about to leave service.



COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is vital for Wessex RFCA to successfully support and promote the Reserve Forces and Cadet movements across Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, and the City of Bristol. Our communications encompasses a range of campaigns, events, and the strategic use of social media to engage and inform our diverse audience.

Key Campaigns

Armed Forces Day Cornwall

Armed Forces Day Cornwall was a cornerstone event that celebrated the invaluable contributions of the armed forces community, including regulars, reserves, cadets, and veterans. We worked very closely with the event Working Group from the beginning of the year to support this event, and maximise communications opportunities. Our communication efforts for this event included use of social media, local press, and community outreach. Collaboration with local councils and organisations amplified our reach, resulting in significant public engagement and heightened awareness of the armed forces' role within our community.

Gold and Silver Employer Recognition Scheme Awards

The Gold and Silver Employer Recognition Scheme Awards recognise employers who go above and beyond in supporting the armed forces community. We leverage press releases, social media content, success stories and testimonials to foster stronger relationships with local businesses and increase participation in the scheme, showcasing the vital support employers provide to our Armed Forces.





Reserves Day

Reserves Day shines a spotlight on the vital contributions of reservists to the armed forces. Our communication strategy includes social media campaigns featuring personal stories of reservists and local media coverage. By encouraging reservists to wear their uniforms in civilian workplaces, we generate public interest and awareness, strengthening community ties and boosting recruitment efforts.

Key Events

Lord Lieutenant's Awards Ceremonies

The annual Lord Lieutenant's Awards Ceremonies are prestigious events that recognise the outstanding achievements of cadets and reservists. We invite local dignitaries and media, provide extensive social media coverage, and issue post-event press releases to ensure these accomplishments are widely recognised. These ceremonies not only honour individual achievements but also enhance public awareness and motivate our cadets and reservists.

Growth of Social Media

Our social media presence has seen substantial growth, with platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn playing a crucial role in our communication strategy. By consistently posting news updates, event promotions, success stories, and interactive content, we try to engage our community in meaningful ways. This strategy has led to an increased follower count, higher engagement rates, and a broader reach for our key messages and campaigns.

The growth of our social media channels has significantly improved community engagement and awareness of the vital role of the Reserve Forces and Cadet movements.

Successes of 2023/24;

- 6.5% increase in followers across social media channels
- Delivery of Wessex regional Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Awards, and digital campaign
- Delivery of the Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Awards digital campaign
- Over 2000 views of Silver ERS Videos on Facebook
- Over 1300 views of Gold ERS Videos on Facebook
- Worked closely with agencies on the delivery of Armed Forces Day Cornwall.



ARMED FORCES DAY FALMOUTH

Falmouth, with its rich maritime heritage, played host to a memorable Armed Forces Day celebration in June 2023. The event was held at the picturesque Events Square, and commenced with a formal parade featuring serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and cadet forces.

Throughout the day, visitors had the opportunity to engage with a variety of interactive displays and demonstrations. The Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force each showcased their capabilities with equipment exhibitions and hands-on activities.

From climbing aboard military vehicles to witnessing simulated rescue missions, attendees gained a deeper understanding of the diverse roles our Armed Forces play. A highlight was the thrilling display by the Red Arrows, whose aerobatic maneuvers drew gasps and applause from the crowd.

Armed Forces Day also served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by veterans and their families. A dedicated veterans' village provided a space for former service members to connect with each other and access support services.

Family members of serving personnel were also recognised for their crucial role. Special activities and entertainment for children ensured that the day was inclusive, acknowledging the collective effort of military families.

As the day drew to a close, a sense of unity and pride resonated throughout Falmouth. The event not only celebrated the contributions of our Armed Forces but also reinforced the importance of community support.





LORD-LIEUTENANT'S AWARDS 2023

This years Lord-Lieutenant's Awards were delivered in September and October by the Engagement team and iHub. The aim of the Awards are to recognise the hard work and dedication of those in the Reserve and Cadet community across the South West.

Across the seven counties of the south west, 45 Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers were recognised for outstanding service with a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service.

The awards also recognised outstanding Cadets from across the region, investing 34 as Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for the upcoming year. The Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets are chosen from county Cadet Forces to assist the Lord Lieutenant in carrying out their duties.

The ceremonies also saw 45 employers recognised for their support to the Armed Forces, being presented with a Silver Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Award.



7

Ceremonies



45

Certificates of Meritorious Service



34

Lord Lieutenant's Cadets



45

Defence ERS Silver Awards



ESTATES

The past year has been one of significant achievement and progress for the Estates team, but one also of change as we prepare for the transition of the hard facilities management of the Reserve estate to contractor VIVO from 1st August 2024. This has placed immense pressure upon the team at Mount House, who have completed extensive training to prepare them for their new roles. They have also worked closely with the new contractors to ensure they have all of the information they require to enable effective management of the estate when they pick up the baton in August.

The team has also worked very hard to deliver outstanding projects for our Reserve and Cadet customers, and we are pleased to report the completion of several major initiatives, each contributing to our commitment to excellence, sustainability, and service to our end users.

At Horfield Army Reserve Centre (ARC),

Project Newbury marked a milestone with the completion of new build offices and stores. This project saw the creation of modern offices, a servery, ablutions (including those compliant with DDA standards), classrooms, and storage facilities, all of which have been specifically designed for 7 Military Intelligence (MI). The project was undertaken with a strong emphasis on sustainability, meeting the Breeam excellent standards. With a total project value of £1.5 million, this development was a collaborative effort between stakeholders at HQSW, contractor Rigg Construction, and consultant Avison Young.

Bath ARC also saw significant work, with the establishment of a new Joint Cadet Centre (JCC). The new JCC accommodation was established on the top floor, relocating the Army Cadets from their existing home on the lower floor of the building, to share the space with the Air Cadets.



This relocation enabled the creation of a welfare room and allowed the provision of additional office space in the vacated areas. The project, valued at £934,000, was a combined effort involving end users RAFAC and Somerset Army Cadet Force.

In Derriford ARC we focused on the refurbishment of ablutions across the site, alongside the creation of a new laundry facility. This upgrade, funded by Wessex RFCA through Regionally Generated Income (RGI), had a project value of £460,000 and benefited end users 265 Port Squadron and 165 Port & Maritime Regiment Royal Logistics Corps.

