

Business Bulletin

OCTOBER 2021 | Property & Infrastructure



Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce

Time for a new office romance?

Inside job

The return to
office working

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Future facing

The investment shaping
the North-east

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With over 150 years experience of providing care and support, VSA is pleased to announce we have launched a new community-based Care at Home service.

Our team of highly trained support staff can help you or your loved one with a variety of tasks at home, including:

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Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

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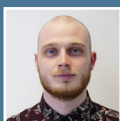
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November's theme
COP26 Special Focus

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Inside job



On track for a bright future



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Our partners

As well as helping our member businesses to be better through a range of activities, the Chamber is committed to investing a significant amount of energy in moving forward the economic growth agenda and lobbying for change on key issues to create the conditions for success. Our regional renaissance.

Without the support of our Premier Partners, we would not be able to undertake much of the good work that we do. Their engagement is hugely valued and appreciated.

If you'd like to find out more contact our membership and events director, Seona Shand.

Around the bend in eighty weeks

'SEE you in a few weeks' everyone said, as we left a series of hastily arranged staff meetings in March last year confronted with something we'd heard about on the news called CV19. As you read this, the reality is that it's now eighty weeks and counting!

Of course for many frontline workers there was no heading home to set up laptops on breakfast bars and squeeze chairs smuggled from the office under furniture intended as dressing tables. People in healthcare, education, retail, hospitality, logistics and many other sectors have been in business as usual mode - kind of - throughout the period. Thank you to them all.

For some with 'office' based roles, what was intended as a short-term home working response to the pandemic came to suit them, if not always their employers, quite nicely.

But for the majority of people I talked to over the last year and a half, this artificial way of interacting and doing business was driving them round the bend.

Some of what we have learned will stick for sure but let's not force fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another on the back of what was purely an emergency response, not some giant social experiment to unpick an effective *modus operandi* built up over decades.

And I say again. It is not the role of government to interfere in the contract between employers and employees by mandating or even advising a change in working conditions.

Being remote from each other has made teamworking, the way we like to do it at the Chamber, much more difficult. While on-screen meetings are functional and enable information exchange, this is flat, two dimensional.

The third dimension; the buzz of the office, face to face creative meetings, sharing experiences as the kettle boils, overhearing things that you can help with, ice creams on nice days, has been badly missed. As has our ability to build strong, long term internal and external customer relationships and provide meaningful staff engagement and development.

Our USP of 'in-person connection' - something that Chambers of Commerce have been facilitating for hundreds of years - was totally removed. In turn, this badly impacted our financial performance with events, training and trade documentation revenues in particular hit hard.

Now is the time to rediscover all of this and rebuild our income streams. And we'll do this better working together rather than individually, supporting our members and the wider business community to recover from the crisis and creating the economic conditions that will underpin the future success of our incredible region.

So we have invested in this future by extending our existing office lease until 2027 and undertaking a major refurbishment, creating an amazing new space for staff, members and customers. A place to enjoy working together, for our members to drop in, network, collaborate and learn. A 'Hub' of the business community in every sense.

The vast majority of the work was carried out by contractors and suppliers based in the region, putting our money where our mouth is when we ask our business community to support companies and jobs here by 'buying local'.

This is demonstrated by the Chamber taking the lead on creating the North East Now portal and will be a theme of The Ultimate Business Show at P&J Live on November 18. Check out our website for more details.

As we say in our feature on page eight, the office is not dead, long live the office. Feel free to drop in and visit us soon.



Russell Borthwick
chief executive





Sarah McColl of AFC with the RAM team and new mascot Robbie

North-east firm 'RAM'ps up support of Aberdeen FC

RAM Tubulars has signed a three-year deal to become an official supporter of Aberdeen FC's Bobby Clark Youth Academy.

A long-term supporter of Aberdeen FC, the company was keen to further strengthen its relationship with the club. A key driver in their decision was the opportunity to bolster the pipeline of young talent coming through the ranks at Pittodrie.

AFC academy director Gavin Levey is pleased to see another local business supporting the opportunities and development pathways facilitated by the AFC Youth Academy.

"The business community in the North-east has always been hugely supportive of the AFC Youth Academy and this new collaborative relationship with RAM Tubulars aligns with the club's desire to nurture opportunities for our young players and be the best developer of talent.

"Managing the transition players make from Academy to first team, something that Aberdeen FC have been renowned for many years, takes a lot of effort behind the scenes from various departments at the club. Forward-thinking partnerships such as this will allow us to continue to enhance the environment we offer our young players and help them make the step up."

Office move for Prospect 13

PROSPECT 13, the virtual marketing consultancy, has moved from the James Gregory Centre at the Innovation Park to a larger, more modern office suite in the Enterprise Centre at the Energy Park, Bridge of Don.

The business has agreed a three-year lease for the ground floor unit which can accommodate eight people and includes an element of collaboration space.

Managing director Cerri McDonald said: "The expansion comes after a 55% growth in the last 12 months despite lockdown, meaning we had outgrown our previous premises."

Contract aids record year for Intellicore

NORTH-EAST headquartered software solutions group Intellicore is on track to achieve \$2.5m revenue for 2021/22, making it the best year since establishing in 2010.

Intellicore, part of the Human Centered Technology Group, has secured a contract as the technology partner of choice for global short-term immigration compliance management firm, Nomadic, which is a subsidiary of Fragomen, the world's largest immigration firm.

Intellicore will support Nomadic with the development of its traveller management software.

Since the start of the year the group, which includes marine software specialists Seall, has secured six contract wins across geographies including Mexico, USA, Cyprus, The Netherlands, India and Turkey. This has seen the firm increase its staff by 10, with a further five expected to be added before the end of the year.

Tidy Green Clean goes carbon negative

TIDY Green Clean, the environmentally friendly commercial cleaning business, has achieved carbon negative status after working with sustainability and energy consultancy, Carbon-Zero.

Aberdeen-headquartered Tidy Green Clean already operates to global environmental standard, ISO 14001, which underpins its entire philosophy to invest in smart green cleaning technology, use less water, employ eco-friendly products and cleaning agents throughout its business. This benefits both the work environment and the wider world.

Carbon negative status means that the sum of its entire business operations goes significantly beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions. The benefit is there is less carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result.

David Moncur, co-founder and operations director, said: "To be the first commercial cleaning business in Scotland to achieve carbon negative status is more than we ever expected. Our whole business operates around an environmental, people-focused model. We value local communities and want to do all that we can to support people and the environment wherever we operate.

"Achieving carbon negative status is a phenomenal achievement and it's come through an ongoing commitment to reducing our carbon footprint. We would like to thank Brian Johnstone and the team at Carbon-Zero for all their advice, support and focus in helping us to come to this position and it's something we intend to maintain."

Tidy Green Clean has switched a number of its cars to electric and uses suppliers who have done the same, use i-Mops that require very little water, and as part of the carbon negative achievement, will be buying carbon credits through Carbon-Zero's guided carbon offsetting programme partner.



EODEX opens base at Aberdeen Energy Park

AN UNEXPLORED ordnance disposal company has taken space at the Innovation Centre.

Moorfield Group, the owner and landlord of Aberdeen Energy and Innovation Parks, has welcomed new occupier EODEX to the Energy Park in Bridge of Don.

EODEX, which specialises in the safe and environmentally friendly removal and disposal of unexploded ordnance (UXO) around the world, is opening its first Scottish base at Unit 2 of the Innovation Centre and has agreed an initial one-year lease.

Hugh Canham, head of asset management at Moorfield Group, said: "This deal is yet another boost for our reputation as a key business location within Aberdeen and the North-east region. It is testament to the quality of our workspaces that dynamic new occupiers like EODEX recognise the value in the flexible office solutions that we have available here at the parks.

"As pandemic restrictions start to ease, we anticipate increased occupier demand for space at the parks. We provide occupiers and their staff with the perfect safe office solutions within a spacious and green environment, ideally suited to support health and wellbeing, the vital importance of which has been highlighted over the past 18 months."

Silver medal for Neptune

NEPTUNE Energy has been awarded silver medal status from the environment, social and governance ratings organisation, EcoVadis. The upgrade places Neptune in the top 25% of all 75,000 global organisations assessed by EcoVadis.

EcoVadis assesses companies' policies, actions and performance disclosures in the areas of environment, labour and human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement.

In its report, EcoVadis highlighted Neptune's disclosure of emissions data and quantitative targets, strong environmental management practices and comprehensive ethics policies and procedures.

Oceans of opportunity for subsea industry

SUBSEA UK is urging the industry to come together for next year's Subsea Expo to explore the 'oceans of opportunity' in the blue economy.

Subsea Expo, Europe's largest exhibition and conference focused on the underwater industry, is set to be one of the first post-pandemic, large scale physical events back on the international calendar.

The three-day flagship exhibition and conference will go ahead at Aberdeen's P&J Live from February 22.

Under the theme 'Oceans of Opportunity - Harnessing the Opportunities in the Blue Economy', the event will centre around high-level discussions on how the UK's underwater engineering industry can capitalise on the global blue economy, estimated to be worth \$3tn by 2030.

Organiser Subsea UK is planning a packed three days of debate on key industry topics including the push towards net zero, the development of carbon capture, utilisation and storage, hydrogen technologies, and smart innovation. The event will also examine how the underwater industry can take advantage of its world-leading expertise in skills and technology to successfully compete for market share in other emerging sectors of the blue economy.

A call for papers has been issued with a deadline of October 29 for abstracts to speak at the event.

Neil Gordon, chief executive of Subsea UK, said: "Against the backdrop of a global pandemic and the acceleration of the race to net zero, our future looks very different now than it did at the start of last year.

"Subsea Expo provides an excellent platform for finding out more about mature and emerging markets and for making connections that can lead to cross-sector collaborations which will be key to developing solutions to the challenge in both the blue economy and the energy transition."

Inspectahire expands in Portlethen

INSPECTAHIRE has taken occupancy of a modern warehouse in Portlethen on a five-year lease amid a period of continued global expansion.

The firm, which provides inspections and testing services to various cross-sector industries including oil and gas, renewables and pharmaceuticals, started trading in 1981 from its Helensburgh base. The newly renovated building in Badentoy increases its office and yard space in the Aberdeen area by 30%.

Inspectahire has grown to become a world leading global NDT inspections and testing business employing around 20 people across operations worldwide. Currently 17 of these are based at the company's new headquarters at Badentoy with room for expansion and a renewed focus on introducing new products and technology going into 2022.

Long live the office

RUMOURS of the death of the office are greatly exaggerated according to those whose businesses depend on them. Offices, and the millions of workers based in them, remain a vital cog in regional economies.

In March 2020 the vast majority of office workers abandoned their desks on the instruction of the government and set up base everywhere from shared kitchen tables and bedrooms to home offices and luxury garden cabins.

Since then there has been much talk about hybrid ways of working which would allow employees' time to be split between home and the office. For some, working at home has attractions like the convenience of no commuting. For others it can cause significant wellbeing issues.

The absence of office workers in our city and town centres is also having a devastating impact on shops, cafes, restaurants and many others whose livelihoods depend on their footfall.

There can be few more focused on the future of offices than Colin Campbell, managing director of Langstane Press, not just as a business owner but also as someone whose business is directly dependent on offices.

He said that the last 18 months has had a dramatic effect as when offices were all shut down there was a massive drop in the demand for the products and services Langstane supplies. It is only now, 18 months on, that he feels confident in gradually moving staff back to their offices.

As part of a consultation employees were asked what a return to the office would mean for them and whether they had any apprehension relating to the pandemic. Their views were canvassed on how they felt about working from home and how that was influencing their thinking about the future.

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“A minority were apprehensive, the majority were ready to come back and a proportion were excited about getting back”

Colin Campbell,
managing director
Langstane Press

“A minority were apprehensive, the majority were ready to come back and a proportion were excited about getting back,” Colin said. “There is a strong lobby right now, including the First Minister, talking about hybrid working as the way ahead but I have a bias towards offices getting back to where they were because that’s our business.”

He said hybrid working meant different things to different people and was not a cure-all as different businesses require different skills: “If we go back to March 2020, within the space of three days of the instruction from the government, everybody who was in an admin role was working from home.

“It was achieved amazingly quickly and there were quite a lot of interim measures because we thought it would maybe be for a few weeks, so it was making do with equipment and so on.

“Staff basically unplugged everything on their desks and took it home and some even took their chairs. But you can’t do that in a hybrid situation. You can’t suddenly unplug all your desktops and printers and say you’re going to work at home tomorrow.

“For various reasons there are some businesses which are wholly embracing the view that there will be



much more home working. It might be operational or financial if they can save a lot in rent and rates.

"If some businesses need that, then fine, but I don't think that goes for all businesses. The office definitely isn't dead. The office is still needed. Even when some people are working at home they will require a workplace, but not necessarily for day-to-day operational work at a desk.

"It may just be a meeting place for town halls or conferences, somewhere staff can actually still have that vibrant feeling of community that they are part of an identity and a business. A big danger is that everyone is working from home sitting in their back bedroom every day and they don't have that feeling of community and togetherness.

"By recommending that home working could be the way ahead, the government is further damaging city centre businesses which need the footfall office workers bring to our towns and cities. There's no one there from 9-5 because we're all working from home.

"We need people back in offices, going to the shops and coffee bars and staying back after work going to the cinema or restaurants. That's part of our economy, part of our

environment, part of our city and our culture.

"I worked out that by not going out to buy my sandwich lunch for the 500+ days I have been at home, city stores have lost my spend of about £1,700 – and I'm just one person out of probably thousands."

The return to office working is something the Chamber is championing and has actively

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"This investment is not just about creating an enhanced, modern base for our team to operate from in the city, it is also a commitment to providing an easily accessible, bright function space for the many businesses who use our office to support their own activities."

Russell Borthwick,
chief executive
AGCC

invested in its 4,826sq ft base at The Hub in Bridge of Don. Providing contracts to a raft of North-east businesses including Langstane Press, Tinto Architecture, Space Solutions, Commercial Moves Group, Early Bird Catering, Holburn Hi-Fi, We Are Transform and N Sainsbury & Son, the extensive refurbishment programme was completed in September.

