

Case Study: Funding helps sustain the future of the Royal Navy Association



The Royal Navy Association Sunderland (RNAS) has completed a £175,000 refurb of its HQ, including a grant from Sunderland City Council's BREEZ project towards a £12,250 energy efficiency upgrade.

The building was first opened in 1975 by the late Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh. After 45 years of good service to its members, the building and its utilities needed a major upgrade and refurbishment.

In 2019 RNAS was awarded an Armed Forces Covenant Grant which funded the majority of the works, but the new energy-efficient LED lighting and heating systems received a grant from BREEZ, a Sunderland City Council project part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, to help businesses reduce their carbon emissions and cut energy bills. BREEZ has supported 64 local SMEs to date.

In summer 2020, BREEZ commissioned a free Energy Savings Opportunities Audit throughout the RNAS building and the recommendations made in the report improved the quality and efficiency of the energy-related refurbishment works. To help with decision making RNAS were also able to estimate the long-term, value-for-money energy savings that could be generated from the report recommendations.

BREEZ covered 50% of the total cost of three key energy-saving measures, including energy-efficient heating, LED lighting upgrades and insulated suspended-ceiling tiles.

Neil Craig, vice chairman of RNAS, said: "The extra support ensured we could plan to do even more work in the building and also cut our gas and electricity bills for longer by investing in good quality heating and LED lighting products."

By cutting the amount of energy it uses, RNAS has also reduced the amount of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere, which is a key objective for both the organisation and Sunderland City Council.

Cllr Graham Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, said: "The Royal Navy Association in Sunderland is an important part of the community for both serving and former veterans, as well as people with

other military affiliations. I am delighted they have completed this refurbishment with the support of a grant and the Sunderland City Council Breeze project."

The Roker branch provides a meeting place and support for its members and associate members, including serving and former Royal Navy personnel, as well as other military associations.

Neil added: "RNAS provides a warm and secure environment for veterans and the community to meet for comradeship, as well as support for mental wellbeing for former RN personnel and those from other Armed services. We are also privileged and honoured to have as a long-time member, one of the few surviving WWII WRNS.

"We currently support our veterans by holding bingo nights, quizzes, and functions in our concert hall, including reunions of different associations such as HMS Tamar from Hong Kong and their members, who come from all over the country and world to attend. We also hold regular branch and Fellowship meetings, as well as Art Therapy classes in conjunction with Veterans in Crisis for the members."