Significant work has also been undertaken at Keynsham ARC, also under the banner of Project Newbury. This project involved the demolition of obsolete garages and the construction of new garages and stores. Additionally, the former range building was refurbished to create stores for the Army Cadets, as well as a gymnasium space. Valued at £3.2 million, this project also adhered to Breeam excellent standards,

serving end users 101Bn REME, 243 (Wessex) Multi-Role Medical Regiment, and Bristol.

At Swindon ARC, the former caretaker's accommodation was converted into modern offices, a servery, ablutions, and classroom space for the use of Wiltshire ACF. This project, valued at £150,000 and funded by Wessex RFCA RGI, was completed in collaboration with stakeholders at HQSW, contractor 21 CBS, and consultant Avison Young.

Reserve Estate Optimisation

The Reserve Estate Optimisation (REO) initiative saw Wessex completing its Tranche 1 delivery of REO projects. Notably, Wessex had no projects in Tranche 2. The final pieces of work included creating new JCCs, facilitating the relocation of Air Cadet Squadrons, and refurbishing existing facilities. The REO efforts resulted in the disposal of three freehold properties, generating receipts of £1.55 million, and the completion of 11 refurbishments across various locations.



Alternative Venues (AV)

Alternative Venues within the Wessex region experienced a successful year with long-term company hirings from Learning Curve (MPTC) and the Ministry of Justice. Learning Curve, who provide college-type military training for 16+, utilized two sites generating £15,000 per quarter. Regular use of two sites by Devon and Cornwall Police also contributed to steady income. The growing interest from education companies in medium to long-term use of our sites is promising for future income generation. AV income for the fiscal year is expected to remain around £146,000, net of site/unit shares.

Future Defence Infrastructure Study (FDIS)

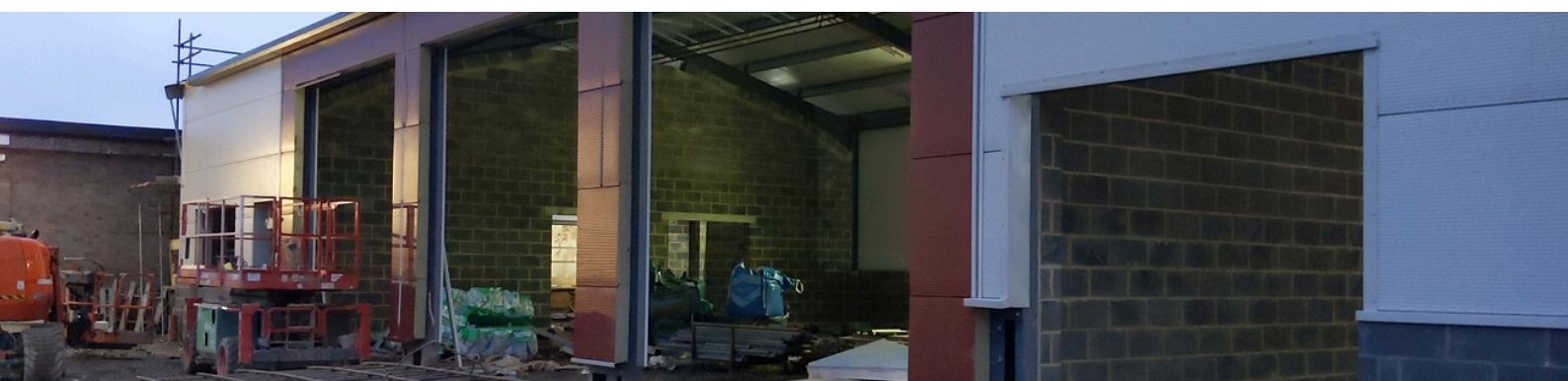
Work around FDIS and the planning for the transition of the management of the volunteer estate, saw the recruitment of a new Estate Manager (with Health and Safety lead). Two new Estates Officers were recruited internally, with plans to recruit a third EO as well as a further AO. The department will be further reconfigured, introducing a new team for LMS and Soft FM. Mark Cubitt, currently Cadet Executive Officer at Devon ACF, will soon join as the new Head of Estate, focusing on stakeholder engagement. Extensive training on contract management systems, including CAFM, IMS,

and Aim CDE (Glider BIM), has been undertaken by all estates staff.

Efforts in data capture and compliance continue and the team are working closely with Vivo to confirm estate-specific task schedules (ESTS). Roadshows at Swindon and Derriford ARC introduced the Vivo team to our stakeholders and site users, giving the opportunity for briefing around the new Service Desk provision and for end users to ask questions. Vivo has appointed a Tier 1 supplier for reactive works and plans to appoint Tier 2 and 3 suppliers for specialised tasks. Certain works, such as gas management plans and grounds maintenance, will remain outside the Vivo contract until at least March 2025.

Outside FDIS, Wessex continues to deliver legacy adaptation works for injured service personnel, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to support and service excellence.

In conclusion, this year has been marked by significant achievements across various projects, proactive engagement with Alternative Venue hirings, and strategic advancements in FDIS initiatives. We look forward to continuing our work with the same dedication and commitment in the coming year.



FINANCE

The Finance Committee present the accounts which are enclosed in the pack and which have been subsequently approved by the Board. There is much to be proud of this year with a number of property projects funded by us all around the region which the Estates team report on elsewhere as well as many smaller projects, often dealing with urgent maintenance issues.

Our task this year has been a challenging one as we have contended with significant unplanned expenditure, substantially reducing our historic surplus cash balances. New legislation demanded that urgent gas safety and fire doors work be initiated on both the Reserve and Cadet estate to make our buildings safe and legal. The whole process had to be dealt with speedily to ensure the estate was open and available to support the summer camp period for both cadres. Previously, we have received central funding to cover such costs but due in part to financial pressures elsewhere, the totality was not forthcoming so the balance had to be funded from our own resources. The issues around defence funding for the front line will be well known to the audience reading this report, but the current year (2024/5) is seeing attention focussing much more on the RFCAs' and particularly the requirement that Regionally Generated

Income (RGI), which we have in past largely used to fund new projects and contribute towards REO sites, will now need now be directed to general maintenance to ensure our properties remain safe and legally compliant. The introduction of the FDIS contract will mitigate much of this through the 'Inclusive Repair Threshold' funded by our partner, Vivo Defence Services, but costs above and beyond that may need to come from our RGI. At present, it is difficult to assess the full impact of this but we are reappraising expenditure commitments to ensure we can continue as much of our current programme as finances allow.