Chief executive Russell Borthwick said: "This investment is not just about creating an enhanced, modern base for our team to operate from in the city, it is also a commitment to providing an easily accessible, bright function space for the many businesses who use our office to support their own activities.

"We see it playing a central role in how we bring people together to meet, collaborate, share ideas and do business with each other, the vital in-person connectivity that businesses tell us just can't be replicated virtually."

Indeed the return to office working is stoking lots of discussion around how spaces are used. Richard Tinto of Tinto Architecture said that CV19 had accelerated debate around the flexibility of property usage and not having people working at desks five days a week.



“That doesn’t mean that we need less of the office, in fact you could argue that we need more spaces to bring people together,” he said. “Perhaps less sitting at a desk but more collaboration, more team meetings more client interactions. Offices and workspaces can actually become the best physical manifestation of your brand. It really allows you to walk your talk and if you’ve got customers or suppliers coming in then they actually can walk that talk with you as well.

“Traditionally people do business with people and can you ever replace a smile, a handshake, an embrace, a human touch, human interaction? I would say ‘no.’ We build relationships in the working environments therefore those environments perhaps take on an extra dimension. When we disappear to do focused pieces or different types of work in a remote sense, the need to come together is enhanced.

“The size or shape of workspaces may ultimately be up for grabs but I think to say that the workspace, as opposed to the office, is not going to last, is really naïve. Businesses should be embracing the opportunity to enhance their customer experience through better offices.

“That is what we have done at the Chamber through individual meeting

Pods. We are giving people spaces to work in a different manner providing the flexibility which allows them to be their very best.

“We have tried to create an exciting place for Chamber staff to come to. Somewhere they have room to work, room to do Chamber business which is all about people, all about serving other businesses. We have given them a physical manifestation of their brand which sets them up for a post CV19 world.”

Chris Carr, senior workplace consultant with SPACE, said: “One

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“One of the biggest challenges currently exercising people’s minds is the attendance model - how do we decide who comes in, when and for how long?”

Chris Carr,
senior workplace consultant
SPACE

of the biggest challenges currently exercising people’s minds is the attendance model - how do we decide who comes in, when and for how long?” he said. “Some organisations have decided on a fixed number of days for everyone, while others have suggested this is something for team leaders to manage at a local level.

“We are perhaps not going to get it right first time. I don’t think we should beat ourselves up in an attempt to create the perfect model. Every workplace policy has to evolve. If your people have been back in the office in greater numbers from, say September 1, have a first review after one or two months. The model might need to be fine-tuned.”

He suggested that organisations should be thinking about what brings added value when people are back in the office – for example team members collaborating and bouncing ideas off each other. Do their offices support that type of interaction? Do they have the right size of meeting spaces and are they flexible enough? Does every meeting room have a fixed table and chairs or does the space allow people to be creative, with whiteboards or smart screens?

“Do we have comfortable social spaces? People may be coming back



into the office for so-called 'team days' – is there a space that allows the team to have a lunch together? To a certain extent organisations should always be looking at their space because if the work we do is constantly changing – and technology is changing the way we work – then the space should always be changing."

He said, for example, that as well as collaborative spaces the offices of the future will also need quiet corners where staff can go for a video meeting with a client, or just for focus time: "When colleagues are back in offices internal Teams calls will drop off but I think more routine client meetings will be held digitally, saving on travel time. Rather than booking out a large meeting room for one person, you just need that quiet corner where you can go and corral the noise."

Holburn Hi-Fi has been ensuring companies have, and continue to have, technology equipped to deal with the changing office environment.

Managing director Jonathan Turner said: "CV19 really forced the hands of some companies to embrace technology when beforehand it was maybe down the priority list. Smaller offices now have video conferencing

which they may not have had before and we are finding quite a lot of business owners have video conferencing in their home offices, feeding into their main office. The same is also applying to some senior management to create flexibility.

"You absolutely need to have face-to-face and the office is there for that but there's now also the option of spreading the workforce a bit and having some staff remote and some physically in the office with video conferencing technology which can interact with Zoom, Skype and so on.

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"I think the key to the survival of many local businesses during the pandemic has been that they are providing something which is difficult to replicate online – and because they are very price competitive."

Jonathan Turner,
managing director
Holburn Hi-Fi

"The key to it is people's networks. What you often find is if the business owner is at home there may also be kids on home learning or the other half working as well and the routers which the broadband companies provide free of charge simply are not up to the job of doing what you need.

"The speed of the connection is vital but assuming you've got that right you also need a decent local network which allows various devices to connect effectively. Both ends need to be what we call 'enterprise grade' and that is our domain and we can provide the equipment and professional advice.

"I think the key to the survival of many local businesses during the pandemic has been that they are providing something which is difficult to replicate online – and because they are very price competitive.

"Buying local means having the expertise on hand to assist and I think both our business and residential clients appreciate that."

What are you most looking forward to as staff begin to return to their offices?



"Given that everything we do is about people, it's been tough not seeing our team members or clients in the flesh. I can't wait for our team to get back together again in the office. We enjoy working with each other – there's no shortage of team spirit. Bouncing ideas and experiences around in the same room generates huge amounts of creative energy in normal times and I'm really excited to return to this way of working.

"I'm also looking forward to seeing our clients again face-to-face and I know from our conversations that many of them feel exactly the same. We've built up strong relationships over a long period of time and that has sustained us during lockdown, but it's just not the same as sitting down for a chat over a coffee. Now, where's that kettle..."

Phil Anderson, *director*, Phil Anderson Financial Services



"I'm very much a people person. So #workingfromhome has certainly not been my preferred mode of working. Don't get me wrong, myself and the rest of the Eserv team adapted really well, pivoting our processes to work just as well remotely as they do in person. But in common with many of my colleagues I missed the team all being together.

"We're a creative and passionate bunch and when we get together we're so much more than the sum of our parts. Bouncing ideas and energy off each other creates the optimum conditions for innovation – it's often when we come up with our most groundbreaking concepts. So, for me, the return to the office is very much a homecoming."

Dan Millard, *chief executive officer*, Eserv International



"We know positive learning environments are always built on the quality of human relationships. A school is not just a building; it is a community. I believe we have all learned important lessons from living (and learning) in lockdown, not least that sticking together emotionally has never been more important. It is one of the greatest feelings to see our corridors full of students again, as well as having all the teachers and staff back together on campus with a positive outlook for the year ahead.

"We are continuing to focus the school's energy on wellbeing, friendship and inclusion – three things we have always valued but have really come to appreciate and treasure throughout the strange times of CV19. Putting the challenges of last year behind us our students are back in open, socially distanced safe classroom environments and we are all delighted to 'pop' our social bubbles."

Nick Little, *head of school*, International School Aberdeen

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Kirstie MacLennan

Brodies recognised as a Working Families top employer

UK and leading Scottish law firm Brodies LLP has ranked in the top 30 UK family-friendly employers by work-life balance charity, Working Families.

Now in its 12th year, the Working Families Top Employer rankings assess UK employers of all sizes from across the public, private and third sectors on their flexible and family-friendly policies and practices that specifically support mothers, fathers and carers.

Kirstie MacLennan, people engagement director at Brodies, said: "The wellbeing of our colleagues is at the centre of what we do and we aim to provide a supportive and inclusive culture that enables them to find the right balance between work and family responsibilities. We recognise that personal circumstances for each of our colleagues is different, and we work with them to address those individual needs.

"Being recognised by Working Families demonstrates our ongoing commitment to looking after our colleagues and ensuring that our core value of care emanates across all areas of our firm."

Wood strengthens its CCUS position

WOOD, the global consulting and engineering company, has strengthened its position across the Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) value chain through a series of new wins in the first half of 2021.

The company has secured more than 20 individual CCUS related contracts since the beginning of the year to accelerate decarbonisation and emissions reduction activities, as clients focus on aligning their operations to support a net zero future.

The company anticipates continued growth in this space, with around \$500m worth of potential CCUS projects coming to market in the medium term, highlighting the important role this technology will play in delivering a low carbon energy system.

Among the contract wins, Wood is delivering decarbonisation solutions for the world's largest carbon capture and storage project in the United States which will allow the capture and permanent storage of up to 10 million tons of CO₂ annually.

The company is also supporting the front-end engineering and design (FEED) for the Acorn project which is set to be one of the first industrial-scale carbon capture projects in the UK. It could remove at least half the CO₂ emissions set out in the UK Government's 'Ten Point Plan' by capturing carbon at the St Fergus gas terminal in Aberdeenshire and using existing energy infrastructure to transport and store it under the North Sea.

Wood is also continuing to support BP on the Net Zero Teesside project with an industrial cluster masterplan and VPI Immingham on the Humber Zero project where it's developing the early design to help create a zero carbon industrial cluster.

Major hotel and restaurant boost for Huntly

INDEPENDENT North-east whisky merchant Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky has acquired The Castle Hotel in Huntly and The Bank Restaurant and Café.

The hotel, set in 11 acres of land, was purchased in May for near to the £1.25m asking price and the restaurant and café followed. An extensive refurbishment of both is being undertaken with The Bank ready to open and the hotel scheduled to open next year.

Euan Shand, chairman of Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky, is delighted to be investing in Huntly where the firm has its headquarters. "I was born and brought up in Huntly," he said. "My father, Albert Shand, was the manager at Glendronach Distillery and I grew up in a house on the distillery grounds so my love of Huntly and the people is deep rooted. We have already invested heavily in the area with our headquarters, our Whiskies of Scotland shop and online retailer The Spirits Embassy all based in the area."

Forty years and counting as a shed shifter!

Graeme Watt,
director,
FG Burnett



1981 was a rather significant year in my life...Highers had been sat and the results were encouraging, the driving test had been booked, the golf handicap was at an all-time low and Scotland had qualified for the 1982 World Cup.

Sixth year at Harlaw Academy had started and university beckoned but all was not well, the availability of subjects was not fitting in with the plans – what to do?

Sensing growing frustration, my mum spotted a recruitment ad in the P&J by a firm of surveyors on Albyn Place called FG Burnett. Without any real knowledge or understanding of the firm or what the job was, it sounded like something that merited further investigation and an application for my first ever full time job was submitted. Fast forward to the present day and here I am, proud to have recently reached the milestone of 40 years' service with the firm.

It's been quite a journey from the day one apprentice, marvelling at the scale of it all, including the partners' rather impressive Mercedes cars in the car park, to being one of the senior directors of the company.

It seems obvious to say but there has been considerable progress and change and without doubt, the ease and speed of communication in all its numerous guises within the context of the digital revolution has been the biggest business game changer or disruptor as they are now known.

A graduate of Aberdeen's oil and gas boom and bust, sometimes contra, market cycle, I have experienced, worked through and learned my profession from the various ups and downs of the energy sector, not to mention a few separate financial crashes along the way. The crash of and emergence from 1986 is never to be forgotten and at that time communication skills were and still very much are in all its forms, key – managing client expectations in the face of seller or buyer, landlord or tenant hopes and aspirations is an art. There are not many sheds in Aberdeen into which I haven't poked my head!

Career highlights? Too many to give justice to here but climbing through the ranks at FGB is the obvious one. One memorable encounter was meeting Sir Laurie Barratt and doing a tour of Aberdeen with him when I was still a recently qualified, raw but ambitious surveyor. A no-nonsense

Geordie, next to whom you knew exactly where you stood and from whom some valuable deal making lessons were quickly learned.

Deals and experiences have been many, ranging from visiting OTC in Houston to physically measuring a hill with ranging poles and tape in a cold and blustery Shetland to literally travelling the length and breadth of Scotland in 24 hours inspecting a bank's portfolio. A rich and varied career tapestry indeed.

Perhaps with the exception of the 1986 oil crash and the subsequent lean years of the late 1980s, the last 18 months has seen the greatest business and societal turmoil in my 40 years as a chartered surveyor but hopefully the future will confirm we all can emerge and transition in all senses from the challenge of that turmoil ever the stronger!



On track for a bright future

THE Aberdeen City Region may just have been beginning to recover from the oil slump when CV19 hit but, in spite of these devastating blows, there is significant investment in the pipeline and much to look forward to.

The Chamber's 2021 Investment Tracker, delivered in partnership with Invest Aberdeen and Opportunity North East (ONE), will shortly be published, demonstrating how resilient the North-east economy is and how bright a future is being created by the diversification strategy underway.

New life will be breathed into Aberdeen city centre with the £28m transformation of Union Terrace Gardens which is nearing completion. Also making great progress is the investment in digital connectivity to make Aberdeen one of the best connected cities in the world and provide gigabit fibre to the region.

Two projects funded by the Aberdeen City Region Deal are well underway. The £21m North East Food Hub, a seedpod project to realise an ambition to double the size of the North-east's £2.2bn food and drink sector, will open next year on the campus of Scotland's

Rural College at Craibstone close to Aberdeen International Airport and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. It will be the centre of excellence for nurturing and growing food and drink businesses in the area.

Significant changes are underway to transform the appearance of Aberdeen railway station which has been in the city centre for more than a century and a half, with completion due next year.

Also scheduled to open to its first tenants next year is the Bio-Therapeutic Hub for Innovation (Bio Hub) which will house up to 400

scientific entrepreneurs with the goal of doubling the number of life sciences companies in the region by 2027. It is under construction on the Foresterhill Health Campus, already one of Europe's largest integrated clinical, research and teaching sites for life sciences and medicine.

Ryan Houghton, convener of Aberdeen City Council's city growth and resources committee, said that the £350m development of state-of-the-art facilities at Aberdeen South Harbour, due to open next year, was obviously a massive development for the city and created new opportunities for offshore wind production.

In addition, a potential bid to create an Aberdeen City and Peterhead Freeport could be hugely important to incentivise additional inward investment to support the next phase of the city's economic future with the potential to create an estimated 22,000 jobs.

He said as soon as the UK Government finalises its application process a bid could be lodged.

Ryan highlighted the 70-hectare Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) as another development which could radically change the economic landscape of Aberdeen and the wider North-east. It is being

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“£350m development of state-of-the-art facilities at Aberdeen South Harbour, due to open next year, was obviously a massive development for the city and created new opportunities for offshore wind production.”



developed south of the Aberdeen harbour expansion and could directly support 2,500 green jobs by 2030, alongside a further 10,000 transition-related jobs.

