

MAY 2024 | LOCAL HEROES

# BUSINESS BULLETIN

**20<sup>th</sup>** **NORTHERN  
STAR2024  
BUSINESS  
AWARDS**  
*Anniversary*  
*Winners review*  
*page 35*

## Meet the local hero with international reach

Urology expert James N'Dow on saving lives all over the world.

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## Monty to host golf legends at Trump International

Colin Montgomerie has signed up as host of the Staysure PGA Seniors Championship.

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**Exclusive:**

**Legal eagle Elaine  
on golfing and  
business success**



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# Local heroes are not hard to find in our inspirational region

**It takes a lot to silence a room of 850 business folk with wine in their hands. Doubly so on a Friday night.**

But Alistair Robertson – the recently retired boss of Sport Aberdeen – pulled it off in what was one of the stand-out moments of the 2024 Northern Star Business Awards.

The Chamber's Regional Contribution Award – handed to an unsuspecting winner each year – was bestowed upon the man who has catalysed the surging use of the city's leisure facilities.

His acceptance speech – delivered with sincerity and humility – was the moment of the night for me. Those who were in the room will acknowledge what a special moment it was.

He is a local hero, which rather aptly is the theme of this month's magazine.

Not only has Alistair been an excellent – and formidable – Managing Director, but he has also been a friend to many. His door has always been open and he has generously shared his experience and wisdom.

Alistair's ability to connect with people on a personal level has made a lasting impact on the lives and careers of countless people within Sport Aberdeen as well as further afield.

Throughout all the challenges of his time in charge – none bigger than the CV19 pandemic – Alistair delivered on Sport Aberdeen's core mission; to get more people active.

In 2016, Sport Aberdeen had 1.2 million visits per year to its venues. In 2023, it had more than 2 million visits per year. An amazing legacy.

He joins the pantheon of greats who have picked up this award, and follows some incredible names such as Sir Ian Wood, Sir Jimmy Milne, Jane Spiers, Stewart Spence, Martin Gilbert and Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The many other winners of this year's awards are detailed on pages 35 - 43 and all could rightly stake a claim to being a local hero.

They are all around us – and there are a few others who deserve some special recognition this year.

In the city centre, we have amazing volunteers giving up their time to help rebuild a Union Street the region can be proud of.

Another of last month's big award winners was one of them – Robert Keane – who has taken on the mammoth task of regenerating the Trinity Centre.

Many in Aberdeen already know the leisure industry impresario for leading the transformation of Shiprow Lane into a popular food and drink destination perfect for the Instagram generation.

Along with his partner Mary Martin, the 68-year-old also runs the well-known and much-loved Douglas Hotel which has benefitted from years of refurbishment.

What fewer people realise is the Irishman is also the brains behind similar venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Anyone who has travelled to the Scottish capital by train will

have passed and maybe even stopped for some refreshment at the busy rooftop bar next to Waverley Station.

He is also the mastermind of the Festival Village beer garden and street food venue in the heart of Glasgow's Merchant City.

The rebirth of the Trinity will be fundamental to a vibrant Union Street – and I hope we are toasting further success for Robert and Mary in 2025.

As is always the case with the Northern Star awards, planning for next year's event starts that day after.

My brilliant events team are already looking at menus, sponsors (they may be in touch with you) and how to build upon what was biggest and most successful Northern Star ever.

Meanwhile, I am plotting the winner of next year's Regional Contribution award.

If a certain young Swedish manager gets his act together, I think we might have a winner...



**Russell Borthwick**  
Chief Executive  
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber  
of Commerce



Regional  
Contribution



# Our premier partners

The Chamber sits at the heart of the North-east business community, and one of our core aims is to help create the economic conditions and business environment which will allow this region to flourish.

Our premier partners see the value of a strong regional Chamber and choose to engage with us at this level to reinforce their ongoing commitment to the region and its economy.

Without their support we would not be able to undertake much of the work that we do. Their engagement is hugely valued and appreciated.

If you are interested in joining them, we'd love to talk to you!



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## Port of Aberdeen advances in strategic investment model for offshore wind

Port of Aberdeen is a step closer to becoming a strategic hub for floating offshore wind, with its proposed South Harbour upgrade project progressing to stage two 'priority' status in the Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council's Strategic Investment Model.

The significant upgrade involves a capital dredge project to deepen 750m of quayside to -14.5m chart datum, providing suitable depth for the majority of ScotWind and INTOG project turbine designs. Combined with South Harbour's expansive laydown area and ultra heavy-lift capacity, the facility will support turbine integrations and foundation assemblies. Looking further ahead, it also positions the port to handle major component exchanges with tow-in, tow-out operations.

As Scotland's largest berthage port, offering 7,600m of quayside across its North and South Harbours, Port of Aberdeen has the potential to become the largest operations and maintenance base for offshore wind.

Last year alone, the port handled more than 700 vessels associated with offshore wind projects, highlighting the increasing demand from both existing and planned Scottish offshore wind developments.

Strategically located within 100 nautical miles of 75% of the ScotWind licences, Port of Aberdeen is at the heart of a growing renewable energy cluster. The port is the marine gateway for Energy Transition Zone Ltd and closely located to Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult's world-first Floating Offshore Wind Innovation Centre.

Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, Port of Aberdeen, said: "SOWEC's prioritisation of the South Harbour upgrade is a significant vote of confidence from both the Scottish Government and industry in our £420 million expansion. Upgrading South Harbour for floating offshore wind will ensure the unrivalled energy supply chain in Aberdeen and wider North-east of Scotland can maximise the opportunities presented by ScotWind and INTOG.



## North-east's M-Word event continues menopause conversation

Senior businesswomen from across the region gathered in Aberdeen to share their experiences of the menopause and hear expert advice from two guest speakers.

Organised by Aileen Easton, Chief Corporate Affairs Advisor at True North Advisors and Shona Macaskill of Gary Walker Wealth Management, the "M-Word" event was the first in a series planned for the North-east during 2024.

The audience which gathered in W-Zero-1, in Aberdeen's Energy Transition Zone, heard from Nicola Williams, a menopause counsellor based in Kemnay, and Kim Woolner, a holistic HR consultant from Peterhead, who spoke about their own experiences, both personally and in the workplace, and gave well-received wellbeing advice.

Aileen Easton of True North Advisors said: "The menopause is now a topic that is featured regularly in the media. However, it can feel like there's a tsunami of information which just leaves many women feeling confused about where to turn for help tailored to their needs.

"The M-Word events are an opportunity to bring together successful women from across the region to support one another and share their own experiences while also providing excellent networking opportunities. We will be announcing details about our next event in June shortly."

# Welcome to the Chamber



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The Braemar Highland Games Centre, or, its Sunday name, The Duke of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion, was opened in 2018. The centre is a multi-purpose space for events, and a beautiful exhibition covering the history of the Highland Games in Braemar.

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# A local hero with international reach

## Professor James N'Dow's local hero status extends far, far beyond Aberdeen.

Born and bred in The Gambia – more than 4,000 miles away – James has just about acclimatised to his new home in the North-east of Scotland, despite moving nearly four-decades ago.

“I'd never left Africa, I'd never seen snow,” he told me.

“I landed, looked out the plane and it was pure white, it was beautiful.

“And then the doors opened,” James laughed.

He doesn't think he'll ever acclimatise to Aberdeen's winter chill, but reckons he's “adapting”.

“I do my best to bunch up all my holidays for the winter,” he jokes.

James' incredible work in the urology field, along with his related cancer research and years' worth of charity work, can only be summarised by the fact that he was awarded an OBE for it in the King's New Years Honours List.

“It was just shock. I have never worked towards such things,” James told me.

He remained quiet when talking about it and was clearly humbled to have been given such an honour.

He added: “It's always been a privilege to not only be in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire but to work at the University of Aberdeen and NHS Grampian has been a huge privilege for me.

“That was more than enough for me, so when news came I got a bit of a shock.”

James is a Professor of Urological Surgery, Chair in Urological Surgery and Director of the Academic Urology Unit at NHS Grampian. He's also the co-founder of UCAN, the urological cancer charity, and is the driving force behind Horizons, a charity aimed at providing quality healthcare in The Gambia, as well as building and managing high quality medical facilities.

His career is storied, but James, literally, has no idea how it started.

He was working at a British research facility in The Gambia when he got a mystery call.

“There was someone from the British Counsel or the British High Commission at my home.

“I thought it was all a big joke but when I got home they offered me a scholarship from nowhere.

“I was on a plane within a couple of days and taken up to Aberdeen.”

“I thought it was a joke...but I was on a I was on a plane within a couple of days and taken up to Aberdeen”

To this day, he doesn't know how he got the scholarship. He'd never even applied.

His life changed within days, but his plan was clear.

“Come here, study, finish my medical degree and then go home. That was always the plan.”

James' father, a clear inspiration to James, had studied in Edinburgh and Dublin in the 1940s, before returning home.

It was only natural that James followed the same path.

But a wine and cheese evening at university changed everything.

“It was my first day of my second year when she came in on the first day of her first year.”

James would go on to marry that woman he met as a fresh-faced 20-year-old; his “Stonehaven lass”, as he referred to her.

He joked: “I didn't do my due diligence. If I did, I would have known that a Stonehaven lass doesn't travel well.”

James still travels to The Gambia annually, in part to continue his work with Horizons.

“I'd never worked in the Gambian health system. When I went back to do charity work for the first time in 2001 I was shocked.

“To see the desperation of patients, illnesses that in Aberdeen are so easily sorted would be the things that are destroying livelihoods in The Gambia.”

Life expectancy in the West African nation is barely 60, and about one in eight children in the country die before their fifth birthday.

Nearly one woman dies each day during childbirth. Deaths, which James tells me, are all preventable.

“

## I thought it was a joke... but I was on a plane within a couple of days and taken up to Aberdeen

“If one woman, during childbirth, bled to death in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary it would be national news. There’d be an inquiry, national outcry.

“And here we are, people are dying, and sometimes not even a blink of an eye.”

He adds: “People like us when we go back, if we allow it, we almost accept it as the norm. But it isn’t the norm, it must not be.

“There is a way in which we can all join hands to make sure it is not normal.

“My responsibility between now and when my maker calls me is to make sure that I work with others towards establishing the foundations that allows countries like The Gambia to have a chance to have international class healthcare.”

It’s not only in Africa does James save lives.

Working “hand in glove” with NHS partners, James, from 2005, met with cancer patients and their families.

He told me of an “ego-bruising” experience with patients and their families which inspired UCAN.

“Having humoured us for two minutes flat about things we were doing reasonably well, they spent the next hour and 58 minutes telling us about how hopeless we were.

“Where there is a cancer, and it can be cured, we do our best to do that and for that they were appreciative.

“But we were hopeless at raising awareness of early diagnosis, were hopeless at supporting them and their families during the acute phase when the diagnosis was being treated.

“All the information was in a language they could not understand.

“When we discharged them out of surgery we thought the GPs were looking after them, and the GPs thought we were looking after them. They felt abandoned.

“We were still doing the curing bit, but the caring bit had been forgotten.

“We ended up partnering with some real North-east stalwarts that helped us set up the UCAN charity.”

Launching in 2008, then-Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon helped oversee it.

“The first phase was to set up the cancer care centre. Patients, families and anyone on the street can come into the centre and talk to specialist nurse about their worries.

“We are staffed by a number of cancer nurses and it’s been the best thing, in my view, we have been a part of.

“The second phase was bringing the first robotic surgical system to Scotland.



“We had a lot of challenges. The Scottish Government didn’t believe in it at that time, but through partnership with businesses we managed to get the first robot to come to Aberdeen.

“Now, robots are everywhere you go in Scotland.”

James didn’t deny the importance of the first two phases, but he was quick to highlight how vital the charity’s current mission is going to be.

“We’ve taken our eye off the ball,” James admitted, speaking generally about the healthcare system from the top down.

“In doing so, people are waiting for diagnosis three, four, five months.

They come for multiple tests to the hospital, each test is a different thing.

“It’s ridiculous, it should not be that way.”

James’ and UCAN’s idea, should it come to fruition, has the potential to save an unlimited number of lives in the North-east.

“What we are now planning to do is to set up a system, a one-stop diagnosis service where patients come one day to see the consultant, they get their tests done, they get the results, we give them a letter and we give them a plan.

“For me, that would be absolutely transformational, but it’s not going to be easy.

“Imagine you don’t have cancer, but you have symptoms that could suggest it.

“Imagine having to wait for four to six months, with all the psychological impact, to know whether you do or you don’t have cancer.

“We have a responsibility to get those people back to their lives quickly and reduce the stress their family goes through while waiting

for a diagnosis that may never come.

“Curing is one thing, but it’s a very small part of what patients need from us.

“They need us to care better, communicate with them quicker and in a way that they can understand.”

I could’ve chatted to James endlessly about his adaptation to life in Aberdeen, his cross-continent work, and his efforts to save lives in the North-east.

All of these, no doubt, contributed to his awarding of an OBE.

The North-east is fortunate to be blessed with an abundance of healthcare champions, but it takes someone special to be recognised as a local hero, something James N’Dow undoubtedly is.

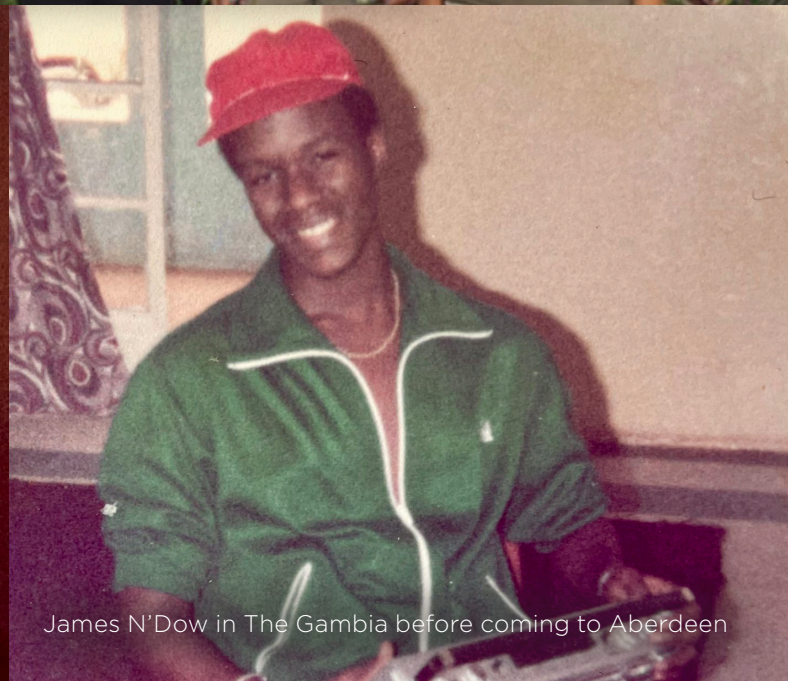
And it takes someone completely extraordinary to be a local hero in two places, 4,000 miles apart.



In The Gambia with a team from Houston’s Baylor College of Medicine



James in London in 1986



James N’Dow in The Gambia before coming to Aberdeen



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# Business lessons I've learned



## Ed Morrow,

Managing Director, Sodexo Energy & Resources UK & Ireland

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

Regarding the renewable sector, we provide unique solutions to clients whose objective is to develop wind farms, CCUS, or any other projects attached to the energy transition. We offer remote camp solutions for their workers; and support them from the first step of their remote camp project with the design and planning of the remote camp, to its construction and operational management.

We also deliver to both onshore and offshore energy clients a range of integrated services from daily catering to hospitality, cleaning, technical services, facilities management, and refurbishment for their headquarters, refineries, offshore platforms, industrial and remote sites.

In addition, as an organisation, we strive for creating a positive impact on the communities we live in and serve. Social value is at the heart of everything we do, and we've committed to making a positive difference across the UK and Ireland through a series of initiatives – one

of them being through our Starting Fresh campaign, where we've committed to fill 5% of our vacancies with ex-offenders, helping them break the cycle of re-offending.

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

Labour availability and constraints. With oil and gas continuing, renewables ramping up to support the UK's strategy to achieving net zero targets and huge infrastructure projects, there will be a labour squeeze. As a result, we're starting to witness a skills shortage within the energy sector, so training and recruiting workers is becoming crucial to ensure projects can be delivered longer term.

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

The difference in working with other cultures. I was responsible for managing our business in Israel and learnt the hard way that our Western 'norms' in how we motivate and work with teams didn't give the same result there.

## Quick fire round

### What was your first job?

An evening paper round.

### When would you like to retire?

Unsure as I still have lots to do but everyone I have spoken to doesn't regret retiring and many wish they did it earlier.