In all this we should not forget the amount that we donated last year circa £50k in direct support to Reserve and Cadet Adventure Training activities - as well as other worthy and enterprising projects. Much of this revenue comes from our Alternative Venue (AV) scheme you will have read about earlier in the report. It is the Committee's ambition to continue to offer this support as we move forward, but inevitably this is under some pressure. We hope to develop the AV scheme in the coming years such that we have more resources to better support and serve our reserves and cadets.



BRISTOL

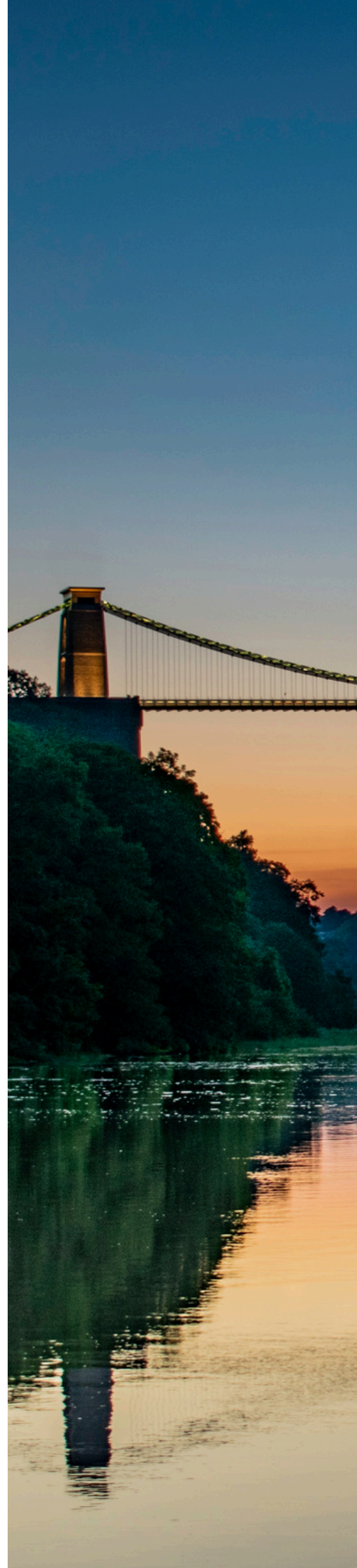
KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City and County of Bristol - Mrs Peaches Golding OBE

County Chair for Bristol - Colonel Jane L Thompson TD DL

KEY EVENTS

- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Bristol Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 10th October 2024 - HMS Flying Fox
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



BRISTOL

ARMED FORCES COVENANTS

Shield Services Group
E3 Media Limited
The Building Safety Group Ltd
riskHive Software Solutions Ltd
Bath Demolition (Avonmouth) Limited
Chorus Global Ltd
Future Networks Training Ltd
Turners Coachways (Bristol) Limited
I.C Express Ltd
IDS Refrigeration Limited
Conventus Solutions Limited
P2 Enterprises Ltd
NHS Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire
ICB
Humanihut (UK) Ltd
F5 Consultants Ltd

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Shield Services Group
E3 Media Limited
The Building Safety Group Ltd
riskHive Software Solutions Ltd
Bath Demolition (Avonmouth) Limited
Chorus Global Ltd
Future Networks Training Ltd
Turners Coachways (Bristol) Limited
I.C Express Ltd
IDS Refrigeration Limited
Conventus Solutions Limited
P2 Enterprises Ltd
NHS Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire
ICB
Humanihut (UK) Ltd
F5 Consultants Ltd



BRISTOL

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Safeguard Engineering Ltd
Synoptix Limited
Heidelberg Materials UK
Driving Force Recruitment Ltd
Runfibre Ltd
Chamois Consulting Limited
Evolve Commercial Limited

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

i3Works Ltd



CORNWALL

KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall - Sir Edward Bolitho OBE

County Chair - Air Commodore John C Bessell RAF (Retd) DL

KEY DATES

- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Cornwall Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 22nd October 2024 - RAF St Mawgan
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



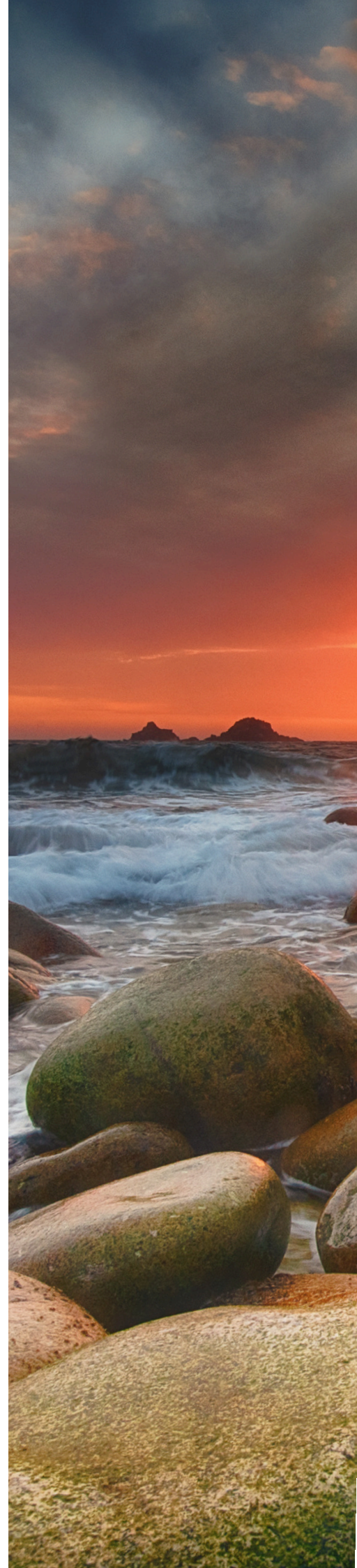
CORNWALL

ARMED FORCES COVENANTS

Falmouth University
Celtic Sea Power Limited
Devon & Cornwall 4X4 Response
Chillflow Solutions Limited
Newquay HM Armed Forces Veterans CIC
Quirk Solutions Limited
Liskeard Town Council
KWB Protection Ltd
NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board
Jak Drones Ltd
AlphaOne Electrics Ltd
Saint Pauls Healthcare Ltd
Penzance Dry Dock
Access Cornwall CIC
Association Of Accessible Employers CIC
GSD Security Limited
Tamar Safety