Within the city's green infrastructure investment, the council is bringing forward its plans for phase two of Hydrogen Aberdeen, a production, storage and distribution hub that is already attracting interest from commercial investors.

In the heart of the city there has already been major developments with the completion of the renovation of the Music Hall and Aberdeen Art Gallery which had just hosted the first visit to Scotland for some considerable time of the prestigious British Art Show.

Provost Skene's House will reopen as a new tourist attraction in the heart of the city and now the council is working on additional proposals to revitalise the city centre and the beach area.

To intensify and bolster the City Centre Masterplan, £150m has been set aside and detailed proposals will be bought forward in November.

The council has already purchased the former Aberdeen Market and BHS site to create a destination venue featuring international-style

food and drink outlets as part of the city's recovery from CV19.

The development would also create a pedestrian link between Union Street and the bus and railway stations via The Green around which there would be urban realm improvements.

The proposal is to develop the site with market-style floorspace to create a destination venue with commercial marketplace elements promoting local produce and

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“It's good to see progress on the Aberdeen Market and former BHS retail unit with the purchase of the site and now the committee agreeing that it should be put to out to market to find an operator”

Ryan Houghton,
convener of Aberdeen city council's city growth and resources committee

goods alongside continental style delicatessen, cafes and food outlets.

“It's good to see progress on the Aberdeen Market and former BHS retail unit with the purchase of the site and now the committee agreeing that it should be put to out to market to find an operator,” said Councillor Houghton.

“It will attract and retain footfall in this key area of the city and help our hospitality and retail sectors which have suffered due to the restrictions caused by CV19 and is an exciting opportunity to breathe new life into our city centre.

“The new Aberdeen Market, combined with associated public realm works on Union Street and to the south, will bring transformational change to the heart of the city centre and we look forward to the next stages.”

He said detailed business cases for projects designed to help to revitalise the beach area into a new waterfront destination are also being progressed.

These include significant work at the Beach Ballroom creating an enhanced public realm setting with an integrated football stadium – a new home for the Dons - leisure



complex, an improved promenade and potential provision of an energy centre.

“We have seen more people enjoy using the beach during lockdown and our proposals would maximise this new demand and make it a destination once again. They would transform it through significant investment providing new facilities and creating a space to which city residents and visitors are drawn.

“We know how loved and important the beach area is and we want it to be a big part of Aberdeen continuing to be a vibrant place to live, work and visit.”

The report highlighted the desire for a dynamic waterfront making the most of the beach boulevard including support facilities such as changing accommodation/beach huts and a pier.

He said assuming all the necessary approvals, demolition for the international market site could be underway by early next year, if not by the end of this year.

“We then need to get an operator and contractors and we are pushing our officers hard to do that. This isn't something that we're going to be spending years thinking and talking about - we're going to get moving on it.

“Aberdeen's industrial and economic history has always been characterised by reacting and responding quickly to new challenges. In this sense it has always been a city in transition. It was granite, then fishing, then oil and gas and now it is going through the energy transition with Aberdeen the UK's leading hydrogen city with infrastructure in place.

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“Despite recent challenges, we have worked collaboratively as a region to focus on minimising the economic impact and look to recovery. One vital aspect of that journey is investment and we have an important role in showcasing exactly why the region continues to be a strong investment location.”

Andy Kille,
council leader
Aberdeenshire Council

“The energy opportunities are here and new jobs for the next generation of energy production will gravitate here, capitalising on the foundation of a world class subsea engineering sector and the expertise and innovation that is here. But it is not just a case of turning off one and turning on the other or you lose the quality of our talented work force and you lose the supply chain, the people and technology.

“I hope to see more people living and spending time in the city centre.

People who have lived in Aberdeen for a long time feel it's not quite right and want to fix it. We can't build a city for the future based on what we maybe enjoyed 20 or 30 years ago, but we have to be sympathetic to the legacy we have.

“We are incredibly fortunate in Aberdeen that we have two fantastic universities and the airport and harbour. Thanks to the oil and gas industry we are in a unique position and we will always be in a unique position but only if we all try and be a bit more optimistic. We need to talk up our city and we are fortunate to have these projects coming to fruition now.”

Aberdeenshire Council leader councillor Andy Kille said: “Despite recent challenges, we have worked



collaboratively as a region to focus on minimising the economic impact and look to recovery. One vital aspect of that journey is investment and we have an important role in showcasing exactly why the region continues to be a strong investment location.

“Each year the Investment Tracker helps us to do this, demonstrating business confidence, growth in our key sectors and sharing the many exciting and often world-leading projects in the pipeline.”

Depute leader and chair of the council’s infrastructure services committee, councillor Peter Argyle, added: “Over the past 18 months, we have taken great strides in our drive to net zero with projects such as Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage garnering global media coverage and recently securing £31m investment from the UK Government.

“A project to bring a full-fibre network to Aberdeenshire designed to boost economic activity, quality of life and improve the delivery of public services has so far laid 153km of new underground fibre cable. Two examples of the ongoing delivery of our diversification strategy.

“We look forward to the results of the next Investment Tracker, noting

that whilst we are indeed recovering from a downturn, our determination to future-proof the region and ensure a resilient and vibrant economy has not wavered.”

Jennifer Craw, chief executive of Opportunity North East, said: “Transformational projects led and funded by ONE in the region’s key sectors are essential to economic recovery, with public and private

sector investment focused on creating new high-value jobs, increasing productivity and supporting health and wellbeing and a just transition. Projects currently in delivery – including BioHub and SeedPod – and in development, such as North East Adventure Tourism and Seafood Transformation, will bring new opportunities across the region.

“North-east Scotland has a record as one of the most investable, productive and entrepreneurial economies in the UK, with high levels of business start-up, research and development, and exports. The private sector continues to adapt and evolve with the focus on low carbon and sustainability, as each industry and company develops its route map to net zero, and digital transformation is embedded in business. Investment in this region will deliver a national impact.”

“

“A project to bring a full-fibre network to Aberdeenshire designed to boost economic activity, quality of life and improve the delivery of public services has so far laid 153km of new underground fibre cable. Two examples of the ongoing delivery of our diversification strategy.”

Peter Argyle,
depute leader
Aberdeenshire Council

Leases and town centre regeneration

by Emma Stephen,
partner, commercial property,
Stronachs LLP



THE pandemic has ripped through town centres leaving boarded up shop fronts, dilapidated buildings and deserted high streets in its wake. The trend away from in-person to online shopping and the ramifications of that change are becoming apparent.

Despite the convenience of online shopping there remains a desire to have physical shops, as well as functional and vibrant town centres. As we move away from CV19 restrictions managing this juxtaposition shall be a primary concern of local authorities, property investors, retailers and other business owners dependant on footfall.

The reason behind the demise of the high street is not solely CV19 but reports suggest that it has sped up the process of digitisation of shopping by at least five years. A common complaint is that Union Street in Aberdeen is a shadow of its former self. The pavements are dirty and congested with street furniture and the buildings look dilapidated. Perhaps proposals to pedestrianise parts of Union Street shall have a positive impact but they are unlikely to be successful in isolation.

There are many angles to look at this problem from including planning,

taxation, investment, unit size, new shopping centres etc. We shall briefly look at the impact leasing has and how landlords can play their part in regeneration.

Most retail premises will be owned by a commercial landlord and leased to retail businesses. These leases would have historically been long term (upwards of 10 years) and on an FRI (full repairing and insuring) basis. Meaning the tenant is responsible for all repairs as well as paying rent. The landlord collects the rent and has little else to do with the premises. This model works well when tenants' businesses are successful and allows them to invest their capital in the business and not property. However, it is not so effective when the tenants' margins are constantly being squeezed, particularly as in-person shopping is more expensive for retailers.

In this climate tenants struggle to comply with the repairing obligations in their leases (dilapidations costs). In the event of the tenant going into administration or liquidation the landlord can be left with buildings with outstanding dilapidations where no payment shall be forthcoming from the tenant. Even if a dilapidations payment is made (in lieu of works being carried out) the landlord is entitled to keep these sums and not

reinvest them in the property if they want to.

At the end of a lease the landlord can decide to invest in upgrading the property or to seek to rent the property in its current condition but at reduced rent (if they can find a new tenant at all). This is frequently done by a lease where the repairing obligation of the tenant is limited by a schedule of condition (a photographic record of the condition of the property). In these circumstances there will be no obligation on either the landlord or the tenant to improve the property and this can lead to a general deterioration of the area.

These issues are not the fault of local authorities but rather the normal leasing market practices. In the challenging conditions both landlords and tenants find themselves in there will need to be a recognition of the importance of investment in properties to ensure that town centres do not deteriorate further. Although only part of a wider picture, ensuring the reasonable condition of these retail properties is a crucial part of city centre regeneration. Aesthetically pleasing streetscapes will improve footfall, which shall in turn improve occupation levels, rents and property values in the long run.

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Digital session for events sector available online

REOPENING and staying open safely in the hospitality and events sectors is the focus of an event which is now available online.

Aberdeen based Granite PR's growing portfolio of digital events took yet another stride forward on September 2 thanks to a collaborative effort with Glasgow based InSite Group which will build on the success of a previous webinar held last year.

This time, the focus was on InSite Group's Eventcair biosecurity system which provides continuous air and surface protection against 99.99% of viruses, including CV19, and bacteria as well as other dangerous pathogens, toxins and microbes.

The system was recently in action at OnTrade Scotland in Glasgow's DoubleTree by Hilton. The event was the biggest indoor gathering to take place since the relaxation of CV19 restrictions in Scotland and, as a result of the system being implemented, resulted in zero cases of CV19 being reported or recorded that were connected to the event.

Commenting on the seminar, Granite PR managing director Brett Jackson said: "Tough operating conditions continue to add to the many challenges faced by business right now, so it was important to come together and share experiences and knowledge in this safe and accessible way."

To access the seminar email events@granitepr.co.uk

New signing for Inverness Caley

INVERNESS Caledonian Thistle FC (ICTFC) has signed up Scottish IT and cybersecurity company Converged Communication Solutions as its first IT partner.

The SPFL Championship side has joined forces with Converged, which has offices in Aberdeen and Inverness, to upgrade its IT systems and invest in technology which will improve digital engagement with fans.

Since last autumn Converged has supported ICTFC's investment in new laptops and other computer hardware at the Caledonian Stadium. The independent IT firm has also managed the club's transition to Office 365, installed new data back-up systems and firewall solutions and controlled the migration and management of the club's data to secure cloud-based systems.

In the longer-term, Converged will assist ICTFC by providing ongoing IT support and desktop device management, servicing of onsite infrastructure, software licencing and maintaining effective cybersecurity measures.

The partnership will also involve Converged delivering cybersecurity training sessions to ICTFC staff and players. These will heighten awareness of different types of cyber threats and demonstrate the steps individuals can take to better protect themselves and their employer when online.

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Frank Mackenzie and Ian MacIntosh

CFN Solutions targets growth with new appointment

EXPERIENCED communications experts are targeting continued growth by appointing a new regional sales manager.

CFN Solutions has seen a significant growth over the last 18 months with several new clients throughout Scotland including Aberdeen, Wick, Invergordon, Lothian and Aberdeenshire across multiple industry sectors including healthcare, oil and gas, digital marketing, retail and renewables.

Launched in April 2016, the company provides mobile, cloud based fixed-line telephony and internet connectivity services. Frank Mackenzie has joined in a newly created role to spearhead its ambitious strategic plans.

Commenting on the new appointment, managing director Ian MacIntosh said: "Frank joining the business is a big, bold statement of our growth intentions. He brings to the business over 20 years industry experience, having spent most of that time working for BT and is a highly respected individual, not only in the Highlands, but across Scotland."

Harbour Energy contract for Legasea

LEGASEA has been awarded a contract for subsea services and associated goods in support of Harbour Energy's operations on the UK Continental Shelf.

The contract will run for an initial five years and the award covers a range of electrical, mechanical and hydraulic engineering services as well as consultation in relation to decommissioning and the circular economy.

A word of advice



Grant Maclean,
business development manager,
AV One Solutions

Area of expertise?

AV One Solutions offer a range of audiovisual solutions, from displays and digital signage to video conferencing, audio systems, room control, offshore entertainment systems and full technical planning, set up and delivery of events. We ensure compliance with all relevant health and safety aspects involved with installing, operating and decommissioning all equipment associated with these types of projects. The team are experts in their respected fields with decades of experience in delivering trusted technical solutions for businesses.

What should people know?

Video is here to stay. There are still a lot of people working from home and current opinion suggests that will continue, albeit on a smaller scale, when offices are fully reopened. No matter where you are working from, you will need a good and reliable video meeting set-up, whether that's in your home or at your office/place of work.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Don't cut corners or rush into a quick-fix solution when it comes to your video communication. Make sure you get expert advice on what will/won't work for you and your business now and in the future. Investing in the right technology will ensure much more effective meetings with clear audio and video for all participants and a return on your investment through improved communication with your teams and suppliers.

What's your top tip?

At the risk of sounding obvious, make sure you choose the right vendors or partners to work with. You will get different advice or varying approaches to your needs from a range of suppliers but you have to be confident that they will back up what they are offering, technically and commercially. Cheapest isn't always best.



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Meet our Northern Star Business Awards host



SPORTS presenter and broadcaster Radzi Chinyanganya has been revealed as the next host of the prestigious Northern Star Business Awards.

A familiar face on our screens, he started out his career on the BBC's landmark children's show *Blue Peter* and has since gone on to present shows for the BBC, Sky Sports and Channel 4. Radzi will anchor the 2022 Northern Star Business Awards, organised by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and held in partnership with Nucore Group, when they take place on Friday, February 11 at P&J Live.

With four months still to go and more than 500 people already booked to attend, it's time to get to know our host for the evening.

What should people know about you?

