

APRIL 2022 | INTERNATIONAL

# BUSINESS BULLETIN

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North-east firms**



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The Hub  
Exploration Drive  
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Bridge of Don  
Aberdeen  
AB23 8GX

T 01224 343900  
E [info@agcc.co.uk](mailto:info@agcc.co.uk)  
[www.agcc.co.uk](http://www.agcc.co.uk)

**Affiliated Chambers**  
Moray

### Bulletin Team



#### Editor

Ryan Crighton  
T 01224 343926  
E [business.bulletin@agcc.co.uk](mailto:business.bulletin@agcc.co.uk)



#### News features

Graeme Smith Media  
T 01224 275833



#### Advertising

Neil Burr  
T 01224 343901  
E [neil.burr@agcc.co.uk](mailto:neil.burr@agcc.co.uk)



#### Design & production

Andrew Taylor  
T 01224 343934  
E [production@agcc.co.uk](mailto:production@agcc.co.uk)



#### Editorial

Cody Mowbray  
T 01224 343936  
E [cody.mowbray@agcc.co.uk](mailto:cody.mowbray@agcc.co.uk)

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# The importance of being connected

**THIS month's Business Bulletin has an international theme, and I wanted to focus on one of our biggest challenges as we seek to build a stronger post-pandemic economy.**

On one hand, Scotland has an ambitious 'Trading Nation' strategy which by its very nature requires us to be connected to the world. An attractive partner, easy to do business with, accessible.

But in a similar vein to the debate around the role of oil and gas in our future energy mix, air travel is being put in the baddy camp as we look to hit our carbon targets. If we stop all air travel, we will of course reduce emissions, but at what economic cost?

Alongside other strategies like A Trading Nation, Tourism Location and NPF4, is this a circle that can be squared by the aviation strategy currently being developed by Scottish Government?

Of course we should aim to take a lead in decarbonising but not through demonising aviation. The strategy must provide the meaningful solutions, interventions and action needed to support sustainable economic growth.

With this in mind, we'd like to see more emphasis being given to the creation of a UK Sustainable Aviation Fuel industry. One report estimates that the opportunity for St Fergus alone is between 320 and 920 jobs created with annual GVA of between £46million and £133million.

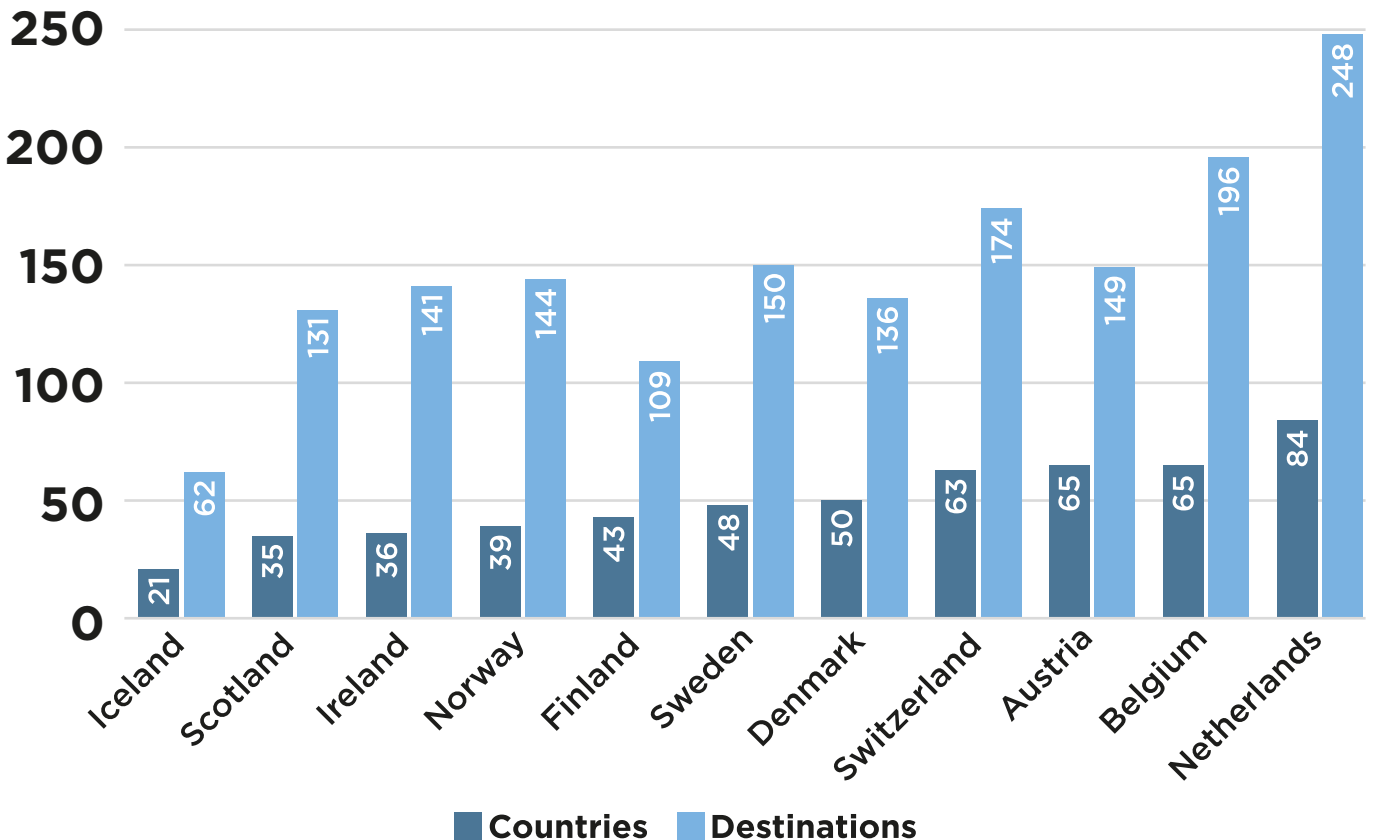
In Scotland, where we are located on the North of an island on the periphery of Europe, the role of aviation is profound. Travelling by air is not a luxury. It is an essential element of business and social life.

The implications of not making meaningful and rapid progress will see impacts ranging from tourism to the movement of goods and from inward investment decisions to further hits on productivity.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the resultant pressures on the industry mean there will be less airlines with less aircraft. However, as it currently stands, there are the same number of airports, meaning the race to recovery will be hugely competitive.

A report commissioned by Airlines UK found that without Government support, UK airports will lose around 600 routes as a result of the pandemic. The same report said around 80% of these lost routes will be to/from UK regional airports.

The first priority must be to restore Scotland's pre-pandemic route levels. But this in itself underplays the fact that before 2020, we already performed poorly against peer nations. This table shows that Scotland ranked 10th of these 11 countries, ahead only of Iceland (population 5% of Scotland's). Ireland and Norway are smaller in terms of population but have measurably greater connectivity than we do.



Re-establishing Scotland's lost connectivity will require direct government support and we need to see, urgently, a defined package of support for the aviation/airports sector to enable this.

Part of this must be the re-introduction of a route development fund, its predecessor scheme having been withdrawn in 2007 due to state aid concerns. The UK's withdrawal from the EU should provide Scotland with the ability to re-introduce such funding. The Irish Government sought and received approval from the EU on December 3, 2021 to provide its airports with €160million in funding so our competitors are already out of the starting blocks ahead of us.

In the summer of 2020 I wrote this and it remains as true if not truer today as it was then.

The impact of this crisis on the aviation sector cannot be overstated. Aberdeen more than any other region of the UK is dependent on air connectivity to enable our internationally-focused economy and ensure we do not become just a distant Northern outpost.

Securing the future of our airport and connections to key hubs and cities will be central to our recovery and ability to be a leading global player in energy transition.

The Union Connectivity Review concurred, stating that "domestic aviation is particularly important for the more northern regions of Scotland." But the challenge is as much about keeping our major city conurbations connected with the UK and wider world as it is about ensuring Highlands and Islands

communities are accessible to the rest of Scotland.

So it's vital all of this is reflected in the steps taken by government in partnership with industry. And this should extend to consideration being given to how the Just Transition Fund may have a role to play.

Aberdeen International Airport is North-east Scotland's major transport hub. It is the gateway to Europe's energy capital and is Europe's busiest commercial heliport. The airport contributes more than £110million annually to the local economy and supports 3,400 jobs across the North-east of Scotland. The health of our airport is intrinsically linked with our regional economic prospects.



**Russell Borthwick**  
*Chief Executive*



## Our premier 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.

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If you'd like to find out more contact our commercial director, Seona Shand on 01224 343929.





Jaslin Bhagrath

## A new resource for start-ups

STARTING a business for the first time can be a daunting prospect and to assist, accountancy firm Henderson Loggie has created a new resource for start-ups which covers everything required to get off the ground and grow.

Owner-managed business specialist Jaslin Bhagrath, Partner at Henderson Loggie, said: "Whatever goals people are pursuing in starting a business, it pays to take advice from experts to avoid common pitfalls and ensure the business is structured correctly to meet those goals. There's lots of self-help guides for start-ups available, but it can save time and money, in the long run, to take professional advice at the get-go, no matter the size of ambition for the future. Never think, "my business is too small". A small successful business is preferable to one that has failed through lack of financial foresight.

"Advances in technology have taken the pain out of financial administration for all sizes of business, from sole traders to enterprise-scale operations, and it pays to understand what cloud accounting and automated processes can deliver when used in tandem with expert planning advice. As the economy recovers from the impact of CV19 restrictions, we expect to see a rise in the number of new businesses getting off the ground to fill the gaps created by businesses lost or new opportunities arising as people re-shape their lives."

## Huge growth for Exceed Managed Pressure Resources

Exceed Managed Pressure Resources, the Managed Pressure Drilling (MPD) arm of Aberdeen-headquartered well management and performance improvement specialist Exceed, has announced a 230% rise in revenue during 2021.

The Lowestoft-based company, established by MPD experts James Parr and Jim Doran in 2016, was acquired by Exceed in 2019.

Since then, it has continued to increase its global footprint, supplying a range of managed pressure and underbalanced drilling services to operators and major drilling contractors based in the UK, Norway, USA, Mexico, West Africa and Asia-Pac.

## UK's underwater industry set to grow to £45billion

THE UK's underwater industry, currently valued at £8billion with a third of the global market share, has the potential to grow to £45billion by 2035, creating an estimated 180,000 new jobs and around £20billion or more in exports for the UK.

The Global Underwater Hub (GUH) has been established to ensure the industry achieves this growth, capitalising on the "unprecedented" scale of opportunity globally in the energy transition and the underwater segment of the Blue Economy, estimated to be worth £140billion by 2035.

The GUH is a new strategic, intelligence-led organisation that will lead the transformation of this industry to deliver one of the biggest opportunities for revenue generation and job creation in the country's sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

Neil Gordon, Chief Executive of the GUH said: "As the industry emerges from the uncertain and challenging pandemic period with a degree of optimism fuelled by opportunities in the energy transition and blue economy, the GUH will provide the specific market intelligence and support to help companies make informed decisions on which markets and sectors to target to deliver a step-change in growth.

Mr Gordon added: "The GUH will play a pivotal role in delivering transformational change and exponential growth in this highly important industry. Meeting the long-term shift towards a low carbon society and sustainable use of the oceans' resources and, in turn, to creating significant additional revenues, jobs, technology and exports for the UK."

## Increase in demand for Forrest Training

WITH restrictions beginning to ease, Forrest Training has seen an increase in demand for its training courses, which in turn resulted in the need for larger premises. Forrest moved to Rosemount Viaduct, which offers two fantastic rooms to deliver training courses, an office and free parking for candidates, all in a city centre location.

As demand increased, so did the Forrest team. Four new additions include Brian, an ex-Ambulance Technician from the USA delivers first aid, moving and handling, Sandy who has been delivering training for many years in the first aid field, including 10 years with Survivex and has experience of the catering and the offshore industry. Kayleigh is the welcoming face to everyone and Cara is the bookings guru.

Forrest Training specialise in health and social care and deliver client moving and handling, epilepsy, autism, learning disability awareness, person centred planning and adult support and protection.

To find out more about Forrest Training and the 50 e-learning courses available, call the team at 01224 659297.

Exclusive:

# Brexit “nightmare” is far from over for North-east firms

**RECENT research by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and the UK Government’s Public Accounts Committee has highlighted the significant burden which Brexit has placed on companies across a range of sectors – and Chamber members are amongst those hardest hit.**

According to the BCC survey of more than 1,000 exporters, almost three out of four (71%) said that

the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) is not enabling them to grow or increase sales.

The majority view is that it has led to rising costs for companies and their clients; small businesses have neither the time nor money to deal with the bureaucracy it has introduced; and it has deterred EU customers from considering UK goods and services because of the perceived costs and complexities.

Walker’s Shortbread is one Scotland’s biggest food exporters and Managing Director Nicky Walker, great grandson of Joseph Walker who founded the company 124 years ago, told Business Bulletin that the inability to find staff had caused a major problem for the company.

Around 50% of Walker’s iconic tartan-boxed products, produced in Aberlour and Elgin, are exported to 120 countries. Amongst the host of honours won are three Queen’s Awards for Export Achievement and Walker’s holds a Royal Warrant from the Queen.

“It has been a nightmare and the thing that affected us most on the announcement of Brexit was the downturn in the

availability of the traditional migrant workforce,” he said.

“There is a degree of seasonality to our business, but it does get busier towards Christmas and therefore we are busier from May taking on additional seasonal workers, many of whom have traditionally come from across Europe.

“We have a permanent workforce of around 1,200 but through the busy period, that number has gone up to about 1,700 to supplement our order requirements. Since the announcement of Brexit it appears there have been no foreign nationals coming across in any great numbers and I am sure the berry pickers and the potato guys are all feeling the same thing.

“Last year we were about 350 down on the staff numbers of three years ago. It looks as if people just don’t want to come and last year it was exacerbated by CV19. It was an ‘imperfect storm’ and we’ve lost sales over the last couple of years, compared to our normal level. We picked up a little last year but I imagine it will take a couple of years to get back to the levels we experienced through 2018/19.”

Nicky said he hoped that change could be introduced, and rapidly, to allow and encourage seasonal workers to come to Scotland.

“I think the whole country has benefitted from migrant workers whether it be the retail industry or the hospitality industry and now everyone appears to be struggling because of the lack of people currently in the country who are willing to do these jobs.”

He said that as soon as Brexit was announced Walker’s had looked at further automation possibilities to

**Nicky Walker**  
Managing Director,  
Walker’s Shortbread





““

**Last year we were about 350 down on the staff numbers of three years ago. It looks as if people just don't want to come and last year it was exacerbated by CV19**

**Nicky Walker**  
Managing Director,  
Walker's Shortbread

alleviate the problem, which helped last year, and they would be looking at more operations to potentially automate to increase efficiencies and production.