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Recycle it Global Limited
Your Partnerships Ltd
Redruth Albany RFC
Kerrier Homecare Limited
Devon & Cornwall 4X4 Response
Falmouth University
Associated Armour Limited (AAL)
Veterans Outdoors
Trusted Tech Ltd
WillSecure Limited
YMCA Cornwall
Quirk Solutions Limited
NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board
AlphaOne Electrics Ltd



CORNWALL

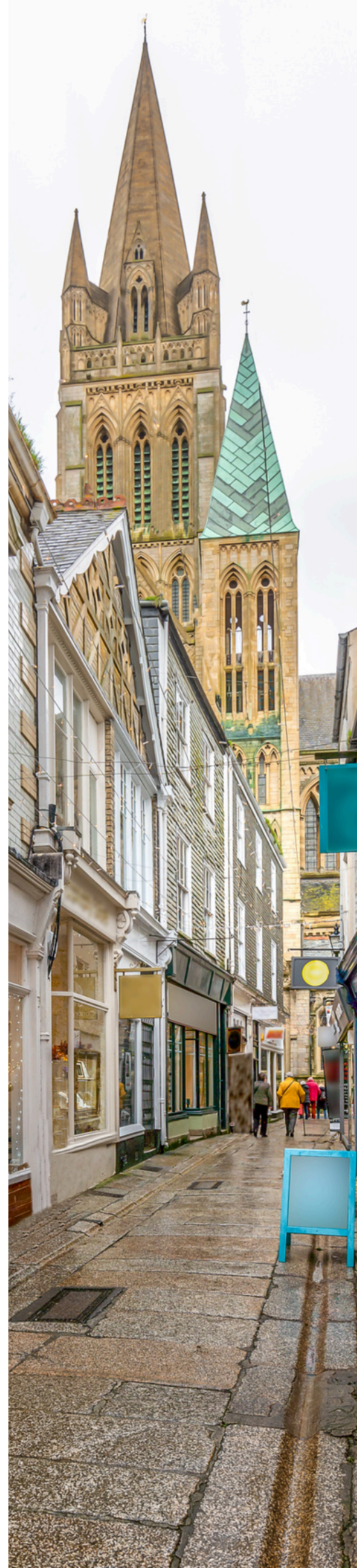
Fuel Specialist Services Ltd
Saint Pauls Healthcare Ltd
Chillflow Solutions Limited
Smart Savings South West CIC
Celtic Sea Power Limited
Jak Drones Ltd
Liskeard Town Council
GSD Security Limited

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Wildanet Limited
China Fleet Country Club
Take Point Training Limited
Penair School

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust



DEVON

KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Devon - Mr David Fursdon

County Chair - Commander Jane Allen RD

KEY DATES

- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Devon Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 1st October 2024 - County Hall
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



DEVON

ARMED FORCES COVENANTS

City College Plymouth
South West Water Ltd
Teignbridge District Council
The Family Law Company
Gilpin Demolition Group Ltd
Mercury Construction (South West) Limited
Plymouth Community Homes
North Devon Council
Sunrise Windows (Plymouth) Limited
MSubs Ltd
Will Writing & Estate Planning Services (Exeter) Limited
Dartmoor National Park Authority,
(UK) Howard Financial Limited
Oliver J. Knapman Funeral Service
Emrys Group Ltd
Everys Solicitors LLP
Eco Nrg Ltd
A.Older Safety Solutions Ltd
Adelie Brand Ltd
Gardant Security Limited
CAD Wing Ltd
The Culture Business Ltd
Barnfield Hill Surgery
Lackfords Group Ltd T/A West Country Bailiffs
Killian Construction Ltd
SA Safety Limited
TRIPLEJ SOLUTIONS LTD
South Devon Hospitality Limited
Devon First Aid Ltd
Sangfroid Group Ltd
Rotary Power Sweeping Limited
Business Smart Solutions Ltd
Equal Ops Ltd
MSTEVENS.TMC



DEVON

Frank Care Solutions Ltd
Otter Valley Funerals Ltd
Red One Ltd

BRONZE DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

South West Survival Ltd
OLC Properties Ltd
Gilpin Demolition Group Ltd
Everys Solicitors LLP
(UK) Howard Financial Limited
Emrys Group Ltd
Agilexe Limited
The International Foundation For Protection Officers
(UK) Ltd
Erebus Adventure
TCi (GB) Ltd
Oliver J. Knapman Funeral Service
Respite for Veterans
Latitude Mediation
The IWH Group Limited
Will Writing & Estate Planning Services (Exeter) Limited
City College Plymouth
RV1 Training Solutions
North Devon Council
Adventure Therapy
A.Older Safety Solutions Ltd
Tecalemit Garage Equipment Company Limited
bthechange CIC
TRIPLEJ SOLUTIONS LTD
Adelie Brand Ltd
Plymouth Community Homes
Cyber Security Strategies Limited
Rotary Power Sweeping Limited
South Devon Hospitality Limited