They should know that I have an infinity to the area. My mum was from Dundee and I spent many a school holiday in Scotland. My granny is also from Caithness, so half of my family is derived from Scotland. At formal events I often wear the Black Watch tartan, I might even wear it to the Northern Star Business Awards, it means an awful lot to me and being in

Scotland is like coming home. As for me personally, I love my job. I love presenting, I love shining lights on things which don't otherwise get the props that they deserve and so those attending the awards can expect energy, they can expect fun, they'll hopefully expect professionalism and ultimately a night to remember!

How did you get your big break?

It took me three years of working for free, doing everything from being a mascot called Spike the lion and another called Busby the bird. I worked the Olympics and Paralympics all for free and, eventually, whilst being an intern at CBBC and living in a hostel with mice running through the kitchen, I got my break on a kids tv show called *Wild*. Off the back of that, I then got offered a job on *Blue Peter* and everything went from there. But it was a long journey of very little money, very little hope and at the very end all became good and I'm incredibly grateful.

What's been the highlight of your career?

There's been so many highlights. Whether it's jumping out of a plane, solo skydiving with the RAF Falcons or scaling the world's tallest man-made climbing wall but the thing

that possibly meant the most to me isn't something that is adrenalized. It is getting to interview Elliott Kibchogi, the first man to run the first ever sub-two hour marathon and I did the first ever interview with him. The interview was amazing. He was present, I was present - it was totally a stream of consciousness and for somebody who cares about athletics as much as I do, it was a moment I will never forget.

You chose a tough profession to pursue, what's the secret to being successful in any career/business in your opinion?

I can't speak on behalf of other professions because I haven't worked in any and what I do isn't even a profession because there is no qualification required to be a presenter, but I can speak about what I've observed and it seems to me that there are two types of people: there are lucky people and there are people that work unrelentingly hard to get what they've got and I've been very much the latter.

What's next for you?

The amazing thing about what I do is the variety. This summer I've been lucky enough to work at the World Snooker Championship

Quick fire round

Tea or coffee?

Tea please, milk and two sugars always. Or green tea.

Text or call?

Call every single time. I voice note on WhatsApp, I love to call people. I love to hear the nuance of people's voices. It's all about the call.

Early bird or night owl?

I'm currently answering this question at half past one in the morning so definitely night owl.

Vinyl or streaming?

Because I didn't grow up in the 60s I'm going to go streaming. Plus Netflix has just changed the game.

Books or movies?

It has to be movies. I'd love to say books but I'm just too lazy.

Eat out or order in?

Order in for me, that way I can order in and watch Netflix.

Cats or dogs?

This is a tough one but I'm going to go dogs.

Winter or summer?

Summer.

City or countryside?

City.

Tuxedo or kilt?

No doubt kilt! Black Watch tartan all the way.

for the BBC, Queens Tennis for Amazon Prime, Wimbledon for the Wimbledon Channel, Tokyo Olympics for Eurosport Discovery +. As I speak to you I'm about to go filming for an episode of the Antiques Road Trip, 48 hours ago I was presenting for Songs of Praise and in two days' time I'll be at Giants Live: Europe's Strongest Man - so there's lots of things I'm getting up to. Some of jobs in the pipeline I'm massively excited about but you learn not to get too excited in case they don't happen. Needless to say that hopefully the short term, medium term and long term will be filled with sports events, incredible moments, things I can be proud of and hopefully things my mum can be proud of as well.

We know you haven't been yet but, what's your initial impression of the Aberdeen city region?

I actually know Aberdeen pretty well. Given my Scottish connections I spent many an Easter, summer or Christmas with my Scottish family. My uncle in fact used to work in oil and fly to his oil rig from Aberdeen so I know Aberdeen well. I love that side of Scotland, the east coast is a special part of the world anyway so I'm really excited about going back there.

If we told you that we have one of the world's best celebrations of street art, were ranked 20th in the New York Times list of must-see global destinations recently (the only UK location to feature) and are home to the world's first floating windfarm - what would you say?

I would say that I absolutely love that and actually it's of no real surprise to me. And the reason it's of no real surprise is that of course hearing that it raises an eyebrow but actually I think Scotland as a whole is an untapped secret. It's humble, it punches above its weight, it's filled with salt of the earth people who are funny, loyal, family orientated - who are my kind of people. So whilst I wasn't expecting that, I never ever underestimate the power of the Scottish people.

What can attendees expect from you as host of the 2022 Northern Star Business Awards?

The 2022 Northern Star Business Awards of course can expect a celebration of the award winners, definitely a celebration of the award nominees but also a celebration of what we've overcome over the last 18 months. It has been unimaginably challenging for so many of us in so many different ways yet here we are, we're still going, businesses are

still running, we're all still doing what we love so that is why it will be an unforgettable night.

Why do you think it is important to celebrate business success?

The reason we should celebrate business success is because the nature of business means that you are competing against other businesses or against other sectors or against other industries, and even within a business there is a lot of competition whether it's to be the best sales person, to make the most deals, to be the most efficient department within a business. But actually what this is about is reminding us that we are doing it for a reason. And we do it because we possibly love it. There's an element of we do what we love, and that's really important. My mum calls it 'a shot in the arm' and that's exactly what this is, giving us all a shot in the arm, to celebrate, to remember to remember and ultimately to have a brilliant night.

Make sure you are there when the North-east celebrates its shining stars! Visit agcc.co.uk and book your place today.

AAB takes on 30 trainees

THIRTY trainees have joined Anderson Anderson & Brown (AAB), the tech enabled business critical services group.

AAB has consistently recruited more than 20 trainees each year but this is the second consecutive year it has recruited more than 30 trainees. From this year's cohort, trainees will be based at the Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow offices.

Investment in grassroots and 'growing their own' talent has always been a core element of AAB's recruitment strategy and this has not wavered despite the CV19 pandemic. With the AAB Group continuing to grow significantly, recently announcing its merger with Glasgow-based Hardie Caldwell and acquisition of Edinburgh-based Purpose HR, the importance of developing new talent is paramount.

Each entry-level position provides an opportunity for students looking to begin a career in business services to gain valuable hands-on experience with the benefit of learning from specialists across the firm's wide-ranging services. In return, AAB gains new ideas, a fresh approach to different initiatives and the opportunity to develop potential leaders of the future.

A number of AAB's current leadership team and directors joined the business as graduates, with some beginning their careers on placement.

Tripadvisor award for Science Centre

ABERDEEN Science Centre has been awarded a Travellers' Choice accolade by the world's largest travel platform, Tripadvisor.

The Travellers' Choice Award, which was previously known as the Certificate of Excellence, recognises places which earn consistently positive reviews from visitors, who rate services, quality and customer satisfaction.

The achievement is the only travel industry award based on millions of reviews from travellers around the world and celebrates their favourite hotels, restaurants and airlines. Winners must have an overall rating of at least four out of five and a minimum number of reviews to qualify, with only around 10% of global businesses listed on Tripadvisor receiving a Travellers' Choice Award.

This is the first award secured by Aberdeen Science Centre since it reopened last year following a £6m redevelopment project to create an aspirational science centre which reflects the STEM priorities for both industry and education.

More than 60 new interactive exhibits over two floors now await visitors, including the OPITO Theatre of Energy - the UK's first immersive experience of its kind - and RoboThespian, a chatty humanoid robot sponsored by the centre's Digital Futures Partner, Equinor.

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First Walk to Work campaign at Cygnus

NEPTUNE Energy has announced the start of the first Walk to Work (W2W) campaign at its operated Cygnus gas field in the UK Southern North Sea.

A programme of brownfield modifications, maintenance and inspection activities will be supported by Bibby Marine's WaveMaster 1 vessel, reducing time, costs and environmental impacts.

The vessel is equipped with a motion-compensated transfer gangway, enabling crews to safely walk between the vessel and the Cygnus Bravo platform. It is an efficient and less carbon-intensive means of accommodating the 50 personnel carrying out the work, in comparison with carrying out multiple helicopter flights to and from shore.

The W2W campaign at Cygnus Bravo, which is usually unmanned, will also increase productive time allowing for additional operations to be undertaken that would have otherwise been scheduled separately.

Neptune Energy's managing director for the UK, Alexandra Thomas, said: "Partnering with Bibby Marine on our first W2W campaign, we believe this approach could be very effective for the Cygnus field and provide significant efficiency and environmental benefits. This will enable us to consider alternative execution strategies for extended shutdowns, intensive fabric maintenance or inspection programmes in the future."

New handbook for cyclists

A NEW handbook, compiled by cyclists for cyclists, has been published to highlight best practice cycling behaviours.

The Good Cycling Guide has been published by voluntary group the Grampian Cycle Partnership which encourages, promotes and supports all forms of cycling across the North-east. With an extraordinary uptake of cycling over the past year or so, it aims to remind cyclists of their responsibilities while riding.

The guide allows cyclists to refresh their knowledge of some of the fundamental advice they should be following. There are also tips and encouragement for those looking to begin, or resume, pedalling.

The Good Cycling Guide can be found on the Grampian Cycle partnership website.

Bancon beats CV19 to deliver profit

POSITIVE trading and a strong recovery since the easing of lockdown restrictions has resulted in Bancon Group delivering a profit in 20/21 despite the impact of CV19.

The Aberdeenshire housebuilding and construction group, which has posted results for the year ending March 31, 2021, is also predicting significant growth in turnover and profit for the current year with record levels of activity in its timberframe business, new construction contracts and extremely positive homes' sales, where 75% of the full year sales targets have already been secured only four months into the new financial year.

The latest accounts reveal that turnover dropped from £85m to £73.6m as a direct result of the loss of almost four months trading due to the suspension of all trading activities and the associated disruption caused by the pandemic.

However, the underlying strength of the group's three businesses, coupled with a robust recovery and strong trading performance in the second half of the year, has resulted in an operating profit of £1.4m.

Wood wins a host of hydrogen awards

WOOD, the global consulting and engineering company, has secured more than 30 separate hydrogen awards in the first half of 2021. The company anticipates continued growth in this space with around \$600m worth of potential hydrogen projects coming to market in the medium term.

The contract awards span green, blue and bio-hydrogen projects and strengthen Wood's position as a key delivery partner in building out the hydrogen economy and helping clients navigate towards a low-carbon future.

The company is delivering pre-FEED work with ADNOC on a world-scale blue ammonia production facility in Abu Dhabi to drive the development of hydrogen in the Middle East. Similarly, Wood's hydrogen technology is being used on the first advanced biofuels project in South America, at the Omega Green production facility in Paraguay which aims to produce up to 20,000 barrels per day of renewable diesel and jet fuel.

Wood also entered into a three-year engineering framework agreement with Norway-based NEL Hydrogen to develop and execute large scale, complex green renewable hydrogen projects globally.

Earlier this year, the company became a steering group member of the Hydrogen Council, a CEO-led initiative which brings together more than 100 companies from across the hydrogen value chain who share a commitment to decarbonisation and a net zero future. Wood also appointed Josh Carmichael as vice-president of hydrogen to bolster its hydrogen experience.



David Jamieson

Multinational safety group deal for Salus

ABERDEENSHIRE headquartered process safety firm Salus Technical has signed a technical partnership deal with a leading global operational risk management company, ABSG Consulting Inc. (ABS Consulting). This new collaboration combines Salus Technical's Bowtie Master software with ABS Consulting's robust history providing risk management solutions to industrial sectors worldwide.

Many ABS Consulting clients have already made the transition to Bowtie Master to assist in the development of their comprehensive risk management plans. The success of the partnership to date has enabled Salus Technical to expand its global footprint and branch out into different sectors, in addition to its core oil and gas customer base.

Five new customers are now on board across several geographical regions and industries including the aerospace, marine and utility sectors, as well as oil and gas. One new customer has signed up for four years, while another five companies, which have come through ABS Consulting, are also currently evaluating the product via a free trial.

Salus Technical is predicted to exceed £200k in revenue this financial year – a 75% increase on the previous year – with the ABS Group partnership contributing 15% of that figure.

Salus Technical founder and managing director David Jamieson said: "ABS Consulting has established an enviable reputation for helping its clients to maximise safety, secure their assets, improve performance and reduce risk. For one of the market leaders not just in safety but in bowtie diagrams in particular to be giving Bowtie Master their seal of approval is a real endorsement of the software's capabilities. It's a fantastic opportunity for us to introduce Bowtie Master to the key markets ABS Consulting serves such as marine and offshore, industrial, power and energy and oil, gas and chemical."

Lockdown sparks rise in technology ownership

MORE than 19.2 million digital devices were bought in the year to July 2021, marking the fastest-ever rise in technology adoption in the 10 years that Deloitte has been surveying digital device ownership in the UK.

According to new research from Deloitte's Digital Consumer Trends 2021 report, the number of devices bought in the year to July 2021 was more than double the number of devices bought in the year to May 2020 (9.3 million).

The findings show that, on average, UK consumers bought 1.6 million new devices every month over the past year, with each consumer now having access to 5.4 different digital devices. This is 8% higher than in 2020, when consumers had access to five devices on average. Prior to 2020, device ownership had been growing steadily at an average 5% year-on-year between 2016 and 2021.

Wearable devices – such as smartwatches and fitness bands – recorded the sharpest rise in ownership over the past year, with 40% of consumers now having access to these devices, up from 31% in 2020, including 23% now having access to a smart watch (14% in 2020). Meanwhile, access to voice-assisted speakers also rose from 29% to 35% in the past year, while smart TV ownership grew from 59% to 65%.

Smartphones (owned by 92%) and laptops (accessible to 79%) continue to be the most popular digital devices owned by UK consumers, however ownership has long since hit a plateau.

Paul Lee, global head of technology, media and telecommunications research at Deloitte, said: "Lockdown left many households with more time to devote to devices and more savings to buy new technology. However, this is likely to have been a one-off surge in device acquisition. Device ownership is unlikely to grow as fast over the next year. While technology acquisition rates may slow, consumer dependence on technology will continue to deepen, along with demand for new functionalities and designs which is likely to continue driving device ownership across the UK."

New distribution deal for Seall

ABERDEEN based Seall has secured a partnership with global marine electronics and service provider Mackay Marine to distribute Seall's suite of innovative software solutions and products to the maritime industry, as it expands its worldwide footprint.