A further problem was shipping goods overseas and for lorries coming to and from Europe it could add anything from a week to two weeks to deal with the extra paperwork which had created a massive amount of work for the company's export team.

"It is more efficient for us to buy our novelty tins from the Far East and ship them in but with the added complication of the Suez Canal problems the traditional cost of

about \$4,000 for a container has gone up three or four times.

"America is a big market for us and we were also hammered with unprecedented increases in prices to ship there. This must be affecting every sector globally."

Euan Shand, Chairman, has guided Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky Limited, the Huntly-based independent whisky bottler, to global success since acquiring it 20 years ago as a dormant business.

He described Brexit generally as a "total disaster" but not for his company.

During a visit to Huntly from Los Angeles, where he is now based, he told Business Bulletin that the problems with Brexit had been compounded by CV19.

He said the company, which exports continuously to 60 countries, had lost a significant amount of business in Europe but had more than compensated for that by an increase in their business in America.

"But that wasn't because of anything done by the government," he said.

"That was because we were already in the States and if one market dies, you put all your emphasis on another market and we had the intelligence to enable us to do that.

"Transport was a nightmare and the changes in customs and regulations were a nightmare. CV19 couldn't have come at a better time for Brexit because you just couldn't place where the issue was coming from? Was it Brexit? Was it CV19?"

The brief period we had up until CV19 hit was messy. Transportation was messy. People were unsure about pricing anymore because we were no longer part of the European Union. I was quite clear on my side but customers were unsure what they would have to do because of the changes. So there was a period in Europe where



everybody was a little bit confused about what came next. Then came CV19. That brought serious confusion because we didn't even know if we would have customers but thankfully people started drinking from home.

"Because we supply specialist importers and not volume

run of the mill whisky we didn't lose bars and restaurants and hotels. Some of our biggest customers in America are specialised liquor stores but in places like China and Taiwan they are specialist guys dealing in single malts or aged blends.

"Things have bedded down but prices of dry materials – boxes, labels, bottles and corks has gone sky high, although that has not been reflected in our selling prices.

"The problem with anything in Europe is price and the cost of the haulage. Haulage prices are massive and shipping is nigh impossible. Trying to get on a boat to go anywhere is an issue

although that's not all Brexit, that's CV19 as well. Things are so much more difficult than they were.

"Our sales in Europe are probably up now because we are trying harder.

"Before, we were enjoying steady growth in Europe, had good customers but didn't spend a massive fortune to build up the business. After CV19 and Brexit we had to push things harder and we've noticed a fairly substantial increase, but it hasn't been aided by Brexit. We have employed more people and spent more money and built things up."

Euan has whisky in his blood having grown up in a house in the grounds of the Glendronach Distillery where his father Albert was the Manager.

"My love of Huntly and the people is deep rooted," he said. "We have already invested heavily in the area with our headquarters, our Whiskies of Scotland shop and our online retailer The Spirits Embassy are all based in the area."

His company has also bought The Bank Restaurant and Café, which has just reopened, and The Castle Hotel in



**The problem with anything in Europe is price and the cost of the haulage. Haulage prices are massive and shipping is nigh impossible.**

**Euan Shand,**  
Chairman,  
Duncan Taylor Scotch  
Whisky Limited

Huntly which will open next year after an extensive refurbishment to international standards.

“In the hospitality side of our business trying to get labour is extremely difficult. We are trying to recruit waiting staff and chefs and in previous times, when borders were open, it was dead easy, now it is nigh impossible.”

Scotland’s potato merchants have suffered a significant blow since the end of the Brexit transition period. Since January 1 last year they have been prohibited from exporting seed potatoes to the EU because of the European regulations under which they were perfectly acceptable on December 31, 2020.

A spokesman for the British Potato Trade Association said that DEFRA

has, on the behalf of the Scottish seed potato industry, been in discussions with the European Commission since the transition ended but as yet had made no headway – “and there is no prospect of a resolution in the near future,” he said.

Banff-based exporter Alan Twatt (Potato Merchants) Ltd is typical of the many companies for which there has been an impact.

Seed potatoes are grown to be replanted to produce a potato crop.

Scotland is a world leader because the climate, especially in the North, doesn’t favour the aphids which spread virus diseases and the country is responsible for around 80% of UK seed potato exports.

Ahead of Brexit, the family-owned Banff-based merchant exported around 3,500 tonnes of seed potatoes globally every year and Company Director Dianne Wiseman said that, as they feared, since January 1, 2021, they have not been able to send any seed potatoes to Europe.

“Our concern then was that we did not know how long it might take for new agreements to be set up to allow us to do that, and that situation is unfortunately unchanged.”

She said the impact would be far greater for larger exporters but that one consolation was that there had been little impact on exports to Egypt, Scotland’s main market,

Morocco and Saudi Arabia – “although there has been a slight increase in import tariffs in these countries.”

“Europe is a different matter. We send to several countries in Europe and because it was an open market, we simply loaded them on the lorry and off they went, but that no longer happens.

“When potatoes are exported to non-EU countries they have a plant passport called a phytosanitary certificate and we hoped that once we left the EU, phytosanitary certificates, or some sort of new movement certificate, might come into play for tatties going from Scotland to mainland Europe but that hasn’t happened.”

# HOT TOPIC

## What can the government do to help businesses tackle rising costs?



“We are a thriving multinational firm with Aberdeen operations which began three years ago. We’ve developed considerably since then and we recently took a huge step by shifting to much larger new facilities on Sinclair Road. The offices had been empty for around five years and I feel that widely available government support for upcycling older buildings like these would be extremely beneficial to SMEs like us. For example, we are in the process of converting all our lights to LED and while I’m sure there are programmes to help with the expense, and access may be straightforward for those who deal with this kind of thing on a regular basis, it would be difficult and time consuming for us. We are keen to lower our carbon footprint, and any aid in implementing VRV heat recovery technology for heating would be highly appreciated. Perhaps it might be done by yearly tax breaks available only if businesses produce evidence of their efforts to reduce emissions.”

**Keith Skinner**, *Director*, Subsea Pressure Controls Ltd



“As the employer of one of UK’s market leading visual communication providers, we are notably concerned with the scale of rising costs placed upon businesses across all sectors, as well as the impact inflation is having on household incomes. Whether it’s the rising cost of utilities; fuel at the pump; raw material fluctuations or the increased cost to consumers of their weekly shop, we will all have to adapt once again. To circumvent the black hole in the public purse will be somewhat ‘challenging’ for our decision makers at Westminster and those with devolved powers at Holyrood, that said, they must try their level best to protect the interests of staff and employers alike. The temporary reduction of corporation tax rates or PAYE costs could be one strategy, this should also include either abolishing - or at least postponing - the planned increase in National Insurance contributions. Non-domestic rate charges, along with subsidies should all be reviewed as a matter of urgency; further support towards tax breaks as well further evaluation of immediate subsidies towards rising utility and fuel costs.”

**James Barbour**, *Managing Director*, Sign Plus Limited and Lofthus Signs



“It is critically important that the government and decision makers step back from looking at things in silos such as sectoral or geographical context and take a much broader, holistic view of the problems we all face. Companies and individuals are working harder than ever but facing rising costs to some extent or another, so there needs to be a step-change towards getting to grips with the bigger picture. Diesel, gas and electricity, minimum wage, National Insurance and numerous other essentials at home and at work are going up in price, yet it is increasingly difficult to pass that on to the client or customer. In my opinion, government and businesses themselves could learn by working with each other and other countries, actively listening and sharing knowledge on how others tackle the issues with long-term, sustainable solutions.”

**Karen Russell**, *Country Manager*, NorSea UK



Jenny Laing

## UK's first hydrogen-fuelled waste vehicle

THE UK's first hydrogen-fuelled waste collection vehicle has started collecting waste and recycling around Aberdeen.

The hydrogen fuel cell waste truck is one of seven which will be deployed across seven pilot sites. Each truck will be tested in a range of environments from rural areas to city centres, demonstrating that hydrogen waste trucks provide an effective solution to reduce emissions from road transport.

The waste truck is being part funded by the Interreg North-west Europe Programme as part of its HECTOR project - Hydrogen Waste Collection Vehicles in North West Europe. Selected as the project's lead partner, Aberdeen City Council will add this waste truck to its growing fleet of 85 hydrogen powered commercial vehicles, including hydrogen powered buses and public sector vehicles.

It is initially covering wheeled bins in Garthdee, Kincorth, Bridge of Don, Newhills, Woodside/Hilton, Mastrick, Milltimber and Rubislaw and will move to mixed recycling and bulk bins on other routes.

These journeys will not only result in estimated emissions savings of over 25kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/litre across a year, based on a diesel truck on similar routes, but will also collect data which will allow further rollouts of hydrogen-fuelled waste trucks in the future.

Councillor Jenny Laing, Aberdeen City Council Leader, said that enabling truly "green" transport is key in the plan to deliver Aberdeen's net zero vision and the council's plans to replace its vehicle fleet with alternative fuelled vehicles.

"Adding a waste truck powered only by hydrogen is another important step forward and builds on the zero emission buses and other public sector vehicles that are already here in the city," she said.

Each European deployment site will aim to continue operation of the trucks after the end of the project in June 2023 and, as the vehicles are operationally proven, will gradually replace conventionally fuelled trucks.

## Strategy needed for secure and flexible gas supply

THE global trade in liquefied natural gas (LNG) increased 6% to 380 million tonnes during 2021 as many countries rebounded from the economic impact of the CV19 pandemic, according to Shell's latest annual LNG Outlook.

Rising LNG demand, combined with supply constraints, caused gas and LNG prices to remain volatile throughout the year. Prices reached record levels in October 2021 as Europe, with historically low storage levels, struggled to secure LNG cargoes to meet expected winter gas demand.

The volatility emphasises the need for a more strategic approach to secure reliable and flexible gas supply in future to avoid exposure to price spikes. An LNG supply-demand gap is forecast to emerge in the mid-2020s and focuses attention on the need for more investment to increase supply and meet rising LNG demand, especially in Asia.

"Last year showed just how crucial gas and LNG are in providing communities around the world with energy they need as they strived to get back on track following the difficulties caused by the CV19 pandemic," said Wael Sawan, Integrated Gas, Renewables and Energy Solutions Director at Shell.

"As countries develop lower-carbon energy systems and pursue net zero emissions goals, focusing on cleaner forms of gas and decarbonisation measures will help LNG to remain a reliable and flexible energy source for decades to come."

## Sustainable business providing environmental benefits

WOODRECYCLABILITY have saved nearly 40,000 tons of waste going to landfill which equates to over 43,300 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> saved from the environment.

Over the last 25 years, the company has grown steadily from two staff and six service users in a small croft and outbuildings to 10 staff and up to 32 service users each day in a new purpose-built workshop, yard and five acres of agricultural land.

Service users, who have a range of additional support needs, including autism, Downs Syndrome, and ABI (acquired brain injury) are involved in all aspects of the business. There are opportunities to work with hand and power tools, de-nail wood and construct various products as well as enjoy interaction with fellow peers, staff and visitors.

Woodrecyclability is a great example of how an organisation can be a sustainable business whilst providing an environmental and social benefit.

The future looks even better as plans for diversification into plastic recycling and the provision of a newly planted orchard for the new apple juice and cider production, they plan to have in a few years time and a further expansion of the premises looks set to build on this success.



Jason Brown

## Aker Solutions to recruit 200

AKER Solutions will recruit 200 employees in the UK throughout 2022 – increasing its UK workforce by 25%. This recruitment will support the delivery of a new strategy which targets significant growth in renewables and low carbon oil and gas solutions.

Kjetel Digre, Aker Solutions CEO, said: “In 2025, one-third of our total revenues will come from solutions enabling oil and gas production with low-carbon emissions and from deliveries to renewable energy projects. By 2030, this will grow to two-thirds. In parallel, we aim to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions by 50% by 2030, reaching net zero by 2050.

“We operate in more than 20 countries around the world, and we have some of the industry’s best experts for both concept development and delivery of new energy projects. With these extensive capabilities, our purpose is to solve energy challenges for future generations.”

This strategy is bolstered with the appointment of Jason Brown as Aker Solutions’ Head of Renewables in the UK. In this position, Jason will lead the delivery of the company’s UK renewables growth targets. He will report to Stephen Bull, Executive Vice President of Renewables at Aker Solutions and RenewableUK Chair.

## Wood extends Equinor contract

WOOD, the global consulting and engineering company, is to extend its two-decade relationship with international energy company Equinor following the award of a three-year contract extension to support the company’s assets on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.

The contract extension, valued at around \$170million, continues an existing multi-asset framework agreement with Equinor, which was initially awarded in 2015 and will now extend through to 2026.

## Beach Boulevard Retail Park sold in £60million deal

ABERDEEN’S Beach Boulevard Retail Park has changed hands in a deal worth a reported £60million.

Reality Income Corporation has bought the site from Abrdn (formerly Aberdeen Asset Management) after a “hotly contested process”, according to real estate publisher React News.

It is the US investor’s second major purchase in the city, having previously bought the Garthdee Retail Park for £32million. It now has a retail portfolio across Europe worth over £2billion.

## Tendeka acquired by TAQA

TAQA announced it has signed an agreement to acquire Tendeka, a UK-based engineering and manufacturing company with offices in Houston, Stavanger, Aberdeen, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur.

Tendeka specialises in offering reservoir monitoring and control, advanced lower completions, and production optimization technologies, delivering innovative, stand-alone completion products which can be combined and tailored to specific customer requirements across the full spectrum of conventional and unconventional reservoirs.

Brad Baker, Tendeka CEO, said: “We are delighted to join the TAQA Group. Tendeka has a rich history of providing innovative technologies for reservoir recovery and production optimization. TAQA will not only immediately strengthen our capabilities in the key Middle East Region, but also bring investment for our future growth.”

## Blue Water Shipping expands in Guyana

BLUE Water announced the acquisition of Guyana-owned and operated Falcon Logistics Inc. and its proceedings.

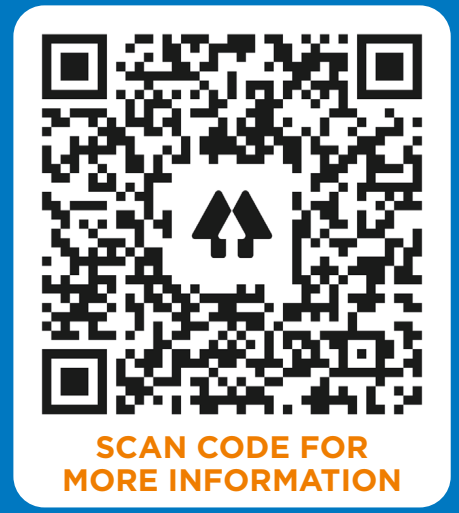
“The acquisition of Falcon Logistics is a very exciting event in the world of Blue Water. It is yet another substantial commitment in the Caribbean region, and we are pleased to welcome more than 40 new colleagues in Guyana to the Blue Water family,” says Thomas Bek, COO, Energy, Port & Projects at Blue Water.