### What did you have for breakfast?

Porridge.

### Who, or what, inspires you?

As a Christian, the teaching of the Bible.

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

Family Plan with Mark Wahlberg.

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

Perception is 100% correct in the eyes of the person perceiving it. You can argue that what they see isn't true but that won't change anything. You need to create a new perception.

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

There have been many from contract wins to large savings for the company to turning around loss-making contracts but I'm proudest when I see people I used to work with going on to bigger and better roles, especially those who others had given up on.



## Charitable efforts step up a gear to help everyone get on their bikes

As a family business founded on the principles of trust, respect, collaboration and open-mindedness, Aberdeenshire-based engineering firm, Brimmond, have established close links with charitable causes in the local community.

The company recently established the Brimmond Community Fund to provide support for local charities and organisations close to the hearts of their staff members. Whether it is Kintore, Aberdeen, Peterhead, or Huntly, the key purpose of the Brimmond Community Fund is to 'support the communities in which our people live'.

From education to sport, health to environment, the fund has made donations to a wide variety of worthy causes, including Huntly Pipe Band, Kintore United FC, Run Garioch, and local music charity, The Gaitherin.

Most recently, the Brimmond Community Fund has sponsored a trishaw on behalf of Cycling without Age Scotland. The charity, which has local hubs in Kemnay, Aberdeen City, Balmedie, Inverurie and Stonehaven, aims to enhance and enrich lives by giving elderly and disabled people access to the beautiful outdoors through trishaw rides.

Brimmond team member, Jim Simpson nominated the charity to the Community Fund, after volunteering with the charity. He said: "I have been volunteering with CWAS Kemnay (Cycling Without Age Scotland) for six months now, and working towards getting my "pilot's licence" in mid-February. We now have a pool of volunteer pilots and "outriders" who assist with the whole process of making the passengers' experience pleasurable. Funds were raised through the great generosity of local public and businesses which enabled us to take delivery of our own trishaw here in Kemnay.

"Our official launch event took place on March 23, which was very well attended and made all the better with a piper who played quite a few well-known tunes. The trishaw was named "Spirit of Kemnay" based on the great spirit shown during our fundraising. We offered demo rides on the day

which was enjoyed by folks of all ages. One of our sponsors was my employer Brimmond, who very kindly provided the funds for a cosy fleece lined cover. The Brimmond logo is across the front of it and certainly cannot be missed when we're out and about. It means a lot to me when people ask about Brimmond.

"Personally, I get great enjoyment in helping the local people of all ages with mobility issues get out in the fresh air for a while on pre-assessed routes and quite possibly see things around the village they haven't seen for a long time or maybe never at all."

Managing Director, Tom Murdoch said: "We set up the Brimmond Community Fund because we care about the people and the communities we work in. We wanted to empower our team to make a difference to the causes close to their hearts.

"The Charity and Events committee chose to sponsor the Cycling without Age Scotland trishaw after our colleague, Jim, highlighted the fantastic work that the charity does to give people the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors on three wheels! We are delighted that our Brimmond branding is proudly displayed on one of their trishaws and look forward to seeing it out on the roads of Aberdeenshire in the coming months."

The Brimmond team are passionate about supporting local charities, organisations, and initiatives, with staff regularly taking part in both fundraising and volunteering for good causes. In fact, the company has introduced matched funding as well as one paid volunteering day a year for each member of staff.

Brimmond specialises in the design, manufacture, rental and repair of lifting, mechanical and hydraulic equipment for industry worldwide, from their base in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Consistently meeting the demands of global clients in a range of sectors from energy to aquaculture for 27 years, their successful track record is founded on the belief that every project is unique – and needs a uniquely engineered response.

# 20 years and counting...

**They say that getting married is one of the most stressful things you can do in life – probably because it involves compromise and change, which many of us instinctively shy away from.**

Translating that to business - a merger of two companies is one of the biggest challenges any organisation can face - bringing with it concerns about viability, reputation, the effect on staff and clients and a host of other problems.

These issues confronted my firm - Raeburn Christie & Co - just over 20 years ago. At that time I was head of Raeburn's commercial property department, and involved in a deal with Brian Healy, my opposite number at rival local firm Clark & Wallace. His firm had recently lost a partner, and he raised the possibility of a co-operation agreement between the firms, to cover that partner's work.

That discussion quickly moved on to the prospect of a full-blown merger between the firms, leading to a consideration of the obstacles which would be faced in such a



**We had operated next door to each other for many years and many of us knew each other well**

merger - as outlined above - but also the benefits that the merger might bring. On our side we quickly came to the conclusion that merging was a "no-brainer" and the green light was given.

As it turned out it was an easy marriage - for all number of reasons. I used the word "rival" above but we were hardly that.

We had operated next door to each other for many years and many of us knew each other well, with partners who had shared experiences going back to school days, through University and in our time practising law together - on many occasions passing on business referrals or helping out in conflict cases. As a bonus we owned the properties we operated from, so that amalgamation of the buildings into one office was in our control. More importantly, there was a shared ethos between the two firms, and a specialisation in the same areas of work; and the merger complemented these specialities. Some of the partners from each firm even had an external link through music, playing together in a local blues band - Murphy's Law. More of the band later...

The merger happened quickly, as these things go, and the merged firm was launched on June 1 2024 under the imaginatively titled name of Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace. We launched during a period when Aberdeen continued to boom as the oil capital of Europe, and the merger was a success on all levels - financially yes, but more importantly the ability of the partners to put aside their history and move forward as one organisation helped to create the business' reputation as one of the leading Aberdeen-headquartered full service legal firms. The success of the merger culminated in the business being awarded Law Firm of the Year at the prestigious Law Awards in Scotland ceremony in 2008.

Underlying the success of the merger was a common ethos which had sustained both firms over many years - essentially, we are a friendly and personable business, with a desire to put the client first. That ethos continues to-day and has seen the firm remain at the heart of the business community in the North-east of Scotland and beyond, as it continues to be a

Mike Taylor, Callum McDonald, Brian Healey (When the merger took place 20 years ago)





# Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace

Solicitors & Estate Agents **for life & business**

market leader in its core business of property and private client work. The firm has continued to be successful even as Aberdeen's fortunes have dimmed slightly over the past 10 years or so.

Related to the firm's ethos is the work we have carried out over many years with a number of the biggest charities in the North-east, helping to raise tens of thousands of pounds for - amongst others - Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH), Sue Ryder, Alzheimer's Scotland and the Forget Me Not

Club, Roxburghe House, the Cyrenians, the Archie Foundation, VSA, the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, the Aberlour Trust and Macmillan Cancer Support. Money has been raised by our staff by running, cycling, rowing, swimming, dancing, long distance walking and scaling Munros, and otherwise giving time and effort to support these worthwhile causes.

I became the firm's Managing Partner five years ago and - who knows where the time goes - we are approaching the 20th

anniversary of the merger next month. We plan to celebrate that anniversary with a Charity Ball at the Chester Hotel on Midsummer's weekend. This black tie event is already sold out, thanks to the support of clients, professional contacts and the partners - and ex-partners - of the firm. The ball has two purposes -to mark the anniversary of the merger but, more importantly, to raise much needed funds for Friends of Anchor, our current charity partner, and I look forward to welcoming our guests to that evening.

And one of the original connections between the two firms lives on - in the form of our office band, which was formed shortly after the merger and who will be entertaining guests at the Ball. The band now goes by the name Oldplay, an amusing soubriquet to recognise the maturity of the current members. If they remember to turn up, a fabulous night should be on the cards.

**Callum McDonald,**  
*Managing Partner,*  
Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace LLP



Current Board Members Bill Barclay, Douglas Crombie, Heather Stephen, Neil Fraser and Callum McDonald with new partners Gordon Wallace and Kimberly Smart and associates Michael Leith, Grant Mills and Stacey Grubb to mark their respective promotions in April 2024.



Raeburn's charity committee present a cheque to former charity partner Sue Ryder

If you would like to support our charity partner Friends of Anchor you can do so using the QR code below.



# MEET THE



**Colin Duncan,**  
Director,  
CMD Coatings Ltd

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

July 2023

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

High quality coatings using bullet liner, which will extend the life of your product. We can coat anything from

roofs to vehicles and horse boxes, the list really is endless. Originally, we set up in the Middle East in 2021 and completed several projects and now we have started our new chapter by opening our facility in the North-east of Scotland.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Most companies have something we can extend the life of. We are currently working with oil and gas companies, commercial vehicles, haulage businesses, trade businesses and the public sector.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Raising our profile. As this is a new product being introduced to the area, there are people who are not aware of just how beneficial it is.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Bringing a unique product that the client will see a huge value in having.

The lifespan of the item, the cost savings, the environmental impact of being able to save something instead of buying new, the possibilities really are endless.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Delivering on quality and extending client assets for the future. Bringing a product that will get people talking about the benefits and the lifespan of their assets in any weather. Introducing a new solution that people haven't previously thought of, which is quick, affordable and environmentally friendly.



**Drew Leitch,**  
Managing Director,  
MDT International

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Founded in 1992. I joined MDT in 2004 and enjoyed working there so much that I bought the company in 2011.

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We deliver training courses covering the business side of the oil and gas

industry. Topics include: finance, accounting, audit, economics, contracts, negotiations, leadership, fiscal systems plus our ever-popular Introduction to the oil and gas Industry course. Based in Aberdeen but with a truly international reach. To date, we've delivered in 82 countries.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Our clients range from the largest E&P companies in the world to the smallest and everything in between. They include IOC's, NOC's, service companies, ministries plus a range of regulatory authorities. Our course participants are mainly young professionals from a very broad range of disciplines.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Convincing our clients to invest in the ongoing learning and development of their staff is a never-ending challenge, but one that we relish at MDT.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

From delivering more high quality and valued training courses. There is no better 'marketing/business development' than having happy course participants return to their day job ready to refer and/or recommend our courses.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

The industry is not perfect, however, at MDT we believe that oil and gas has a hugely significant role to play in the energy transition for many years to come. We care about sharing knowledge and are immensely proud of the part MDT have played in inspiring thousands of young professionals on a global basis.

# MEMBERS



**MaryAnn Rae,**  
Relationship Manager,  
Empirisys

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Empirisys was founded in 2020 by two former Centrica employees - Chief Engineer Gus Carroll, and Data Science Director Peter Sueref. Headquartered in Cardiff, we have recently opened an Aberdeen office in Marischal Square, and work with clients across the length and breadth of the UK.

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Empirisys works with organisations in high-risk industries to improve process safety, asset reliability, safety culture, and leadership. Using process engineering, risk management, and data science, our experienced team discovers the hidden value within existing data by applying a three-step process: finding and analysing hidden data; revealing the insights from that data, which then inform changes that improve safety.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We are working with around 30 different businesses and member-led organisations in high-risk industries, such as energy, renewables, decommissioning and utilities, including bp and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). We also work in the built environment, providing Safety Case Reports for high-rise buildings in line with the new regulatory requirements following the Grenfell disaster in 2017.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Our biggest challenges are recruitment and artificial intelligence (AI). At Empirisys, we take pride in maintaining a team with a balanced blend of experienced professionals and subject matter experts, but attracting data science and process safety professionals can be challenging due to demand. Additionally, while AI technologies hold immense potential to enhance efficiency, drive innovation and solve complex problems, misconceptions and apprehensions persist.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

The biggest opportunity for our business is the potential of AI driven technologies to revolutionise how process and behavioural based observations are used across multiple industries. We are positioned to establish our safety observation software as the market leader, offering cutting-edge AI technology that will enhance efficiency and safety measures.



**William Miller,**  
Owner,  
Miller Parks

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Miller Parks Ltd is a family run business that started in 2004 with the purchase of our first Residential Park - Ashgrove Park in Elgin. Since then, we have expanded to three parks across Moray and Aberdeenshire adding Kinloss park in Forres and Nia Roo Park in Newmachar.

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Our business specialises in the redevelopment of residential parks to a five-star standard offering luxury park homes for the over 50's.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We are proud to use local companies, suppliers and tradesmen as much as possible as well as working with others in the industry across the UK.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

The biggest challenge would have to be rising costs and economic uncertainty across the industry.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

The biggest opportunity would be providing low cost, energy efficient bungalows at a time where there is a shortage of suitable affordable homes for the elderly.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

I am most proud of the team we have and watching them grow in themselves as well as the company, it gives me great satisfaction. I'm also very proud of the finished product and the handover of a new home to the customer.



# Forsyth's



Picture:Rothes site



Picture(s):Buckie sites



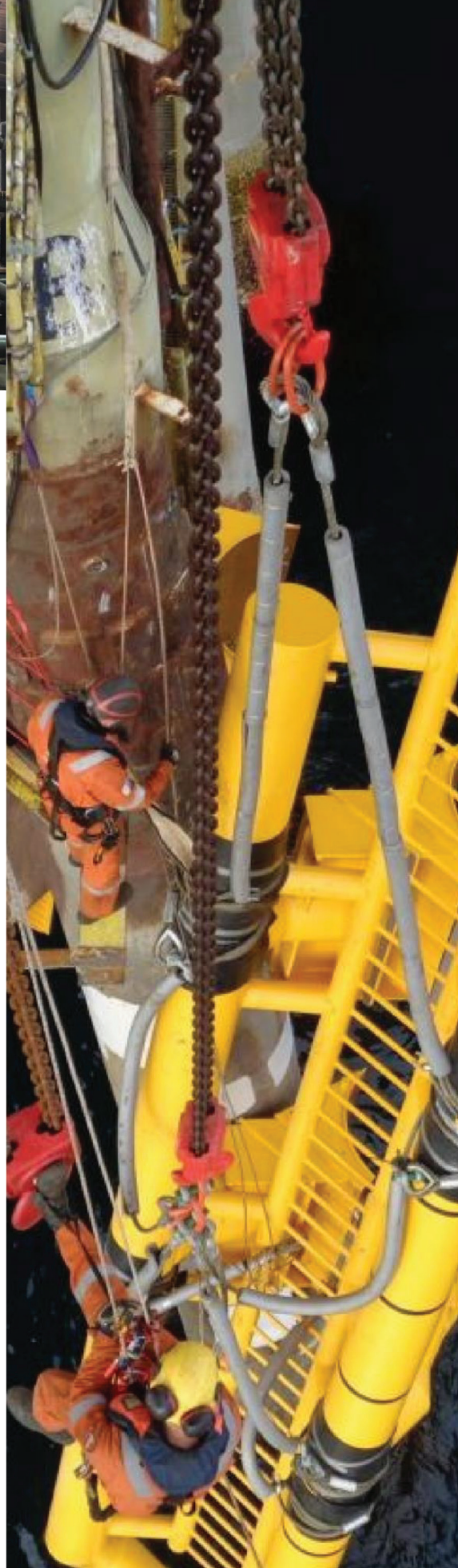
Picture:Aberdeensite



Picture:Caithnesssite

- **Established 1890**
- **#1 Whisky Still Design & Manufacturer in the world** 3 years pipeline
- **Fabrication** of secondary steel, oil & gas pipework, process skids, & pressure vessels
- **Welding & fatigue specialists** & welding advisory
- **Design Capabilities** Experienced In-House Design Engineers, AutoCAD & Solidworks for Draughting, Finglow/PV Elite for Pressure Vessel, Pipework & Heat Exchanger Design, STAAD Pro for Structural Design, Finite Element Analysis, Production of Interconnection diagrams, cable schedules, process & pneumatic hook-ups
- **4 Main sites, more in the works:** Rothes, Buckie, Caithness, Aberdeen & Ireland
- **Have all the ISO's, + F4N, +F4OR** Top rated & valued in a new UK Pressure Vessel Manufacturers industry analysis for Nuclear
- **8+ Years Nuclear**
- **6+ Years Decom**
- **Transitioning to Renewables**
- Employed Business Development of Offshore Wind & Green Hydrogen Supply Chain specialists for Strategy Design, Market entry, Deployment & Delivery





## WHAT SERVICES CAN FORSYTHS PROVIDE THE INDUSTRY?

- Boat Landing & Ladders
- Platforms & Handrails
- External Working Platforms
- I & J Tubes
- Heave Plates
- Anode Rings
- Bespoke Fabrication Design
- Modular Containers
- Innovation Design
- Hydrogen Skids
- Welding Advisory
- Green Hydrogen Process Skids
- Drag Anchors
- Primary Steel Potential
- Suction Cans
- Vessels Process Pipework & Valves
- Fabricated Parts for FLOW Substructures
- OTM (Offshore Transformer Module) Containers



*A rare asset to Scotland. A key resource to Scotland's energy security, focusing on fabrication for the energy sector, engineered with a lifetime of skills. Local fabrication, energising Scotland. Local & Strategically Global.*



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**F4N**  
Fit For Nuclear

**F4OR**  
Fit For Offshore  
Renewables

# Anas Sarwar challenged on windfall tax amid falling profits and job losses

**Anas Sarwar says Labour's plan for the windfall tax on oil and gas companies is aimed at "giants" like Shell and BP, not the biggest producer of fossil fuels in the UK's North Sea.**

In a heated debate on the ChamberTalk podcast, the Scottish Labour leader repeatedly said his party's controversial policy is due to the "astronomical profits" made by "Shell, BP, others".