Mackay Marine, headquartered in North Carolina, USA, has 50 locations in 16 countries, making it Seall's largest distribution partnership agreement to-date. Seall will work with Mackay to build and scale its offering across its network of partners and customers.

This is the latest of seven new distribution partnerships Seall has secured in the last six months which cover Mexico, USA, Cyprus, The Netherlands, India and Turkey. Access to more markets in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, Canada and Latin America will be achieved through the Mackay partnership.



**GRAHAM
SIBBALD**

Graham + Sibbald strengthens Aberdeen commercial team

Graham + Sibbald has announced the recent hire of Chris Ion as a director within its Aberdeen based commercial department, bringing a fresh perspective to the established team offering agency and valuation services.

With a master's degree in property and management from the University of Aberdeen, Chris joined Knight Frank as a graduate within the valuation and lease advisory team before switching his focus to agency and capital markets. Chris boasts a wealth of property knowledge and expertise and was involved in the high-profile sale of 16 North Esplanade West let to Neptune Energy earlier this year.

Chris' remit will primarily involve disposals and acquisitions of commercial properties on behalf of a range of clients across Aberdeen and the surrounding local area, while aiding in the development and service offering of the Graham + Sibbald commercial team across Scotland.

Chris commented: "After seeing the business rebrand and reposition themselves in the market over the last few years, I'm excited to be joining Graham + Sibbald at such an opportunistic time. I'm looking forward to working in a varied roll covering both agency and investment instructions on behalf of clients in this next step in my career, within a forward thinking and expanding company."

Partner and head of commercial agency Keith Watters said: "We are pleased to welcome Chris to our Aberdeen team at a time when we are experiencing growth and high levels of activity. He will be a key asset to the established team and I'm very much looking forward to working alongside him."

Graham + Sibbald's commercial offering also includes valuation services which is led by Derek Richardson. The valuation and advisory team of RICS registered valuers carry out property valuations in respect of both market value and market rent on behalf both private and public sector clients.

Working across multiple sectors, including the industrial, office and retail markets, Graham + Sibbald also have an established presence in a number of specialist areas including hotel and leisure, petroleum and roadside, healthcare, social housing; and ports and harbours.

Aberdeen office partner Bruce Murdoch said: "Whilst the Aberdeen market has had its challenges over the past 18 months there has been transactional activity and I am pleased that Graham + Sibbald have been involved in a number of the deals that have been concluded. Chris is a well-known player in the local market and a welcome addition to the Aberdeen office commercial team leading and expanding on our commercial agency services offering across the city and Aberdeenshire."

Graham + Sibbald boasts a total complement of over 200 staff including 23 partners working across 17 UK offices in Scotland and England.

Business Gateway supports new Advanture

A BUSINESS that specialises in campervan gifts has been able to expand its product offering and increase orders by 900% following support from Business Gateway.

Founded in August 2020, The Advanture is the brainchild of brothers Dylan and Luke McConnell. After initially offering customers a limited range of products and campervan designs, the team approached Business Gateway for advice and support as they looked to scale up their business activities.

Working with Business Gateway, the team was able to access support through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) where they accessed three days specialist support from a graphic design expert.

Simon Orr, adviser at Business Gateway, said: "A business often requires a varied mix of support as it grows from a start-up to a more established operation. Dylan and Luke make a great team and have unique skillsets that complement each other. Their passion, high quality product and drive is why the business is going from strength to strength.

"They made strategic use of the diverse support provided by the Business Gateway services and for others in a similar position I would encourage reaching out to see how we can help."

Infinity Partnership shortlisted for three UK accountancy awards

MULTI-AWARD winning accountancy firm Infinity Partnership has been shortlisted for three accolades in a prestigious UK awards event for accountancy professionals.

The Aberdeen practice, a five-time winner at the British Accountancy Awards, has been named a finalist in three categories at the 2021 Accounting Excellence Awards.

Infinity has been nominated in the Client Service Award and Tax Team of the Year categories. In addition, the firm's senior accounts associate, Chloe Leslie, has reached the last stage of the Rising Star of the Year category.

Simon Cowie, managing partner at Infinity Partnership, said: "The Accounting Excellence Awards are one of the most prestigious for UK accountancy firms so we are therefore delighted to be shortlisted in three categories.

"All of our teams have worked extremely hard over the past 18 months and the client service nomination is well deserved. Our tax team has consistently grown in recent years and played a significant role in our success.

"I'm also thrilled that Chloe has been shortlisted. She is a key member of the team and we are all delighted that her hard work and dedication has been recognised with this nomination."



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The four-day workforce of the future?

Fiona Herrell,
partner, employment law team,
Brodies LLP



HERE'S an offer not many employees would refuse: reduce your 35-hour week to 28 hours, with no drop in pay. That's the idea of the 'four-day week', and it's one that's gaining momentum in many countries, including Scotland. The Scottish Government has indicated that it will establish a £10m pilot to help companies explore the benefits and costs.

As to whether a four-day week could become mandatory any time soon, it seems unlikely. At present the UK, rather than the Scottish, government holds the power to set a maximum limit on weekly working hours. There has been a 48-hour limit on average weekly hours in the UK since 1998, but employees can 'opt out' of this limit and many do. It is difficult to envisage the current UK government having much appetite to remove the opt-out or reduce the 48-hour limit, never mind legislate for anything like a 28-hour limit.

So, for the foreseeable future, it will be for employers to decide whether they want to go down this road, albeit perhaps in the face of some pressure from unions, and the need to compete with other organisations in attracting talent.

Oft-cited benefits for employers include increased productivity and staff retention; and reduced sickness absence. CV19 has of course brought into question many of our pre-pandemic norms, not least working patterns. Perhaps a four-day week is the next step down the road towards more flexible working and increased focus on work-life balance. Protagonists argue that it could reduce unemployment and help mitigate the economic impacts of the last 18 months and potentially even transform the health of the nation. Particularly with COP26 on the horizon, suggestions that a reduced working week could bring environmental benefits, via reduced commuting and use of buildings and technology, are also important.

Sceptics on the other hand may be unconvinced about the productivity gains and question whether a four-day week could work in reality across all sectors, including for example retail and teaching. Employers with minimum staffing requirements (perhaps for health and safety, or to service customer demand) would need to employ additional staff to plug the gaps. Shift workers and those working for example two weeks on / three weeks off don't slot easily into the four-day week model.

And don't forget about those who already work part-time. If you move full-time staff to a four-day week, with no reduction in pay but do nothing for part-time workers the latter will find themselves earning significantly less per hour than their 'full-time' counterparts. Part-time workers have the right not to be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers, unless you can justify it. Part-time workers are also more likely to be female, raising the risk of sex discrimination claims if they are treated less favourably.

If you are designing a scheme, even on a trial basis, to ensure fairness for part-time workers and those with 'non-standard' working patterns, it is likely to be more appropriate to focus on a percentage reduction in hours across the board, rather than the headline 'four-day week'.

It's not always easy to get employees' agreement to a change in their terms and conditions. Usually, you need to think about consultation and in some cases you may even need to dismiss and re-engage employees to implement a change. But if you're moving to a shorter working week and protecting pay, chances are your employees will be lining up to jump on board.

Cheers to a new Guinness World Record

DUNCAN Taylor Scotch Whisky in Huntly, Aberdeenshire, was the setting for a new Guinness World Records title for the largest bottle of malt whisky.

The team at the specialist independent whisky merchants took over an hour to fill the largest ever bottle of whisky, earning the 1.8m high bottle a spot in the record books.

Jack Brockbank, the official judge from Guinness World Records, was on hand to verify the record and confirmed that the bottle, holding 311 litres of 32 year old Macallan, was a new Guinness World Records title.

The bottle, owned by both Rosewin Holdings and Fah Mai Holdings, beat the previous record by 83 litres. The last record, held by The Famous Grouse Experience, was confirmed back in August 2012 at 1.7m high and holding 228 litres or 50.15 gallons of their well-known blend.

Chairman of Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky Euan Shand said: "We were asked to bottle this whisky because of the care and attention we pay to all our whiskies and it was an honour to be part of this record title right here in our Huntly headquarters."

The record-breaking whisky will head to a top London auction house later in the year where it will be auctioned off and may break a further world record for the highest price for a bottle of whisky ever bought.

RGU installs Dame Evelyn Glennie as chancellor

AHEAD of a new term when students and staff return to campus, Robert Gordon University (RGU) has installed internationally renowned solo percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie CH as its new chancellor.

The double Grammy winner took to the stage following a tour of the Garthdee campus, alongside staff representatives and students, where she was formally installed as the titular head of the Institution, a title previously held by Sir Ian Wood.

As chancellor Dame Evelyn, who was made an Honorary Doctor of Music from RGU in 2016, will play a crucial ambassadorial role for the university, helping to raise RGU's profile regionally, nationally and internationally, and building on the remarkable work of her predecessor.

Commenting on her new role, she said: "It has been my life's mission to widen access to music and use it as a medium to build social cohesion. I also know that listening is the key to inclusion and collaboration. RGU shares these values and I support the university's ambition to eliminating barriers to higher education and widening participation among underrepresented groups

"I recognise this is a great privilege and I am proud to represent the university not just nationally but on an international stage."



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Decisive action is needed now to boost confidence

Shane Taylor,
policy manager,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber
of Commerce



ALTHOUGH we're still living within it, it's already clear that the pandemic has created existential challenges for many businesses. One key concern is the behaviour change driven by a sustained period of homeworking and the major implications this may have for urban centres and how property is used. Recent research from the CIPD found that 40% of employers expect more than half of their workforce to work from home 'regularly' even after the pandemic has ended.

Of course, it's unclear how this will play out in practice. Many firms reported real challenges as homeworking remained mandated by government, with Fraser of Allander research highlighting that 60% of employers believed it has had a negative impact on innovation and collaboration.

While the merits and challenges can be debated it's clear that if regular homeworking becomes a part of many workers lives we can't underestimate the implications. Particularly when it comes to city centres, thousands of jobs across our region depend on the finely balanced eco-system where footfall driven by offices has allowed retail and hospitality businesses to grow alongside them.

With Aberdeen currently ranking in the bottom 10 for highstreet spend compared to pre-pandemic levels according to the Centre for Cities,

we need government to work with the private sector and take concrete steps to ensure that city centres are supported to recover.

Even if we focus on just the business rates system, as we look towards the Scottish Budget, there's some clear actions that could boost confidence and keep firms anchored in our regional hubs.

Firstly, mitigating the damaging decision to delay the next business rates revaluation from 2022 to 2023. The Scottish Government took this decision in light of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic but the North-east will feel the impact of this more than any other region. Excluding designated utilities, Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire accounted for 45% of the total uplift in rateable values at the last revaluation in 2017.

This staggering increase clearly wasn't matched by economic conditions at the time, and following a campaign driven by the Chamber, government recognised this and created a North-east specific transitional rates relief scheme.

However, years on, this scheme is now effectively inaccessible and it means that businesses across the region are faced with rates bills which are often far higher than for comparable properties in another part of Scotland.

Government need to recognise that

this further year of delay has hit our region the hardest and step up with a refreshed regional relief scheme which ensures that North-east firms get rates bills that reflect reality while we wait for the revaluation to level the playing field.

Secondly, we need to consider a phased and proportionate reintroduction of business rates for the hardest hit sectors which are currently exempt, such as retail, hospitality and aviation. Cutting the headline poundage rate could be another method that government consider to lower the burden on cash-strapped businesses and give them the space to rebuild and rehire.

Finally, the Scottish Government should commit to come together with ratepayers to kick-start an ambitious, independent review of the business rates system to succeed the Barclay Review. This should focus on delivering a true level playing field and supporting firms to invest in decarbonising building stock as we look towards COP26 and delivering our net zero ambitions.

City centres can have a hugely exciting future as we rebuild but we need to take decisive action to bring archaic systems like business rates into the modern age, securing the best possible foundation for a strong recovery.

2021 training calendar

Business Development	Oct	Nov	Dec
Business Development Accelerator Develop a powerful strategy to drive sales			
Sales and Account Management Develop a structured approach to selling		5	

Finance	Oct	Nov	Dec
Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction Learn how to establish and maintain budgets	21		
Cash Flow Management Maximise cash flow with effective cash collection techniques			
Finance - The Basics Develop a broad understanding of business finance		26	
Finance for Non-finance Managers (2 days) Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business			8-9

Critical Skills for Business	Oct	Nov	Dec
Communication and Interpersonal Skills Develop effective communication techniques			
Customer Service Excellence Discover the techniques to excel at customer service		16	
Dealing with Difficult Situations Understand the variety of personalities and determine how to alter your approach for each		17	
Emotional Intelligence for Business Develop situational awareness and influence outcomes		18	
Improve your Professional Confidence Promote a positive and confident self-image in a professional manner			
Negotiating and influencing Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success		24	
Personal Effectiveness Improve your self-management by changing the way you work	7		
Presentation Skills Deliver a dynamic and motivational presentation confidently	5		
Project Management - The Fundamentals Understand the principles of project management and the complexities of scale			
Renewable Energy and the UK (half day) Gain an understanding of the basics of the UK renewable energy industry		30	
Taking Notes and Minutes (half day) Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes		23	
Time Management (half day) Identify time wasting activities and manage time more effectively		9	
Train the Trainer Feel confident whilst developing and presenting different types of training		2	
Train the Trainer Advanced Improve training delivery techniques		30	
Understanding the Oil & Gas Industry (half day) Gain an understanding of the basics of oil and gas production and processing		30	

Management and Leadership	Oct	Nov	Dec
Essential Management Skills (2 days) Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager			1-2
Essential Supervisory Skills Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks		10 and 25	7
HR for Non-HR Managers Understand responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements		4	
Motivation and Delegation Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation	27		
Performance Management Establish processes to improve employee performance in line with organisation objectives			
Reviews and Appraisals Assess performance constructively and increase reviewee's motivation	6		
Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management Identify and engage with stakeholders to build effective and lasting relationships			
Supervisors Next Steps Improve techniques and add new areas of awareness and understanding		3	

International Business and Exporting	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beginners Practical Guide to Exporting Gain a high level overview of the exporting process			
Customs Declaration Training Learn how to complete customs requirements accurately and efficiently	26		
Customs Procedures and Documentation Explore the various customs systems, procedures and documentation			9
Understanding Export & Export Documentation Understand what is involved in exporting and export documentation to save time and money		18	
Import Procedures Avoid the obvious pitfalls in importing to reduce complexities and errors		24	
INCOTerms 2020 (half day) Benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers			2
Letters of Credit - Methods of Payment Ensure your Letter of Credit is not rejected and compare payment methods	5		
Preference Rules of Origin (half day) Learn about the difference between Preference and Non-Preference Origin; understand the rules and how to apply the percentage rule.			