Falcon Logistics is confident that Blue Water will succeed in combining the strength of the two companies and that both current and future customers will benefit from the acquisition in the future.

“We are proud to join the Blue Water family, which will provide a global reach to an already expansive Falcon Logistics product. This newly formed Guyanese-owned company not only complies with the full spirit of Guyana’s local content legislation but creates a plethora of opportunities for Guyanese people within this industry”, said Jennifer Falconer, Co-founder of Falcon Logistics.

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Botan Osman

## Restrata launches crisis management software

NEW digital software designed to ensure that all energy and industrial companies can manage any emergency they are faced with effectively has been launched by global technology company Restrata.

The cloud-enabled SaaS (Software as a Service) technology, called Restrata Platform Incident & Crisis Manager, enables industrial organisations to go fully digital with their emergency response capabilities – instantly giving responders the information they need to make critical decisions.

It collates incident and crisis management data into a single platform – synchronising critical information such as people impacted, personnel on board (PoB), helicopter and asset locations, tasks, team briefings, and media response and much more, into easy-to-use dashboards.

Teams at the incident site are connected to those managing the incident onshore and the crisis response team on one secure hub.

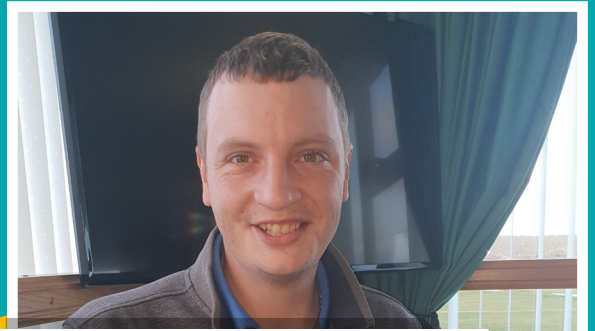
The emergency response software is a central product of Restrata Platform - the company's overarching suite of safety, security, and resilience SaaS solutions.

Restrata's dedicated emergency response centre in Aberdeen was the first to roll out Incident & Crisis Manager across its operations.

The solution will also be rolled out to more than 20 energy and industrial companies.

Botan Osman, Restrata's CEO, said: "When every second counts during an emergency, having the right information, at the right time, in front of the right people is critical. This latest addition to our sector-leading digital solution ensures that companies can stay at the forefront of emergency response and crisis management, taking them one step closer to achieving connected resilience and further reducing fragmentation."

# Business spotlight



**Derek Bond,**  
*Operations Director,*  
MDB Marine

### What does your company do?

MDB Marine works in asset integrity inspection specialising in, but not limited to, the marine sector and the offshore energy sector.

### What is unique about it?

At MDB Marine, we specifically focus on Remote Inspection Techniques (RIT). It's normal for the areas that require inspecting to be inaccessible or hazardous to inspect, therefore we pursue the use of innovative technology such as tactical remote operated vehicles (ROV), magnetic crawlers and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) as well as a full suite of equipment designed to give outstanding results in difficult conditions, all while significantly reducing the risk to personnel posed by the task.

### What do you hope your customers say about you?

I'd hope that MDB Marine is known as a goal orientated, value driven company with unquestionable integrity. The end result is our priority, our clients' needs are our needs and we understand that there needs to be a symbiotic relationship.

### What is the priority for your business right now?

Our priority at MDB Marine is to continue to grow our client base and expand our services in line with what our clients require. We have an ethos of organic development here at MDB Marine which comes from the relationship that we develop with our clients, taking time to listen to what our clients need rather than telling them what they need.

### What are your ambitions for the future of your company?

We wish to see continued growth based off the back of our successful operations. We'd like to see our reputation grow and for the company to be a success for the local community, offering jobs and opportunity.

### What has been most valuable to you as a member of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce?

We're new members but it is already apparent that the contacts and relationships that can be formed here will be undoubtedly beneficial to our growing company.





Eleanor McEwan

## Home-Start seeks volunteers

FAMILY support charity Home-Start Aberdeen is receiving the highest volume of referrals for help than it has ever seen. In the first eight weeks of 2022 it received more than 40 new enquiries to support families who are struggling to cope. This already represents 30% of the total referrals the charity received last year.

General Manager, Eleanor McEwan has warned that the true impact of the CV19 pandemic is starting to flood through and combined with soaring costs of living, families across the city are struggling to cope financially and emotionally.

Home-Start Aberdeen provides crucial help for struggling young families, who have at least one child under the age of five. Trained volunteers provide compassionate, confidential and life-changing support to help families create a secure, loving home environment where their children can grow up happy, healthy, confident and able to achieve their full potential.

The charity is now calling for more volunteers to help provide practical and emotional support to meet the demand for help from families across the city.

“The sheer volume of referrals we have received over the past few weeks is quite staggering,” said Eleanor. “We have a team of six coordinators and around 70 volunteers and it’s just not enough to meet the demand we’re currently seeing. Families have been in survival mode for the past two years, now they are at breaking point and they need help.”

The charity is inviting anyone who might be interested in becoming a home-visiting volunteer to get in touch. All volunteers receive full training and support from expert staff. To find out more or to register an interest contact Home-Start Aberdeen volunteer coordinators on 01224 693545 or by email at [admin@homestartaberdeen.org.uk](mailto:admin@homestartaberdeen.org.uk).

## Maersk Training centre completes £750k refurbishment

MAERSK Training has completed the final phase of a £750k refurbishment of its Aberdeen training centre following the installation of a new advanced firefighting facility to provide a full suite of accredited emergency response training for offshore, marine, and industrial firefighting teams.

The installation of a helicopter simulator and helideck for emergency response team member training means the new-look facility in Portlethen now offers complete training across the energy and maritime sectors. As well as offering a range of GWO and STWC courses, the OPITO-approved centre can provide bespoke training programmes to companies.

Callum Dewar, Maersk Training’s UK Operations Manager said: “The completion of our upgraded Portlethen training centre marks the culmination of months of hard work and research to ensure that we have the very best offering that reflects an evolving energy industry.

Commenting on the newly installed fireground and helideck training, Mr Dewar added: “Delegates can be placed in realistic fire and helideck emergency response scenarios, where they will undertake extensive training in planning, system and controls, personal protective equipment and any potential hazards during emergency response. During the courses they will be taught to efficiently manage any HSE risks, as well as how best to communicate effectively with teams.

“The investment supports Maersk Training’s ambition to be seen as a one stop shop for all safety training. The simulators and training grounds will enable us to offer a high quality and impressive offshore emergency response learning experience, which is not only realistic but also unique.”

## Eserv move into new HQ to accommodate rapid growth

ESERV has secured new office space for its headquarters on Queens Road, Aberdeen following a number of new contract wins globally and subsequent team expansion.

Relocating from Carden Place, the digital twin technology experts have strengthened their team in the last six months by 10 people, bringing their total head count to over 40, as they focus on expansion into new markets including subsea, renewables and nuclear.

Dan Millard, CEO of Eserv said: “This move into a bigger headquarters is an exciting development for Eserv and represents our commitment to investing in the next phase of our growth. It’s also a testament to the success our team has experienced over the past 12 months.”



Mark Robertson

## Redevelop obsolete facilities to meet demand

INDUSTRIAL is still commercial real estate's star performer in Scotland with record levels of activity and demand outstripping supply in most areas, according to Ryden's 87th Scottish Property Review.

Key industrial estates will be developed out over the next 18 months, extensions to existing parks and infill projects are advancing, but it will be an insufficient supply of new product.

Demand for development sites also comes from housebuilders who are looking at large and peripheral locations to satisfy unit sales increases. This would normally push land values up, were it not for the significant increase in build costs.

Dr Mark Robertson, Ryden Managing Partner and Scottish Property Review Editor, said: "Economic output appears to be reaching pre-pandemic levels but the societal and economic changes are still being felt through some property market sectors with retail continuing to be hit while logistics reap the benefits.

"The property investment market in Scotland accelerated during the latter half of 2021 as investors re-entered the market, particularly for industrial, city centre trophy offices and retail warehousing. The wall of money allocated to property as an asset class is expected to sustain this investment activity through 2022."

## Enermech's investment pays dividends

ENERMECH has secured more than \$100million (£74million) of pre-commissioning and new pipeline contract awards, following a \$30million (£22million) equipment investment programme across its global locations, to support its continued growth.

This targeted investment represents a significant expansion to its specialist equipment fleet of compressors, air dryers, booster compressors, nitrogen tanks, nitrogen membrane units, downlines and fluid pumps, expanding its operational capability in the pre-commissioning sector. This approach has secured 10 significant new contracts including key awards in Mozambique, Guyana, Trinidad, Turkey and Australia.

## Verlume secures consortium investment

INTELLIGENT energy management and storage technologies specialist, Verlume, has received a £2.5million investment from a consortium led by Par Equity.

Par Equity, a venture capital firm based in Edinburgh, specialises in investing in innovative technology companies and was joined by existing investors, Orchard Venture Capital and Scottish Enterprise.

Aberdeen-based Verlume offers a suite of products and services across the underwater, offshore and onshore sectors, helping clients to reduce carbon footprint and decarbonise operations. The new investment will help it rapidly accelerate its growth as it consolidates its position at the forefront of the energy transition in these sectors. Verlume was previously known as EC-OG and its new branding will underpin the company's business development strategy.

Verlume's flagship product, Halo, is a scalable, modular battery energy storage system with integrated intelligent energy management. It is an easily installable, autonomous power source that can integrate with renewable energy systems to create a zero-emission power system at a fraction of the cost of traditional methods of power delivery.

The company already supplies to a global customer base and is currently involved in a project in the USA. It is supplying the first commercial Halo battery system as part of a world-first sea trial off the coast of Hawaii, where it is part of a wave energy project for the C-Power SeaRAY autonomous offshore power system.

## Sport Aberdeen invests in snow sports

SPORT Aberdeen is investing more than £125k in dry ski slope upgrades at Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports Centre.

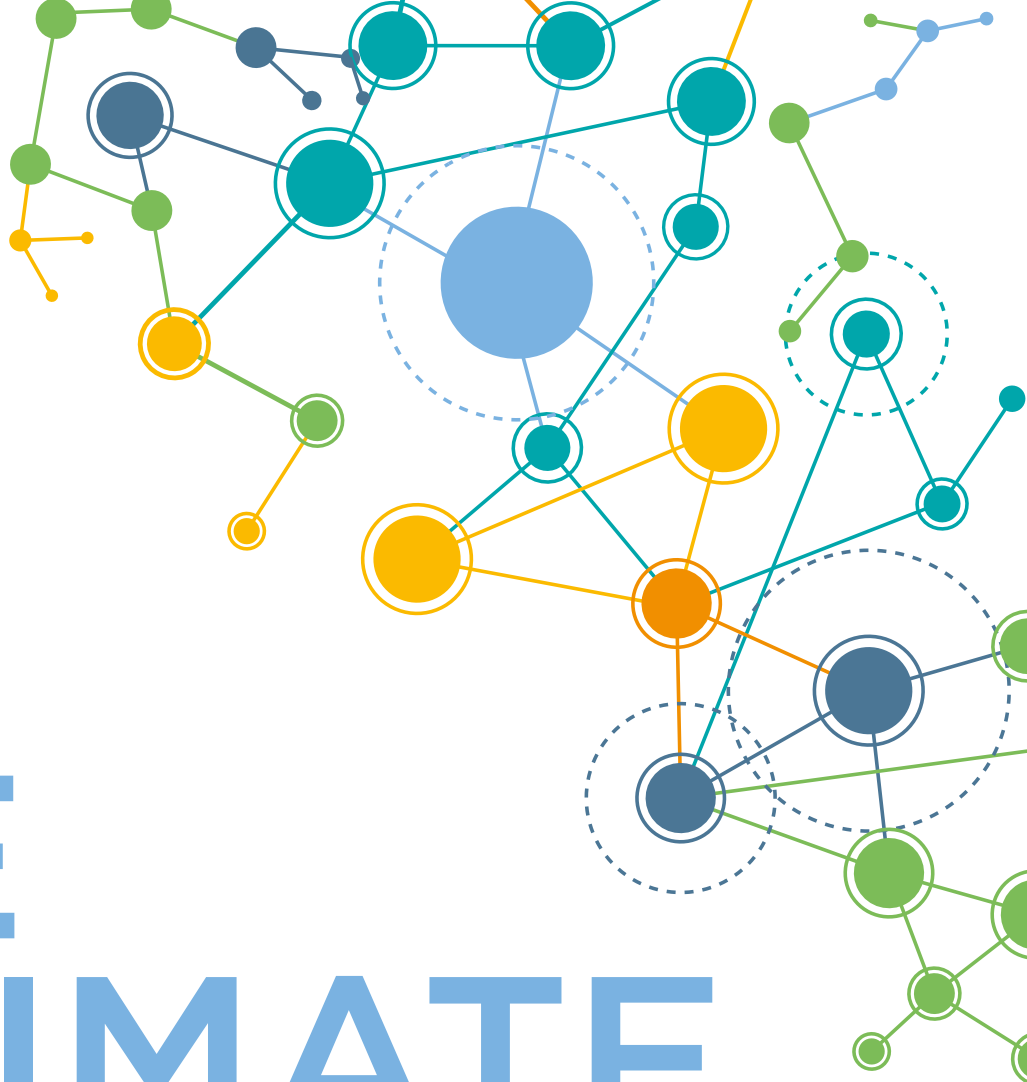
As a result 600m<sup>2</sup> of synthetic matting will be replaced across two high-traffic areas on the "Great White" - one of five slopes at the venue.

A credible alternative to snow, the matting is a high-performance synthetic system which offers two essential properties for the enjoyment of skiing and snowboarding; slip for speed and grip for the ability to switch direction and regulate the speed of descent.

Other recent developments at the centre include the installation of a traveller on the tubing slope, widening and flattening of surrounding paths as part of enhanced CV19 safety measures, and redecoration of the main building's interior to welcome customers back after a period of closure due to the pandemic.



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Andrew Elvin OBE

## EODEX Group expand into the US market

EODEX Group, has announced a major expansion into the US market, with the establishment of EODEX US LLC. The new US subsidiary will be based in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

Following on from rapid growth of the UK operation and exponential rise in demand for their industry leading deflagration capability, EODEX US LLC will now bring EODEX's proven world leading environmental UXO disposal solution to the US offshore market.

The new base in Rhode Island will be led by Andrew Elvin OBE, a retired Royal Navy Captain with over 30 years' experience working alongside and embedded with the US Department of the Navy commands and organizations.