Harbour Energy, who produce more oil and gas in the UK North Sea than Shell, BP, or any other producer, saw profits of little more than £25million in 2023.

"When we talk about the oil and gas giants making record profits, we're not talking about Harbour Energy we're talking about your Shells, your BPs," Mr Sarwar told Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce's podcast.

The Glasgow MSP has previously mentioned the global profits made by energy companies in Holyrood, something he was questioned on during the podcast.

Continuously pushed by AGCC's Policy Director Ryan Crighton on the fact that Shell and BP's record profits were achieved globally, and not solely in the UK, Mr Sarwar insisted that the policy is targeting

"huge companies making record profits", referencing Shell and BP regularly.

**Sarwar: I'm a huge supporter of our oil and gas sector**

The party chief was quick to talk about Labour's Green Prosperity Plan as a "suite of policies" and not focus on the proposed changes to the windfall tax.

"We've got to look at a holistic package," he said.

"I think it would be an act of folly if you were to look at the Green Prosperity Plan purely as being about the windfall tax. It is much, much bigger than that.

"This is the holistic plan that is about getting right balance in the North-east, with the oil and gas sector, but it's also about recognising the deep energy and poverty inequality we have in our country and people, even in Aberdeen, are struggling to put food on the table.

"I'm not a green party politician that thinks that the oil and gas sector is some kind of enemy and at all costs it has to be shut down and the lights switched off.

"I'm a huge supporter of the sector, it has to play a significant role for decades to come, I just think you

have to look at oil and gas policy and renewables policy beyond just the windfall tax. It's a holistic plan and there are two sides in terms of outputs for the companies and the businesses, and also the lived experience for people across the country."

**Listen now**

The full episode is now available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and YouTube.

As well as a heated debate on the windfall tax, host Finlay Jack presses Mr Sarwar on GB Energy, and there's a candid discussion on how racism impacted politics 30 years ago compared with its impacts today.



“

I think it would be an act of folly if you were to look at the Green Prosperity Plan purely as being about the windfall tax

WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW HERE



EPISODE 3: ANAS SARWAR

# Business lessons I've learned



**Sean Rhodes,**  
*Manager (Solicitor), Fragomen LLP*

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

We are a firm of more than 5,500 immigration-focused professionals and staff spanning more than 60 offices worldwide. Immigration has been our sole focus for 70 years, and today we offer support in more than 170 countries.

We are problem-solvers, innovators and established thought leaders in immigration and our firm is recognised year after year by Chambers, Best Lawyers and Who's Who. We contribute to conferences and seminars around the world, gather vast amounts of immigration data and leverage it for clients, author respected publications, and never stop working to design the future of our industry. As immigration around the world becomes more complex, we rely on many of our professionals' years of experience working in government agencies and in-house corporate immigration departments to advance world-class, compliant immigration and technology solutions.

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

Assisting our clients to navigate a complex and consistently changing immigration system. There are significant gaps in visa categories, particularly for contractors in the energy sector, which have been exacerbated post-Brexit.

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

Achieving a work life balance. Early in my career I was working long hours in the office and so had little time to spend with my family. As my career has progressed, I have learnt to prioritise and delegate tasks which has meant that I have leisure time during the week. However, this is a constant work in progress.

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

Don't be afraid to give advice a client doesn't want to hear. Whilst a less compliant option may be quicker in the short term, non-compliance is often costly in the long run. Advising

# Quick fire round

## What was your first job?

Paper boy – I can still remember how heavy the Sunday supplements were.

## When would you like to retire?

I had hoped to start winding down at 55, but as my family grows this seems less likely!

## What did you have for breakfast?

Cappuccino and muesli. This is my go-to weekday breakfast, but at weekends I enjoy cooking breakfast for my family.

## Who, or what, inspires you?

I am always inspired by people who overcome childhood adversity. Their struggles often put my own into perspective.

clients of the level of risk is also critical so they can then make a pragmatic, informed decision in line with their company's risk appetite.

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

I attended law school for four years whilst working full-time. I had to use almost all of my annual leave for studying and effectively put my social life on hold for most of the year. At the end of the process, I was one of only a handful of people who went on to qualify as a solicitor.

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

A government plan for economic development, particularly for renewables, which supports key industries and creates skilled green jobs.





## A new chapter at Langstane

Long established and well-known local family-owned business Langstane Press Ltd is entering a new chapter with a change of leadership.

Colin Campbell will be retiring from the day-to-day management of the business after an incredible 50 years' service, the last 37 years as Managing Director, a role he stepped in to when his father retired in 1987. He proudly announced: "In recent years, our recovery from the oil and gas recession followed by getting over the impact of the pandemic have been my biggest priorities and contemplating my retirement was only going to be an option once we were heading in the right direction. The business is now in a stable and strong financial position, and on June 3, 2024, it will be 50 years since I started work at Langstane. It has therefore become very clear to me that when that day comes it will be the perfect time for me to step down from the Managing Director role and retire from the day-to-day management of the business. From that date, my successor as Managing Director will be Mark Campbell, my cousin Jack's son, who after over 30 years in the business is more than ready for the challenge. I will be taking on the role of Chairman so I will always be available to Mark as his mentor and biggest supporter".

Mark has been shadowing Colin in recent times with the goal of having as seamless a transition as possible. Mark said: "I'm very much looking forward to leading Langstane and making sure we continue our success. We are in excellent shape and as Scotland's largest independent distributor of business products, with headquarters in Aberdeen and branches in Dundee and Livingston, we are in a very strong position to generate more growth."

An exciting new chapter in the Langstane story has begun.



## VSA to support young and adult unpaid carers

Local social care charity VSA has announced it will be supporting young carers and adult unpaid carers living across Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council awarded VSA a contract to provide practical, emotional, social, financial, and wellbeing support to adults, and young people caring for someone in the Aberdeenshire area.

Anna Garden, Director of Children & Families at VSA said: "We are truly honoured to have been awarded the contract from Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council to support unpaid carers living across the shire. At VSA, we know the impact being an unpaid carer can have on many aspects of a person's life and we are looking forward to being able to provide support and a friendly ear to chat to."

Lindsey Flockhart, Lead Social Worker for the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, says: "This contract was awarded to VSA after a competitive tender process which gave us the opportunity to ensure that the specific needs of young carers and unpaid adult carers living in Aberdeenshire will be met by the right service provider.

"Unpaid carers provide the backbone of care and support across Aberdeenshire and the country as a whole and we are looking forward to working with VSA to ensure that our Aberdeenshire carers are recognised and get the support they need and are entitled to."

VSA Aberdeenshire Carers Service has a team that will support carers across the locality areas in Aberdeenshire focussed on making the support more accessible in each local community. The service will continue to provide the programme of events that carers are used to attending while adding more across the year in each locality area for carer groups across Aberdeenshire.

## University of Aberdeen in global top 20 for real estate research

The University of Aberdeen has been ranked third in the UK, fourth in Europe and 19th in the world for its real estate research.

Aberdeen appears alongside Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell, Singapore and Hong Kong universities in the EduRank Best Universities 2024 table. The University's real estate research contributes to shaping the future of urban development, investment and sustainability.

Professor Norman Hutchison, Director of the Centre for Real Estate Research, said: "The outcome confirms the quality and relevance of the research conducted by real estate colleagues at Aberdeen. We have a strong global reputation for our teaching and research."



## The Archie Foundation's fundraising topped £1.6million in 2023

Local charity The Archie Foundation raised more than £1.6million in 2023 to support babies, children and families, an increase of 12% on the previous year.

More than 50,000 children and young people visited one of the three hospitals supported by The Archie Foundation last year - Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, Tayside Children's Hospital in Dundee and the Highland Children's Unit at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness.

The Archie Foundation released its impact figures for 2023, with a total of £1,667,241 raised through fundraising events, donations and grants.

Paula Cormack, Chief Executive of The Archie Foundation, said: "At a time when many of us have been heavily impacted by the cost-of-living crisis it is heart-warming that people are continuing to support The Archie Foundation. We never fail to be amazed by the generosity of our supporters. It is incredible that our fundraising total has increased so significantly. The money will allow us to continue to support young patients and their families in North Scotland."



## OPITO's new global standard to address offshore safety zone incidents

OPITO, the global safety and skills organisation for the energy industry, has launched a new training standard to ensure increased awareness, competency and reduce incidents in the safety zones around offshore installations.

The Safe Offshore Marine Operations (SOMO) - Offshore Installations and Energy Structures Safety Zone standard was created to mitigate avoidable collisions within these exclusion areas globally.

Sarah Hutcheon, Product Development Manager at OPITO, said: "We are committed to creating workforce development solutions to build a safe and skilled energy workforce. Industry has highlighted there are avoidable collisions happening in safety zones globally and therefore the requirement to address the knowledge, competency and level of training of those working in operations in these areas."

## AAB short-listed for prestigious Taxation Award

Tech-enabled, business critical services group, AAB, has been shortlisted for the Best Private Client Tax Practice award, in the coveted UK-wide Tolley's Taxation Awards 2024.

The Group's Private Client team are set to attend the glittering awards dinner in London on May 16. The awards celebrate exceptional achievements, unwavering commitment to the industry, and groundbreaking contributions to the tax industry.

Paula Fraser, Head of Private Client, leads the team. She said: "At AAB we are exceptionally proud of our Private Client team, so being short-listed for the final of the Tolley's Taxation Awards by a panel of our esteemed industry peers is a truly gratifying experience."

1495



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ABERDEEN**

BUSINESS SCHOOL

# ENERGY INDUSTRY IN TRANSITION CONFERENCE

TUESDAY, MAY 21ST  
13:00 - 16:30



**EILIDH WHITEHOUSE**

Senior Advisor  
True North



**STUART PAYNE**

CEO,  
North Sea Transition Authority



**COLIN WELSH**

Partner  
SCF Partners



**MAGGIE MCGINLAY**

Chief Executive  
ETZ Ltd

The University of Aberdeen Business School is hosting an industry led conference on 21st May 2024, highlighting energy sustainability, transition, and economic challenges. The conference will focus on regulation, funding and recent research, and will reflect on the opportunities and challenges currently facing the sector.



## Global certification award a step change for QHSE Aberdeen

QHSE Aberdeen has been formally recognised for the standard of its training after agreeing a partnership with a globally renowned industry body.

The Westhill-based company is a leading provider of professional consultancy and advisory services to organisations that require assistance with developing and implementing robust ISO management systems across a wide range of sectors, including oil and gas, renewables, nuclear, and construction.

Since 2015, the award-winning company has demonstrated its commitment to excellence in providing high-quality training solutions across quality, health, safety, and environmental disciplines. It has now been confirmed as an approved training partner with the Chartered Quality Institute (CQI) to deliver International Register of Certificated Auditors (IRCA) certified ISO 9001 internal auditor courses.

With the introduction of IRCA certification, QHSE Aberdeen has underlined its dedication to ensuring that professionals receive training of the highest standard, validated by industry experts. This latest milestone follows increasing demand from clients to provide IRCA certified training courses and involved a rigorous assessment process and stringent criteria.

The IRCA certification is respected worldwide as the benchmark for quality in auditor training. By partnering with CQI and IRCA, QHSE Aberdeen ensures that its ISO 9001 internal auditor courses meet these exacting standards, providing participants with a highly sought-after certification.

Dave Rusling, Managing Director at QHSE Aberdeen, said: "This certification represents a welcome endorsement of the standards that define QHSE Aberdeen's operations and speaks volumes of the hard work and talent of our people who have developed, implemented and maintained robust management systems which underpin the delivery of client services.

"We are committed to putting our clients at the heart of the services that we offer. Having listened to their feedback, we're delighted to be able to offer high-quality, certified training courses which will add real value and create

sustainable solutions for their respective organisations."

With IRCA certified courses due to begin in April, QHSE Aberdeen has appointed a new member of staff, specifically to help deliver QHSE training, and is looking to hire a second person to provide additional support.

In addition to offering public courses for individuals seeking certification, CQI and IRCA certified ISO 9001 internal auditor courses are now available for in-house delivery at client sites and can be customised to meet organisations' specific needs.

For more information about QHSE Aberdeen's CQI and IRCA certified ISO 9001 internal auditor course and upcoming training schedule, please visit the dedicated page via the company's website.

Angela Scott, Business Development Director at QHSE Aberdeen, commented: "The training side of our business continues to grow organically, so it's a natural step for us to certify these courses in response to demand from existing clients.

"This partnership agreement bolsters the quality and depth of learning on offer and cements our position as a one-stop shop for helping organisations gain ISO certification and then train their staff to maintain it.

"Meanwhile, our small team of experts in their field allows for more personal client relationships, with advisers being appointed to clients based on their skillset and experience in that particular sector."

Established in December 2015, QHSE Aberdeen has gone from strength to strength with the size of its team more than doubling over recent years, the creation of a new management team, and a move to larger office premises in Westhill.

The company's focus on people – its own team as well as those working within clients' organisations – has allowed it to stand out from the competition. This ethos was recognised by judges at the 2022 Northern Star Business Awards, where the business received the Customer First honour.




# Our story in numbers

**200**  
homes cleaned  
and sparkling  
for homeowners  
every week



Covering  
**23**  
towns  
and  
cities



**100**  
new homes  
cleaned and  
handed over  
every week



**44** SUCCESSFUL  
YEARS IN  
BUSINESS



Over  
**10K+**  
HAPPY  
HOMEOWNERS




**600+**  
clients across  
our service lines



**9000 sq.m**  
of windows cleaned  
every month



**30+** state  
of the  
art vans



**160**  
members of  
our winning  
team



## Get to know Goldstar



Domestic



Commercial

IT'S ABOUT TIME



**Ian Spence,**  
*Regional Manager,*  
Coretrax

**Area of expertise?**

I would have to say wellbore cleanout. Most of my career has been spent covering the Middle East wellbore clean out market with Coretrax. Covering simple ESP workover operations to single trip tapered strings with inflow testing and chemical clean out.

**What should people know?**

Their weaknesses. From knowing your natural abilities and what does not come natural allows you to work on them but also build a team around you that can make up for those shortcomings.

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

Not having a clear strategy that aligns to the company vision. When a company has a strong strategy, it enables teams to work towards the same goals and encourages team cohesion, preventing siloing of functions.

**What's your top tip?**

Always have honest open conversations and do not avoid confrontation. If managed correctly this can have positive impact on team morale.



**Ron Garden,**  
*Senior Advisor,*  
QHSE Aberdeen

**Area of expertise?**

As a Senior Advisor at QHSE Aberdeen, my area of expertise is development and operation of QHSE management systems.

**What should people know?**

If designed properly and continually maintained, a robust management system can act as a company's memory, its conscience, and its defense mechanism. It can help a company to keep improving the things it does right, and it can help to identify where things have gone wrong and clarify what needs to be done to get things on a better path.

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

Companies sometimes don't see the full benefits of having an effective management system. It's easy to form the opinion that it is a hindrance and allow it to stagnate, rather than evolve as the company does the same.

**What's your top tip?**

A company should fully embrace the audit process. If delivered and received with a positive attitude, it can be invaluable in identifying the 'dead wood', and an opportunity for fresh eyes to highlight improvements to an organisation.



**Benoit Lamoussiere,**  
*Managing Director,*  
Ponticelli UK

#### Area of expertise?

Ponticelli UK is a leading construction and maintenance services contractor providing bespoke multidiscipline EPC solutions across the energy and petrochemical sectors. Ponticelli UK manages projects from pre-feed engineering to completion, implementing sustainable methods to provide a long-term future for its employees, clients and partners.

#### What should people know?

Ponticelli have been delivering industrial scale contracts across the globe for over a century, developing a highly skilled inhouse workforce of over 6000 employees. Ponticelli also lead Aberdeen-based consortium PBS in partnership with Brand Energy and Infrastructure Services and Semco Maritime, delivering diverse integrated services to the UK energy industry.