DEVON

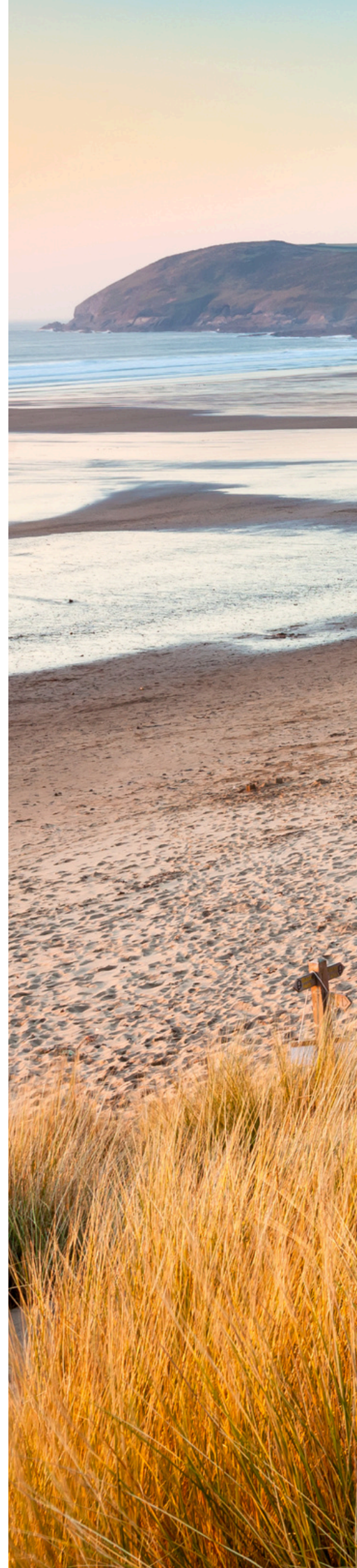
Business Smart Solutions Ltd
MSubs Ltd
CAD Wing Ltd
Sangfroid Group Ltd
MSTEVENS.TMC

SILVER DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

FR Aviation Limited
Prevail Partners Ltd
Hayachi Services LTD

GOLD DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

Plymouth City Council
Retain Limited
Katie Mills Independent Funeral Service



DORSET

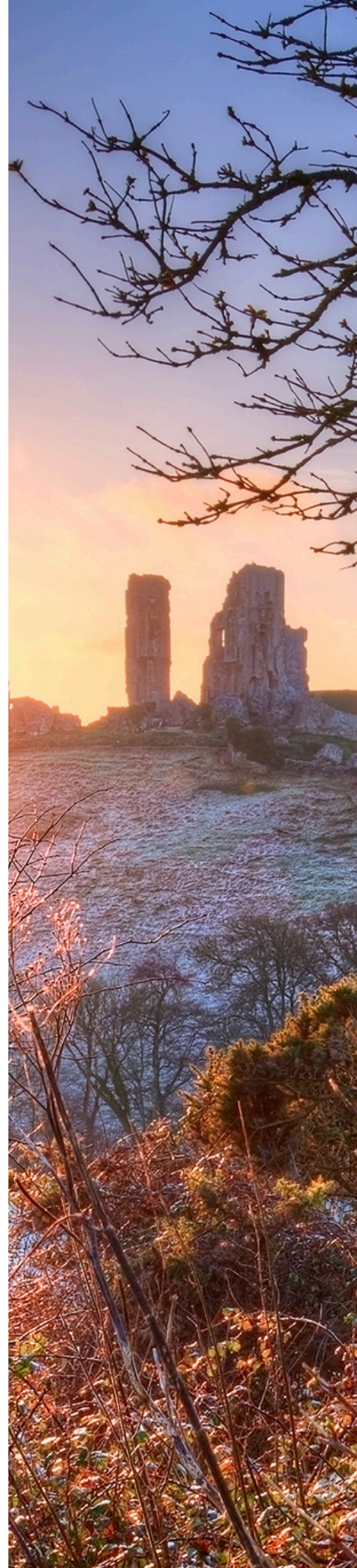
KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Dorset - Angus Campbell Esq CVO

County Chair - Brigadier Donald R Wilson CBE

KEY EVENTS

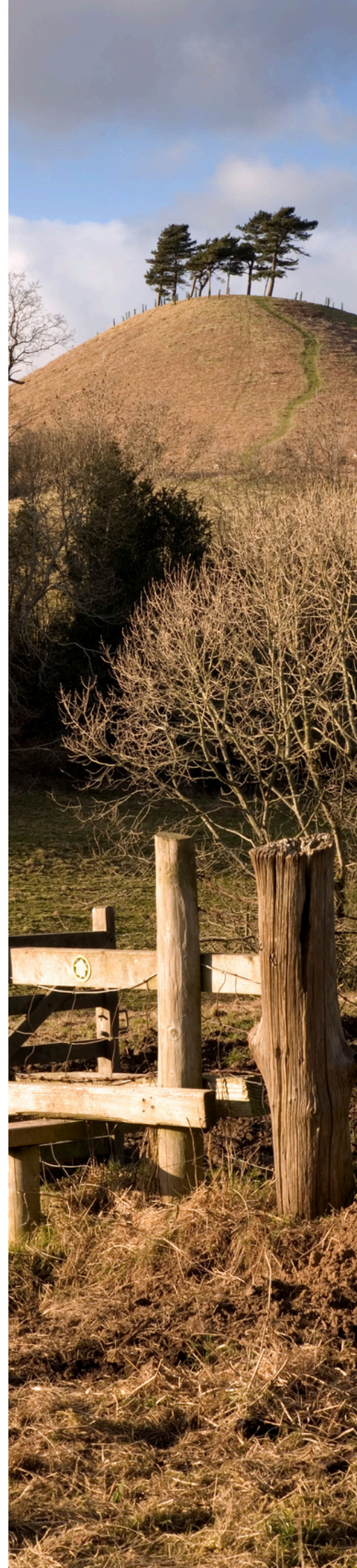
- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Dorset Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 15th October 2024 - Thomas Hardye
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



DORSET

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

C3IA Solutions Ltd
Dextra Group plc
Hall & Woodhouse Ltd
Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Kingston Maurward College
Shawqat Worldwide Ltd
The Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust
Nautilus International Risk Consultants Ltd
Blandford Forum Town Council
Altogether Care - Care Homes Limited
Candour Facilities Management Limited
JETS (Bournemouth) Ltd
Home Instead North Devon & Exmoor
Shaftesbury Town Council
Ecosafe Heating Limited
Beaufort Road Surgery
Military Freefall Solutions Inc
Olympia Triumph Manufacturing Limited
Outlander Outdoors Ltd
Portland Port Ltd
Wimborne Minster Town Council
Ammtek Limited
Huddleday Limited
Impressions Care Solutions Limited
Norco Composites Ltd
SafeGuard Security Consultants Limited
Apex CB Financial Planning Limited
Gillingham Town Council
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
Safempowerment
Portland Town Council
Rollalong Limited
ExoTechnologies
Evocatus Consulting Ltd