Andrew Elvin, President of EODEX US added: "EODEX US is strategically positioned here in New England to bring its full spectrum of unexploded ordnance risk mitigation capabilities to the offshore renewables industry.

"With its proven environmentally conscious techniques, EODEX can deliver safe and effective operations not only offshore, but anywhere minimal impact to the environment is desired. EODEX brings commercial unexploded ordnance disposal into the 21st century."

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## World class hockey pitch

ABERDEEN Sports Village has invested £250k to upgrade the existing hockey pitch to ensure it maintains world class standard.

It is the first refurbishment the pitch has undergone since ASV opened in 2009 with a full surface replacement and new LED lighting fully approved by the Federation of International Hockey.

The substantial investment is in line with the organisation's commitment to developing the sport in the city and working with local clubs, schools, universities and performance players across the region.



## Loganair's new winter schedule

LOGANAIR, the UK's largest regional airline, has launched its winter schedule for the 2022/23 season, enabling customers to book flights up to a year ahead on more than 70 routes throughout the UK, Ireland and Scandinavia.

The airline recently celebrated its 60th anniversary and now serves more UK airports than every other airline combined. Highlights of the winter schedule include:

- Introduction of larger 72-seat ATR72-600 turboprop aircraft on key routes to and from the Isle of Man and Aberdeen
- New routes launching in Summer 2022 – Edinburgh to City of Derry, Aberdeen to Oslo, Aberdeen-Teesside-Southampton – continue throughout the winter season
- More flights on UK regional routes including Edinburgh-Cardiff and Aberdeen-Manchester-Newquay, with up to six weekly flights on each route
- Christmas flights on busy routes to the Scottish Islands and to City of Derry
- Extra flights in late January 2023 for Shetland's renowned UpHellyAa Viking fire festival, which is taking place in Lerwick for the first time in three years.

Kay Ryan, Loganair's Chief Commercial Officer, said: "The scale of our winter 2022/23 schedule reflects both our growing confidence in the recovery of air travel after the pandemic and the range of services that our customers have now come to expect of us. The launch of our schedule – over eight months ahead – also enables customers to plan and book Loganair flights to connect to worldwide itineraries offered by our growing range of airline partners."

In addition to the significant expansion of its partnership with British Airways announced earlier this month, Loganair has added new interline arrangements with Singapore Airlines, Finnair and Ethiopian Airlines in recent weeks, facilitating same-ticket, assured connections for customers between the respective airlines' services.

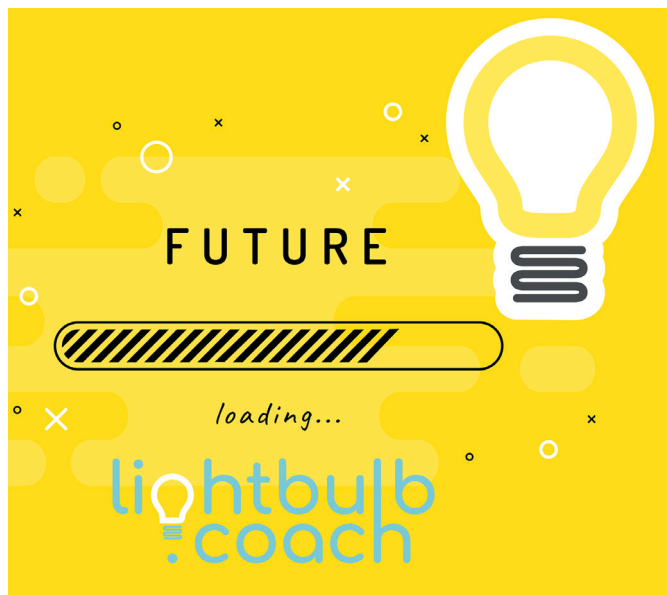
These new partnerships complement existing Loganair relationships with major airlines including Emirates, Etihad, KLM, Qatar Airways and United Airlines.

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## A word of advice



**Alison Paton LLM,**  
*Managing Director,*  
Align People HR



### Aberdeen Coach shines a light on future workforce

LIGHTBULB.COACH, an Aberdeen-based coaching company are on a mission to create the new generation of coaches. Already working as a strategic partner with DYW, it has created a coaching skills course that provides a coaching qualification for young people. The course is open to schools, businesses and individuals who are looking to become a professional coach. Cohorts are small and personal, with the first running mid-2022.

Founder Sarah Smith, an accredited Coach and Learning & Development professional, set out on a mission to make coaching mainstream for young people after a previous career in managing apprentices and graduate programmes. She said: "Coach training provides the essential meta skills needed across any sector or profession, we need to provide our future workforce with these skills early to enable self-sufficiency and efficacy."

"We need to change the narrative for young people and help them see the opportunities available to them. Coaching can help to remove barriers and build confidence to succeed. Imagine a generation who can do that for themselves and for others."

The 60-hour course is delivered in-person and/or virtually and includes the knowledge, skills and practice needed to be a professional coach. Set on the foundations of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) competencies, the course provides a route to ICF accreditation which is a globally recognised standard and a real CV differentiator.

In the last year, lightbulb.coach has seen in an increase in parents, students and young professionals signing up for coaching sessions. The "great resignation" has also created a new swell of interest in coach training as a viable new profession. coaching is no longer seen as a tool given to senior executives; it is accessible to everyone.

If you are interested to find out more about the course or coaching, contact Sarah Smith at [sarah@lightbulb.coach](mailto:sarah@lightbulb.coach), tel 07917410448 - [www.lightbulb.coach](http://www.lightbulb.coach)

#### Area of expertise?

Align People HR are a small, local HR consultancy service for SMEs. Our expertise lies across all areas of HR, learning and development and recruitment. As an independent business, we use our HR and recruitment knowledge to advise and guide SMEs through the challenges of employing and managing people. We offer HR project support, ongoing advice and guidance as well as simply being an experienced HR sounding board to help with decision making.

#### What should people know?

Business is made up of people doing business with other people. For us, an HR strategy is just as important as a business strategy. If you get your people plan right, the rest should fall nicely into place and even if things do go wrong, it will be easier to manage with a solid people plan in place.

#### What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

At the moment, it's complacency. Post pandemic the world of work has changed and we are quickly moving into a new phase of working. Don't assume that everything will go back to the way it was. It's important to be aware that employees may now have different priorities than they had before in terms of well-being, ways of working and financial security. These priorities now come with higher expectations for their employers to support them. The job market is also very buoyant at the moment with opportunities and head-hunters actively out there working hard to turn heads and lure talent away.

#### What's your top tip?

Look after your people and they will look after your business. Don't underestimate the value a professional HR support service will bring to a business. An outsourced HR partner doesn't have to cost the earth and investing in your people is always money well spent, especially at this time.

# The international stars shining at the Northern Star Business Awards 2022

**INTERNATIONAL markets offer huge opportunities for businesses of all sizes. Sales grow faster, more jobs are created, and a geographic spread can limit the impact of fluctuations in the home economy.**

So how do North-east companies go about spreading their wings?

Here we look at the four finalists in the Northern Star Business Awards Going Global category to discover some of the secrets of their success.

**Arnlea Systems Ltd** was set up in 1994 in the wake of the Piper Alpha disaster, to provide inspection software to help manage the directives and regulations introduced to ensure a tragedy of that scale could never happen again.

Its vision is to be a trusted partner by forging positive relationships with global businesses which rely on its SaaS (software as a service) asset management products for greater data control, safety, insight and sustainability. As part of that effort Paul Goonan, International Business Development Manager, is moving to Houston to help expand its reach.

Arnlea's software is the culmination of almost three decades of customer intelligence integrated into its solutions. Customers can carry out inspections using the latest version, eliminating paper trails, enhancing safety and compliance and creating more efficient and effective processes.

The software can be used for inspections and maintenance, for materials management and for the inspection and maintenance of hazardous area equipment for which it is widely regarded as the world leader.

Although developed for the North Sea and UK Continental Shelf it is now a multi-sector, multi-geographic

product used on almost 200 sites globally from Norway to Nigeria and Canada to the Congo.

Such is the potential in the USA that Paul is in the process of moving his family to Houston to take up a new post as Head of Business Development America for Arnlea Systems Inc. He would have made the move two years ago - although the pandemic has had one positive impact in that the forced use of technology has opened eyes and led to a far more receptive audience for Arnlea's cloud-based applications. The concept of digital transformation is now more widely seen and understood to be the most appropriate corporate response to this fast-evolving digital world. Businesses need to embrace digital transformation to stay relevant in this ever-changing environment.

"The uptake is certainly much better than it used to be and people are realising they have to get procedures in place," said Paul. "They're wanting to move away from pen and paper and realise the efficiencies around our solution. I think, as technology advances, more and more companies will be looking at streamlining their operations and at the available options out there in the market.

"SaaS is the lifeblood of what we sell and we continually review our roadmap and invest in our software using the data to apply AI and machine-learning to deliver the right output to our customers. This allows our system to make decisions or recommend the right course of action for customer inspections.

"For Arnlea, a changing industry is an opportunity to create and reinforce our overall market position while continuing to grow, develop and provide the best possible service to our customers. One key aspect of these changes will be that every operator, major contractor, sub-contractor and supplier will be faced with new and different challenges

ranging from cost control, through local restrictions and liability sharing and an expected expanding technical capability through digital transformation."

**Enerquip** was launched in 2015 and is a market-leader in the design, manufacture, installation and maintenance of torque machines and associated products for the energy industry. It invests heavily in research and development for constant innovation to remain at the forefront of its sector.

A highly skilled team with more than a century of combined experience supports a growing client base in Africa, North and South America, Canada, Europe, the Far East, Australia, the Middle East and Russia. The roots of the business remain in Aberdeen and Caithness with subsequent expansion including a hub in Houston.

Last year Enerquip landed its largest ever single contract from a client in Abu Dhabi worth \$1.2million (£887k) accelerating plans to create a regional service hub there.

Enerquip has already traded with most of the world - from Alaska to New Zealand and Sakhalin Island, Russia to the Falkland Islands.

Critical to growth and sustainability is that 90% of revenue is generated through export, with 80% from outside Europe.

Opening a US office created the footprint customers were demanding to deal with the company which has now successfully penetrated the North America market and achieved massive growth.

"Since we launched in 2015, the boom in shale gas in the North American market has only been matched by activity and demand the Middle East," said Enerquip Director, Andrew Robins. "To capitalise on these emerging opportunities, we had to



Paul Goonan of Arnlea Systems Ltd

have the courage to be there and be ready to embrace the market and its opportunities.

“Our strategy is to continue to grow organically, primarily by opening further sales and service offices in new regions. In the short to medium term, it is anticipated that a new service hub will be created in the United Arab Emirates where success in the market has given rise to the need for a permanent physical presence and personnel on the ground.

“This will allow better support of existing and prospective clients in the Middle East. Business in countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman has been limited due to geography but a new regional presence will be a key driver towards pursuing new business in these countries.

“We also remain committed to opening an office in Singapore which we hope will act as a launchpad into the Far East. South East Asia has already proved to be successful for Enerquip, but opening an office there will be a crucial way of cementing our place in the region as well as driving future sales.”

**Kaseum Technology** has just celebrated its fifth birthday having been established to research, design,



Andrew Robins of Enerquip

develop and manufacture a range of electro-mechanical measurement and intervention tools for user in oil and gas wells.

The company’s speciality is providing downhole instrumentation and technical solutions to cut cost and increase the safety and efficiency of oil and gas production and its turnover is also around 90% export driven.

This creates increasingly global opportunities as oilfields around the world mature and the technical solutions can be applied to new marginal fields and new fields in challenging locations.

It has shown consistent revenue growth, the staff has risen from four to 26, and it now supplies more than 50 companies in 30 countries in every oil and gas producing region of the world.

Recent growth areas have included the Middle East, South East Asia and North America with South America and Russia/CIS countries as a secondary focus.

Kaseum has also gained customers in Canada, USA, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei, Russia and Ukraine.



Ron James of STATS Group

It supplies three of the “big four” oilfield service companies (OFS) and some of the largest independent OFS companies including Expro, Tier 1, Dimension Bid and Al Mansoori. Three of the “big four” are estimated to share 51% of a market worth \$9.8bn between them.

“Our primary strategy has always been to design our products to anticipate and exceed the needs of our customers,” said Managing Director, Paul Church.

“We have taken a two-pronged approach to developing international markets. We undertake research visits to the target market and then typically target the largest potential customer in that market.

“Our first overseas market to penetrate was China and this followed extensive visits throughout the country and attendance at trade shows. The over-riding feedback during these visits was that the Chinese market had evolved from a market where price was no longer the number one factor and using international technology was extremely attractive.

“A similar approach was taken to developing the Middle East market. Our first action was to attend the ADIPEC conference and with

support from Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International we secured shared booth space. We used the show both as a marketing opportunity but also as an opportunity to hold face-to-face meetings with all the major OFS companies in the region.”

He said the time taken to penetrate the largest OFS companies was a drawback as it could take up to 18 months from initial contact through to vendor qualification.

Penetrating the US shale plug and perf market required a completely different strategy from Kaseum. Visits to the US established that if they were to compete, they had to think differently and completely focus on reducing cost and designing for efficient manufacture. That led to the development of bespoke tools which could be manufactured at scale.

Another critical element for the US market was to have local inventory, service and support so market research was carried out to identify suitable partners for Kaseum.

**STATS Group** is a market leader in the supply of pressurised pipeline isolation, hot tapping and plugging services to the global energy industry.

Its strategy to internationalise has been core to the business for over a decade and has involved significant investment in people, equipment and facilities in the USA, Canada, UAE, Qatar and Malaysia and more recently in Oman, Australia and Saudi Arabia.

“Our focus has always been on building local capability providing rewarding employment opportunities and making a positive contribution to the local economies where we operate,” said Leigh Howarth, CEO of STATS Group.

“Providing a safe, responsive and value-for-money service is at the heart of what we do. With an eye on sustainability, increasingly

short lead times and price competition, we have focussed on developing our local presence in key energy regions to ensure we are providing a highly responsive and cost-effective service to our customers.

“The emergence of CV19 and the subsequent closing of borders and strict travel restrictions underlined the importance of having our teams and equipment in-country to deliver our services.”

The strategy to localise operations helped STATS deliver revenues of £50million in 2021, an increase of 17% on the previous year despite the continuing impacts of CV19.

“This growth was achieved by building on our existing client relationships while also adding new customer accounts and has resulted in staff numbers increasing to more than 300, with close to half employed internationally,” said Mr Howarth.

“STATS problem-solving culture and fast response to customers’ needs have underpinned our success in international markets and positions us well for future sustainable growth.

“STATS is very selective when deciding in which international markets to operate and market analysis guides decisions with a focus on the potential scale of demand.

“To assess the potential for new markets, STATS uses several different information sources including market intelligence and making regular visits to a country to meet with clients and progress project work scopes when a business opportunity has been identified.”