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Craig Roberts and Graeme Dale of Sport Aberdeen



Lauren Brook of Butterfly Effect

Connecting the workforce through technology

Kirsty Morrison,
internal communications manager,
Stewart Milne Group



THE world has seen much uncertainty since the pandemic started so it is imperative that employees have the tools and resources to keep them engaged, involved and connected to the business.

At Stewart Milne Group we have a workforce that is typically a 50/50 split between office and factory/site-based employees. Historically, it has been difficult to reach the whole workforce simultaneously but, throw in a global pandemic and a move to homeworking for office staff as well as a period of furlough for the construction sector, and our business has never needed to engage with colleagues in new ways more.

A key solution to this was a mobile app - one that links employees to the tools and information they need, no matter if they are at home, in a factory or on a construction site.

Partnering with internal communication platform specialists Poppulo we introduced an app that meant we could simplify the process for all our staff to stay updated on company news and keep in touch with colleagues regardless of role, department location or hierarchy. By building in a network of advocates who would promote Stewart Milne

Group as a great place to work we helped boost morale in the company and connect employees to business leaders at a time when it was needed most.

Stewart Milne Group, which operates across five offices, three factories and 23 sites throughout the UK, had been looking into apps for some time. Metrics had previously highlighted that our on-site and factory workforce of more than 400 staff were harder to reach with internal messaging due to the nature of their role.

It was therefore important to have something that was user-friendly, concise and easy to use 'on-the-move', especially for those who were not desk-based. We wanted to alert employees to major business updates, while cutting through the noise of daily emails. This app does exactly that with the added benefit of push notifications for essential reading.

It's been trial and error understanding what our workforce wants to read and what type of content they engage with best. Taking inspiration from our own social media channels where our employees engage well, we've shared more video content and added more personality to our communication on the app. We focus on getting the

tone right and have removed the corporate language, so it acts as more of an informal update and is therefore easier for employees to digest.

We have four generations in our workforce so a variety of channels is essential to make sure everyone feels included and receives the communication in the way they prefer. With that in mind, in addition to the app we also use face to face communication, email and e-newsletters to keep communications active. For those who like longer updates, we link these off the app so they can be accessed through mobile devices too.

It's vital to communicate with employees in a way that suits them. They are the driving force behind successful business operations and their strong work ethic aids our overall success as an organisation. We will continue to find new ways to use the app, keeping employees engaged and front of mind, so they know we see the value in what they do and they can see how their role impacts the business.

Siberia a winner in the Scottish Bar & Pub Awards

SIBERIA Bar & Hotel has won the 'Customer Service' award at the 2021 Scottish Bar & Pub Awards held in Glasgow's Hilton Hotel.

Despite fierce competition from venues across the country the bar came out on top following a year of uncertainty in the face of the pandemic.

Co-director Stuart McPhee said: "I'm very proud of the whole team who work exceptionally hard every day to give a level of service which leaves the customers wanting to return. We faced exceptional competition from the Howlin Wolf, Zinfandels and also Platform 1864 in Tain; they are all great venues so to be recognised alongside them and to come out on top, on a national level, it's a tremendous achievement."

Siberia, situated on Belmont Street, Aberdeen, was looking forward to a busy few weeks following its win, with the re-emergence of bar service, an 'All Night Passion' terrace party and - in conjunction with Aberdeen Performing Arts - the True North Fringe Festival all having taken place in September.

Centenary of insulin discovery

THE University of Aberdeen is to join forces with Scotland's other top diabetes research institutes to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin.

Aberdeen graduate and later Regius professor JJR MacLeod led the Toronto team which made the landmark breakthrough in the treatment of diabetes a century ago.

Today the university continues to pioneer diabetes research to improve the lives of those with the condition.

Aberdeen will join Diabetes Scotland and the universities of Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Strathclyde to put on a programme of online events to showcase the role that Scotland has played not only in the initial insulin breakthrough but in many other medical achievements which have supported diabetes care in the decades since insulin was first successfully administered.

The events, which will run from this month to February 2022 will feature leading experts as well as patients living with diabetes.

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The Moment team

This is the Moment

A SCOTTISH marketing agency is going from strength to strength on a platform of sustainability.

Based out of Aberdeen, Moment has weathered the pandemic with a growing team and an increasingly impressive list of clients.

The firm has been lucky enough to see huge growth potential, particularly over the last six months. With this growth comes new opportunities and the company has assembled its latest management team to streamline its services and continue to develop its business model.

It now has three teams: commercial, campaign and creative. With the management team in place it can keep communication flowing between teams to ensure it meets the goals of both Moment and its clients.

Q2 of 2021 the company had welcomed eight new team members with another one on the way. This more than doubles the team total to 14.

Delivery director Adam Bell said: "The formation of Moment's management team was a critical step that empowers our next phase of growth. With strong team leads now in our commercial, campaign and creative functions we're set to drive forward into new markets and work with existing and new clients at scale. With these senior strategists on board we can put together design-led, data-driven plans for the marketing tactics that will work best for each unique business; and then focus on delivering these via our in-house team of channel-specific experts."

Innovator award for Praesidio operations director

ROB Diver, operations director for Praesidio, won the award for Innovator of the Year at the second annual Scottish Ex-Forces in Business Awards.

The Ex-Forces in Business Awards is the world's largest celebration of ex-military in second careers – recognising the value veterans add to businesses as well as the employers which support the transition of servicemen and women. They take place in London and Glasgow.

Aberdeen based Praesidio is a specialist security, emergency response and training provider. It provides a wide range of solutions to suit a varied client base operating from the UK but with a global reach.

A winning project for Sport Aberdeen

REGISTERED charity Sport Aberdeen has been named as a winner at the ukactive Awards 2021, a UK wide awards ceremony celebrating the active lifestyle sector.

Sport Aberdeen's SPACE (Supported Physical Activity for Care Experienced) project, delivered in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, has been recognised in the category 'Developing and Supporting Communities during CV19'.

SPACE is an innovative project which uses the positive benefits of sport and physical activity to help care experienced children and young people reach their full potential through bespoke interventions.

The project was the first of its kind in Scotland and is the evolution of the 'Looked After Project' which began in August 2016 in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. As a corporate parent, Sport Aberdeen has a commitment to over 450 care experienced young people within the care of Aberdeen City Council.

Working together, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council's Integrated Children's and Family Services aim to provide support for participants to achieve positive destinations using sport as a catalyst for positive change.

The project mentors the city's most vulnerable children and young people who would otherwise have little or no access to many opportunities. These opportunities include boxing, cycling, horse-riding and accessing local greenspaces alongside free-of-charge membership to Sport Aberdeen's city-wide gyms.

Safety praise for Aberdeen Airport

ABERDEEN International and Glasgow airports have been praised for their high safety standards following an international CV19-secure audit scheme introduced to give passengers confidence in flying as the safe restart of international travel continues.

Launched by the Civil Aviation Authority, the voluntary scheme was introduced following a recommendation from the UK Government's Global Travel Task Force.

The safety measures and procedures put in place at the beginning of the pandemic in both Aberdeen and Glasgow were measured alongside many of the world's leading airports.

Both airports invested significantly early in the pandemic to introduce a series of safety measures to reassure staff and passengers during the biggest health crisis in a generation. The health and safety measures were audited and deemed best practice by the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force CV19-secure guidance set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).



Brett Jackson,
managing director, Granite PR

What does your company do that others don't?

Granite PR was established in 2008 to provide a unique business building combination of PR, events, networking and facilitation on local, regional, national and international levels. In addition to offering the full suite of traditional, creative PR support for a growing and increasingly diverse client base we have created the Gateway series of business networking events which link the North-east with key locations such as Houston, Norway, Perth WA and Abu Dhabi.

What are the most pressing challenges that your industry sector faces today, and why?

The biggest challenge in modern media is, I believe, the prevalence of fake news. It is therefore crucial to have the ability to overcome this through clear communication of the real story to target audiences using the correct mixture of toolkits and techniques. We are fortunate to work with many, many excellent professionals throughout the media whose integrity is vital in this journey.

What is the hardest lesson you have learned in your career to date?

It's tempting to offer free or heavily discounted services, especially when you're trying to get a new business up and running but very often it puts a strain on the client/supplier relationship in the long-term because true value becomes harder to achieve.

What is the most valuable piece of business advice you have ever received?

Always leave something for the next person. When I was growing up, a family friend impressed upon me the importance of not grabbing everything you can from a client. As a service provider, you must make sure you take a long-term view that the sustainability of their business impacts on your own.

What's been your proudest career achievement to date and why?

Setting up Granite PR and growing it over the past 13 years is definitely the thing I am most proud of. This has been done by providing and offering what clients want with initiative, good service and unique selling points giving strong added value.

If you could make one thing happen tomorrow that would benefit North-east Scotland, what would it be?

We must value, protect and help the industries we have currently whilst simultaneously driving forward in new areas to ensure that we keep Aberdeen a strong player on the UK and international stages.



Quick fire round

What was your first job?

A retail sales assistant in the music department of John Menzies.

When would you like to retire?

It's really not on my horizon right now because I enjoy what I do too much to step away from it just yet!

What did you have for breakfast?

A boiled egg and brown toast.

Who, or what, inspires you?

Creating and bringing ideas to life inspires me hugely.

What's the last book you read / film you saw?

The Ipcress File (1965)



UNICEF first for RGU

ROBERT Gordon University (RGU) has become the first university in Scotland to be awarded the UNICEF UK 'Baby Friendly Initiative Gold Award' for Universities in an official ceremony.

The award is recognised as a mark of sustained quality in student midwifery and health visiting programmes and helps ensure that students are prepared for practice. The Baby Friendly Initiative is a global accreditation programme that offers an evidence-based approach to supporting breastfeeding and good infant nutrition and helping parents to develop close and loving relationships with their babies.

Professor Susan Dawkes, head of the school of nursing, midwifery and paramedic practice, said: "As a Baby-Friendly Guardian for RGU we are proud that the midwifery and health visiting teams have embedded UNICEF Baby Friendly's high-quality standards. The university is committed to ensuring students are educated to effectively support parents with infant feeding and developing close, loving relationships to give their children the best possible start in life.

"We are thankful to the teams at UNICEF Baby Friendly and the Scottish Government for their support throughout this process. This accreditation would not have been possible without the continued commitment from RGU staff and students and I am proud of their contributions."

Algerian contract for SafetyGrip

SAFETYGRIP Solutions has been awarded a \$500,000 contract to supply 65 land rigs for a land drilling company in Algeria.

Mark Watt, managing director, said: "This is the culmination of months of painstaking work and continual communications to have our products and designs approved by the drilling contractor. The process was made even more challenging by the inability to visit in person due to CV19 restrictions. The efforts have finally paid off and we look forward to working closely with the client on this and future projects."

SME Spotlight



Douglas Cowe,
property manager,
Town & Country Apartments

When was your business established?

The business was established in 2012.

What does your business do?

We provide luxury and top-end serviced apartments mainly for the corporate market but also for the staycation sector.

What sort of companies do you do business with?

Most of our business comes via booking agents on behalf of all major companies operating in Aberdeen and the North-east. We also deal direct with companies large and small.

What is the biggest challenge facing your business at the moment?

As with most businesses the last 18 months have been extremely challenging with business levels reducing considerably as people are not moving.

And the biggest opportunity?

As companies start to relocate people again our biggest opportunity is to encourage businesses that a serviced apartment can be more attractive and flexible for staff and families than a hotel room. There has also been an increase in staycation and tourist business.

What are you most passionate and proud of when it comes to business?

We are hugely passionate about the level of quality of our apartments and the service we offer guests. We have a small dedicated team all focussed on ensuring guests receive the very best level of service and customer care.

What has been most valuable to you as members of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce?

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce offers a vast range of people and services to support businesses large and small and we are extremely grateful for all support.



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From Scotland to Latin American and Central Asia

Alice Arandia,
commercial director,
LA Finch Global Ltd



WHILE the last 18 months of heavy travel restrictions, closed borders and lockdowns may have made the world seem like a much bigger place we have also been pushed to find new ways to feel connected, be it through a Teams meeting or virtual hang-out.

Though we have known for years that you can in theory run a business from anywhere with good wif-fi, the recent restrictions imposed have accelerated our efforts to make this a reality. It has also leveled the playing field a little. Previously it was difficult, if not almost impossible, for a small company to compete with multinational organisations but now a small international team can be connected online and pursue opportunities in global markets they might have struggled to enter before.

Of course, international trade is nothing new. People have traded across borders for centuries and Scottish businesses have built a strong global reputation for innovation, quality and integrity. Our Scottish brand is something we need to respect and protect when we work internationally.

My husband and I have had the privilege of living and working in many countries. Over the years we have accumulated knowledge and experience of doing business in different areas and this is what motivated us to start up our own business to help other companies grow internationally. The world is full of opportunities and you don't have to jump on a plane to find them, however, online calls only get you so far. The importance of local knowledge and partners cannot be underestimated. International growth can be very rewarding but there are challenges too, so mitigating risks is important.

At Finch Global we do a lot of work with companies in Latin America, a region that is often overlooked by British companies but it isn't just a backpacker's dream. To start with Mercosur is the fourth largest trade block in the world with a population of over 295 million people and a rapidly growing middle class. There is a wealth of opportunity in different industries from oil and gas to renewables, infrastructure, agriculture, mining, professional medical services and supplies, finance and more. I fell in love with Latin America many years ago and learned a lot from the Latino

entrepreneurial spirit and the value of building personal relationships in business.