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

Often companies use buzzwords like collaboration but do not act on them. Collaboration and partnership are two fundamentals of Ponticelli's global growth strategy. We are demonstrating this here in the UK via the PBS organisation, aligning three global companies and harnessing the best from each.

#### What's your top tip?

Employee wellbeing is crucial. Ponticelli and PBS employees are our most valuable assets, and we are dedicated to enhancing their workplace experience and optimising their work/life balance. This year our efforts have been recognised by achieving finalist positions at the cHeRries Awards in both 'Wellbeing in the Workplace' and 'Learning & Development' award categories.



## Chris Hay promoted to Chief Commercial Officer at Well-Safe Solutions

Energy transition specialists Well-Safe Solutions have promoted Chris Hay from the position of Strategy and Commercial Director to the role of Chief Commercial Officer, effective from April 1, 2024.

The change comes in recognition of Chris' exceptional leadership, strategic thinking and deep understanding of the Well-Safe Solutions offering.

Since joining the company in November 2021 as Director of Strategy and Business Development, Chris has grown the company's business development, commercial, corporate sustainability, marketing and tendering teams based at the company's global headquarters in Aberdeen, UK.

Chris continues to be responsible for these departments in his new position, with Well-Safe Solutions Pty Ltd – the company's Asia-Pacific entity based in Perth, Western Australia – also reporting into him.

In recognition of his new role, Chris said: "I've been fortunate to be a part of the Well-Safe Solutions team as it has undergone considerable change and organic growth over the past three years.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to take on this leadership role at such an important time for the business. There's still so much for Well-Safe Solutions to achieve through our international commercial strategy, and we are well-positioned for growth into a number of new markets."

Phil Milton, Chief Executive Officer at Well-Safe Solutions, added: "With his dedication and commitment to driving growth, I am confident that Chris will excel in this new role and continue to contribute significantly to our company's ongoing success."

Catriona Walzak has also been promoted to Strategic Business Analyst from the position of Executive Assistant. She will work closely with the CEO, CFO and CCO to provide strategic support to Well-Safe Solutions' international growth ambitions.



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# Who are SNF?

**Robin Shields,**  
*Eastern Hemisphere Sales Manager,*  
SNF



**SNF might just be one of the biggest oilfield suppliers that you've never heard of! With global revenues to rival those of more well-known oilfield chemical companies (~€5Billion in 2022), we continue to grow at an average rate of ~12% year-on-year against a more common trend of slight decline across a lot of this sector of the industry.**

But our revenue is not what defines us as an enterprise. As a privately-owned company (one owner), it allows us to break free from the normal corporate structures that define how normal big-business works. We are free to fail, in some respects, because it proves that we are exploring new realms and not just staying in our lane, competing in the race to the bottom. In this respect there are no constraints on success which is a very liberating position to be in.

Our business is the treatment of water using polymer chemistry technologies wherever that may be required. We have majority market share across a number of industries ranging from mineral extraction, paper, municipal waste and potable water, personal care and, of course, oil and gas. It has been calculated that our products have treated the water and improve the lives of over

one billion people worldwide, or to look at it in another way, one in eight people around the world.

In the oil and gas space, we manufacture products to treat produced fluids such as scale inhibitors and solid-liquid/liquid-liquid separation technologies to name a few. We also make products for viscosity modification applications such as those used in Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) projects. These polymers are added to the injected water to reduce the water-cycling that frequently occurs during secondary oil recovery, reducing the amount of water usage required by up to 80%. Producing, treating and injecting huge volumes of water requires vast amounts of energy and so by viscosifying the injected water, up to 70% less energy is consumed, reducing the overall carbon footprint whilst simultaneously improving oil recovery by 10% or more.

Although reducing the carbon footprint of our customers is a key driver for what we do, sustainability is also at the heart of how we operate internally. By continuing to invest in the latest manufacturing technologies and ensuring best practice across our processes, we have reached our 2023 sustainability goals eight years ahead of target. In recent sustainability assessments

by EcoVadis and Moody's we were scored 'Gold' and 'A1' respectively putting us in the top 5% of companies assessed.

That culture is embedded throughout the organisation. With over 7500 employees across the globe and growing, we all share a collective goal to be the best at what we do. Talent acquisition and retention is a key driver to our success. The vast majority of our profit is re-invested in our people as well as our R&D efforts and our manufacturing facilities, another benefit of the private ownership model. Our 21 manufacturing sites are located across the globe to further add value for our customers whilst keeping transportation carbon emissions as low as possible.

So, whilst we might be relatively unknown, we keep working tirelessly behind the scenes to keep growing, help our customers meet their financial and sustainability targets and treat the world's water.

**SNF**  
WATER SCIENCE

# NORTHERN STAR 2024 BUSINESS AWARDS

## Winners review





## Business of the Year W M Donald

**Civil engineering contractor W M Donald has clinched the Business of the Year title at the Northern Star Business Awards thanks to its consistent achievement in the delivery of complex enabling and infrastructure work.**

Recent works include taking the role of lead civil engineering contractor on some of Aberdeen's largest housing developments as well as being the main civil subcontractor on the £27million ONE Seedpod food and drink industry innovation hub.

As well as this, the family-owned company specialises in the delivery of reinforced concrete structures, sewer inspections and rehabilitation, road surfacing, bulk earthworks, as well as repairs to utilities and drainage.

W M Donald has also delivered a range of improvements in its own operations while embracing and enabling strong, profitable growth. This includes a near doubling in turnover in the two years to the end of March 2023.

Its superb financial performance has been achieved in the face of fierce headwinds, including rising costs and materials shortages, affecting both its own business and that of its clients.

The Netherley-headquartered firm was the first major civil engineering contractor in Scotland to achieve carbon neutral accreditation. The firm has also focused on improvements using new digital tools including the development of the WMD App.

Established in 1977, its workforce has reached 222 employees who are supported by a further 80 subcontractors.

Led by its founders, husband-and-wife Willie and Elaine Donald, the firm has established a highly proactive program of engagement with organisations – including Developing the Young Workforce, North East Scotland College and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils – to address the widening skills gap in civil engineering and construction.

The firm has also led the way in the development of a two-year apprenticeship scheme for the construction and civil engineering sector across the North of Scotland.



## Customer First Load Monitoring Systems (LMS)

**Launched in 2016, Load Monitoring Systems (LMS) specialises in the design, manufacture, sale, rental, repair and calibration of intelligent lifting equipment and load monitoring products, supporting customers across a range of industries including oil and gas, decommissioning and renewables.**

The firm's range of products and services includes load cells, winch monitoring, air skates, digital pad eye systems, data logging and crane safety instrumentation.

In 2021/22, the DNV-GL triple accredited company achieved a tremendous 21% increase in turnover and a 26% increase in profitability.

In 2023, LMS was named as a recipient of a King's Award for Enterprise in the field of International Trade. The accolade prompted a root and branch review of processes and procedures which have seen a stratospheric raising of the bar when it comes to customer services.

Internally, LMS incorporated a "lessons learned" process so that anything that goes wrong is raised so corrective action can be taken. The LMS mantra is to fix the problem first then investigate later.

These carefully crafted processes also highlight when a new customer comes on board. All feedback is kept after the sales team have telephoned each and every new customer, and the source of all new enquiries is carefully analysed to identify both strengths and areas for improvement.

Putting the customer squarely at the front and centre of all operations has paid dividends.

The LMS business value and volume has continued to increase over the past 12 months with sales quotes increasing by 25%. Meanwhile, sales revenues have jumped by 52% and new customer accounts have increased by 37%. During the past year, the monthly average for new customers has increased by 28%.



## Driving Sustainability Duncan Farms

**Duncan Farms prides itself on providing “affa fine” eggs from its free range and organic flocks around Banffshire and Moray.**

The firm has launched a home-grown initiative which has reduced the carbon footprint of its traceable, sustainable eggs – and its customers are scrambling for more.

The Turriff-headquartered group harvests eggs from happy hens who enjoy enhanced environments and the company of two alpacas named Jack and Victor.

The family-owned business produces 3.8 million eggs per week, with plans to increase production by 30% over the next 12 months.

It has nurtured long-term supply partnerships with retailers Lidl, Morrisons and Marks and Spencer, primarily supplying private label ranges.

Recently it launched Woodcote Responsible Free Range Eggs with Lidl. Using a “cradle-to-customer plus waste” approach to the carbon footprint of its eggs, its analysis showed that over 80% of the eggs’ carbon footprint was attributed to the feed mix.

Duncan Farms instead adopted a field-to-fork model with sister business, A J Duncan, which farms over 7,000 acres of arable crops.

By replacing imported soy with oil seed rape grown within a 20-mile radius of laying farms and the packing centre at Fortrie, the firm has revolutionised how it feeds its hens and has reduced the carbon footprint of its Responsible Eggs by 57%.

A wind turbine powers the head office, two laying farms, as well as electric vehicle chargers for any staff who would like to have electric cars charged at work.

Packaging was also considered, choosing a 100% recyclable “pre-pack” carton that is label-free, and made of 100% recycled content.

Due to the success engendered by its environmental leadership, Duncan Farms has put in place plans to double production of responsible eggs since March 2024.



## Family Business Katoni Engineering

**Katoni is a second-generation engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) business owned by the Maclean family.**

It was founded and is owned by John Maclean while dad, Donnie Maclean, who was previously owner of Maclean Electricals, is chairman.

The business primarily supports the offshore oil and gas industry but has begun to diversify into other sectors including renewables and utilities. It considers itself unusual in the market in that it delivers fixed-price solutions which share risk and rewards with its clients.

The firm believes its clear focus on young people and growing its own talent has proved critical to avoid the merry-go-round of the Aberdeen jobs market.

Every employee under 30, or those entering work as a “mature” team member, have a three-year work-based development plan which focuses on a mix of technical/discipline, business and soft skills.

All other individuals have a five-year plan to help them grow personally and within the company.

The last 12 months has been a seminal period for Katoni. In 2021/22, it doubled in size and turnover and continued that growth by a further 60% the following year and increased headcount to 65 FTE.

The firm secured its first major offshore manpower contract for a UKCS operator creating a new business line and opportunity for growth.

The company’s profitability means it has been able to give back to its home city, including the regeneration of a Queens Road townhouse as its HQ. It also supported a new youth national football tournament since 2017 – the Katoni Cup – and has announced a partnership to support Aberdeen Football Club Charity Trust as its charitable partner.



## Going Global TWMA

**An improved drilling waste management system pioneered to meet the requirements of global clients is solidifying TWMA's reputation as a global powerhouse.**

In 2022, Aberdeen-based TWMA launched its RotoMill 2.0, the next phase of its oil field drill cuttings processing technology.

The system incorporates its new XLink™ automation technology which can be operated remotely with real time monitoring capabilities. A new standardised design reduces maintenance requirements, installation times and footprint while increasing processing performance. The upgrade was designed to meet the needs of customers who were looking to achieve net zero targets.

Representing a £2million investment, the first unit mobilised to the UAE in 2023 as part of a \$100million contract on a major sour gas development in Abu Dhabi. The deal will see it double its regional headcount to more than 400.

This contract and what it has described as “record high” remand for its offshore processing technology in the North Sea enabled the private-equity backed company to close a \$62.5million sustainability-linked bond on the Nordic Alternative Bond Market in February.

Last year, it secured a 10-year contract with Equinor and a five-year, \$15million contract with bp. Meanwhile in 2022, TWMA successfully deploying a RotoMill processing unit in West Texas in the biggest drilling market in the world.

From its beginnings on Shetland 20 years ago, the firm is the first company to bring drill cuttings processing to the wellsite, eliminating the requirement to transport drilling waste to shore for treatment. This has been proven to reduce carbon emissions by 50%, lower cost by 35% and improve safety performance by reducing lifting operations by 95%.

TWMA operates in the UK, Norway, UAE, North Africa and USA and employs more than 700 people worldwide.



## Inspiration from Innovation Balmoral

**Balmoral is a shining example of an Aberdeen oil and gas supply chain company successfully adapting and transitioning solutions for the fixed and floating offshore wind industry.**

In May 2023, Balmoral unveiled a ground-breaking, globally-patented product, HexDefence, a new technology that solves a significant subsea challenge and the result of extensive research and investment.

Scour conditions pose a grave threat to offshore wind turbine foundation stability and inter-array cable integrity, often resulting in costly cable failures.

Balmoral's innovative new system eradicates the need for expensive and carbon-intensive practices such as rock dumping could save developers around 70% on installation and through-life costs.

Following productive discussions with leading wind farm developers and industry organisations, Balmoral is progressing towards developing a prototype for field testing.

While the offshore renewables market is still in its early stages, Balmoral recognises the immense global potential for HexDefence technology to emerge as a pivotal player in the ongoing offshore energy transition.

Balmoral's state-of-the-art product design and manufacturing facility at its home in Aberdeen has been at the core of its ability to deliver detailed design, precise manufacturing, rigorous testing and more for its customers, while delivering exceptional value.

In early 2023, Balmoral's board unveiled a strategic vision that fundamentally shapes its approach to innovation and its integration into its business plan. Central to this vision is the pivotal objective of “product diversification.”

The primary aim of this strategic pillar is to position Balmoral as a crucial enabler for the future success of multiple industries, including oil and gas, renewable energy, and defence.



## Inspiring Futures W M Donald

**For W M Donald, the sustainability of the civil engineering industry is of paramount importance, which is why its leaders took action to make it an industry that appeals to future generations.**

The family-owned firm of civil engineering contractors led the way, resulting in a host of presentations and seminars at schools across the North-east, the development of placement schemes and apprentice days, as well as the establishment of a two-year apprenticeship scheme with North East Scotland College (NESCol).

Taking a proactive approach to filling the skills gap, W M Donald sought and welcomed engagement with organisations including Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Career Ready, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), NESCol, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.

The apprenticeship scheme in particular represents a major step change in skills training in the region and even saw them reach out to industry rivals to make it succeed.

It all started when W M Donald successfully recruited eleven apprentices in 2021. The apprentices were, and continue to be, supported in many ways including getting to Glasgow College for their block release, as there was no suitable construction apprenticeship scheme locally.

Raising concerns about the lack of availability of the program in the North-east, W M Donald's was instrumental in the reintroduction of a civil engineering foundation course.

Just two years later, W M Donald has 26 civil engineering apprentices and four graduate civil engineering apprentices in the business.

W M Donald said: "This challenge was taken on and overcome by using our influence within the industry and by reaching out to our competitors, we were able to offer them places on the College courses. These were taken up by some of the other companies and the feedback regarding their experiences with the apprentices has been equally as positive as ours."



## Making the Difference The Archie Foundation

**The Archie Foundation exists to make a difference in healthcare and bereavement for children and their families across the North of Scotland.**

The charity works closely with NHS Grampian to ensure patients and families of Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (RACH) don't have to face the financial burden of frequent, often long-distance travel to appointments alone.

It offers emergency financial support and operates the Archie Family Centre at RACH so families can stay near their children 24/7 during their treatment. The longest staying family spent 15 months in the facility while another estimated they saved £15,000 on hotel costs they would otherwise have incurred.

It delivers the Archie's Child Bereavement Service (ACBS) to help young people manage the grief of losing a loved one. It further supports neonatal services, including funding for essential equipment like breast pumps and incubators, overnight accommodation, staff training, and counselling.

Archie has also provided financial support for staff and patients for many years, but this has now become top of its priorities.

This includes grant funding to cover the unexpected costs of a child in hospital such as fuel or a parent's reduced working hours.

Over 30,000 children rely on services the Archie Foundation supports. This means one out of three children in our community directly benefits from the charity's initiatives each year.

The collective impact of dedicated volunteers – from fundraisers to bereavement responders to its trustee board members - has helped all areas of the charity, allowing it to operate more efficiently and expand its reach.

The entire Archie team work tirelessly to ensure the charity's success and to help children and families in times of need.



## Marketing Magic Maritime Development Ltd

**MDL (Maritime Developments Ltd) is a market-leading offshore flexible handling equipment and engineering specialist.**

Through market review and company positioning analysis, the MDL marketing team identified an opportunity to increase revenues by focusing its messaging on its in-house design and manufacturing capability.

The “We Build Innovation” campaign set out to grow brand recognition and generate enquiries for its newbuild equipment, and it achieved this in spades.

The multi-media campaign encompassed a variety of platforms to reach its target audiences, including new pages on the website, a promotional video and header, and a blog from the CEO.

Internally, MDL’s in-house magazine, MariTimes, compiled news articles and opinion pieces from across the business with an issue dedicated to the campaign.

Furthermore, a monthly LinkedIn newsletter was launched using a new feature which facilitates reaching new audiences with regular content.