David Bruton

## Subsea Expo Award winners

MAATS Tech has been named Subsea Company of the Year and David Bruton, Director Subsea at Crondall Energy, was recognised for his outstanding contribution to the industry at the Subsea Expo Awards.

The event was held during Subsea Expo and organised by the Global Underwater Hub (GUH). The awards celebrate the achievements of companies and individuals in the UK underwater industry

David Bruton, a chartered engineer with more than 40 years' experience as a specialist in pipelines and associated facilities in oil and gas, was honoured for his contribution to the industry. Throughout his career, which began with bp in 1980, he has been involved in developing new technology for a wide variety of projects.

Basingstoke-based Aquatec Group was named Best Small Company; Verlume received the Innovation & Technology award; the Cross Sector Innovation award went to DCN Diving; STATS Group was the winner of the Global Exports Award; the Innovation in Safety award going to DeepOcean; and the Emerging Talent award was presented to Edris Joonaki, fluid properties expert and technical lead at TÜV SÜD National Engineering Laboratory.

## RGC first in European digital award

ROBERT Gordon's College is the first three to 18 years and also first independent school in Scotland to be recognised under the new European Digital Schools Award, recognising and celebrating best practice in digital education.

Launched in 2021, the Digital Schools Awards European programme was created to encourage and recognise innovation, collaboration and skills development in digital technology amongst schools. It is backed by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme, national government bodies including Education Scotland and leading technology companies led by HP.

In addition to being awarded Digital Schools Award European Status, Robert Gordon's College has also been highlighted as a mentor school.



## Biohub - creating jobs and opportunities

THE transformational BioHub project for Aberdeen's life sciences sector, now halfway through its main construction phase, is providing an economic boost for the construction sector and creating career pathways for young people in the city.

BioHub, led by Opportunity North East, is a £40million investment on the Foresterhill Health Campus to make Aberdeen one of the most dynamic locations in the UK to create and grow life sciences businesses.

It is co-funded by the UK Government, Scottish Government and ONE, and more than 60 people across multiple trades are currently on-site working on installing cladding and glazing, partition construction, mechanical and electrical installation, and brickwork.

The iconic new-build will house up to 400 scientific entrepreneurs commercialising research to transform healthcare delivery, improve patient outcomes and grow the innovation-led economy in the region.

Community benefits delivered by main contractor Robertson Construction include construction apprenticeships with North East Scotland College, careers and skills sessions with pupils across primary and secondary schools, work placements, and volunteering with local charities. A garden for NHS staff has also benefitted from a donation of benches.

Jennifer Crow, Chief Executive of ONE, said: "The whole team delivering BioHub has done an outstanding job over the past nine months to realise the project vision on site. The build phase of this transformational public and private investment provides valuable construction jobs in the city and inspires young people setting out on their careers. These benefits are significant to the community and economy just now. BioHub will open in the autumn and accelerate the growth of our life sciences sector. Including more high-value jobs in start-up, spin-out and scaling businesses and bringing new therapies, treatments, technology and digital solutions to market."

BioHub will provide laboratory, incubation and collaboration space, custom accommodation, specialist business growth programmes, and access to expert networks and investors. It has secured £20million of capital funding jointly provided by the UK Government and Scottish Government via the Aberdeen City Region Deal. ONE has committed up to £5.6million to deliver BioHub's objectives. NHS Grampian and the University of Aberdeen are strategic delivery partners in the project.



## RGU award scholarships to inspiring women

Six female Latin American students have benefited from an academic scholarship to study a year-long master's degree at Robert Gordon University (RGU) funded by the British Council.

The programme aims to increase opportunities in the field for women who need financial support and want to inspire future generations to choose careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. According to data from the UN Scientific Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), only 30% of female students select STEM-related fields in higher education.

As part of their courses, the students are also working on STEM projects to positively impact their home countries, applying the skills and experience gained from their time at RGU. Donella Beaton, Vice-Principal for Business and Economic Development at RGU, commented: "We are delighted to participate in the British Council's Scholarship programme for Women in STEM and be the only Scottish University to receive Latin American students through this programme. RGU has been working with partners in Latin America for some time and these scholarships are a real milestone in this journey."

## Newtonhill players pitch perfect in new kit

PLAYERS from Newtonhill Community Football Club are taking to the pitch with a new set of kit this season, thanks to sponsorship from Aberdeen-based marine consulting and safety specialists AMS Global Group.

The company has sponsored the 2004 age group's red change kit as well as their black training kit. The team, which trains twice a week at Lochside Academy 3G and GOALS at Inverdee, plays in the Aberdeenshire & District Juvenile Football Association Under 18A League.

This is the second team supported by AMS Global Group. In 2021, the company sponsored the kit for the young players in the Dyce 2015 age group at Dyce Boys Club.



## An exceptional year of growth for STV

STV Group reveal that 2021 had been an "exceptional" year of growth for the Glasgow-based media company with annual turnover and profits both well in advance of 2020's performance - and also better than the figures recorded in 2019 before the onset of the pandemic. Last year's turnover hit £144.5million - up 35% on 2020 and 17% in front of 2019. Pre-tax profits reached £20.1million - triple the 2020 figure and 10% in advance of 2019.

Chief Executive Simon Pitts said: "2021 was an exceptional year of growth for STV which saw us deliver the highest revenue, operating profit and lowest net debt on record. We continue to support our people, partners and communities as we emerge from the pandemic with momentum and confidence.

"We are taking full advantage of the growth in video viewing, with STV recording its highest viewing share since 2008 and our streaming service STV Player growing streams by 63% - thanks to huge audiences for new dramas and Euro 2020. This viewing success propelled us to our highest-ever advertising revenues - 24% up on 2020 and 11% ahead of 2019, with growth continuing into 2022.

"Our strategy of creating a more diversified media business through a relentless focus on digital streaming and production growth is delivering, with these new areas now making up 36% of our total profit."

Mr Pitts added that 2022 had started well with a strong advertising performance in the first quarter, and also particularly good revenue visibility in studios.

"2022 will be our biggest year yet in terms of content - with over 150 hours of new, original drama, 40% more than 2020, including the Ipress File and Our House starring Martin Compston, followed by extensive coverage of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar later this year."



# NORTHERN STAR2022 BUSINESS AWARDS

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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.

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VSA

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# Join VSA in celebrating our heritage...

Aberdeen Cares Exhibition

Aberdeen Art Gallery • Saturday March 12th - Sunday May 29th

Admission **FREE**



Do you have a story or a cherished photograph that captures what VSA means to you, or perhaps a relative or close friend? We would love to hear from you.

Scan **HERE** to share your VSA memory and visit our dedicated Heritage website.



# ...supporting vulnerable children and adults for over 150 years

Since 1870 Aberdeen Association of Social Service, known locally as VSA, has stood next to the people of the city, offering care, support, and vital services to vulnerable people in our communities.

To mark our 150th anniversary, a special exhibition at Aberdeen Art Gallery opens this Spring. It will explore VSA's role in the history of social care in Aberdeen and highlights the impact of human kindness through poignant and inspiring personal stories captivating archival photography, documents, and objects associated with caregiving in Aberdeen.

With the Queen's Green Canopy initiative also taking place throughout 2022, we are currently inviting corporate volunteer groups to support VSA at one of our forthcoming tree planting days at Easter Anguston Farm. To find out more about how your business can take part and join VSA at this exciting time, contact us at [philanthropy@vsa.org.uk](mailto:philanthropy@vsa.org.uk)

VSA's Heritage Project is kindly supported by



# Playing the short and long game with energy security

## THE WAR in Ukraine has brought into sharp focus the fragility of global markets, and the fault lines of globalisation.

It has also, for the first time since the 1970s, seen genuine concerns raised about our energy security as a nation.

Our oil and gas production has already more than halved over the past 20 years. The ONS says that production is now 58% lower than its peak in 1999.

In that same period, the amount of energy generated from renewable sources has risen, but at a fraction of the pace, and energy consumption has remained static.

This has left us ever more reliant on energy imports from other parts of the world. We have gone from being a net exporter of energy just 20 years ago, producing around 17% more than we needed, to importing 30% of the energy we use.

In recent years, there have been points where we have fallen back to import dependency levels that we haven't seen since the 1970s, before mass production in the North Sea.

In peaceful and globalised times, we have dropped the ball and allowed ourselves to become increasingly reliant on imports.

Clearly we need to develop, at pace, alternative clean energies. Diversity of supply represents security of supply.

But what about the short-term?

In 2020 the UK obtained 21.5% of its primary energy from low carbon sources.

So yes, we need to ramp up investment in lower carbon technologies. But the energy transition is going to take 25 years and there is quite clearly a sustained period of time, during that transition, where oil and gas will remain a crucial part of our energy mix.

So, for now, we have two options; to produce more domestically, with full control over the regulatory environment in which it is extracted; or to import an increasing amount of our energy, with the heavier carbon toll that shipping it from other parts of the world carries.

The latter makes little economic sense, and even less environmental sense.

Nobody wants to alter the direction of travel, net zero is where we want to get to. But with such a lengthy transition, now is not the time to be ideological, it is time to be practical and realistic.

An opinion poll run in the Times recently showed that 98% of people in the North of Scotland believe that the oil and gas used in the UK should be produced in the UK.

There is an acceptance in the public at large that leaving Scottish oil in the ground while importing it from other parts of the world environmentally illiterate.

However, this opinion is not shared by Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, who has doubled down on her position that there should be no new exploration in the North Sea.

She rejected a call from Scottish Tory Leader Douglas Ross to maximise oil and gas drilling in the North Sea.

Her argument was that new oil and gas fields can take years to come on stream. But is this really the case?

There are marginal reservoirs which are part of larger fields which weren't viable at \$40 a barrel, but they certainly are at over \$100. Those sorts of incremental reserves, as part of an already developed asset, can be drilled and brought on-stream within six months.

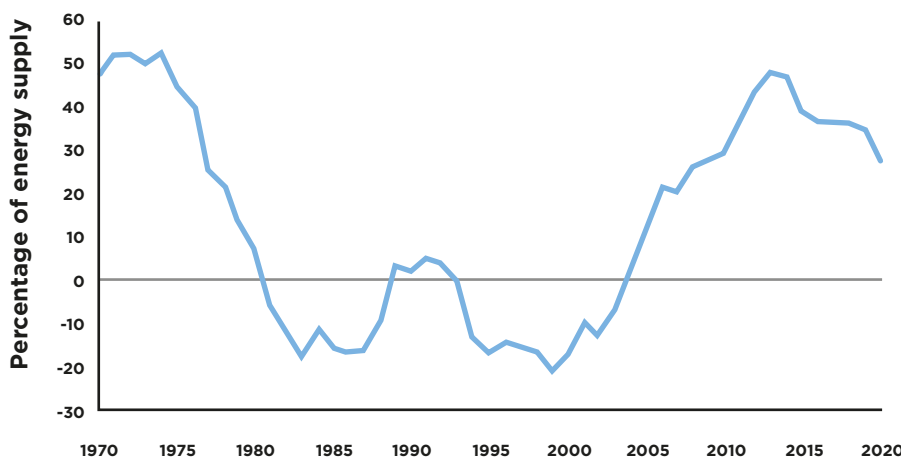
And it doesn't seem like this Ukraine crisis or its effects will have gone away within six months. Most predict the energy supply crisis will have worsened by then, and costs will have gone up further. Traders are talking about oil at \$200 a barrel.

Wholesale subsea developments in the North Sea would take two years to bring to production. Which may well be within the lifespan of the current crisis too.

But again, let's set that in context overall... the transition is going to take at least 25 years.

So, what should we make of the First Minister's comments? Her position is largely symbolic, as these matters are reserved to the Westminster parliament.

OVERALL ENERGY  
Import dependency, 1970 to 2020



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But we have had conversations with industry figures who are nervous about investing in the waters off Scotland while the first minister holds this view. And that should be something of great concern to the Scottish Government.

She needs to change tact and come work with the industry. We need to play the short game and help unlock the billions of pounds we need for our energy security today. This will allow us to play the long game and secure our energy transition tomorrow.



**Ryan Crighton**  
Policy Director,  
Aberdeen & Grampian  
Chamber Commerce

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**In 2020  
the UK  
obtained  
21.5% of  
its primary  
energy  
from low  
carbon  
sources.**

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## Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce 2022 training calendar

Management and Leadership	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Assertiveness at Work</b> Learn to communicate your point of view without causing conflict			
<b>Communication and Interpersonal Skills</b> Develop effective communication techniques		24	
<b>Customer Service Excellence</b> Discover the techniques to excel at customer service			
<b>Dealing with Difficult Situations</b> Understand the variety of personalities and determine how to alter your approach			
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b> Develop situational awareness and manage emotion in self and others			7
<b>Improve your Professional Confidence</b> Promote a positive and confident self-image in a professional manner			8
<b>Negotiating and Influencing Skills</b> Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success			
<b>Personal Effectiveness</b> Improve your self-management by changing the way you work	20		
<b>Presentation Skills</b> Deliver a dynamic and motivational presentation confidently		4	
<b>Project Management - The Fundamentals</b> Understand the principles of project management and the complexities of scale		6	
<b>Report Writing</b> Learn to produce clear, concise and effective reports	21		
<b>Taking Notes and Minutes (half day)</b> Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes	6		
<b>Time Management</b> Identify time wasting activities and manage your day more effectively			22
<b>Train the Trainer</b> Feel confident whilst developing and presenting different types of training	26		

International Business and Exporting	Apr	May	Jun
<b>A Beginners Practical Guide to Exporting</b> Gain a high level overview of the exporting process			
<b>Understanding Export and Export Documentation</b> Demystify what is involved to save time and money			
<b>Customs Procedures and Documentation</b> Learn how to navigate the various customs systems, procedures and documentation			
<b>Import Procedures, Inward and Outward Processing</b> Avoid pitfalls when importing, understanding methods of claiming relief			
<b>Incoterms 2020</b> Benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers			
<b>Methods of Payment and Letters of Credit</b> Ensure your Letter of Credit is not rejected and compare payment methods	28		
<b>Preference Rules of Origin</b> Understand the importance and rules of Preference Rules of Origin		18	
<b>Understanding Commodity Codes</b> Guidance through the international coding process and the paperwork involved			9

Business Development	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Business Development Accelerator</b> Develop a powerful strategy to drive sales		5	
<b>Sales and Account Management</b> Develop a structured approach to selling			
<b>Social Media - Developing Your Recruitment Profile</b> See the importance of a personal and corporate brand using social media			

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Contact us: **01224 343902** or [training@agcc.co.uk](mailto:training@agcc.co.uk)



Finance	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction</b> Learn how to establish and maintain budgets			
<b>Finance - The Basics</b> Develop a broad understanding of business finance			
<b>Finance for Non-finance Managers</b> Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business			

Management and Leadership	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Advanced Management Skills</b> Grow as a manager and improve the performance of your team			
<b>Building Effective Teams</b> Understand what makes a great team and learn how to build one			
<b>Essential Management Skills</b> Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager			
<b>Essential Supervisory Skills</b> Bridge the gap between doing and supervising	19		28
<b>HR for Non-HR Managers</b> Understand responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements			16
<b>Motivation and Delegation</b> Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation			
<b>Reviews and Appraisals</b> Assess performance constructively and increase reviewee's motivation			
<b>Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management</b> Identify and engage with stakeholders to build effective and lasting relationships			
<b>Supervisors Next Steps</b> Improve techniques and add new areas of awareness and understanding			

## Chamber members\* save on all training courses

\*Silver level membership and above

### Training delegate fees

Course	*Members	Savings	Non-members
<b>Half day</b>	£245 +VAT	£125	£370 +VAT
<b>Full day</b>	£295 +VAT	£145	£440 +VAT
<b>Two day standard</b>	£560 +VAT	£280	£840 +VAT

“We have been regular participants in various Chamber of Commerce training courses for developing the skills of our employees (at all levels). We would have no hesitation in recommending them to others looking for staff development training programmes”.