Another area we see with a lot of opportunity is Central Asia. We are working with companies in Kazakhstan and have been very excited by the development in this area. Forget any comedy you have watched. Kazakhstan is a vast country, rich in natural resources, and huge growth potential. As eleventh biggest oil producer in the world there are many opportunities in the oil and gas sector but there is also an abundance of business opportunities in manufacturing, renewable energy, agro industry, mining and metallurgy, finance, engineering, construction, healthcare and pharmaceuticals. The cultural differences and language can make it a challenging environment initially but once you get to know locals and understand the culture, you can make lifelong friends as well as strong business partners.

My main message therefore is not to feel restricted by the doom and gloom on the news covering rising unemployment and recovery post-pandemic, there are many opportunities out there.



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Terraocean launch set to deliver renewable solutions

THE Rigmor Group, a leading global inspection, maintenance, marine services and survey company, has launched a new business unit to support expanding operations in the renewables sector.

Terraocean, an autonomous operating subsidiary within the Rigmor Group, will focus support in the offshore and onshore renewable energy sector, including wind, solar, wave, tidal and hydrogen energy industry.

The operating philosophy and focus of Terraocean is to provide services from blade tip to seabed. Terraocean, with its vast experience in engineering, marine project management, surveys and positioning, installation and operations and maintenance, will provide clients with a one-stop shop.

The business has already secured two six-figure wind farm inspection and maintenance contracts with Vattenfall in the North Sea and the Irish Sea.

Rigmor Group chief executive officer Keith Nelson said: "We have already delivered hugely successful projects through Rigmor Services and InterOcean Marine Services in the wind sector in Aberdeen, Moray, Kincardineshire and North-west England. The launch of Terraocean and subsequent investment emphasises our commitment to the sector and offers clients the full Rigmor Group services under one business entirely dedicated to renewables.

"The Group is targeting a number of projects in fixed and floating wind that will see offshore renewables accounting for a significant proportion of our activities over the next five years. Terraocean will allow our clients in this sector to fully benefit from utilising the skills and expertise that we have developed in our business units over the years in the offshore and marine sectors."

Caber Coffee encourages drinkers to Spill the Beans

ABERDEEN based Caber Coffee has launched a new fundraising initiative which aims to highlight the mental health benefits of chatting over a cup of coffee.

The family-run company's new 'Spill the Beans' coffee blend has been created to underline the importance of communicating when it comes to looking after mental health. £8 from every case sold will be donated to mental health charities, starting with Mental Health Aberdeen as it prepares to relocate to new headquarters in Aberdeen city centre.

The move to create the product has been spearheaded by life and work pressures, particularly during the CV19 pandemic. It is borne out of personal challenges experienced by Caber Coffee managing director Findlay Leask and his desire to highlight the importance of both seeking and giving support.

Findlay said: "I know from my own past circumstances just how much we can all feel the pressures of life from time to time and the old phrase 'a problem shared is a problem halved' has never been more relevant than it is at the moment.

"By taking time to sit down and talk over a cup of coffee, we can make a real difference to ourselves and others by giving the greatest gift we all have in our power – time."

Graeme Kinghorn, Mental Health Aberdeen (MHA) chief executive, added: "Very often it is the little things that can make a real difference to an individual's emotional balance. Taking the time to sit down, away from technology and just talk and engage with someone is a powerful antidote to the pressures of modern life and even better if this can be done over a great cup of coffee.

"As a local charity, MHA actively supports local people and local businesses and would encourage as many people as possible to support Caber Coffee and 'Spill the Beans'."

Proserv cable monitoring backed by SPR

GLOBAL controls technology company Proserv Controls has received industrial sponsorship for its disruptive subsea cable condition monitoring system for the offshore wind segment, ECG™, or Electro Cable Guard, from ScottishPower Renewables (SPR).

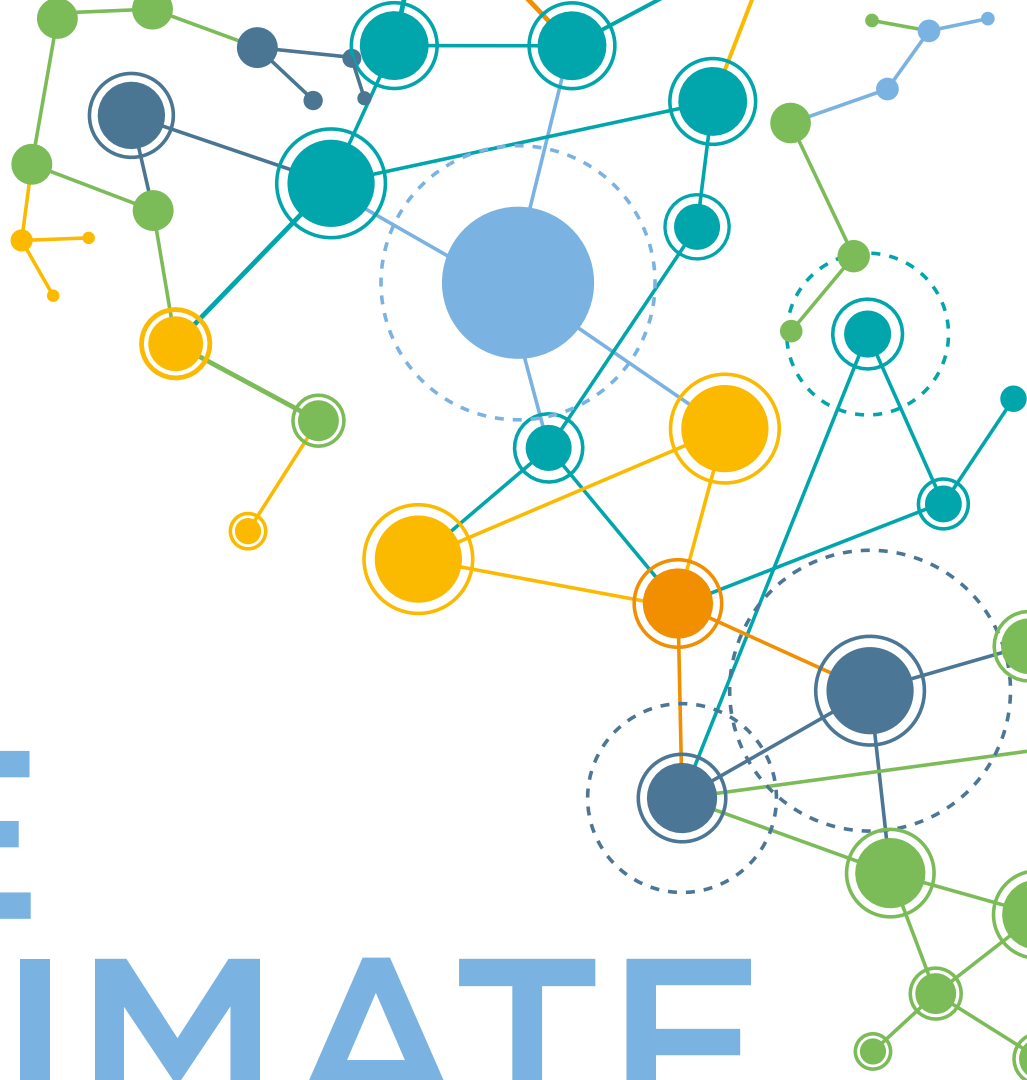
SPR is part of the ScottishPower group of companies operating in the UK under the Iberdrola Group, one of the world's largest integrated utility companies and a leader in wind energy.

The sponsorship agreement will involve SPR providing its expertise and resource both from a cable owner and operator perspective, bringing vital knowledge into the project to assist in the ongoing development and ultimate functionality of ECG.

SPR's input will greatly help the future commercialisation of the system, with its close understanding of the key requirements of the industry across asset owners and developers.



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Stereophonics announce huge UK arena tour

STEREOPHONICS will return to P&J Live on March 20, 2022 as part of the UK-wide tour following the launch of their new album 'Oochya!'.

The album follows Stereophonics' previous album 'Kind', which went to number one in the UK album charts in 2019, outselling nearest competitor Kanye West by over 10,000 copies. It became the band's seventh UK number one album in the process.

The release of 'Oochya!' will see the Welsh rockers return to the road for what's sure to be another eagerly anticipated sold out UK arena tour. Kicking off at Manchester arena on March 18, 2022, the 11 date tour reaches The O2 London on April 1 and culminates at The Birmingham Resorts World arena on April 2.

Louise Stewart, head of entertainment, exhibitions and marketing at P&J Live, said: "We are thrilled to welcome Stereophonics back to P&J Live after an unbelievable night back in March 2020. The band are a very welcome addition to what is lining up to be an exciting 2022. I know the people of Aberdeen will give them a warm welcome back to this part of the world - we can't wait to hear the crowds roar."

Two new offices for Burnett & Reid

NORTH-EAST law firm Burnett & Reid LLP has relocated to new premises in Aberdeen and opened an office in Banchory.

The firm, which employs 38 staff, has moved its headquarters from Golden Square to 9 Queens Road, Aberdeen.

It has also relocated eight members of its team to Banchory Business Centre in Hill of Banchory Business Park. The move to two offices marks a significant milestone in the firm's long-term growth plans as it continues to expand its service offering across the region and beyond.

Grampian Training Services new centre

GRAMPIAN Training Services, 2020 winner of the Northern Star Inspiring Futures award, has established a training centre at Loirston House in Altens, Aberdeen.

It is now offering places on its HSE accredited workplace first aid courses on the following dates: Three-day First Aid at Work (one day online + two days in person) - October 19-20; Nov 16-17; and December 14-15. One-day Emergency First Aid at Work - October 18; November 15; and December 13.

The company uses the revenue raised from its commercial training courses to provide free safety training for Primary 5, 6 and 7 schoolchildren in the North-east. Any company which GTS trains in its workplace will be given the opportunity to be closely associated with the schools training programme as a named sponsor.

This presents a great way for businesses to support their local community and be recognised publicly for doing so.

Nucore opens Dundee office

NUCORE Group, a specialist engineering company which provides safety products and services for hazardous environments, has opened new offices in Dundee to support its ongoing company growth and diversification.

The Dundee facility, which will create up to a dozen new jobs, is an important next step for the Aberdeen-headquartered company which operates across a number of sectors including renewables, marine, oil and gas, petrochemical and the public and private sectors.

From its base in Dundee's Technology Park it will deliver a range of services including heating, ventilation and air conditioning, refrigeration, fire, safety and security solutions.

"Dundee is an increasingly important player in the energy industry and we look forward to supporting companies across the region operating in sectors such as offshore wind, oil and gas and marine as well as businesses working in fast-growing sustainability sectors such as hydrogen," said Mike Bryant, chief executive officer designate and director, Nucore.

Doug's first million

A NORTH-EAST business is celebrating its first anniversary by announcing its one millionth delivery.

At the height of the 2020 CV19 lockdown Doug Stuart took the decision to launch Dor-2-Dor Aberdeen and Dundee, a leaflet marketing company which has now delivered more than one million leaflets on behalf of an ever-expanding and diverse client base.

During its first year in business, the company created more than 40 jobs and established an experienced team for its growing number of projects on behalf of customers from a broad spectrum of sectors including retail, hospitality and politics.

Recovery and skills programme

A RECOVERY and skills programme designed to support thousands of workers and hundreds of businesses across the North-east is to be led by Aberdeen City Council.

The authority is the lead accountable body for the £14.3m North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund, which brings together a range of partners to deliver 29 projects designed to support Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in the recovery from the economic impacts of the oil and gas downturn and CV19 pandemic. Energy transition, green recovery, inclusion and equalities are the key themes of the programme.

Aberdeen City Council leader councillor Jenny Laing said: "This programme will further build on the tremendous progress we have made towards becoming a low-carbon economy. Actions around energy transition are the key to the future economic health and prosperity of the Aberdeen City region.

"Our council has led the way in deploying ground-breaking technology, as demonstrated by the projects within Hydrogen Aberdeen, the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre and our commitment to reaching net zero emissions through our own actions as a local authority.

"It is crucial that we have funds in place to support our workforce through training programmes and re-skilling. By encouraging business growth we can ensure our residents are able to access new jobs. We look forward to working with partners in aligning all elements of this programme so that we continue to translate economic success into social success by offering equal opportunities for all."

Opportunity North East (ONE) chief executive Jennifer Crow said: "Our region has a clear vision for economic recovery and transformation - to focus on high-value activity and transition to a low-carbon economy as quickly as possible. This new funding addresses specific challenges in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and builds on the action, investment and partnerships driving recovery and diversification.

"The projects, including those led by ONE, will help growing businesses across the region provide high-quality employment and training opportunities for people in a low-carbon economy and ensure that we contribute to an environmentally sustainable net zero future at home and internationally."

Birthday award for J+S Subsea

SUBSEA controls engineering specialists J+S Subsea has celebrated its first anniversary with an award.

Following a management buy-out in September last year, the Aberdeen-based company has continued to show strong growth and has also settled into new larger premises in Kintore.

Its first year was topped off with the award of 'Best Subsea Equipment Engineering Specialist' in Corporate Vision's Oil & Gas Awards.



Hundreds of fundraisers hit the streets for Maggie's

HUNDREDS of fundraisers turned the streets of the Granite City orange as Maggie's Aberdeen's famous Culture Crawl fundraiser returned for the first time since 2019.

On September 3 around 350 walkers completed the 10k route around the city centre, stopping off at venues along the way for food, fun and entertainment. Stop-offs this year included a Tai Chi class in Westburn Park, the Sives Football Centre on Nelson Street, Mackies 19.2 in Marischal Square, the British Art Show 9 at Aberdeen Art Gallery and the new OGV Taproom.

Walkers also enjoyed a guided Nuart talk at Union Plaza and also had the opportunity for some quiet reflection at Midstocket Church.

Maggie's Aberdeen fundraising manager Richard Stewart said: "Culture Crawl has always been popular in Aberdeen and we were gutted that we missed out last year due to CV19, Pulling it all together has been a challenge this year but we made some adjustments: scaled back the route, involved larger and outdoor venues and used staggered starts to avoid bottlenecks and I could not be happier with the result.