The biggest surprise came from the LinkedIn newsletter, which recorded over 1,000 organic followers within the first day of publishing.

The newsletter was a new tool identified by the marketing team to reach new audiences not on the company’s mailing database. With no sponsorship or other non-paid promotion used to spread the word, the team found the initial response staggering.

In addition to metrics such as a 37% increase in traffic to the website and 15% increase enquiries received via marketing channels, the most important measure is the bottom line.

Since the launch of the campaign in August 2022, revenues from newbuild opportunities increased 140% year-on-year in 2023 and has continued strongly. Both the number of new operations and their value have increased in each half year.



## Rising Star Nicole Thompson

**Grampian Housing Neighbourhood Officer Nicole Thompson has only been in her job since 2022, but she has already made a huge and positive impact on her colleagues and tenants she supports.**

On appointment, Nicole took over responsibility for one of GHA’s more challenging city centre developments at Market Stance.

On her own initiative, Nicole was the first Neighbourhood Officer to organise “tenant tea time” surgeries, out of office hours on a weekly basis.

She created an office area with a folding chair and working on her laptop in the stairwells. This ensured tenants got to know her well and she worked hard to gain their trust. Tenants who did not actively come to see Nicole at the surgeries were not excluded as she knocked on every door before leaving the scheme, proactively drawing out their concerns, discussing options available to them and developing an action plan to help.

During one of Nicole’s surgeries, she visited a single father who had lost his wife. He had his own health issues and was in a very challenging situation. He was living with no food, electric, heating and was struggling to organise his benefits and manage debts.

Nicole supported him to sort his benefits, set up payment arrangements for his debts, clean up his property, access support with electric and food costs and sourced clothing for him and his son.

In another first, Nicole contacted all staff and co-ordinated help for the tenant. The Leasing Team contacted the contractor who supplies white goods and they willingly donated a fridge and also offered a television. Free of charge, another contractor collected and laid the carpets which had been donated.

Recently, Nicole was voted by staff as Great Colleague of the Year 2023, which is presented annually to GHA’s most inspiring colleague.





## Staff Matter Balmoral

**Balmoral is a renowned leader in buoyancy, protection and insulation products, known for providing technical expertise and a rich history of delivering cutting-edge solutions across industry sectors.**

It employs a team of over 300 across facilities in Aberdeen, an office in Glasgow and a manufacturing site in Newcastle.

In 2022, after conducting an in-depth internal survey in collaboration with Investors in People, Balmoral undertook a transformative shift in its employee development.

An Employer of Choice Working Group was established to lead the initiative, whose mission was to make Balmoral a preferred employer by improving talent management practices.

Ten months after it launched, Balmoral saw significant improvements with a profound impact on its business, including an improved retention rate.

Key changes included the launch of an intranet that streamlined communication, a benefits portal, a social committee and a long service scheme.

Managing director Bill Main also addressed the firm's first company-wide town hall meeting and the firm now plans to hold similar events twice a year.

The company has also reinstated its leadership academy which had been temporarily sidelined due to the onset of the CV19 pandemic. It has since recruited an HR professional with the expertise needed to implement a competence framework for the scheme.

The improvement in retention rate is underpinned by its appreciation of several employees who have worked in the business for over 20 years. One of the group's leaders recently retired after 37 years with Balmoral and another colleague is currently in their 24th year with the business. Balmoral said 35% of staff have been with the firm for more than 10 years, while over half have been with the business for more than five years.



## Start-up Business of the Year Amuse by Kevin Dalgleish

**Amuse is the first restaurant by leading Scottish chef, Kevin Dalgleish, and opened in July 2022.**

Since then, it has proved a great success, not only for Kevin himself, but also for his staff, the community and the city.

Opening immediately following the CV19 pandemic, Amuse shows that restaurants can not only survive during such hardships, but by working to a successful business plan and investing in staff, they can thrive.

It offers an informal 70-cover restaurant, complete with a contemporary bar, private dining space and intimate outdoor dining area. The menu highlights the best local and regional produce with a touch of classic French flavours.

Kevin is passionate about championing the North-east, including both its produce and tourism offering.

Menus change regularly to ensure the finest local, seasonal ingredients are celebrated in every dish. Some highlights include Aberdeenshire beef, east coast crab, Peterhead monkfish, and fresh berries picked from a field just a few miles from the restaurant.

Kevin invests significantly into training up his staff to deliver the highest level of customer service. For example, the bar manager has recently undergone training to become Amuse's Whisky Ambassador.

Kevin is especially passionate about nurturing the next generation of top chefs, welcoming apprentices and young chefs into his kitchen and ensuring they're trained to the highest standard.

In 2022, Kevin appeared in the Scottish heat of BBC2's Great British Menu where he competed alongside some of the UK's best chefs using fresh produce from Aberdeenshire.

The restaurant has been awarded numerous accolades. In January - just six months after opening - Amuse was included in the prestigious Michelin Guide, making it one of only two Aberdeen restaurants to be listed.



## Student Placement CNR International

**Robert Gordon University (RGU) Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Student Miquel Marcos says his placement with CNRL provided him with an exceptionally diverse and enriching exposure to the oil and gas industry.**

He said: "During my student placement at CNRL, where I worked alongside the development team, the company demonstrated a remarkable commitment to ensuring that my experience was as productive as possible.

"First, CNRL provided me with an exceptionally diverse and enriching exposure to the oil and gas industry. Rather than confining me to a limited set of tasks, the company encouraged me to engage in a wide range of projects. From hands-on experiences, such as ROV inspections and visiting rigs to delving into geology and smart completions, I was exposed to a breadth of knowledge and skills development that is rarely seen in a typical internship program.

"My visit to the Well Safe Guardian rig was a testament to CNRL's unwavering commitment to the well-being of its workers.

"CNRL actively supported my educational journey. I had the privilege of interacting with industry experts with many years of experience, deepening my understanding of the critical roles such as subsurface geology and subsea, both of which play a vital role in the oil and gas industry.

"On a personal level, CNRL's support and mentorship contributed significantly to my growth. The company not only provided insights into the technical aspects of the industry but also emphasized the importance of teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication. This holistic approach to personal and professional development went beyond the standard internship experience."



## Archibald Simpson Ardent Group

**Where Aberdeen city centre was on the verge of despair, Robert Keane has brought some fresh hope.**

The entrepreneurial property developer has a flair for breathing life into unloved spaces.

So expectations are high that his plans to turn around the Trinity Centre will, alongside the £40million market in the former BHS building and efforts being led by volunteer organisation Our Union Street, reverse the fortune of Aberdeen's main thoroughfare.

When Robert was revealed as the new owner of the mall which had been on the market for nine months, reaction was a mixture of delight and relief.

Many in Aberdeen already know the leisure industry impresario for leading the transformation of Shiprow.

Along with his partner Mary Martin, the 68-year old also runs the well-known and much-loved Douglas Hotel.

What fewer people realise is the Irishman is also the brains behind similar venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Anyone who has travelled to the Scottish capital by train will have passed and maybe even stopped for some refreshment at the busy rooftop bar next to Waverley Station. He is also the mastermind of the Festival Village beer garden and street food venue in the heart of Glasgow's Merchant City.

Already, formerly vacant spaces in the mall are finding new tenants, such as Shot 'n Roll and Resting Brunch Face. This adds to key tenants including Flying Tiger, HMV, and Primark, which with a very conveniently-located, multi-level car park, together attracts a healthy footfall of 4.5 million year despite the high vacancy rate.

Robert even has ambitions to tame the dreaded stairs which lead from the from the Guild Street train station up to the mall's main level at Union Street.

His aim is to bring his unique form of experiential magic to the 40-year-old Trinity Centre and, by extension, the core of Union Street.



## Regional Contribution Alistair Robertson

**Alistair Robertson, who retired from his role as managing director of Sport Aberdeen in January, has been celebrated this year for his regional contribution.**

Throughout Alistair's tenure, the operator of Aberdeen's leisure facilities has transformed and grown from strength to strength – despite facing some unprecedented challenges in the form of the cost-of-living crisis, public sector budget restrictions and the pandemic.

Not only has Alistair been an excellent – and formidable – managing director but he has also been a friend to many.

His ability to connect with people on a personal level has made a lasting impact on the lives and careers of countless people within Sport Aberdeen as well as further afield.

Pre-pandemic, a £350,000 revamp of Sheddocksley Sports Centre in 2019 won the Leisure Capital Project of the Year at the Community Leisure UK Awards.

In all, the organisation received more than 50 awards and commendations in recognition of the outstanding work of staff, volunteers, venues and programmes under his tenure.

Alistair steered the organisation through the challenges of CV19, working tirelessly throughout the first lockdown with his leadership team to highlight the devastating situation faced by Sport Aberdeen and Scotland's leisure sector. His leadership ensured that Sport Aberdeen survived this tumultuous period, returning to provide vital opportunities for sport and physical activity to our city.

Some of this impact has been measured, with the organisation having generated £8m in social value through improvements in physical and mental health, mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development for the people of Aberdeen last year.

There has also been significant growth. In 2016, Sport Aberdeen had 1.2 million visits per year to its venues. In 2023, it had more than 2 million visits per year.



# Business lessons I've learned



## Quick fire round

**What was your first job?**

Labourer at my dad's business at around 14 years old.

**When would you like to retire?**

When I stop enjoying what I do.

**What did you have for breakfast?**

I don't eat breakfast.

**Who, or what, inspires you?**

My wife, she's the best person I've ever met.

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

The Banshees of Inisherin.

**David Stephenson,**

*Chief Executive Officer, Deep Casing Tools*

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

We listen, we ask our customers what problems they are having, we engage with them and listen to their feedback. Rather than think we know what they need, we ask, and then work with them to develop technologies that they actually need.

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

The noisy minority. We live in a world where the tiny minority bullies the majority. We all understand that an energy transition is essential, and are committed to it, but the reality is it will take decades. The world is addicted to hydrocarbons as a valuable energy source, but some are still brainwashed by the likes of Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil as we give them valuable column inches and television cover for a cause that is not immediately achievable.

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

The 80/20 rule, 80% receiving and 20% broadcasting. Listen to what others have to say, hear their opinions, take them in and consider their thoughts. Then, if applicable, respond.

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

People are your number one asset, and the source of all your problems. It is incredibly important to build a team that are all pulling in the same direction. Value, support, and reward that team, and in turn they will value and support you.

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

The turnaround that we have achieved at Deep Casing Tools. In 2017, the year before I took the role of CEO, we turned over around £300,000, and our 2023 forecast shows our turnover will be close to £15million. In this time, we have built a team that has been paramount to this success and puts us in a strong position for continued growth.



## Online Electronics rebrand signals a new era of technological innovation

Online Electronics has rebranded to IK Trax, signalling a new era for the business.

The new brand identity is underscored by a technology-driven slogan, "Intelligent Pipeline Technology", reflecting IK Trax's position as a forward-thinking leader in the industry. This evolution not only reinforces the company's dedication to providing real-time data and total assurance to clients but also signals a closer integration with the wider IK Group.

This will allow the company to leverage collective resources and expertise, enhancing its ability to address clients' needs globally.

"We are thrilled to unveil IK Trax as the next chapter in our company's journey," said Carey Aiken, Marketing Manager at IK Trax. "This rebranding is more than just a name change; it highlights our commitment to delivering innovative solutions that empower our clients and drive seamless operations."

IK Trax's new online home, found at [www.iktrax.com](http://www.iktrax.com), offers a modern website where users can easily find the complete range of products and all necessary information, making navigation more intuitive than ever before.

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# High taxes hampering growth of North-east companies

## High personal and business taxes are hampering the growth of companies in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, according to a new report.

Taxation has overtaken inflation and high energy costs as the biggest constraint facing companies in the region.

The North-east Quarterly Economic Survey, launched today by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with law firm Gilson Gray LLP, benchmarks key indicators in the region's economy against the wider UK.

The report reveals that more than half of companies here (52%) believe that taxation has become a barrier to growth.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### (1) RISING TAXES HAMPER GROWTH

For the first time since 2021, taxation has surpassed inflation as a constraint to growth for businesses in the North-east. 52% of companies polled listed it as a concern, up from 40% in the last quarter.

The windfall tax being extended is partly to blame, alongside changes in personal taxation announced by the Scottish Government in December which have now come into force.

Following changes which came into force this month, anyone who earns more than £28,850 will pay more in income tax than they would if they lived in England or Wales. Those who earn below the cut-off figure will pay less than they would south of the border.

The tax differentials grow sharply for those on higher incomes. Those on a £35,000 salary pay £61 more in Scotland than the rest of the UK. But the gap widens to £442 at £45,000; £1,696 at £55,000 and £2,096 at £75,000.

The new threshold, of 45% on earnings between £75,000 and £125,140 is also now in place, and the top rate, on salaries of more than £125,140, has jumped from 47% to 48%.

#### (2) INTERNATIONAL DEMAND CONTINUES TO GROW

More than a third of businesses (34%) think their international sales have increased over the past three months, continuing a trend of strong export trade for companies located in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Like the previous quarter, this is significantly ahead of the wider UK total (26%) and underlines the strong global demand for our produce, products and services.

#### (3) LABOUR MARKET REMAINS TIGHT

Three quarters of companies (75%) reported difficulties in recruiting staff during the first quarter.

Within the North-east there has been an increase in the number of businesses reporting difficulty in recruiting clerical and semi/unskilled roles.

Several comments touch on the difficulty of recruiting and retaining staff, the negative impact of visa policies on the movement of skilled workers, and challenges specific to sectors like seafood processing that relied on EU workers.

#### (4) INFLATIONARY PRESSURES EASING

Local businesses are reporting higher cost pressures on most measures than the UK as a whole, with a ten percentage-point difference in raw materials and utilities.

Within the data there are mentions of increased energy costs, higher wages leading to inflation, and the general rise in operational costs, including those due to doubling electricity contracts and increased rent.

However, fewer firms now list inflation as a constraint for growth, down from 56% last quarter to 38% this time around.

#### THE NATIONAL PICTURE

Nationally, the survey shows most firms reporting no improvement in investment levels, sales or cashflow in the first quarter of 2024.

After a slight rise in Q4, levels of business confidence have remained static. For the second quarter in a row, 56% of businesses say they are expecting an increase in turnover over the next year.

With inflation likely to remain volatile over the coming months – the data also reveals that more firms expect hikes in their own prices, with staffing costs being the main pressure.

#### REACTION TO THE FINDINGS

Russell Borthwick, Chief Executive of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: "It is little surprise that taxation now tops the list of factors hampering growth among our companies.

“Many firms in the region operate within the oil and gas industry, which continues to be strangled by the windfall tax and a headline rate of 75%. The extension of the tax to 2029 will leave Aberdeen with the slowest growing economy of any city in the UK, according to EY.

“On top of that, we’ve seen the introduction of a new income tax system by the Scottish Government which has opened a significant tax gap between Scotland and England, placing businesses here at a disadvantage. Some companies are having to add a Scottish weighting on to salaries to compensate individuals for the income tax consequences of working in Scotland.

“Elsewhere, there has been a small uplift in the number of companies looking to invest in new machinery and equipment, which can be attributed to the expansion of full expensing, which has given the UK one the world’s best capital allowances regimes.

“However, if the chancellor was hoping that the Budget would strengthen growth across our economy, there is little to suggest that has been achieved.”

Findlay Anderson, Partner at Gilson Gray LLP, said: “Cash flow is a fundamental barometer of the short-term health of a business. And whilst more businesses are reporting increases in recent cash flows since the last quarter (25% to 30%), we have seen a significant rise in the number of businesses reporting cash flow declines in the last quarter – from 18% to 27%.

“These metrics confirm some of what we are seeing anecdotally in the market. There are more reports of businesses across multiple sectors making moves to manage cash flow with more utilising overdrafts or seeing credit terms under pressure.

“It is clear that the North-east economy remains resilient with less inflationary concerns than previously. However, government policies have not helped and it remains to be seen how these will affect the economy as we prepare for a critical period in both business and politics.”



**Scan here  
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## ABZ Propeller Fund increased to £30,000 for Aberdeen International Airport's 90th year

The ABZ Propeller Fund by Aberdeen International Airport increased its funding available to £30,000 this year to coincide with the North-east's largest transport hub celebrating its 90th anniversary.

Established with the aim of propelling support regionally, ABZ Propeller Fund has been instrumental in providing vital support to numerous worthy causes over the years.

Bruce Watson, Chairman of the ABZ Propeller Fund, said: "As we celebrate Aberdeen International Airport's 90th year, we are delighted to announce the expansion of the ABZ Propeller Fund to £30,000. We have been delighted to help several worthy projects over the last two years and we hope we can help more with our increased funding for this year."