DORSET

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

Home Instead North Devon & Exmoor
Shaftesbury Town Council
Altogether Care - Care Homes Limited
Candour Facilities Management Limited
Ridgewater Energy Ltd
Beaufort Road Surgery
Unicard Limited
Natural Skin By Lynne
Outlander Outdoors Ltd
Military Freefall Solutions Inc
Chittak Consulting Limited
Thomas Search Ltd
Ecosafe Heating Limited
Individuality Swimming Limited
Avigation Limited
Impressions Care Solutions Limited
Bournemouth Above and Beyond Trust
Norco Composites Ltd
Olympia Triumph Manufacturing Limited
Rollalong Limited
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

FR Aviation Limited
Prevail Partners Ltd
Hayachi Services LTD

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust
C3IA Solutions Ltd
NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire - Mr Edward Gillespie OBE

County Chair for Gloucestershire - Mr Jon Penhale

KEY EVENTS

- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Gloucestershire Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 24th October 2024 - Imjin Barracks
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



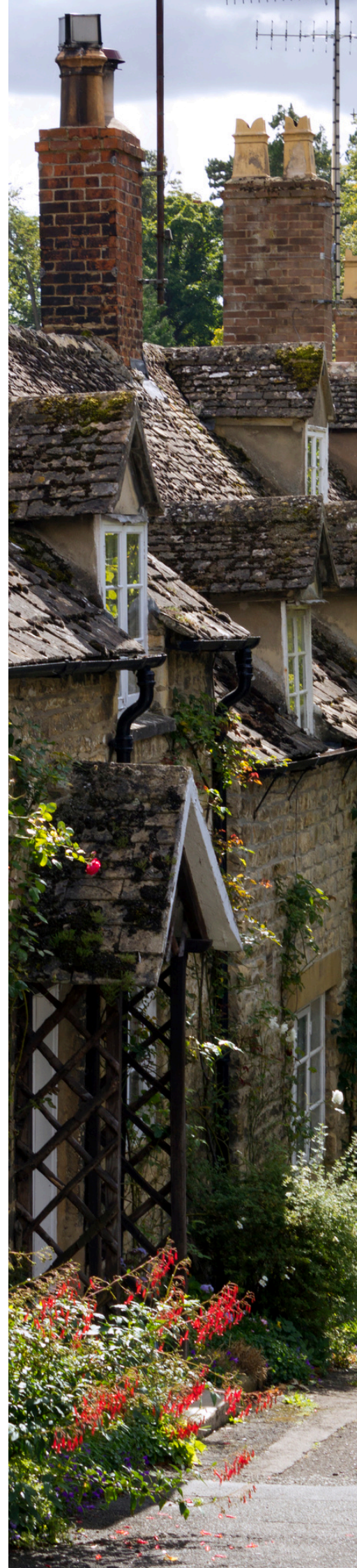
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Geotechnical Engineering Ltd
North Green Security Ltd
Secure Systems and Technologies Ltd
Sevenside Medical Practice
Linsto Limited
Coaley Peak Ltd
Claire Calder Consultancy Limited
Armstrong Wolfe Ltd
Amiosec Ltd
Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire Freemason
NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board
MF Freeman (South West) Ltd
Hooray Works Ltd
Blueprint Project Solutions Ltd
MilScrum Limited
DSG Global Risk Management Ltd
Randall & Payne LLP
Amplo Talent Ltd
Cloud R-F
Merris Consulting Ltd
Ex Military Mentor Ltd
Heart Safe Consultancy & Training Ltd
Prohawk Solutions Ltd
IAG (Global) Ltd

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Amiosec Ltd
Kiejos Ltd
Secure Systems and Technologies Ltd
Lodge Service UK Limited
Montvieux Limited
Logik Recruitment Ltd
Gloucestershire County Security Ltd
Retain Healthcare Ltd



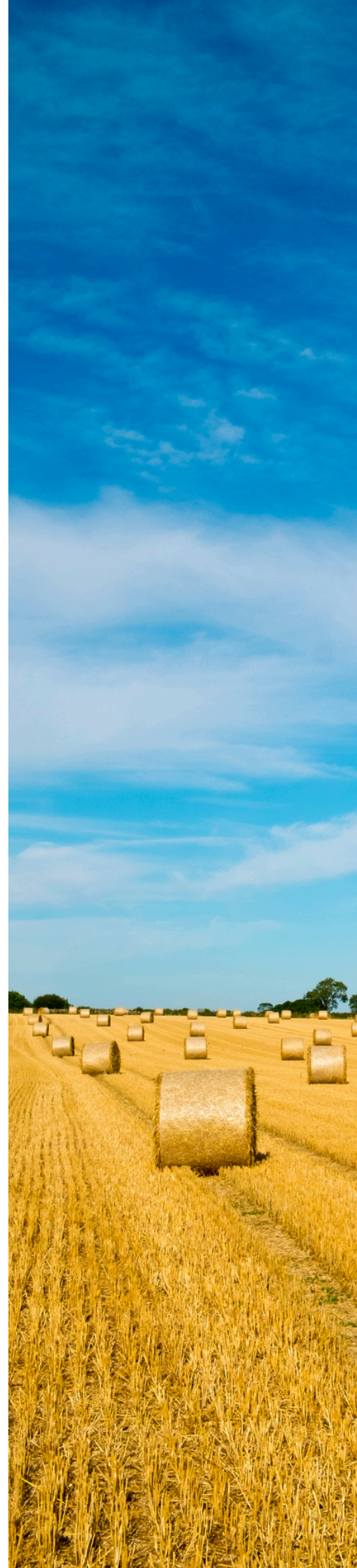
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Cable Intelligence Limited
Base3 Solutions Ltd
GWAS Independent Ambulance Service Limited
Betaris Training Ltd
Cadmidium Services Limited
Prospect Training Services
Helyx Secure Information Systems Ltd
Clarion Insight Limited
St James's Place Wealth Management Plc