Aberdeen Football Club and AFC Community Trust



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## Exciting new tenant for Marischal Square

AN EXCITING new tenant with a new concept to the Aberdeen bar and casual dining scene is the latest occupier in the city's Marischal Square development.

Resident X – also known as RX - with a focus on collaborative residency kitchens, modern craft drinks, and high-energy social space, is set to open its doors in late Spring over two units within MSQ1 and help to boost city centre's day and night-time economy.

RX will boast up to six independently run food and drinks units set amongst a vibrant array of seated and standing social areas, all with unique and stylish themes. All food vendors will also benefit from use of a large shared commercial pod kitchen within the facility, which will enable them to operate on delivery platforms independently from their front of house unit.

Aberdeen City Council Leader, Councillor Jenny Laing said: "By investing £107million into the Marischal Square development, Aberdeen City Council has achieved regeneration of the east end of the city centre. This project along with the investment in Provost Skene House, the Art Gallery, and the soon-to-open Union Terrace Gardens is creating a city centre that people want to live work and visit.

"I am delighted that the final unit within Marischal Square development has been taken over by new tenants and I am positive their offering will compliment what is already a flourishing hospitality complex which will boost the city centre economy by attracting more people into the area."

# Business spotlight



**David Hunter,**  
*Director,*  
The Habitat People

### When was your business established?

We established as a limited company in July 2021.

### What does your business do?

We are the UK's first private conservation firm, and the only CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting company based in Scotland. We are trained conservationists, and help people to improve biodiversity on people's land, at any scale, storing carbon and providing PR for businesses and opportunities for employee wellness. It's much cheaper to have a wildflower meadow than an area of lawn, its better PR, and it looks stunning. Our offsetting scheme utilises the creation of wildflower meadows and a range of habitats to sequester carbon - right here in the North-east.

### What sort of companies do you do business with?

We work with businesses on every scale, such as at business parks like Prime Four, to improve aesthetics and onsite biodiversity in their meadows, but also creating habitats for businesses with a smaller greenspace. With the offsetting, we are largely working with small to medium sized businesses to help them achieve net zero locally, affordably and transparently.

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

We are new kids on the block – so getting the word out about what we do, which in itself is entirely new, and the real benefits we can bring to our potential clients is the main difficulty.

### And the biggest opportunity?

As much as it is a serious threat to our species – climate change. Given the challenges of achieving net zero, sustainability targets and biodiversity loss, everyone is looking for answers of how to achieve this – which is exactly what we sell.

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

Everything we build and do is positive. We work with clients to make habitat and space that looks good, gives good PR and wellness opportunities, as well as fighting climate change and biodiversity loss. Every week I get a few emails from clients on what they've seen or gained from our services. Knowing how much joy and life we can bring to places makes me extremely proud of our work.



Julietta Sikorsky

## Lathallan pupil selected to sing for National Youth Choir of Scotland

FOLLOWING a successful audition, Lathallan School pupil Julietta Sikorsky (S2) from Kirriemuir has been selected to sing for the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS) Girls' Choir. A choir of ambitious singers, chosen from Scotland's best young singing talent.

Talking about the opportunity, 14-year-old Julietta said: "In my singing experience, this has definitely been the biggest opportunity I have had so far and I am very grateful.

"Lathallan has really helped me on this journey. In 2020, I was in my first School Show which was the Lion King and I had the part of Nala. I was quite shy and not very confident, but I was able to get up on stage and sing in front of people. Confidence is one of our school values. The song Shadowland was one of the first solos I ever performed, and it was wonderful".

Mr Hossick, Head of Music at Lathallan School said: "Joining the NYCOS Girls' Choir is a fantastic opportunity for Julietta to continue her vocal journey with one of the best choirs in the UK. We are all delighted for her and can't wait to hear her perform".

## Change of name for TRAC Oil & Gas

SPECIALIST rope access and inspection service company TRAC Oil & Gas Ltd has announced it has changed its name to TRAC Energy Limited, effective from March 1.

Taking this decision to reflect its journey to a net zero future, the Aberdeen-headquartered company already has strong ties to the clean energy industry having worked in renewables for over a decade and having developed a roadmap to a new zero carbon future with clear environmental targets.

TRAC Energy Ltd Managing Director, Danny Hawthorn said: "It's the right time to make this change in business name, it's a subtle yet significant moment for the business as we place ourselves in the middle of a transitioning market."

## First launch for 33 years

FOR the first time in more than 30 years a ship has been launched in Aberdeen from a dry dock once operated by Hall Russell & Co, the city's last shipbuilder which closed in 1992. Dales Marine Services Ltd launched Réalt na Farraige, a multi-cat style vessel platform for an Irish salmon farming company. The launch represented several firsts for the business, including the first vessel they've built and the first vessel to be built in Aberdeen for many years.

Gary Norrie, Project Manager, said: "Today is a very proud moment for myself and my team here at Dales Marine. It has been a test for each and every one of us during the build over the last eight to nine months. From the day the first flat steel plate was brought into our workshop to the last brushstroke of paint applied, it has been a challenge and an exciting one for us all. The experience and skill utilised on this build by the team have been second to none."

## Vehicle fleet fuelled by waste and crops

ASCO is switching its heavy goods vehicle fleet (HGV) fleet from diesel fossil fuel to HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) renewable diesel fuel from as part of its drive to decarbonise its operations and be net zero by 2040.

The global, integrated logistics and materials management company says this will reduce direct carbon emissions by more than 3,040 tonnes, a 46% reduction in the UK and a 20% reduction across its global operations against its 2019 baseline.

The 3,040 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved is equivalent to the amount absorbed by 150,586 trees or the volume produced by heating 453 homes in a year.

HVO is a biofuel made from industrial waste, such as tail oil and fats, and non-food crops that can be used as a drop-in replacement for diesel in the transition to low-carbon fuel alternatives.

ASCO's fleet of around 100 vehicles will be using a 100% biofuel produced from non-food crops, ensuring the biomass is not in direct competition with food growth.

## Union Terrace Gardens to open to the public

UNION Terrace Gardens will reopen to the public at the end of April, it has been announced.

Council chiefs have been told to have a "soft reopening" for the Victorian park in Aberdeen city centre by the end of next month following at near £30million upgrade.

The re-opening was announced as councillors set the local authority's budget for the new financial year, which includes a 3% increase in council tax. Councillors voted for the increase which will see a band D bill rise to just over £1,419.



## Aberdeen social care charity VSA has opened a special exhibition to celebrate 150 years since the organisation was founded.

**THE DISPLAY will run at Aberdeen Art Gallery until Sunday, May 29.**

VSA was founded in March 1870 as the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.

Queen Victoria accepted the position of patron and, ever since, the reigning monarch has been the patron.

The exhibition, which has been delayed for two years due to the pandemic, will explore VSA's role in the history of social care in Aberdeen.

Jennifer Mitchell, Director of External Relations at the charity, said the display will highlight the impact of human kindness through poignant and inspiring personal stories, captivating archival photography, documents and objects associated with care-giving in Aberdeen.

She added: "Visitors will be able to see objects on display which include a man's suit dating from the 1930s, and soap, a comb, shoe polish and toothpaste. In 1933, during the severe economic hardship of the Great Depression, there were between 12,000 and 14,000 unemployed men in Aberdeen. To support the unemployed during this period, VSA helped with the cost of travel to interviews, buying clothes, and providing items that would help people look and feel their best.

"There will also be videos, a tapestry created by Aberdeen Deaf Sewing Bee, and many other artifacts that

showcase our vast history of over 150 years."

"The display will be of interest to all ages, and we are expecting to attract a good turnout while it is on."

The exhibition has been funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Art Gallery.

VSA helps change the lives of more than 20,000 vulnerable children and adults each year. It supports physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing through a range of residential and outreach support services. The charity assists people living with learning disabilities, a mental-health diagnosis, loneliness and isolation, additional support needs, poverty, addiction, and long-life conditions such as Parkinson's and Dementia.

Meanwhile, VSA has announced plans to plant trees at a woodland area at its Easter Anguston Farm in the next few weeks to celebrate the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC).

QGC is a tree-planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's platinum jubilee.

Easter Anguston is an operational farm and local community resource which serves as a training facility for adults with learning difficulties and other additional support needs.

The QGC also coincides with corporate volunteering restarting at

VSA after being suspended during the pandemic.

Jennifer said: "We partner with a number of local, national and global companies who generously donate their time and money towards a variety of projects at our residential sites to benefit the people who need and use our services.

"It's a fantastic opportunity to unite a team of people to work in a different way and they can see first-hand the direct social impact the project they are working on will make to the people who need and use VSA services. The added benefit is the legacy of the project for years to come.

"In the past, companies might spend thousands on a team-building activity day but they now realise that they can have greater impact for social good and still achieve a fantastic team-building result by volunteering for a charity.

"VSA is delighted to welcome back corporate volunteers and would encourage anyone interested to get in touch and find out about what opportunities are available and how these days can contribute to UN sustainable-development goals and environmental, social and corporate governance."



## £3million of Neptune contracts

NEPTUNE Energy has announced a series of contract awards totalling almost £3million to support ongoing operations at its operated Cygnus Alpha and Bravo platforms in the UK Southern North Sea.

The awarded work scopes cover diving support vessel services, helicopter services and general inspection activities.

The work will support maintaining high levels of gas production from the facility, which is capable of producing 6% of UK domestic gas demand.

Neptune Energy's Director of Operations for the UK, John Moffat, said: "We are continuing to work with our partners across the supply chain to ensure continued safe and efficient operations at Cygnus, which is strategically important for domestic gas supply to the UK."

The latest awards follow the announcement of two contract extensions to Petrofac for operations and maintenance and engineering at Cygnus which came into effect at the beginning of 2022.

## Motive opens Taiwan base

MOTIVE Offshore Group, which specialises in the design, manufacture, rental and inspection of marine and lifting equipment, has launched a dedicated renewables hub in Tapei, Taiwan, with an operational base near Taichung Port.

This is the group's first facility in the Far East with Eddie Moore making a permanent move to the country as regional director of Asia-Pacific. Motive is one of the first companies to support the region's burgeoning offshore wind market and the move will allow it to build on its significant presence there while simultaneously creating jobs to support the local economy. Initially there will be 10 new hires with plans for more in the coming months.

The base, established to support the Taiwanese offshore wind sector, is Motive's first dedicated renewables facility, reflecting the group's strategy to consolidate its position within the sector, and ongoing commitment to delivering sustainability for the future.



Richard Noble

## Long awaited positive news for Union Street

THE TOTAL number of empty properties on Union Street has fallen for the first time in two years, a six-monthly review of occupancy levels by property consultants FG Burnett has shown.

The review shows there are 44 units vacant, 23% of the total ground floor lettable units. The North side of the street (18%) is faring better than the South (28%).

"We are a long way off suggesting that Union Street's challenges are diminishing but the current statistics also exclude a total of eight units close to opening or being fitted out and that is very encouraging indeed," said Managing Director, Richard Noble. "Deals are happening albeit at rents or prices which reflect the current market.

"Drilling down to the detail we have said goodbye to three occupiers, Save the Children and McColl's on the north side and Ecco on the south side. Since our last survey Northern Diamond, Geek Retreat and Mental Health Aberdeen have arrived and remarkably four new mobile phone repair outlets have opened in the last six months.

"With the best part of 190 units on Union Street it is inevitable that new voids will arise, but with the number of deals ongoing and units already being fitted by new occupiers we are very hopeful that our next survey in August will show a further decrease in the available space.

"Over the years the look and feel of Union Street has changed and food and beverage and service providers now dominate where variety stores, fashion and footwear once held their own. The change in occupier profile has naturally led to less attractive shopfront displays and when the occupiers of entire blocks begin to change this can lead to a rather down-at-heel look.

"It is heartening that voids have fallen but I expect people will still be terribly concerned at the general perception of Union Street and that the new occupiers are not necessarily adding to the experience being sought by workers, visitors and residents spending time in the central area.

"Any initiative to see a significant improvement on displays and unit fascias would be welcomed as would a step change in the quality of our city centre public realm. The quality environment of a redeveloped Union Terrace Gardens cannot come quick enough and we await further announcements on the former BHS redevelopment, another key project."

# Business lessons I've learned



**Linda Stewart,**  
*Director Marine Geophysical Service Line, Fugro*

## What does your company do that others don't?

We're the world's leading Geo-data specialist. We deliver critical information about the earth and the structures built upon it to assist the safe, sustainable and efficient design, construction and operation of assets. To better explain this, let's take the example of an offshore wind farm development. We can support through the entire project lifecycle from the detailed geophysical and geotechnical surveys required to derisk the placement of turbines and export cables, to the inspection, repair and maintenance needed to safeguard the integrity of the installed infrastructure.

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

The first is the current skills shortage. We need to recruit heavily over the next 12 months to support our growth and it's a challenge to find the right people suitable for the open positions. We have our own internal training and development program called Fugro Academy and we are building up and expanding the range of training which it provides

to meet this demand. The second challenge is managing the impact of the pandemic on staff's mental wellbeing. We've all been operating in fight or flight mode for two years so it's vital to support our staff as they manage these uncertain times. We're able to do this through our employee assistance program, as well as having mental health first aiders available to help staff in need.

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

Never put off difficult decisions or discussions. Causing an unnecessary delay can be detrimental to the business, staff morale and ultimately the success of the services we offer.

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

Don't be afraid to challenge the status-quo, question traditional ways of working and take calculated risks. Very often you find better ways of doing things, and it's important to express that and take action. Don't doubt yourself.

# Quick fire round

## What was your first job?

Call centre - I was an advisor for the UK Passport Service.