## KR Group awarded contracts exceeding £2million

Aberdeenshire based steel and cladding company KR Group has secured a series of contract wins exceeding £2 million with leading Scottish construction business, Morrison Construction.

The continuing relationship between the two companies is a result of Morrison Construction's commitment to achieving net zero, led by parent company Galliford Try.

Mike Bruce, Managing Director, Morrison Construction, explained: "KR Group is a local company based eight miles from our office which aligns with our commitment to fostering a local supply chain. Our overarching goal is to minimise our carbon footprint while simultaneously supporting employment in the local area, therefore, choosing to work with KR Group was a clear-cut decision for us".

## Recycl8 secures first commercial project in the ports sector

Sustainable technology firm, Recycl8, completed its first commercial project in the ports sector, supporting Haventus with work on the Ardersier Port east of Inverness.

Recycl8 teamed up with construction materials company Breedon Group, to pour 52 cubic meters of its sustainable, lower carbon R8 Mix concrete for a weighbridge project at the port.

Mark Gillespie, CEO of Recycl8, said: "The last six months have been particularly exciting for Recycl8 with our first commercial pours in the housing and industrial sectors and now our first port project, marking another milestone for us."

## RSM completes move to The Capitol in Aberdeen city centre

RSM's Aberdeen team has relocated to The Capitol – an award-winning office space in Aberdeen city centre. RSM has secured a nine-year lease in The Capitol building on Union Street, a major retail and commercial centre in the city.

The sustainable office space has previously won awards including the RoSPA Gold Award 2023, the Scottish Property Awards (Commercial & Public Property) for the City of Regeneration Project of the Year, and the Office Agents Society (OAS) Development Award for the Best New Building Outside Central London.

The RSM team in Aberdeen has seen significant growth in recent years, investing heavily in its people to support clients across Scotland and nationally. The move will support the firm's hybrid working capability and facilitate its future growth plans.

Andrew Forsyth, RSM's Office Managing Partner in Aberdeen, said: "Our move to The Capitol cements RSM's commitment to Aberdeen and growing our business in its vibrant city centre. Our new open plan office is modern, high tech and will provide a great space for our clients to visit and our staff to thrive in.

"The office has been designed to boost mental wellbeing at work, with the new space conducive to office-based working by encouraging better communication, teamwork, cooperation and training for staff. This will directly benefit our clients as we provide a more efficient service in an increasingly challenging environment."



## Dandara retains five stars for customer satisfaction for the fourth year running

Independent housebuilder Dandara was awarded five stars in the latest Home Builders Federation (HBF) annual New Homes Survey. This marks the fourth consecutive year the company has achieved the highest accolade.

Dandara, established in 1988, is committed to creating homes which combine innovative design with the highest standards of quality, whilst also putting customers first. With its customer and quality focus, this is what delivers consistently high recommendation scores.

Trevor Dempsey, CEO of Dandara, said: "To achieve five stars again this year is a fantastic success for Dandara, and testament to our customer experience, build product and quality of homes across the country."

## Befriend a Child's Boozy Bridgerton Brunch raises £24,500

Taking place at The Marcliffe Hotel, the inaugural event saw over 260 guests enjoy the themed brunch by dressing up in lavish outfits and enjoying a day of fundraising and games, raising £24,500 for local children Befriend a Child supports across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The guests were treated to Bridgerton themed décor from Adesso, entertainment from local singer, Kim Anderson, Northsound 1 DJ Gregisy, a fun 360 photobooth and games as well as delicious food and drinks from the Marcliffe Hotel.

Sarah Misra, CEO at Befriend a Child said: "The team and I were blown away by the effort our guests put into their outfits, everyone looked fabulous, and it was so fantastic to see everyone have such a wonderful time. We are delighted about the sum raised at the brunch and we couldn't have done it without our fantastic sponsors, guests and supporters who all contributed to making the day so special."



## LoLo+Co boutique celebrate grand opening of new store on Union Street

Rose and Lauren Reid, Mother and Daughter duo behind Lolo+Co, are delighted to announce the grand opening of their new store located at 226 Union Street, Aberdeen. The journey from Netherkirkgate to Aberdeen's Granite Mile marks a significant milestone for the ambitious pair.

Together Lauren and Rose decided to fill a gap in the market for an independent women's clothing boutique catering to all ages. Since its inception in 2019, Lolo+Co has gained a loyal following, prompting the duo to embark on a bold expansion project.

The transition to Union Street was no easy task, the extensive refurbishments to transform the store into a new spacious and inviting storefront. Despite the challenges, the Reids are thrilled to unveil their new home to the public.

Reflecting on the journey, Rose Reid said: "It's been quite a laborious task, a much bigger job than what we originally thought, but after months of hard work, the shop opened last week, and the first week has been a whirlwind."

The move to Union Street signifies more than just a change in location for Lolo + Co. Lauren said: "We feel we have come far to reach this point. We are now right on one of the biggest junctions on Union Street, so we are in a prime area to be noticed. We feel so overwhelmed and grateful for it all".

The Reids are grateful for the positive feedback and look forward to welcoming new customers. They emphasize the importance of community support for local businesses like theirs to thrive.

In addition to offering a curated selection of women's clothing, the new store boasts additional space to accommodate their current stockists such as GANT, French Connection, SAND Copenhagen, Ted Baker and more.

Recently including their newest addition of Penny Black to their range.

As they embark on this new chapter, Rose and Lauren Reid remain committed to their vision and determined to make their venture a success.



## Apache North Sea becomes Maggie's first £1million-plus donor

Milestone moment in 15-year partnership between Maggie's Aberdeen and Apache North Sea helps unlock hundreds of thousands of pounds in benefits for people with cancer.

A new £30,000 donation has tipped Apache North Sea's overall support for Maggie's Aberdeen over the £1million mark, resulting in the oil and natural gas exploration and

production company become the charity's largest individual benefactor.

Apache's offshore charity bond committee has been one of Maggie's biggest cheerleaders, initially supporting the build project for the iconic Foresterhill building on the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary site while it was still on the architect's drawing board.

Over the years, the offshore workforce has contributed an extraordinary seven-figure sum to underpin every part of Maggie's work in the North-east. The most recent donation will be used to sustain the benefits advice service, a crucial element in helping people across the region who are living with cancer.

Jeff Yates, Vice President, North Sea Asset, and member of Apache's bond committee said: "It is important for our offshore workforce to know that the money they raise every day on our North Sea platforms is benefitting people in our local communities. It is remarkable that this latest £30,000 donation will have a multiplying effect on people in terms of financial support for them and their families following a cancer diagnosis.

"We are delighted that our team has managed to donate more than £1million to Maggie's Aberdeen and support this wonderful local charity. Apache is committed to working with community partners to create a lasting positive impact."



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# MEET THE



**Ross Skene,**  
Waste & Recycling Specialist,  
One Stop Waste

### WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

One Stop Waste was established in 2006.

### WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

One Stop Waste Solutions provide a comprehensive range of recycling

and waste services to organisations across Aberdeen City and Shire. From a simple office recycling scheme to an integrated total waste management service, our aim is to help you reduce carbon, increase sustainability and divert 100% from landfill.

### WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We partner with a diverse range of companies, from retail and hospitality to industrial and commercial. We ensure every client receives a bespoke service tailored to their individual requirements. The main thing that each of our clients has in common is that they are trying to improve their sustainability and reduce their environmental impact.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Our biggest challenge currently is optimising operational efficiency while staying ahead of evolving waste management regulations and sustainability standards, ensuring we continue to deliver competitive, compliant and environmentally responsible solutions to our clients.

### AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Our greatest opportunity lies in expanding our services to meet the increasing demand for sustainable waste management solutions, tapping into emerging markets and technologies to provide innovative and eco-friendly options for our clients.

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

We are most passionate and proud of our commitment to environmental stewardship and our ability to provide innovative waste management solutions that not only benefit our clients but also contribute positively to the planet's sustainability for future generations.



**Colin Wilson,**  
Director & Co-Founder,  
SRCN Solutions

### WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

December 2018.

### WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

SRCN Solutions specialises in creating, refining and improving work management systems in the oil and

gas, renewable, utilities and power sectors. We help you to transform your intentions into delivered outcomes fast, whilst freeing up your resources to focus on the tasks only they can do.

### WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

SRCN Solutions can help any organisation that relies on physical equipment to produce its product.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

There is often a disconnect between the reality of the front-line operations and maintenance teams and the information that the decision makers receive. As a result, organisational leadership are often unaware of the opportunities that exist to save money whilst getting more work done.

### AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

As the industry is so inefficient at work execution as a whole, there is a huge opportunity for radical improvement

and not just marginal gains. Many assets have upwards of 50 core crew on them. If the companies can get an extra 30 minutes of productive time from each that's 25 hours of extra work a day. That's an additional 9,000 hours a year at no additional cost!

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

We do what we say and make a real difference to organisations when we do it. From the boilersuit to the boardroom.

### WHAT HAS BEEN MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AS MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN + GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

The visibility, reach and networking opportunities that come with being members of AGCC will allow us to reach new contacts within new organisations and markets.

# MEMBERS



**David Scott,**  
Marketing Director,  
Tayl

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Three years ago.

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Our platform provides customers with a regularly updated library of accredited courses, robust onboarding tools, and

the flexibility to craft bespoke courses tailored to their unique organisational needs.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We focus on industries like manufacturing, hospitality, events, and tourism, known for high staff turnover and strict compliance. However, our platform can be tailored to suit businesses in any sector.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Changing the status quo. Many businesses don't see the benefits and the cost savings of an online staff training system and are happy to stick to the ways they've always done things. The good news is though that when businesses move to online training they rarely go back to the old ways.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

The most significant opportunity for Tayl lies in word of mouth. Our

customers are very happy and the good news about us seems to be spreading fast.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

I'm really proud of the product we've created. As a small team, we've managed to compete with larger training platforms that have large numbers of staff. While there are challenges that come with having a smaller team, the flexibility it brings allows us to adapt quickly to our customers' needs, which means we're always improving our service.

## WHAT HAS BEEN MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AS MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN + GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

Visibility and networking opportunities have been the most valuable aspects for us as members of the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce.



**Nadira Campbell,**  
Financial Adviser,  
William Wilson Wealth  
Management Ltd

## WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

We are a Partner Practice of St. James's Place and have over 25 years experience within the wealth management industry.

## WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We provide our clients with a specialised, professional service in all areas of wealth management, including investment, retirement, protection and inheritance tax planning. Our aim is to provide long lasting, effective wealth building and retention solutions to all of our clients.

## WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We work with a variety of small and mid-size enterprise businesses across all sectors, with a particular emphasis on those who are newly established and are growing. We support our clients in the complex area of corporate planning, pension advice and estate planning, we want our clients to feel confident and in control of their finances.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS AT THE MOMENT?

Finding the right people for our business can be a quite a challenge, especially the challenges around

attracting and retaining loyal, talented employees.

## AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

There are so many ambitious businesses out there at the moment, who care about their employees and want to take their people with them on that journey as the business evolves. That's exactly where we can add value, provide peace of mind and make the most of these opportunities.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

We are passionate about helping people believe that wealth can be built, from early on in their career right through to when it comes to start thinking about retirement, we can support our clients to make the right decisions.

# Legal eagle Elaine on driving Brodies and AFCCT forward

**Heros don't often come more local than Elaine Farquharson-Black.**

Born and bred in Bieldside where she still resides, the top-rated planning lawyer has been a major fixture of Aberdeen's business and sporting communities from the very start.

EFB – as she is known – has been leading from the front whether it has been on the golf course where she was an international championship player or in the board room of one of Scotland's leading law firms, Brodies, where she is a Partner.

She has also taken the helm chairing the Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT), whose mission is to use the power of sport to change lives for the better across the region.

Working for developers and landlords across Scotland, she points out that local authorities including Fife, Edinburgh and Glasgow have recently called a "housing emergency" due to shortages.

"It has never been harder to get planning permission for housing. And it is becoming more costly. It is taking longer," she says.

She recently led a webinar on a Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) study on the housebuilding market which identified the planning system as a "major blocker" to delivering housing.

“

**It has never been harder to get planning permission for housing. And it is becoming more costly. And it is taking longer**

The delays "disproportionately" affect SMEs that deliver smaller sites, she noted.

She argues most builders would be happy to pay higher planning fees – if it meant a better service.

She adds: "Most developers will pay more for planning fees that means I'm going to get my planning consent more quickly or get a better service. But you need to ring fence it."

Her recent work as a planning expert in Aberdeen has included involvement in the





AFC development at Kingsford, as well as new communities at Countesswells and Chapelton.

But she was also fighting for the right for Aberdonians to eat and drink outdoors as she worked to support the owners of the Dutch Mill and No 10 to maintain their marquees beyond their initial use during the pandemic.

“I would like to think that I’m passionate about Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire being seen as a place that people want to come and live and work and do business and play,” she says.

“That’s about making it attractive both in a physical, built-development point of view, but also having events and attractions to go see.

“From the planning point of view, I’m always trying to say to the councils we’re competing for developers’ money. We need to be seen to be an area that will deal with your planning application quickly, that we encourage development, that are pro development. And that’s not that obvious at the moment.”

She would love a new facility for the football club on the beach and sees it as an opportunity to expand its reach in the community, particularly supporting the work of the trust.

“The football club draws people to it. Having that hub right on the beach, people would be more likely to drop in coming past.”

She would also like to see a fresh pipeline of flagship developments in Aberdeen. She points to the arrival of P&J Live, the reopening

of the Music Hall and the Art Gallery, Provost Skene’s House and Marischal Square and would like to see more in the “next wave”.

She says there “isn’t a silver bullet” to turning around failing high streets or bringing retail back to Union Street but welcomes the “experiential economy” in the form of new cafes and restaurants as well as the new market.

Other reasons to be optimistic include the redevelopment of run-down areas of Altens Industrial Estate into the Energy Transition Zone as a spur to industry and the arrival of cruise ships in the new harbour as a boon for tourism.



**There is so much Aberdeen FC Community Trust does for those in Aberdeen who are less fortunate.**

She has a passion for fashionable frocks and footwear – more of which are red these days since joining the trust as its chair.

This year is AFCCT’s tenth anniversary, and she is focused on fundraising in order to continue supporting its critical work with 27 schools across the North-east in the face of increasing funding cuts.

She says: “A lot of the programs we run will need corporate support to carry on doing them – a lot on mental health and positive destinations coming out of school.

“These are often hard to reach children - they respond the badge in a way they don’t respond to normal authority.

“Child poverty is a big thing, but we hide it well in Aberdeen.

“There is so much the trust does for those in Aberdeen who are less fortunate.”

She was born a Dons fan. Her father, Colin Farquharson, was a former sports editor of the Press and Journal who helped design the club’s logo and wrote the match programme for 10 years. Her mother Ethel also helped set up the first AFC merchandise shop on Nelson Street.

But some people only know her as a golfer.

EFB was unaware she has a Wikipedia page largely dedicated to her other career on the fairway.

She briefly turned professional after having a highly successful career as an amateur, representing

GB and Ireland in the Curtis Cup as a player and captain among many sporting accolades. She played for Scotland when she was pregnant with her first son - she has two - adding: "I played some of best golf when I was pregnant. The hormones make you feel more energetic."

She still loves the game. "Golf is where I go to find myself and lose myself - I feel most me when I am hitting balls, music on in my earphones. If I have had a bad day, I like to go hit some balls and ground myself."

Despite her success at sport, it was always going to be law for the talented young Elaine.

With the support of her parents, she balanced her education, legal career and her golf.

She studied in the car on the way to tournaments and she missed her graduation from Aberdeen

University - she came top of her year - because she was playing for Scotland in Belgium.

This was also the day of the fatal Piper Alpha disaster which killed 167 North Sea workers. Subsequently she went on to work on the Piper case as a young lawyer.

She made a major mid-career transfer from law firm Burness Paull to Brodies five years ago. The firm, which sponsors AGCC's Northern Star business awards, is refurbishing the office to allow it to grow its people in Aberdeen. EFB has also worked closely with AGCC to focus on improving the city through its Scotland's Urban Age initiative.

She has no regrets: "I didn't grow up wanting to be a golfer, I grew up wanting to be a lawyer. I found playing golf all day didn't fulfil me the way the law did."

She believes competitive sport gives a solid grounding for a career

in business - it boosts resilience and teaches discipline and hard work.

"I like to win. I like to try my best. I am constantly improving. In terms of resilience, you know you are not going to win everything - I suppose that translates in to litigation. But it is how you bounce back from it."