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

WCS Environmental Ltd
Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust
Ruralink Ltd
North Tower Consulting Limited



SOMERSET

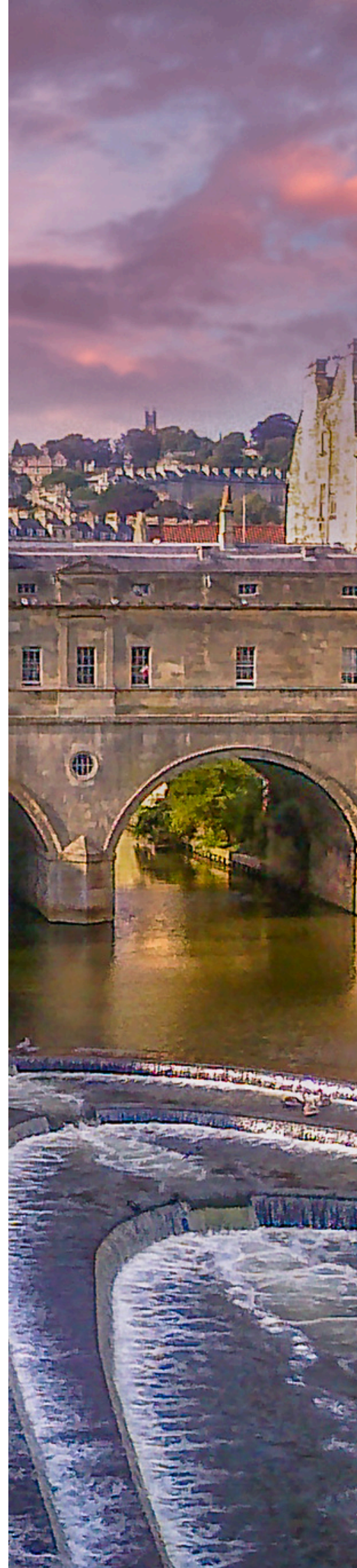
KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Somerset - Mr
Mohammed Saddiq

County Chair for Somerset - Brigadier Nigel C Beacom
QVRM TD

KEY DATES

- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 -
Taunton Racecourse
- Somerset Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 3rd October 2024
- Bishops Hull Army Reserve Centre
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st
November 2024 - Longleat



SOMERSET

ARMED FORCES COVENANTS

South West Advocates Limited
Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd
Jones Building Group Ltd
Somerset Council
Blueloop Limited
Horstman Defence Systems Limited
Whitetree Group Ltd
Somerset Integrated Care Board
Genisys Systems Ltd
C&L Convenience Store Ltd
D R Jones Yeovil Ltd
121 Turnaround Ltd
Indotronix Avani UK, Ltd
P Cubed Projects Ltd
Study Sharpe
OCU Northavon
Robert Blake School
Taunton Town Council
Boon Brown Limited
1servco Ltd
Specialist Passenger Solutions
Poppy of Honour Memorial Group
King's School Taunton Limited
50DEGREES
MT Roofing South West Ltd
Wootton Financial Services Ltd
Cullen & McLean Sourcing Ltd
MultiMax Marketing Ltd



SOMERSET

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Artemis-UK Solutions Ltd
D R Jones Yeovil Ltd
Genisys Systems Ltd
C&L Convenience Store Ltd
Wessex Lifting Services Ltd
Robert Blake School
TP Group Limited
1servco Ltd
Xi Systems Ltd
121 Turnaround Ltd
The Warrior Academy Ltd
CH Contracting (South West) Ltd
Healthinnova Limited
Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd
Indotronix Avani UK, Ltd
Your Eco Construction Ltd
Study Sharpe
Bibic
ARK At Egwood C.I.C
Bath City FC
Horstman Defence Systems Limited
Poppy of Honour Memorial Group
South West Advocates Limited
Cullen & McLean Sourcing Ltd

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITIONS SCHEME AWARD

Labyrinth Computers Ltd
At Height Services Ltd
S & D Childcare Limited
Atlantas Marine Limited
Triple Threat Security Ltd
Symphony Healthcare Services Ltd

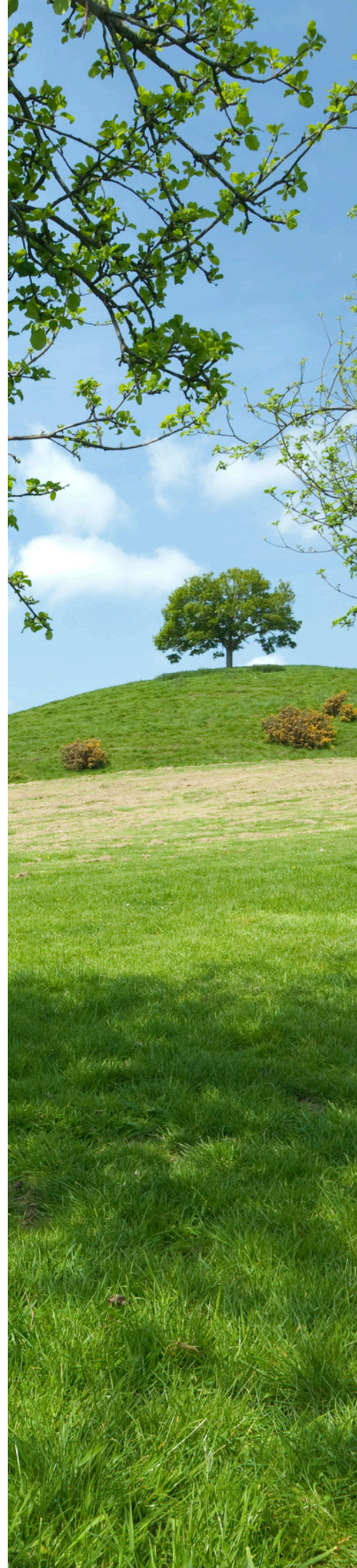


SOMERSET

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

SEA (Group) Ltd

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



WILTSHIRE

KEY PERSONALITIES

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire - Mrs Sarah Troughton DStJ