"Places sold out in just six weeks and we've been overwhelmed with the support we've been offered by the many partners, venues and volunteers who have helped make it happen."

Ground breaking platform removal

ABU Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), one of the largest listed integrated utility companies in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, has completed the topside removal of the Brae Bravo platform.

This marked the completion of two successful ground-breaking campaigns with HAF, the Heerema Marine Contractor and the AF Offshore Decom consortium contracted to complete the Brae Bravo removal and disposal scopes.

The topside removal was completed by two of the world's largest semi-submersible crane vessels, Thialf and Sleipnir. At its peak, up to 500 people worked on the project totalling nearly 400,000 man hours without any major incidents recorded.

2021



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Business Breakfast

As Scotland hosts COP26, find out about opportunities for your business.

Nov 4

08:00 – 10:00
P&J Live
£35 member
£50 non member

COP26 Business Breakfast: Growing a greener future

The North-east of Scotland's energy transition is a pathway towards the global transformation of the energy sector from fossil-based to zero-carbon by the second half of this century. This event will focus on how we rebuild our economy and address the pressing climate emergency. Whether we call it green economic recovery or build back better, it's about jobs for the future, decarbonising our key industries and creating opportunities for our people and communities.

Keynote speakers will include The Rt. Hon John Gummer, chairman of the Committee on Climate Change.



THE ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE 21

Stay across the changes in the employment law landscape at this sector-leading event.

Nov 11

08:30 – 16:30
£390

Annual Employment Law Conference 2021

Scotland's leading employment law advisers Burness Paull LLP and Pinsent Masons LLP combine their resources to deliver the must-attend event for busy HR professionals and SME business owners.

With a dynamic programme of presentations, industry updates and guest speakers, the high profile Annual Employment Law Conference equips delegates with the essential information, know-how and skills to deal with the demands of 21st century employment law and personnel management in the company of fellow professionals.

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Drop into one of our six 30-minute TUBS Talks taking place throughout the day and immerse yourself in the latest thinking and hear our inspirational speakers share their perspective on ways to support the growth and development of your business.

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2022

Feb 1

07:30 – 09:30

P&J Live

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£75 non-members



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**Business Breakfast
- Energising the race to net zero**

Regarded by offshore exploration and production professionals as Europe's premier energy event, SPE Offshore Europe attracts attendees from around the world. As part of the keynote programme, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce will once again host the high-profile breakfast event on the opening day of the show.

Grab your name badge, which saves you queuing and gives you fast track entry, tuck in to a fully cooked breakfast then take your seat for 8.00am to hear our speakers. Places are limited at this event which is traditionally a sell-out.



Kickstart your OE experience at the Chamber's business breakfast.

Feb 11

18:00 – 23:00

P&J Live

Northern Star Business Awards

This has been an incredibly tough time for people and businesses across the North-east and, as we recover, it is vital that we start rebuilding confidence in our regional economy and recognise the hard work undertaken by local businesses to make a positive impact on their people, their customers and their communities.

The Northern Star Business Awards seek to recognise the exceptional accomplishments of organisations across the Aberdeen city region. Taking place on a Friday night for the first time, join us in celebrating the best of North-east business success!



Book your place today and be part of celebrating North-east success



Donella Beaton

Robert Gordon University (RGU) has appointed Donella Beaton as vice-principal of economic development, a new role to assist the university develop its strategic commitment to stimulating and supporting economic development regionally and further afield. Donella started at RGU in 2012, originally focussed on supporting the university to grow its own commercial portfolio.



Alan Walsh

ANSA, provider of independent data analytics solutions to the global energy industry, has appointed Alan Walsh as managing director to spearhead the company's next phase of growth. Alan has more than 20 years of oil and gas operational management, service delivery and technical experience.



Lisette Bellizzi

Lisette Bellizzi has joined the Electra Learning & Change Management Consultancy UK team. Lisette is in the newly created position of sales representative and will play a key role in developing Electra's new business streams and sector expansion. Lisette has lived in the US, the Caribbean, Italy and Scotland.



Kevin Giles

Kevin Giles has been promoted to managing director of READ Cased Hole. Having spent the last three years as the company's global commercial director, in this new role Kevin will be responsible for day-to-day management of the READ business worldwide, including all activities in Aberdeen, Doha, Houston and Anchorage.



Clare Smith

Robert Gordon's College has appointed Clare Smith as head of senior school. Clare joins from Wellington School in Ayrshire where she was part of the senior leadership team with responsibility for strategic and operational leadership of nursery, junior and senior school.



Kenny Smith

The frontman of Highland folk rockers Torridon, Kenny Smith, has accepted an invitation to become a patron of The Archie Foundation and serve as an ambassador to spread the word about the essential work of Archie across the Highlands and beyond.



Donald MacKay

Glencraft has appointed a new managing director. Donald MacKay was born and raised in Lewis and is a board member of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, a public body tasked with ensuring the advancement of the Gaelic language in Scotland. He replaces Graham McWilliam who took the decision in May to pursue new business interests.



Martin Grainger

REDA Oilfield UK has strengthened its management team with the appointment of Martin Grainger. He will lead business development as REDA seeks to expand and diversify its oilfield businesses in the North Sea and internationally, building on the opportunities created by the energy transition.



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Jonathan Abbott

Tendeka has appointed Jonathan Abbott as chief technology officer to drive its next generation of products and systems. Jonathan takes on the role with almost 20 years' international experience in operations, sales, technical support, product development and project management. His career includes stints in Canada, Russia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.



Pete Smith

Professor Pete Smith of the University of Aberdeen's Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences has been appointed to a new group of international experts who will advise the Scottish Government on environmental issues. The First Minister's Environmental Council will draw on global best practice to help tackle the climate emergency.



Alan McQuade

CR Integrity (ICR) has promoted Alan McQuade to group managing director. Alan joined the company in 2018 as chief financial officer and has played a pivotal role in developing the company's strategy for the global energy market laterally as chief financial and strategy officer.



Phil Bellringer

SBP Accountants and Business Advisers has promoted senior manager Phil Bellringer to director level. Phil, who is now heading up the firm's Peterhead office, has fast tracked through the business, initially joining as a client manager in 2018 before being promoted to senior manager last year.

Other recent appointments

Befriend a Child has appointed **Katie Kyle** its head of fundraising and marketing. Katie was previously with The Archie Foundation for four years as partnerships manager and head of regional fundraising. She will be leading the team to generate income and enhance visibility as well as putting a three year strategy in place.

Georgia Wood has joined VT Wealth Financial Planning Specialists as a client relationship manager. Georgia joined VT Wealth from Aberdeenshire Council where she worked in operational and systems support, a role that gave her insight into the operation of financial systems and problem-solving skills.

EC-OG has made key appointments to drive its ambitious growth plans. **Angus MacDonald** has been appointed to the newly created role of workshop manager and **Graceann Robertson** has taken on the role of marketing manager as the focal point for developing EC-OG's company image and managing product brands.

Osprey Housing Group has created a new role of tenancy sustainment officer. Taking up the job-share position are **Elaine Bowie**, an Aberdeenshire Osprey housing officer for the past five years, and **Catriona Leggat** who is based in Moray.

Tidy Green Clean has a new franchisee. **Faith Fitzgerald** has bought the Tidy Green Clean (TGC) franchise for Highlands and Moray. Based out of Elgin, she has a background in both commercial cleaning and business education and has lived in the region for many years.

J+S Subsea has appointed **Lucinda Craig** as business development manager. Lucinda has more than 20 years of experience in the energy industry and has previously worked with both Aker Solutions and SengS a Pryme Group Company. **Tom Hutchinson** has been appointed business development engineer. He joined as a workshop assistant in 2012.

Developing the Young Workforce North East has announced three appointments to its board. **Dr Colette Backwell** of CLAN Cancer Support, **Neil McKinnon** of Peterson Offshore Group and **Anita Martin** of Well-Safe Solutions join the rapidly expanding organisation as it increases its efforts to bridge the gap between education and employers and help young people in the region find fulfilling careers.

Susie Mountain, accredited family law specialist of Brodies LLP, has become a solicitor advocate following an introduction to the court ceremony at the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

DM Hall, chartered surveyors, has appointed Dunfermline-based **Calum Allmond** as its new head of architectural services.

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New urban village for heart of Aberdeen

A NEW urban village called 'St Clements' could be created in the historic heart of Aberdeen under plans being proposed by final year architect students at The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment at Robert Gordon University.

The new village would be named after the 15th century church of St Clements, which was originally built to serve the small fishing community of Footdee and would be created between the harbour and esplanade, in the area between Castlegate and Footdee.

The proposals are the work of final year architecture students from The Scott School of Architecture, who have carried out a two-year project, to explore issues concerning urban living, with a particular eye on generating ideas for the future City of Aberdeen.

The project builds on the work of last year's final year students who envisaged a new beachfront for the city of Aberdeen and an opening up of the harbourfront to people on the North edge of the harbour.

University of Aberdeen goes up in the world

THE University of Aberdeen has risen 20 places in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2022, strengthening its position among the world's top 200 universities.

Aberdeen is now ranked 158th in the world, 22nd in the UK and is one of three Scottish universities within the world top 200.

Of the five broad pillars on which the rankings are based, the university scored highest in 'international outlook' where it was ranked 31st globally and 9th in the UK. It also saw a rise in its score across the teaching, research and industry income pillars.

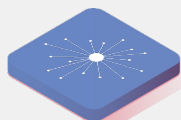
As a result, the university has moved into the top 30 in the UK for teaching and research, as well as being ranked 16th in the UK and 91st globally for citations, which measures research influence. Meanwhile, the university continues to be ranked 8th in the UK for industry income.

The annual THE World University Rankings is considered one of the 'big two' of worldwide university rankings and is renowned for its competitiveness. This year's rise in the THE rankings is the university's second biggest in any one year.

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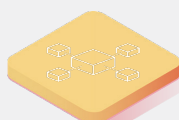
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Loganair chief commercial officer Kay Ryan

New Loganair routes to take flight

LOGANAIR, the UK's largest regional airline, has continued to build on its network and UK-wide connectivity as it adds three further routes to its summer 2022 programme.

The enhanced schedule will see services between Inverness and Dublin, Teesside and Southampton, and Shetland and Dundee take to the skies next year, while opening up further connectivity across the airline's domestic network. Loganair will recommence its Inverness and Dublin service for the first time since before the pandemic, flying from May 27, 2022 up to four times per week with lead in fares of £65.99 from Inverness or €76.15 from Dublin.

Additionally, Loganair will start connecting Teesside and Southampton, a route that had been cancelled by another operator. The new service for Loganair will commence on March 27, 2022, flying daily with the exception of Saturday, with a lead in fare of £70.99. The service provides the opportunity for passengers to fly from Aberdeen to Southampton with a one-stop service where they can remain on the aircraft for the entire journey.

Likewise, the new service between Shetland and Dundee will allow for an important one-stop service between Shetland and London City for the first time. The route is set to commence from May 9 2022 and will operate twice weekly on a Monday and Thursday for business and leisure travellers alike, with a lead in fare of £96.99 to Dundee and £129.99 to London. Customers flying from Shetland to Dundee or London City will now also be able to use their Air Discount Scheme for the entire journey.

This winter marks a return Loganair's successful direct Aberdeen-Bristol service for the first time since before the pandemic, replacing its current one-stop service between the two cities. The direct service will operate five times a week on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday with lead in fares of £79.99.

Loganair recently announced that it would return to international travel for the first time since the start of the pandemic, as it brings back services to both Stavanger and Bergen next year. The airline also announced a new route between Teesside and Dublin, while increasing the frequency of many of its domestic services to enhance UK connectivity.

Decommissioning facility for Montrose Port

JOHN Lawrie Metals Ltd has announced plans to construct a new dedicated decommissioning facility at Montrose Port for offshore oil and gas infrastructure which has reached the end of its life to help meet demand for the service in the North Sea.

The firm has signed a 12-year lease with Montrose Port for the decommissioning site on the port's South Quay. The site is capable of handling and processing all types of materials produced during an offshore decommissioning campaign, having direct quayside access, enabling ease of discharge and handover of client materials.

This new quayside operation will have the ability to downsize and process the imported infrastructure components onsite, as well as the potential to ship direct from the Port with little or no road transportation required – reducing the overall carbon footprint of the operation.

The project is part of a wider growth strategy by John Lawrie Metals Ltd, which is also expanding its decommissioning capabilities at Aberdeen Harbour.

UK aviation minister visits Aberdeen Airport

THE UK aviation minister Robert Courts MP visited Aberdeen International Airport to discuss the vital role the airport will play in supporting the recovery of the North-east's economy post-CV19 and its commitment to achieving net zero by the mid-2030s.

The airport's operations director Mark Beveridge welcomed the minister and provided him with a tour of the terminal building. The visit was an opportunity to restate the importance of rebuilding the connectivity that will be a key driver of the local economy.

The minister's visit comes as the UK government consults on how it can work with the sector to decarbonise aviation in a way that preserves the benefits of air travel. Earlier this year, the airport launched its sustainability strategy which sets out how it will balance the undoubted social and economic benefits it delivers with its climate change responsibilities. Central to that is the airport's commitment to build on its carbon neutrality status by achieving net zero for its direct emissions by the mid-2030s.

The minister was also provided with an overview of the airport's work with the NHS to develop and trial what will be the UK's first national distribution network to use drones to transport essential medicines, blood, organs and other medical supplies throughout Scotland.

Mark said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the minister to the airport to discuss the important role of the airport in supporting local businesses to access global markets, attract inward investment and support our tourism industry. It was also an opportunity to restate the airport's commitment to regrowing sustainably and sharing our road map to achieving net zero by the mid-2030s."

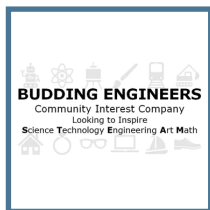
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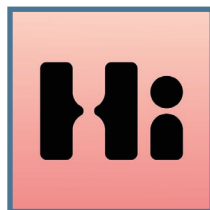
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