“

**I found playing golf all day didn't fulfil me the way the law did.**







## Monty hosting golf 'Legends' at Trump International

Colin Montgomerie has signed up as host of the Staysure PGA Seniors Championship at Trump International Golf Links, Scotland.

The eight-time European Tour Order of Merit winner and Ryder Cup legend will proudly be putting his name to the Legends Tour's flagship event at the end of July when it returns to the Aberdeenshire venue.

Peter Baker won the 2023 event, which drew in record crowds who saw the former Ryder Cup player claim victory by six shots after rounds of 69, 66, 69 and 72 in a season where he won four times and went on to take the season long MCB Road to Mauritius title as well.

Montgomerie won the John Jacob's trophy awarded to the winner of the Legends Tour Order of Merit in 2014 and 2015.

Tickets for this year's event are available now at [legendstour.com/tickets](https://legendstour.com/tickets) with a saving for buying in advance online against the gate price on the day.

Speaking about his new role, Montgomerie said: "I am thrilled and honoured to have become a host on the Legends Tour. Over 50's golf brings together some great friendships and great competitiveness too, it is something I am immensely proud to be a part of.

"The strength of the Legends Tour comes from the players, and it is great to see how it has grown as a Tour over recent years since Ryan Howsam got involved.

"To be hosting the oldest Senior championship in Europe is a distinct privilege. The Staysure PGA Seniors Championship promises to be a fantastic event again this year, with it returning to Trump International Golf Links. The facilities are superb, and the course is incredible. It will provide a great test for the players, while displaying a stunning spectacle for those watching on.

"I cannot wait for the tournament week, where I will be doing my best to be a good host, while also focussing on competing against a very strong field."

Phil Harrison, CEO of the Legends Tour, said: "Colin Montgomerie is a name synonymous with European golf and the success it has enjoyed over the past forty years. We are delighted to have Colin on board as a host on the Legends Tour as we look to take it to the next level and continue our growth over the past four years. Having a marquee name to host our flagship event makes things extra special. The Staysure PGA Senior Championship is a week which all our members want to be a part of. The return to Trump International Golf Links where we enjoyed such a great event in 2023 and now with Colin hosting makes it a week to savour this summer."

Sarah Malone, Executive Vice President, Trump International, Scotland, said "We are truly honoured to welcome Colin back to Trump International Golf Links, Scotland where he helped launch our magnificent links with President Trump in 2012. We are thrilled to host The Staysure PGA Seniors Championship for a second year and can think of no better host for this fantastic tournament featuring so many great legends of the game."

The Staysure PGA Seniors Championship will be staged at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire from July 31 to August 4 with Major champions among the names set to be confirmed over the coming days and weeks.

The par-72 championship course was designed by Dr Martin Hawtree and opened in 2012. It features two loops of nine holes nestled in amongst the Great Dunes of Scotland with views of the Aberdeenshire coastline and the North Sea. It is a truly stunning award-winning golf course, where each hole has its own distinct characteristics and unique features.

The Legends Tour 2024 schedule starts in May and features 20 tournaments across four continents with a prize fund of more than €18 million.

Tickets are on sale at [www.legendstour.com/tickets](https://www.legendstour.com/tickets) with spectators saving against the gate entry prices by buying online now.

# Business lessons I've learned



**Jen Eaton,**  
CEO, Eaton Occupational Health

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

Through three businesses we offer a 360-degree service in health and safety which is led by someone with business experience that understands the stresses on businesses on a day-to-day basis and managing return to work effectively. As a Director of an occupational health company, private health practice and aesthetics company we are able to ensure that all health needs are met whether it be safety at work, GP or Nurse led appointments, mental health support through counselling, hypnotherapy and life coaching to personal aesthetics treatments.

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

Day to day new health and safety legislation. That is why I am passionate about sharing news through social media platforms to keep businesses up to date and informed.

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

My passion is providing people with quality services that my businesses offer and ensure. The hardest lesson I have learned is to stay on top of my businesses with strong leadership and management and not be too much in the business providing too many of the services myself. I have learnt to be the face of my company with my brand.

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

Always lead the business and ensure you focus on quality of service and building long-lasting relationships whilst not focusing on the invoice and money coming in. This was explained to me as "don't chase the invoice but rather the quality of service you deliver, if you do that the invoice will follow you". Another valuable piece of advice was to reflect on what I could improve on that day making a bench marking for a better service tomorrow. Finally, be part of the Chamber of Commerce.

# Quick fire round

## What was your first job?

Selling shoes in Barrats.

## When would you like to retire?

I want to continue working for my whole life if I can!

## What did you have for breakfast?

Chilli and garlic prawns and scrambled eggs.

## Who, or what, inspires you?

Close people within my inner circle for many reasons but most of all their positivity and their dedication to success.

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

Taxtopia.

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

Supporting people and business on a day-to-day business is my greatest achievement and is something I strive to do every day.

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

Build the businesses to provide jobs for all the people who lost them during Brexit and as a result of the pandemic.



## Aberdeen schoolchildren share innovative ideas for future high streets

Pupils from Oldmachar Academy met with representatives of Aberdeen City Council and Our Union Street to showcase their ideas for the future of local high streets after taking part in the TechFest Blueprint Challenge.

TFBC is a national competition aligned with the CREST Awards and grounded in STEM where students are asked to come up with realistic ideas for regenerating high streets.

The 2023 TFBC saw a competition record, 34 teams from across Scotland taking part, including schools from Aberdeenshire, Dundee, West Lothian, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute.

'Las Chicas' from Oldmachar Academy were announced as the winners of the recent TFBC in December last year after

coming up with a variety of innovative ideas for reshaping Scotland's high streets. Their ideas included a U-shaped layout model for easy navigation, energy-generation pavements, a hydrogen-powered bus system and nature-inspired spaces to improve social interactions and mental health.

Sarah Chew, Managing Director of TechFest, said: "As an Aberdeen-based charity, it is fantastic that we have had so much engagement from not only local schools but also Aberdeen City Council and Our Union Street as we all look for realistic solutions to regenerate local high streets together. Both organisations are doing an amazing job championing the regeneration of Union Street and we were truly privileged to connect them with these young people who are full of innovative ideas to achieve that shared vision.



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# When shopping local impacts 6000 miles away

**Aberdeen's oldest independent coffee roastery, MacBeans, is proving that consumer choice to support local businesses not only has a positive impact on the local economy but can also have far reaching effects in communities across the globe.**

While supplying freshly roasted coffee beans to discerning customers across the city and beyond for the last 35 years, MacBeans new owner Brian Milne, has continued the company's commitment to supporting farmers in Honduras and has added Rwanda, Costa Rica and Guatemala to a growing list of community projects they are working directly with.

## Direct Trade

A decade ago MacBeans first participated in the 121 project, coffee importer DRWakefield paired farmers in Honduras with Coffee Roasters in the UK. The 121 project promotes long-term relationships affording farmers security whilst giving Roasters an excellent coffee that is sustainable and traceable. Direct trade projects maximise the final price that will go to the farmer, it's one of the most rewarding schemes within speciality coffee markets. The coffee MacBeans have taken since 2014 has been so popular that they've committed to a second farmer. This extension means that MacBeans can provide a direct trade option to customers all year round.

## A New Beginning

When Brian took over MacBeans he immediately arranged his

first coffee origin visit. Landing in Rwanda a few months later he met the Kinini Coffee Cooperative and their partner charity A New Beginning. The founders Jackie Turner and Malcolm Clear built a school in Jackie's home village, from this the Kinini coffee cooperative was created to provide a sustainable source of income to the charity. The success of Kinini coffee led to expansion providing free education facilities up to secondary school level and now funding university scholarships, as well as extending to provide a medical centre alongside the school.

Within the Kinini cooperative a subgroup was established to support female farmers, the KCRS cooperative empowers women to take control of a part of their family farms. The cooperative supports them with training, supplies such as organic fertiliser and ensures quality standards are improving. With a higher quality product the farmers are achieving higher prices which in turn has raised living standards within the community. The benefit for MacBeans is access

to a premium standard coffee that supports education and equality initiatives.

## Communities

After seeing the popularity of these coffees with customers based both on the quality of product and the positive social impact they have, Brian set out to find more projects that MacBeans can support.

The Todosantarita cooperative in Guatemala consists of 131 farmers in a community where they have combined to build a school, library clinic and infrastructure improvements such as roads and better drinking water.

In Costa Rica the La Laguna community has only 35 families producing coffee and Brian was able to commit to making this coffee exclusive to MacBeans.

In May Brian travels to Colombia to look for more projects so that MacBeans customers can support more communities across the world.





## Munro's Travel wins multimillion-pound contract

Munro's Travel, a leading provider of travel management services to the energy sector, has secured a multimillion-pound contract with Borr Drilling, a global offshore drilling contractor, to support their Europe and Africa regions.

The contract, which is for a 36-month term, will see Munro's Travel manage the crew travel logistics for four Borr Drillings rigs: Prospector 1, Prospector 5, Norve and Natt. The anticipated travel spend for the contract is £4million per annum.

Munro's Travel will deliver a range of services, including flight bookings, hotel reservations, ground transportation and emergency assistance, using its bespoke technology platform and dedicated team of travel consultants.

Murray Burnett, Managing Director of Munro's Travel, commented: "We understand how important it is for clients to depend on reliable, tailored and cost-effective end to end travel management which enables their crew rotations to be on schedule. This contract with Borr Drilling demonstrates our expertise and reputation in the energy sector. We look forward to working closely with them to deliver a high-quality and cost-effective travel management service that meets their operational needs and delivers the highest of safety standards."

## Malmaison Hotel launch Spring a la carte menu

Bar & Grill at Malmaison Hotel Aberdeen, on Queens Road, launched its highly anticipated new Spring a la carte menu.

Amongst new arrivals are New York strip steaks, beetroot-cured salmon, beef brisket croquettes, halloumi burgers and more.

A la carte menu is available for lunches (Thursday to Saturday, special Sunday lunch menu applies) and dinners seven days a week.



## Balmoral Comtec rapidly expands workforce following Rosebank win

Balmoral Comtec, a Balmoral Group company and a major provider of buoyancy, protection and insulation services to the global offshore energy market, has secured a multi-million-pound contract from TechnipFMC to supply more than 600 buoyancy modules for Equinor's Rosebank project.

This contract award is already supporting the recruitment of over 50 new employees at its Aberdeen base.

Balmoral Comtec, which has over 40 years' experience providing buoyancy equipment for offshore industries, including oil and gas and fixed and floating wind, will provide engineering, design and manufacture of buoyancy modules from its base in Aberdeen, Scotland. The modules will be installed on flexible risers and umbilicals.

Gary Yeoman, Sales Director at Balmoral Comtec, said: "Rosebank signifies an exciting shift for the future of offshore field development in the UK, with its ambitions to be one of the first UK fields powered with renewable electricity. We're delighted that as a result of this project we're actively recruiting for many roles here in Aberdeen and across the UK.

"While this recruitment effort is driven by our recent award win, the addition of valuable, transferable skills will continue to heighten our expertise and strengthen our position as a leader across offshore sectors in both traditional and renewable energies."

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# MOTOR MOUTH

## A strong case for the Defender

**When Land Rover Aberdeen and the wider Peter Vardy Group became Platinum members of the Chamber recently, it accelerated the plans we had to introduce a motoring section to Business Bulletin. And here's issue one.**

For this one, I pulled rank and bagsied first go. Possibly a GT3 I was thinking. Or a top of the range Taycan. Maybe a Jaguar F-Type SVR.

But with a little input from my son, we went a bit off-piste (or off road) and opted for the iconic Land Rover Defender - which had been the official vehicle of the Rugby World Cup in France. Pity Scotland failed to take a lead from its name and stop Ireland scoring four tries before half time in their pool decider in Paris.

The model we collected from the Peter Vardy Jaguar Land Rover dealership in Tullos was the five door, 3 Litre P400 X 130 packing 396bhp boasting hot-hatch rivalling acceleration of 0-62mph in 6 seconds. (Not that I tried, of course!)

It looked splendid on the forecourt in bright spring sunshine with its Eiger grey metallic exterior. Ironically perhaps not the weather conditions to see the Defender at its most effective. As we found over the weekend the Defender is a remarkable blend of ruggedness, luxury, and technology equally at home in town or country.

Inside revealed a spacious and luxurious interior offering ample and flexible cargo space and seating options for up to eight passengers.

It is built to withstand the harshest conditions, making it perfect for businesses that require regular off-road travels. Whether it's a construction company needing to access remote sites or a tourism business offering off-road adventures,

# “

**Inside revealed a spacious and luxurious interior offering ample and flexible cargo space and seating options for up to eight passengers.**

the Defender's sturdy build and exceptional 4x4 capabilities ensure it can handle any terrain with ease.

And the model we had was packed with appropriate extras including the Expedition roof rack (capable of carrying up to 132kg), which was coupled with the deployable roof ladder, allowing easy access to additional storage space up top. The off-road look is completed with the addition of the side-mounted



Russell Borthwick test drove the Land Rover Defender for Motor mouth



gear carrier which offers an additional 24 litres of easy-access storage space to keep essential equipment to hand.

But at the same time, its sleek design and sophisticated interior will make a strong impression on clients and partners. And the comfortable and enjoyable ride make it perfect for long business trips or transporting VIP clients.

As we drove the roads of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire the higher driving position offered

a very different and fascinating perspective on landmarks in the area. And this vantage point ensured we saw plenty heads turning as other motorists and pedestrians caught a glimpse of our iconic ride.

The blue sky had given way to heavy showers and the Defender dealt effortlessly with the puddles on the South Deeside Road as we headed to Scolty Hill and the rural terrain that is its natural domain.

The Defender is also packed with advanced technology including the Pivi Pro infotainment system which offers seamless connectivity, allowing you to stay connected with your family, team or clients while on the move.

And as well as enhancing safety, the suite of advanced driver-assistance systems, including adaptive cruise control, blind-spot monitoring, and a 3D surround camera gives tech geeks something to chat about over a cuppa.



Looking tree-mendous at Scolty Hill in Banchory.



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## bp Student Tutoring Scheme celebrates 30 years

Three decades of a bp education scheme, which has provided around 3,000 students with an opportunity to inspire North-east pupils, was recognised at the company's North Sea headquarters in March.

The enduring success of the bp Student Tutoring Scheme is thanks to the partnership between North-east higher education institutions; North East Scotland College (NESCol), Robert Gordon University (RGU) and the University of Aberdeen, the region's two local authorities; Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, supported by bp.

Kathryn McKee, Head of UK Communications and Campaigns at bp said: "The scheme was originally created to help the region's young people progress into further and higher education so they might benefit from the highly skilled job opportunities in the burgeoning energy industry. The fact that the scheme remains as relevant today as it was 30 years ago is a testament to its success."

## NHS Grampian Charity awards over £160,000 to local health initiatives

NHS Grampian Charity has announced over £160,000 of funding for community-led health and wellbeing projects across Grampian.

The programme awards grants of up to £10,000 for projects which improve access to health provision, enhance healthcare experiences, and empower individuals to better manage their own health.

Lisa Duthie, NHS Grampian Charity Lead, says: "The latest round of our Community Grants Programme received a huge number of applications from an incredible range of charities and community groups across Grampian, and we are thrilled to be able to support the 19 projects which have been awarded funding this year."

## Award-winning hotel team takes on new venture

The award-winning group behind The Aberdeen Altens Hotel, announced their latest endeavour as they take on a new Aberdeen Hotel.

The team, renowned for their commitment to excellence and community engagement are proud to confirm that, after a temporary closure, The Aberdeen Dyce Hotel is set to welcome guests once again, in the spring.

"We are incredibly excited to be embarking on this journey at The Aberdeen Dyce Hotel," said Kris Manship, Co-owner and General Manager. "Our team is passionate about hospitality, and we look forward to bringing our expertise to this project."



## Awards double for Norwood Hall's wedding team

The ABZ Propeller Fund by Aberdeen International Airport increased its funding available to £30,000 this year to coincide with the North-east's largest transport hub celebrating its 90th anniversary.

Established with the aim of propelling support regionally, ABZ Propeller Fund has been instrumental in providing vital support to numerous worthy causes over the years.

Bruce Watson, Chairman of the ABZ Propeller Fund, said: "As we celebrate Aberdeen International Airport's 90th year, we are delighted to announce the expansion of the ABZ Propeller Fund to £30,000. We have been delighted to help several worthy projects over the last two years and we hope we can help more with our increased funding for this year."

## The future is bright for young engineers from Scotland's first net zero scholarship

Wind Turbine Technician scholars from North East Scotland College (NESCol) are on track to complete their course in the summer, equipped with vital skills for the energy transition.