## When would you like to retire?

I'm still quite young! I haven't put an age on it yet.

## What did you have for breakfast?

Porridge with blueberries and two cups of coffee.

## Who, or what, inspires you?

I love the fact that every day is a school day at work, I am constantly learning.

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

Arabia by Levison Wood and No Time to Die.

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

I've had a varied career at Fugro, starting offshore and moving into various onshore roles. However, taking up my current position as Director Marine Geophysical Service Line in Aberdeen is my proudest achievement. It was always an ambition of mine, but it came earlier in my career than I had anticipated. I was lucky to have a good mentor and a support system that gave me the confidence to take on the role. I have a fantastic team in Aberdeen, I am hugely proud of them and I am excited to lead them into the future.

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

Sunshine and 20° degrees Celsius all year round! But more seriously, drastically reduce the number of vacant shops and buildings in the city centre.



Nico Simeone

## Six by Nico to open in Aberdeen this spring

TOP CHEF Nico Simeone is set to bring his Glasgow dining concept to Aberdeen this spring when he opens Six by Nico on Union Street.

The new venture, which will take over the former Topolabamba restaurant space, will follow in the footsteps of his Six by Nico and will feature a carefully curated and constantly evolving tasting menu. A brand new six-course tasting menu, each one themed on a different place, memory, or idea will be served every six weeks.

Chef Nico Simeone from Simeone Group said: "We are thrilled to bring Six by Nico to Aberdeen this spring. "During the pandemic, we launched our Home by Nico dining range on HOME-X - our home delivery experiences - and the appetite in Aberdeen and surrounding areas was strong, making it an obvious choice for our first restaurant site outside of Scotland's central belt due to its thriving foodie community.

"Expansion into Aberdeen signals our first move into Scotland's North-east and a significant step in our plan to grow further this year."

## Enovateq doubles its office size

ENOVATEQ, the engineering solutions company, is upsizing operations at Aberdeen Energy & Innovation Parks in Bridge of Don.

It will move from Unit 1 to Unit 12, doubling its office footprint within the James Gregory Centre on Campus Two, having agreed an extended flexible one-year lease with Moorfield Group, the Parks' owner and landlord.

Enovateq was established in 2019 by Steven Drummond and Dave Mitchell and has been based at the James Gregory Centre since its founding.

The company provides vital engineering support to operators and service companies in the oil and gas sector. This includes feed study, design and engineering services, project management, manufacturing and documentation. They can cover all aspects of operations and delivery without the need for external support or personnel.



Lewis Sim and Ray Milne

## Innovative start-up awarded green jobs funding

LEGASEA, an environmental service company for the energy sector, has secured funding from Scottish Enterprise to develop its ground-breaking "Shore to Store" service, while creating green jobs.

The innovative project will reduce the carbon footprint of subsea decommissioning operations by taking subsea equipment no longer required and find routes to refurbish, recertify, remanufacture and reuse, keeping as many components as possible in use, with a projected annual carbon saving of 10,000 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Legasea plans to invest £1.3million during the three-year project, supported by a £187,950 grant, to be received following the creation of at least six green jobs.

The project is the culmination of several years of research and planning, involving engagement with a wide range of operators and service companies in the subsea sector, to develop a service which benefits the industry environmentally and economically. Since Legasea was established in 2018 it has also consulted with a range of government and industry stakeholders to ensure that the service is closely aligned with decommissioning and environmental policy. The company has been awarded a SEPA Waste Management Licence, which permits it to accept a range of material, defined as waste, from subsea decommissioning operations.

Lewis Sim, Managing Director, said: "The reception we have received from across the industry since establishing the company has been incredible and we look forward to continued growth while reducing the environmental impact of subsea decommissioning."

Scottish Enterprise announced that £10.7million has been approved for 43 projects involving total capital investment of £61.6million, with more than 750 green jobs to be created and safeguarded by the projects, supporting the transition to net zero or minimising environmental impacts by developing sustainable low-carbon products or services.



## Enerquip's first Ugandan contract

ABERDEEN-based Enerquip, which specialises in the manufacture of torque machines, has marked a significant landmark by securing its first ever contract to supply equipment to Uganda.

Building on a successful end to 2021 which included securing \$2million of deals, Enerquip has strengthened its export credentials by securing a \$500k scope of work to supply an existing customer in a new location with a containerised make-up and breakout unit.

Enerquip Global Sales and Business Development Manager Darren Bragg said: "Given that around 95% of our revenues come from export markets, it is imperative that we continue to expand our corporate horizons in ways which ensure diversified income streams in new regional markets.

"In working with an existing customer in a new territory, we are delighted to be able to foster client relationships in a mutually beneficial way which enables us to support clients on their growth trajectory whilst exploring new possibilities for Enerquip.

"We hope that delivering this first project into the fledgling Ugandan marketplace will provide us with a vital springboard to explore further opportunities in country as the industry develops and in the wider East Africa region."

## The Clan lunch is back

NORTH-east charity Clan Cancer Support has announced the return of its annual lunch event, which last took place in 2019 due to pandemic restrictions.

It will be held at the Marcliffe Hotel on Friday, May 13. The last lunch event in 2019 raised more than £16k which went towards Clan's vital cancer support services.

As well as a two-course lunch with live entertainment, guests will have the chance to purchase gifts, clothing and local crafts and artwork from various shopping stalls throughout the afternoon.

The lunch is sponsored by bp and tickets can be purchased by visiting [www.clancancersupport.org](http://www.clancancersupport.org) or by contacting Clan's fundraising team on 01224 647000.

## Free cyber security webinar

ABERDEEN-based IT provider IT Hotdesk has announced the return of its free webinars, following the success of the series in 2020 and 2021, both online and in-person.

As part of the company's business insights campaign, which is designed to keep businesses and individuals informed on the latest technology, IT Hotdesk will hold a free webinar "How to create a human firewall" on Tuesday, June 1, at 10am and it will focus on how staff training can support a cyber security strategy.

Managing Director, Gordon Christie said: "The cost of a cyber-attack is much greater than the initial ransom fee. A cyber-attack can cost your business through downtime, loss of business and reputational damage.

"Cyber-attacks are evolving, becoming more sophisticated and happening more frequently. Times are still tough for businesses, but it's important that firms continue to invest in the training and development of their people. Throughout 2022, we aim to offer a range of free educational resources, webinars and in-person events designed to support businesses."

## Senergy recruitment drive

SENERGY Wells, a Vysus Group company, has embarked on a recruitment drive to bolster its expertise across services from exploration to decommissioning.

The follows 15 new contract wins in wells discipline stretching from Mexico, through Europe and Africa to South-east Asia. The contracts are worth more than £5million.

These include a range of projects with customers, including Energean, Repsol, Shell, Chevron, TAQA and Harbour Energy UK.

## IKEA eyes high street model after successful Aberdeen concept

FURNITURE giant IKEA is developing plans for city centre stores across the UK following the successful trial of smaller outlets in Norwich and Aberdeen.

Ikea said the units would make it more accessible to modern shoppers and is making the move after previously testing small trial shops, including the one in Wellington Road, Aberdeen.

Peter Jelkeby, UK and Ireland Country Retail Manager, told the Times that Ikea would learn from the new opening and "develop plans for other city centre locations as well as the wider UK and Ireland, to bring our offer even closer."



# How the international oil and gas industry learnt to thrive in turbulent times

**Craig Martin,**  
*Business Development Manager,*  
ROMAR International



## **CRAIG considers how the oil and gas industry has remained resilient in the face of the pandemic and Brexit.**

Globalisation is a growth mechanism that has been commodiously adopted since the 18th century. Advances in transportation and communication technology have allowed businesses across the globe to fly into the realm of new markets. But what if transportation stopped and communication technology evolved?

Discussions regarding international commerce are deficient without exploring the oil and gas industry first. Oil and gas has a strong network of offshore oil reserves that span across each continent. According to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020, fourteen countries make up 93.5% of validated oil reserves.

Taking this into account, it was expected that the industry would be hard-hit by the dual impact of CV19 and Brexit. While restrictions hampered travel, new trading regulations slowed the import and export of equipment needed to see offshore projects through. At the peak of the pandemic, countries were forced to shut their doors and many projects were cancelled or delayed, severely impacting revenue.

Even when travel restrictions began to ease in 2021, business expense shot up with the cost of compulsory PCR tests and Brexit export/import. Many businesses took to communication

technology to maintain a global presence. MS Teams calls took the place of contractual meetings and agencies cultivated a call-out market. But was this effective?

ROMAR International broke into the global market at a rapid speed, and we've learnt a lot from their journey. Whether you're operating in the oilfield, energy or an alternative sector, there's plenty to take into consideration.

### **Maintaining strong relationships**

From a business development point of view, remote working environments do not provide the visibility to create strong and trustworthy relationships that are crucial in other countries. Operating in the Middle East is unique. We have a diverse market with an array of different cultures at the centre of it. Unlike dealing with business in the North Sea, our contractual requirements are much more complex, and face-to-face communication is a necessity.

### **Adhering to EU regulations**

International businesses not only have to adapt to the time differences and language barriers but must adhere to the complexities of Brexit. The UK's relationship with European neighbours is now governed by the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement and the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

To adhere to Brexit governance while maintaining trade and operational

links, we've reshaped the way in which we work. For example, the Rules of Origin have made imports far more complicated. To speed up the process, we classify and regulate the origin of goods by finding out the correct commodity code and EORI number ahead of customs."

### **Experimenting with call-out markets**

When operating an international enterprise, it's important to understand the intricacies of working with diverse markets. To thrive amongst Brexit, ROMAR has chosen to stretch its expertise into the call-out market to safeguard equipment overseas and avoid inflated import costs. Whether that's agencies or, in many cases, other service providers, ROMAR is determined to jump over any obstacle pathed in the way of globalisation.

Successfully working in over 18 countries and six continents, ROMAR is an international player that provides magnetic separation technologies and mud spill prevention. Since becoming a global entity in 2017, ROMAR's international business accounts for 60% of their market.

International operations have a level of responsibility to adhere to the requirements of diverse markets. Still, the long-term benefits far outweigh the intricacies. By maintaining international relationships, regulations and markets, businesses can tap into an extensive global network that will drive business growth.



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Nicola Sturgeon

## Nicola Sturgeon hails world-first £9million floating wind power centre in Aberdeen

ETZ Ltd and the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult have announced that they will co-invest and collaborate in a world leading National Floating Wind Innovation Centre in Aberdeen dedicated to accelerating the commercialisation of floating offshore wind throughout the UK and supporting the incubation of new products, services and businesses within the sector.

The £9million centre will be located within what will be known as the Energy Transition Zone's Offshore Floating Wind Park at the Altens Industrial Estate and is being developed to ensure that the North-east of Scotland and wider UK capitalise on the massive opportunity created by the Scottish seabed leasing round, Scotwind, which will drive the development and demand for floating offshore wind. ETZ Ltd is providing £4million for the capital costs of the innovation centre and ORE Catapult is contributing £5million to operationally run it.

Speaking at the formal launch of the ETZ Ltd in Aberdeen, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "The Energy Transition Zone, backed by £26million Scottish Government funding, will contribute to the North-east being ideally placed to make the most of the anticipated increase in demand for offshore wind as we transition to net zero. The new National Floating Wind Innovation Centre is a world first, and it marks a major step in our collective efforts to capitalise on the huge opportunity that floating offshore wind presents. My congratulations to the team at ETZ Ltd and ORE-Catapult for progressing this project at pace."

Sir Ian Wood, Chairman of ETZ Ltd, said: "The significant backing for ETZ by both the Scottish and UK Governments is hugely welcome and will help ensure the North East of Scotland's energy transition ambition becomes a reality. This support is tacit recognition of this region's proven ability and unique position within Scotland and the UK to take advantage of this massive opportunity and I'm therefore delighted the First Minister could join us today to formally launch ETZ Ltd."

# A word of advice



**Kenny Robertson,**  
*Company Director*  
KR Group (Scotland) Ltd

### Area of expertise?

KR Group (Scotland) Ltd is made up of three divisions, KR Steel, KR Cladding and KR Solutions. We specialise in steel fabrication and installation, cladding and project management. Our area of expertise in these fields are providing smarter solutions to challenging contracts that arise for our clients, whilst remaining cost effective.

### What should people know?

We're well known for providing innovative solutions to challenging and niche contracts and are enthusiastic about working with our customers and contractors to ensure excellence in all aspects of the job, whilst staying safety focused. Tight deadlines and difficult spaces are just some of the typical obstacles that we overcome due to the dedication, skill set and innovative nature of our squads. Delivering impressive yet cost effective solutions and ensuring our customers can expect regular, open communication from our team throughout their project. Building a 'can-do' culture, training to the highest standard and bringing safety to the forefront of everything we do.

### What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Focus, or lack of, can hinder business development. Excelling in your focused field before branching out to new sectors can create a strong business model. KR Steel began in 2003 and operated for 14 years before creating sister company KR Cladding. By this point, KR Steel were recognised as experts in steel fabrication and erection and had a strong client base. By demonstrating their skills through a vast library of successful projects, and continued repeat clients, it then allowed them to progress in to cladding installation with a client base confident in their abilities.

### What's your top tip?

Never walk into a room thinking you know more than anyone else in that room. By being complacent you fail to really listen and take on information objectively and miss opportunities to expand your knowledge and skill set.



## ScottishPower and Shell confirm multi-million offshore wind supply chain funds

SUCCESSFUL ScotWind partners, ScottishPower and Shell, are set to invest a total of £75million to help the supply chain and businesses support the growth of the offshore wind industry in Scotland.

ScottishPower and Shell were awarded the seabed rights to develop two new floating wind projects through Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind Leasing at the start of the year:

- MarramWind joint venture off the North-east coast of Scotland (3GW)
- CampionWind joint venture off the east coast of Scotland (2GW)

In addition, ScottishPower was awarded the seabed rights for a fixed foundation project off the coast of Islay – MachairWind (2GW).

Collectively, the projects have the potential to create enough clean energy to power almost 8.5 million homes – more than three times the number of homes in Scotland.

Each of the floating projects will benefit from a £25million supply chain stimulus fund from ScottishPower and Shell, with a £25million fund linked to MachairWind provided by ScottishPower alone.

The funds – announced at Scottish Renewables' Offshore Wind Conference in Glasgow – are designed to help create new offshore wind capability in Scotland that would not otherwise be possible.

Mandy Gloyer, New UK Offshore Sites Manager for ScottishPower Renewables, said: "These funds will open up huge opportunities for the supply chain in Scotland as we gear up to lead the development of commercial-scale floating wind and kick start a new global green offshore industry."

"We look forward to working with government, partners, industry and the supply chain to shape the funds and maximise their impact on the Scottish economy, with jobs and investment for local people and businesses across the country. This is a really exciting time and a great chance for companies to get involved in delivering a clean energy future."