County Chair for Wiltshire - Colonel Martyn Wills MBE

KEY DATES

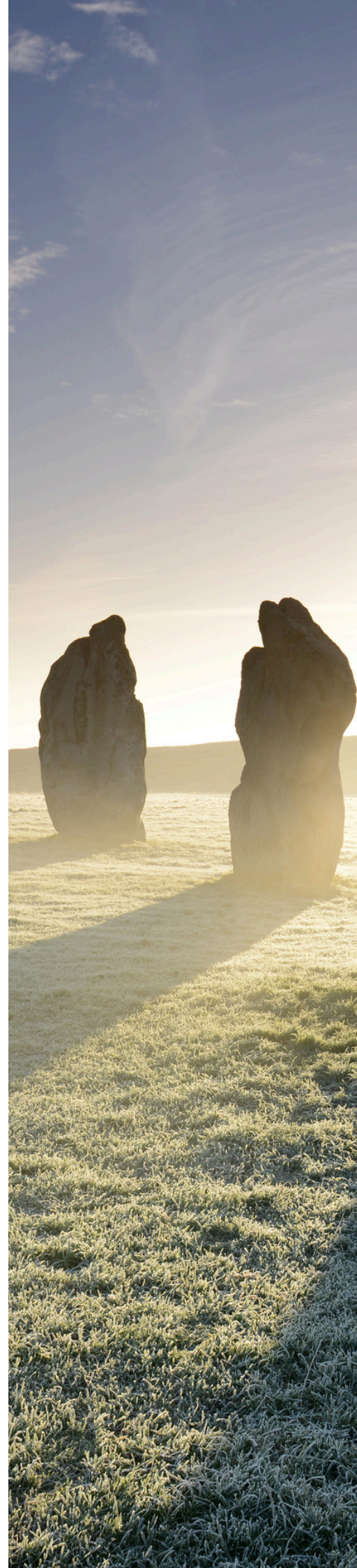
- Annual General Meeting – 11th September 2024 - Taunton Racecourse
- Wiltshire Lord Lieutenant's Awards – 17th October 2024 - Devizes Town Hall
- Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Awards - 21st November 2024 - Longleat



WILTSHIRE

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

A J K Services Ltd
DSTL (Defence Science & Technology Laboratory)
Intel Corporation (UK) Limited
Landmarc Support Services Ltd
Longleat Enterprises Ltd
Man Truck & Bus UK Ltd
Advanced Systems Understanding Ltd
The Wellington Academy
The Salisbury Diocesan Board Of Finance
Norbeck Ltd
AXIAH Ltd
Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Limited
Salisbury Cathedral
OPX Group Ltd
Halo Staffing
Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education
Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust
4Mil Ltd
Intelligence Management Support Services Ltd
C&G Power Services Ltd
Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB
Safety@Work Solutions Ltd
Ebeni Limited
Periculo Limited
Logic Contract Services Ltd
Westwire Harnessing Limited
Women Empowering Defence CIC
Chris Wheeler Construction Ltd
Merlin Contract Services Ltd
Fight Club International
ETSA CIC
UKFlying



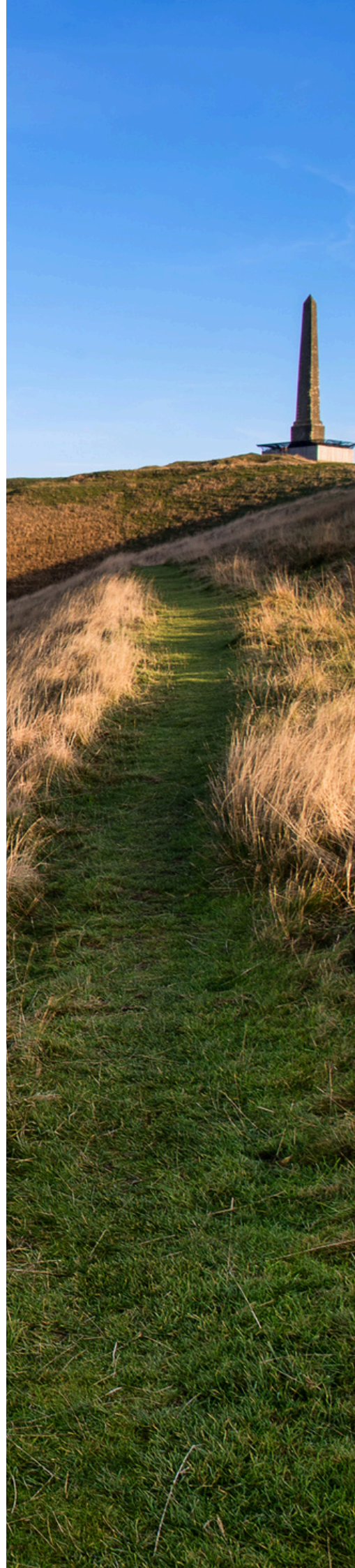
WILTSHIRE

BRONZE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Peachy Productions (London) Ltd
F-TEC Forklift Training Engineering Centre
Man Truck & Bus UK Ltd
Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust
Norbeck Ltd
Sentinel Photonics Limited
Webbed Feet UK Ltd
Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited
Intelligence Management Support Services Ltd
Incursion Cyber Security Ltd
Salisbury Model Centre 2022 Limited
Green Machine Computers Ltd
Halo Staffing
Calne Town Council
KVF Consultants Ltd
Selwood Housing Group
C&G Power Services Ltd
The Wellington Academy
Ebeni Limited
Wiltshire Police
Your Marketing Department Ltd
Westwire Harnessing Limited
Women Empowering Defence CIC
Fight Club International
ETSA CIC

SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Somerford Associates
Code 9 Security Ltd
Great Western Railway - HO
REACT Disaster Response
SVGC Group Ltd
Amesbury Pets Ltd



WILTSHIRE

PE Scholar Ltd

Blue Nine Security Ltd

Longleat Enterprises Ltd

GOLD EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARD

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Nationwide Engineering Group Ltd

SQEP Ltd

Chemring Countermeasures Ltd

SALUTEMYJOB.COM LIMITED

Landmarc Support Services Ltd