The learners were the first cohort to undertake the engineering scholarship in Scotland and started their training in August 2022. The group has spent the past two years training at NESCol's Aberdeen Altens and Clinterty campuses, as well as connecting with local employers and gaining invaluable experience with industry site visits.

Paul Balfour, Head of Sector for Mechanical, Electrical and Vehicle Technologies at NESCol, said: "Our engineers have each dedicated a significant amount of time and effort to their scholarships. I have no doubt this will benefit them enormously as they take the next step on their career journey."



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**OEG Energy Group**

OEG Energy Group Limited are pleased to announce the appointment of several new senior management positions. Joanne Barbour, Melanie Bruce, Leslie Scorgie, Lisa Elrick and David Lipp have all been appointed to the new Group management team to strengthen and accelerate OEG's ambitious growth plans.



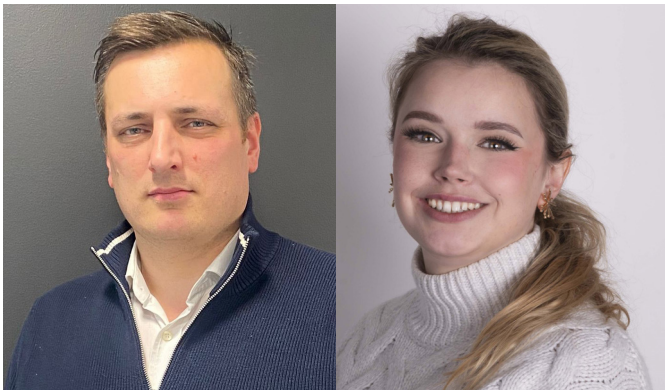
**Apollo**

Apollo are delighted to announce the addition of three professionals to the team. David Stewart, Gary Stevenson and John Donovan have joined Apollo's Edinburgh office, bring a wealth of experience to the team.



**Bold St Media**

Bold St Media has increased its headcount by a third as the brand agency introduces new service offerings. Abbie Strachan and Rowan Monk join the team as Graphic Designers and Sophie Stephen has joined as a Digital Marketing Specialist.



**Donald Lawrie Morrison and Morgen Opala**

Gilson Gray has strengthened its corporate team with the hiring of Donald Lawrie Morrison in the Aberdeen office and Morgen Opala in the firm's Dundee office. Both bring a wealth of experience to their new roles at Gilson Gray.



**Ryan McLennan**

Granite Elite are thrilled to announce the appointment of Ryan McLennan as the new Regional Operations Manager. With over 20 years of experience in managerial roles within the security sector, he brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the dynamic team.



**Susan Webb**

Aberdeen City Council has appointed Susan Webb, Director of Public Health at NHS Grampian to the post of Vice Chair of the Community Planning Aberdeen Board. The appointment, followed the announcement by Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie, Divisional Commander, North-east Division, Police Scotland, that he is stepping down from the role.



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**Jane Tulloch**

Robert Gordon's College has appointed Jane Tulloch as their new Head of Nursery and Junior School. Jane has extensive experience working in Primary education across the North-east region and joins Robert Gordon's from Auchenblae Primary School where she was Head Teacher for three years.



**Colin Black**

Scottish asthma charity, Asthma and Allergy foundation (AAF) has appointed Colin Black, FEI Managing Director of Carjon-MRG as their ambassador. The charity focuses on the management of asthma and specialises in providing reliable asthma training to businesses.



**Rona Kostulin**

Legal firm Pinsent Masons has boosted its Energy Property team in Aberdeen with the addition of Partner Rona Kostulin. Now based at the firm's Queen's Road offices, Rona brings a wealth of experience of advising on the development and funding of major infrastructure projects and asset sales and acquisitions.



**Caroline Merson**

OEG Energy Group Limited has appointed Caroline Merson as its new Chief Marketing & Communications Officer. Caroline brings extensive experience from previous senior marketing and communications roles. Caroline will sit on the Group executive committee and will lead the strategic direction of the OEG Energy Group brand, including its Offshore and Renewables divisions.



**Jim Lockhart and Paul Shields**

Johnston Carmichael has expanded its sector focus to offer specialist engineering and manufacturing services following the appointment of new partners, Jim Lockhart and Paul Shields. The pair will act as joint heads of the new service sector, bringing a wealth of expertise to their new roles.



**Louise Douglas**

The Russell Anderson Foundation (RAF) has appointed Louise Douglas as its first ever full-time Business Development and Fundraising Manager. A well-known figure in the sphere of raising money for charity, Louise Douglas joins RAF after five and a half years with Northsound's Cash For Kids.



**Kerry Scott**

Kerry Scott has been appointed to the role of Group HSEQ and People Director at Motive Offshore Group. The appointment reflects Motive's commitment to further enhancing its HSEQ and people functions.



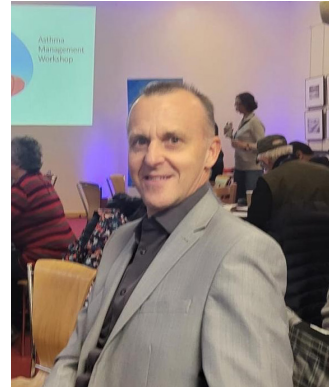
**Port of Aberdeen**

Port of Aberdeen has strengthened its leadership team with the appointment and promotions of three individuals to target growth in the energy, trade and tourism sectors. With experience and expertise spanning 35 years, John Wilson has been appointed Head of Engineering after serving in the role on an interim basis. Benji Morrison joins the port with over 20 years' experience in port management and marine operations, most recently as Assistant Harbour Master at Stornoway Port. Lastly, Peter Suttie, previously serving as Deputy Operations Manager and then Interim Operations Manager, takes up the role of Operations Manager. He joined the port in 2016 as a Vessel Traffic Services Assistant and is now responsible for the safe and effective delivery of quayside operations.



**Alan McQuade**

Well-Safe Solutions is delighted to announce its first Chief Financial Officer. Alan McQuade assumed the CFO position in March, bringing nearly two decades of experience in a variety of senior and management positions in financial services and engineering sector roles.



**Barry Duncan**

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation (AAF) has announced the appointment of Barry Duncan, Managing Director & Vice President Finance at CNR International as its Ambassador, marking a significant milestone in the charity's mission to improve health outcomes for people with asthma.



**Lana Hall**

KR Group has appointed Lana Hall as their Business Development and Marketing Manager, marking a significant addition to the senior team. Lana has returned to the business having previously spent four years in the role of Project, HSEQ & Marketing Coordinator between 2018 and 2022.



**Fifth Ring**

International B2B marketing specialist Fifth Ring has announced several senior appointments as it eyes further growth across its three global offices. The Aberdeen-headquartered agency has appointed Steven Milne as Group Director of Strategy, Dr Chloe Hodge as Head of Brand, and Sarah Gray as Head of Client Services in its Europe office.



**Cat McGarrell**

Gilson Grey has announced the appointment of a new associate to lead the new mass litigation service. Cat McGarrell joins the firm after nine years at Thompsons Solicitors as a group actions solicitor.



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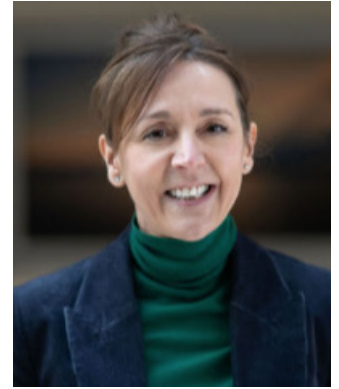
### **Kaylea Adam-Owen and Paul O'Brien**

Dales Marine Services are pleased to announce the appointment of Kaylea Adam-Owen to Chief Finance Officer and Paul O'Brien to Operations Director. Both Kaylea and Paul will serve on the Company's Board as Executive Directors.



### **Andrew Scouller**

Aberdeen's McHardy Financial has announced the appointment of Andrew Scouller as their newest Financial Planner. With his 20 years of expertise in the financial industry Mr Scouller will be supporting private individuals and corporate clients with pensions, investments, and protection.



### **Donna Gibb**

Donna Gibb recently joined the Involve HR team at Quensh Specialists Ltd in Ellon as HR Director, bringing a wealth of HR consultancy experience to the important role.



### **Richard Whittington and Kevin Buchan**

Interwell proudly announces the appointment of Richard Whittington and Kevin Buchan to key sales management positions. Richard takes up the role of UK Sales manager while Kevin assumes the position of Africa Sales Manager.



### **Emma Sadler and Jack Boyle**

Blackadders LLP has announced the promotion of Emma Sadler and Jack Boyle to Partners. Emma is now a Partner in the Family Law Team and advises on all things Family Law, whilst Jack Boyle has been promoted from Director to Partner in the Employment team.



**Danuta Dobrzanska**

Aberdeen Inspired has welcomed Danuta Dobrzanska to the role of Business Engagement and Development Manager. Danuta has over seven years of experience in the hospitality industry and is looking forward to her new role at Aberdeen Inspired.



**Kenny McMillan**

Macdonald Aviemore resort has appointed Kenny McMillan as Managing Director to help drive customer growth. Kenny McMillan returns to Aviemore, where he first trained as a sous chef between 2004 and 2007, with a wealth of experience gained across Macdonald Hotels & Resorts.



**Scott Stewart**

ZynQ 360 are proud to announce the promotion of Scott Stewart to the position of Operations Director at its headquarters in Aberdeen. Scott brings to the role over 12 years of extensive experience in photogrammetry survey capture and visualisation project delivery across global Energy sectors.



**Shane Jamieson**

Arch Henderson LLP is delighted to announce that Shane Jamieson has become a Partner at the firm. Shane has a wealth of civil engineering and project management experience and qualifications and has the energy and passion required to take on the responsibility that comes with the role.



**Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace**

Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace are delighted to announce a raft of promotions at the firm to celebrate the 20th anniversary. Kimberley Smart and Gordon Wallace are both promoted to Partner, and Stacey Grubb, Michael Leith and Grant Mills are promoted to Associate Solicitor.



**Mike Berry**

Engineering and manufacturing specialist, Brimmond, have appointed Mike Berry to the new position of Project Implementation Manager to oversee the roll out of a new Enterprising Resourcing Planning (ERP) system designed to streamline and digitise their processes.



**Duncan Peter**

Aberdeen FC Community Trust is pleased to announce the appointment of Duncan Peter as Business Development and Partnerships Manager. A well-known figure within the third sector in the North-east, Duncan joins AFCCT after almost six years with Clan Cancer Support, latterly as Head of Income Generation and Business Development.



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### Aberdeen Inspired

Aberdeen inspired has welcomed three new members to the board of the city centre's Business Improvement District. Bringing their wealth of experience, knowledge and passion for the Granite City are Duncan Cameron, Managing Director of First Bus Scotland, Dominique Dawson, Jewellery Manager of Fannies and Sarah Stewart, a solicitor of 17 years who is supporting the running of Juniper on Belmont Street. All three have been welcomed by Aberdeen Inspired and will enhance the existing wealth of talent on the board.



### Mark Rhynas and Jamie Smith

SBP Accountants and Business Advisers has announced the promotions of two members of its team to Directors. Mark Rhynas and Jamie Smith move to the Director positions following their exceptional expertise and leadership, and their promotions are expected to bring fresh perspectives and innovative strategies to SBP's management team.



### Joanne Maguire

Scottish Rail Holdings has announced that Joanne Maguire has been appointed interim Managing Director of ScotRail following Alex Hynes' two-year secondment to the UK Government Department for Transport.



### Stephen Rawlinson

STATS Group has announced that Stephen Rawlinson has been appointed the new CEO. Rawlinson will succeed Leigh Howarth in a planned leadership transition who will now assume a Non-Executive Director role with the company.



### Arnlea

Arnlea has announced the appointment of three key members to their team: Claire Murray as Head of Business Development, Jen Hughes as Marketing Manager and Kailee Hoffman as SaaS Delivery Manager. The strategic appointments come as Arnlea aim to fortify their team and pursue ambitious growth plans.



## Former headteacher creates award-winning Scottish craft gin business with support from Business Gateway

Collymoon Craft Gin's Gealach Úr Scottish Dry Gin recently won the Bronze Medal Award for Scotland in the London Dry Gin category at the World Gin Awards in January.

Collymoon Craft Gin is the brainchild of former headteacher, Nicola Finney, who had a long-held dream of launching her own gin and spirits brand. In 2021, Nicola left her career in education and returned to Scotland after 30 years living in Staffordshire, on a mission to turn her vision into a reality. Looking for advice on how to get her business off to the best start possible, Nicola accessed a suite of Business Gateway's start-up support services.

Nicola Finney, founder and owner, Collymoon Craft Gin, said: "Business Gateway has been a massive support throughout the process of setting up my business. Having my adviser on the end of the phone has given me a real confidence boost, knowing that I'm not alone in this process."

## Kym Marsh to star in 101 Dalmatians at HMT

Coronation Street and Hear'say star Kym Marsh is set to star as Cruella de Vil in a new musical production of 101 Dalmatians, coming to Aberdeen's His Majesty's Theatre from Tuesday, October 29 to Saturday, November 2.

Aberdeen Performing Arts Director of Programming and Creative Projects, Ben Torrie, said: "When it comes to villains, you don't get more iconic than Cruella de Vil, and the fabulously talented Kym Marsh will bring her to life in what's sure to be an electric performance. This will be a fast-paced, fun and entertaining show for the whole family - bring it on!"

Tickets are on sale now at [www.aberdeenperformingarts.com](http://www.aberdeenperformingarts.com)

## Boost for local businesses as Aberdeen Gift Card joins GiftRound

Aberdeen's GiftCard has joined the national group collecting platform GiftRound.

Aberdeen Gift Card - introduced by Aberdeen Inspired - is one of the first local gift cards available from the GiftRound store as part of a drive to encourage local shopping. The gift card can be used with more than 300 local businesses - from shops to salons, restaurants, and bars to arts venue.

Shona Byrne, Project Manager with Aberdeen Inspired, said: "The Aberdeen Gift Card being available on GiftRound is exciting and will bring the power of shop local to new audiences."

## AISUS' data team partner with RGU

AISUS has partnered with Robert Gordon University to scale up and expand its systems.

AISUS is pioneering inspection services and solutions, this time by up scaling its data team to evolve its Gemini system, an integrated data management platform.

This strategic expansion marks a milestone in AISUS' growth, confirming its dedication to innovation and excellence, remaining at the forefront of harnessing AI capabilities, and providing an immersive client experience within the oil and gas sector.

## Resilient parents celebrated at annual Fizz and Fashion event

Charlie House's popular Fizz and Fashion event returned to recognise inspirational and resilient North-east parents who care for children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions.

Principally sponsored by Scott James & Associates, the event took place at Union Kirk and saw 10 mums - who are supported by Charlie House - receive indulging beauty treatments before walking in a fashion show in front of more than 200 guests.

Aiming to raise awareness of the remarkable yet critical and demanding care each parent provides their child, Fizz and Fashion offers participating models a dedicated day to prioritise themselves and feel special, while educating the guests on the vast number of local families that need support for their children with degenerative conditions.

Leigh Ryrie, children and family Support Manager at Charlie House said: "I am so proud of every single person who took part in this year's fashion show. These parents give their all to their families every day, often putting their own needs last, and they deserve to be recognised for their strength."

# Innovation for Industry.

What we can do you for you.

## Fabrication

Powering Progress in the renewables sector since Q4 2023, Harper UK Ltd has been leading the charge on welding & fabrication 6-figure projects in onshore & offshore renewables across the UK! Whilst retaining our specialism of providing bespoke fabrication and welding design and engineering services.

## Overboard Chutes

Designed to enhance the efficiency and safety of deploying and retrieving product for subsea, our robust chute system is your key to seamless, standardised interaction with your vessel back deck.

In addition to supplying roller chutes, we are driving innovation in the field where all of our plate chutes feature water lubrication systems.

## Subsea Baskets DNV 2.7-3

Harper UK Ltd are the market leaders in Subsea Baskets. Holding Europe's largest rental fleet of DNV 2.7-3 units, they are designed in-house for construction and decommissioning scopes Globally.

## CSV & DSV Mobilisations & Demob

With our 20 x 8ft portable power unit which fully houses welding and gouging equipment for a 14-man team, for all of your mobilisation and demobilisation needs. The PPU is a single lift from quayside to back deck and operational within 15 minutes, with an integrated vessel e-stop system.

We cover all ports in the UK for vessel mobilisation and demobilisation contracts with 24/7 coverage, 365 days a year.



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