Melissa Read, UK Offshore Wind Business Manager, Shell said: "These funds are in addition to direct project investment in supply chain facilities and will directly support the Scottish supply chain. This includes businesses keen to make the transition to the renewables sector through investment in infrastructure, facilities that will manufacture and service offshore wind projects and support for companies to innovate and upskill."

Applications to the funds will open up later in the year. Online supply chain registration portals for all three projects are now live, giving organisations the chance to get involved in working with ScottishPower and Shell to shape the next chapter for the offshore wind industry.

# What's coming up in 2022?



## Apr 22

18:00 - 23:00  
P&J Live  
Tables of 10 start  
at £1,475

## Northern Star Business Awards

The Chamber believes marking the achievements of local businesses is more important than ever as the local community comes to terms with the impact of the CV19 pandemic.

The Northern Star Business Awards seek to recognise the exceptional accomplishments of organisations across the Aberdeen city region. Real people, black tie – lots of sparkle.

## May 10

08:30 - 10:00  
AGCC  
Member: £35  
Non-member: £50

## Speed Networking

Speed networking is a fantastic way to grow your network and bring you new business opportunities. Can you afford not to attend?

Once you've grabbed a cuppa, take a seat and wait for the bell to ring for the first round. You'll be given around a minute to introduce yourself and tell the person opposite all about your business. Over the hour you'll continue to meet everybody one by one and there'll be the opportunity to continue to network and talk to delegates in more length over lunch, allowing you to connect with up to 50 delegates in a short time.

## June 15

09:00 - 16:00  
P&J Live  
Member: Free  
Non-member: £10

## Attend The Ultimate Business Show 2022

Attend the North-east's leading business networking expo and explore the diverse offering of organisations from tourism, hospitality, PR & marketing, accountants, IT specialists, charities, security consultants, coffee baristas and much more. Get ready to connect, engage and do business.

The one-day event creates the perfect platform for you to source local products or services, helping you save money and keep our regional economy buoyant.

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Free to attend, come ready to join in.

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Make sure to secure your place at a future event

**MAY 20, 2022**  
08:30 - 10:00

**AUG 26, 2022**  
08:30 - 10:00

**NOV 18, 2022**  
08:30 - 10:00

[www.agcc.co.uk/events/upcoming-events](http://www.agcc.co.uk/events/upcoming-events)



**Claire Clubb**

Claire Clubb has joined the Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace residential property team at its Banchory Branch to help meet local demand for property sales, purchases and associated legal services. Claire previously worked at CMS Cameron McKenna and Stewart and Watson.



**Darren Polson**

Aberdeen Considine has strengthened its national financial services team with the appointment of Darren Polson as Head of Mortgage Operations. Darren has almost 20 years' experience in financial services and has joined the firm from Mortgage Advice Bureau where he was head of training and performance in Scotland.



**Michelle Macleod and Ed Welch**

Two university of Aberdeen academics have been appointed to key language leadership roles. Professors Michelle Macleod and Ed Welch from the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture (LLMVC) will take up new posts informing the future direction of research and teaching in modern languages. Professor Macleod, Chair in Gaelic Studies, has been selected as one of three AHRC Future of Language research fellows. Professor Welch, Carnegie Chair in French, became Chair of UCML Scotland in July 2021 and has been appointed by the QAA (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) to be deputy chair of the Advisory Group reviewing the subject benchmark statement for languages, cultures and societies.



**Keith Skinner**

Subsea Pressure Controls, based in Aberdeen and Singapore, has appointed Keith Skinner as Director. This is part of its ongoing expansion and to support after recent long-term contract awards around the world. Keith has more than 30 years of experience in the energy industry and has been a leader within management teams globally.



**Nicola Cocks**

Storegga, the independent UK decarbonisation early-stage developer, has appointed Nicola Cocks into a new role as head of policy and regulation. Nicola joins from Thames Water, the UK's largest water company, where she sat on the company's executive team as Regulation Director.



**Kevin Gaw and Jake Burnett**

Global logistics provider Hellmann Worldwide Logistics – has appointed Kevin Gaw as its Branch Manager in Aberdeen. Kevin has 20 years of freight forwarding experience specialising in energy logistics for the past 13 years. Hellman has also appointed Jake Burnett as their Operations Manager in Aberdeen. Jake joins with 16 years' experience within operations and commercial roles in the industry.



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**Jonathan Craig**

Jonathan Craig has joined Aberdeen's McHardy Group as Financial Planning Director as part of its continued company growth, bringing the staff to 53 across Scotland. Johnathan is a chartered financial planner with previous roles at Tilney Group, Acumen and AEGON.



**Ian Bowie**

Ian Bowie has joined Shepherd and Wedderburn as a Partner, bringing to the firm and its clients more than 25 years' expertise advising on real estate projects, with a particular focus on energy and natural resources.



**Rob Jarvis**

Anderson Anderson & Brown (AAB) has appointed Rob Jarvis as HR Director, based in its London office. Rob has held senior leadership positions in the private sector over the last 10 years, most recently as Global Head of HR at Sera Global. In his new role Rob will grow the AAB HR team, delivering transformational HR projects, as well as supporting the M&A activity of the wider AAB Group.



**Robert Clark**

Experienced management accountant Robert Clark has joined the AISUS team. He has more than 15 years of experience in financial roles in oilfield service, aviation and drilling companies. Throughout his career, Robert has been involved in multiple high-value projects and his experience will be valuable to AISUS as it continues to grow locally and internationally year on year.



**Samantha Mitchell, Lucy Bremner, Darren Elder and Kailee Robinson**

A number of new staffing positions have been created at the Aberdeenshire based rental firm Hiretech Limited as part of key strategic developments to focus on continued growth for 2022. Samantha Mitchell has been promoted to Operations Supervisor, Lucy Bremner joins the team as Office Administrator and Darren Elder and Kailee Robinson join as Graduate Business Development Executives. The company is focusing on increasing market share both in the UK and overseas. It is aiming for 40% of turnover from the international market and is pursuing strategic global partnerships to support this ambition.



**Ed Daniels**

Shell has appointed Ed Daniels to the newly created role of Strategy, Sustainability and Corporate Relations Director. In his new role, Ed will become a member of Shell's executive committee and will have accountability for the company's existing strategy, sustainability and corporate relations organisations.

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**Fergus Healy**

Keenan Recycling has announced that Fergus Healy will be driving strategic development and the journey to net zero. Mr Healy has a career spanning more than 20 years during which he has built up considerable knowledge in food waste collection and treatment, having previously worked at senior level with both The TEG Group and Olleco.



**Dave Lynch**

Robert Gordon University (RGU) will host Dave Lynch, former BP Vice President as its entrepreneur in residence through participation in a Royal Society scheme to increase knowledge of cutting-edge industrial science, research, and innovation. Dave brings a wealth of experience in technology, innovation, strategy, and industrial application.



**Fergus Mutch**

Fergus Mutch has joined Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce as a Policy Adviser to ensure the region's business voices are heard at the highest levels of government. Between 2015 and 2020, Fergus was the SNP's Head of Communications and Research during an intense political period covering five elections and the Brexit referendum.



**Andy Eagle**

Aberdeen Performing Arts today announced that Andy Eagle will succeed Jane Spiers as Chief Executive of the award-winning arts organisation. Andy is currently CEO at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff, and has more than 20 years' experience working in professional and community arts in Wales.



**Kenny Wright and Chris Davidson**

LMS (Load Monitoring Systems Ltd) has welcomed Kenny Wright as Production Manager, while Chris Davidson steps into the newly created role of Business Development Manager. Kenny, who takes up a key role as part of the company's senior management team, will be responsible for all LMS production and operational aspects. With over 25 years' lifting industry experience in the oil and gas sector, Kenny brings a wealth of knowledge which will be invaluable supporting LMS's growth plans. Chris, who joined LMS in 2016 as Operations Manager, has over 15 years' lifting industry experience in the oil and gas sector. His remit will focus on increasing sales and generating further growth both in the UK and globally.



**Craig Stirrat**

Craig Stirrat has been announced as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Grampian Group (comprising Grampian Housing Association, Let's Choose Leasing and TLC Housing Maintenance). Craig, who has been Grampian Housing Association's Chief Operating Officer since 2018, will step up into his new role at the beginning of April 2022.

## Want to raise your profile?

If you have new appointments or promotions in your business, we want to hear about them. Send the details, along with a high resolution image, to [bulletin@agcc.co.uk](mailto:bulletin@agcc.co.uk) and your business could be in the future issue.



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## Camphill School Aberdeen

Camphill School Aberdeen is a charity (Registration No. SC015588) founded in 1940. They were the first school for children with additional support needs in the UK and founded the global Camphill Movement; one of the largest networks of independent charities in the world. Their work empowers 95 children and young people to grow in confidence, independence and reach their fullest potential by accessing our sector leading day and residential services.

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**C** Ben Riddell, Owner



### Quartzelec Ltd

Quartzelec provide electrical engineering services in both UK and global markets.

**T** 01224 593008  
**W** [www.quartzelec.com](http://www.quartzelec.com)  
**E** [colin.nicol@quartzelec.com](mailto:colin.nicol@quartzelec.com)  
**C** Colin Nicol, Sales Engineer



### Wood Boiler Supplies Ltd

Trade supply of and technical support for wood-fuelled (biomass) boilers, including spare parts and ancillaries, across the UK to heating engineers.

**T** 01651 891237  
**W** [www.woodboilersupplies.co.uk](http://www.woodboilersupplies.co.uk)  
**E** [info@woodboilersupplies.co.uk](mailto:info@woodboilersupplies.co.uk)  
**C** Helen Timperley, Managing Director



### Sandaig Engineering

Sandaig Engineering has provided QA/QC, supply chain and engineering support to a number of oil, gas and renewables organisations.

**T** 01467 633086  
**W** [sandaigengineering.com](http://sandaigengineering.com)  
**E** [jackie@sandaigengineering.com](mailto:jackie@sandaigengineering.com)  
**C** Jackie Owen, Business Development and Administration Manager



### Spiral Services Ltd

Spiral Services is one of the largest single-source providers of industrial conveying, fabrication, manufacturing and engineering support services for the global energy and engineering industries. Specialising in refurbishment, general fabrication, installation and maintenance operations, Spiral Services' cross-industry approach allows the company to offer a tailored service to suit needs of both mature and emerging markets within the global energy industry, providing a worldwide operational support. In addition to manufacturing and supporting the world's most advanced and safest bulk handling solutions, we specialise in rental and refurbishment of conveyor systems as well as general fabrication, installation, and maintenance services.

**T** 01224 502038  
**W** [www.spiralservices.co.uk](http://www.spiralservices.co.uk)  
**E** [n.thomson@spiralservices.co.uk](mailto:n.thomson@spiralservices.co.uk)  
**C** Neil Thomson



### The Aberdeen Altens Hotel

An award-winning, independent 4-star Hotel offering ample free parking and the fastest free WiFi in town. Their recently refurbished Coast and Keg Bar and Restaurant is proud to serve Starbucks and offers an open plan dining and social space for people to meet and spend time together in a relaxed and well-designed environment. With 12 contemporary meeting rooms, ranging from syndicate rooms to the Rubislaw Suite seating up to 400 delegates theatre-style, the Hotel provides the ultimate choice and flexibility for your meeting or event. The 216 bedrooms make Aberdeen Altens Hotel a versatile option offering the perfect solution for both groups and the individual traveller.

**T** 01224 379240  
**W** [www.aberdeenaltenshotel.co.uk](http://www.aberdeenaltenshotel.co.uk)  
**E** [hmcloughlin@aberdeenaltenshotel.co.uk](mailto:hmcloughlin@aberdeenaltenshotel.co.uk)  
**C** Helen McLoughlin, Director of Sales

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## Highest honour for University of Aberdeen

MEMBERS of the University of Aberdeen's School of Biological Sciences have been presented with the Queen's Anniversary Prize – the highest honour for UK further and higher education – at a ceremony in St James Palace, London.

The award was granted to the University for world-leading research and education in soil science promoting the control of greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable food production.

Scientists at the University have established a world-leading centre of excellence in soil science which strives to find solutions to some of society's greatest threats including the climate crisis and environmental change.

The University made major contributions to the recent COP26 conference in Glasgow.

## Neptune Energy to store more carbon than it emits by 2030

NEPTUNE Energy announced its aim to go beyond net zero and store more carbon than is emitted from its operations and the use of its sold products by 2030.

Neptune's aim will be supported by a refreshed strategy, focusing on lower carbon energy production and integrated energy hubs.

- Lower carbon energy production: produce lower carbon gas and oil safely and efficiently
- Integrated energy hubs: utilise existing infrastructure and capability to integrate energy systems

Neptune will focus on electrification where it is economic to do so, and continue to reduce emissions from its operations.

Pete Jones, CEO of Neptune Energy, said: "Neptune has one of the lowest carbon intensities in the sector due to the steps we have taken already to reduce operational emissions. We have both the infrastructure and the experience with electrification and CCS to now accelerate our ambitions."

## Government reveals 'National Strategy for Economic Transformation'

A NEW National Strategy for Economic Transformation, underpinned by detailed analysis of Scotland's economic strengths and weaknesses, has been published.

The strategy contains over 70 actions across five key priority programmes that have been identified as having the greatest potential to deliver economic growth that significantly outperforms the last decade within the current constitutional arrangements.

Investment will be prioritised in entrepreneurialism, skills and retraining and the development of new markets and opportunities, particularly in the Just Transition to net zero.

Economy Secretary Kate Forbes says it provides renewed clarity on Scotland's economic vision and a relentless focus on delivery in order to improve economic productivity, accelerate growth and ensure work provides a genuine route out of poverty through better quality jobs and higher wages.

## North Star lands North Sea work worth £100million

MARINE services group North Star has been awarded new North Sea contracts for its emergency response and rescue vessels (ERRVs), totalling more than £100million.

Aberdeen-headquartered North Star operates a fleet of 41 ERRVs and seven service operation vessels from its bases in Aberdeen, Newcastle and Lowestoft and employs around 1,400 people - 950 of them in the UK.

Its ERRVs are currently assigned to support 50 offshore oil and gas installations, providing around-the-clock emergency assistance, 365 days a year.

With additional year charter options, North Star said the awards marked "the most sizeable ERRV order book in recent years".

## New collaboration for SCOTGRIP INTERNATIONAL

MENTO AS, one of Norway's leading oilfield service companies, and SCOTGRIP® INTERNATIONAL, the market leader in the design and manufacture of offshore and onshore anti-slip safety products, are pleased to announce a joint business cooperation.

This strategic agreement will enhance each other's business activities in their respective target markets and will enable the supply and distribution of SCOTGRIP® INTERNATIONAL's anti-slip product range to the energy, shipping, food and drink sectors across Scandinavia.



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