

Business Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 2021 | TECHNOLOGY



Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce



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Virtual Brick packages are now available to support our new mental health facility

We are delighted to introduce a new initiative to support our Changing Lives campaign whereby you can buy a virtual brick and play YOUR part in changing lives.

There is a growing demand for mental wellbeing services, with 1 in 3 adults being diagnosed with a mental health condition in Aberdeen alone every year.

By purchasing a Changing Lives Virtual Brick, you are helping VSA to make this facility a reality and help support adults on their journey to recovery.

There are four packages to choose from, simply visit vsa.org.uk or scan the QR code below to be part of something truly special and change lives.

OUR NEW MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY:



ADDITIONAL OUTREACH
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The Hub
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AB23 8GX

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E info@agcc.co.uk
www.agcc.co.uk

Affiliated Chambers
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Bulletin Team



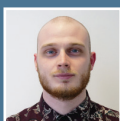
Editor

Laura Grant
T 01224 343926
E business.bulletin@agcc.co.uk



News features

Graeme Smith Media
T 01224 275833



Design & production

Andrew Taylor
T 01224 343934
E production@agcc.co.uk



Editorial support

Michelle Dargie
T 01224 343907
E michelle.dargie@agcc.co.uk

Advertising

T 01224 343900
E info@agcc.co.uk

Next month's theme
Property &
Infrastructure

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Our partners

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

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

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

Technically, our recovery starts here

THOSE of us with long memories might recall the phrase: “Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to make him better than he was before. Better... stronger...faster.”

Of course, these were the words used to introduce the cult 70s sci-fi show The Six Million Dollar Man referring to the astronaut Steve Austin who was re-modelled into a bionic part cyborg part man following a catastrophic crash landing.

An appropriate metaphor for where the economy and our lives are today?

A delve into the mid to late 1970s history books will reveal an oil crisis, reduced working weeks for some, increases in trade union activity, interventionist state policy, serious inflationary pressures, our televisions spewing out a steady stream of public information films telling us how to behave and a winter of discontent. Fast forward almost fifty years, any of this sound familiar?

Accounting for inflation plus the enormous debt being built up in handling the situation, the sixty billion dollar+ question here is, how do we build back the North-east economy at pace, better, stronger and what role does technology have to play in this?

The race to recover is going to be a highly competitive one and the places that succeed will be those with a clear economic strategy, oven ready investible projects, strong partnerships and innovative businesses ready to embrace and lead change. And I believe we have these things in this region, in spades.

To enable this to happen, our governments need to create the appropriate conditions, cutting out red tape and antiquated processes then step back and trust the private sector to take the lead in the daunting task of getting our economy back on track.

There is little doubt that, over the last 18 months many companies have been forced into exploring new ways of working, many of these facilitated by technologies that existed previously but had never before been fully operationally tested.

Some of this will stick, for sure but let's not artificially force fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another on the back of what was a unique set of emergency measures.

Technology is there to assist and enhance how businesses perform, not take over from their lifeblood - people.

Yes, robots and artificial intelligence will become the default solution for many tasks. Just as in the 1700s and 1800s, manufacturing of goods moved from artisans in small shops and homes to steam powered machines in large factories and new-fangled farming equipment replaced people and horses in our fields.

However, as was the case then, in the wake of these changes, humans will be needed to create and deliver value in brand new ways for brand new business models.

And, on a related topic, we must take advantage of the emerging opportunity around seeking to attract talented people to locate themselves in this region based on our fantastic quality of life where their employers are taking a more agnostic approach to location.

In this edition of the Business Bulletin you'll be able to read about how a range of organisations, large and small from diverse sectors - including the Chamber - are employing technology to drive new way customer experience advantage.

'Technically', the bionic future!



Russell Borthwick
chief executive





Gareth Gilbert

Mintra in maritime expansion

A MAJOR expansion of Mintra's maritime-specific eLearning course library - developed in partnership with operators to address the core training needs of seafarers - will help the industry rise to the challenge of digitalisation.

The digital learning specialist is more than doubling the size of its maritime course library from 107 to 238 titles, all of which can be made available onboard a vessel and from its cloud-based learning management system, Trainingportal.

The library expansion is part of a concerted drive by Mintra into the maritime space - a move which this year has already involved the acquisition of maritime specialists Safebridge and overall revenue from the sector overtake income from energy for the first time. This is on the back of a 24% increase in sales of content to shipping customers in 2020.

Contracts have already been signed with two major new clients ahead of the library expansion being completed and several existing clients have committed to increase their eLearning spend on the additional titles.

Gareth Gilbert, chief operating officer of Mintra, said the company's track record in working with digitally mature, safety-critical industries ensured it could support and guide the maritime community as it transitioned towards digitalisation.

"The industry has played a pivotal role in the expansion of our maritime eLearning course library from the outset, demonstrating our commitment to be a genuine and trusted partner of the sector," he said.

"We worked with existing and prospective clients to examine training matrices and identify courses essential to the competency needs of seafarers and consulted with several highly respected subject matter experts to understand how we could maximise the benefits of our library expansion project."

Archie creators become patrons

THE two creative minds behind the instantly recognisable Archie brand identity, illustrator Clare Mackie and brand designer Neil Haston, have been announced as new patrons of The Archie Foundation.

Mearns-born Clare, an internationally acclaimed artist, and Neil, who runs Haston Creative agency, were delighted to accept the invitation to become patrons in recognition of their involvement with Archie since its inception 21 years ago.

Clare and Neil teamed up in 2000 to create the lovable character and introduce the young Archie brand to the world. Their partnership was rekindled recently to bring together The Archie Foundation and its family of funds - Friends of the Neonatal Unit and Grampian Child Bereavement Network (GCBN) - under a new, unifying brand identity, where a grown-up Archie is cuddling baby Neo in his arms and holding the GCBN kite.

Brighton-based Clare can count many international brands in her impressive client list and she has also illustrated more than 20 books.

Neil's creative marketing expertise spans decades and he has worked on many blue-chip accounts in London, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Neil has created memorable work, at home and abroad, for clients across multiple industry and charitable sectors.

Aberdeen Cyrenians expands volunteering service

ABERDEEN Cyrenians, which has a 53-year history of supporting people in crisis through volunteer-led projects, has expanded its volunteering services.

The new project involves street-based volunteers teaming up with support staff to build trusted relationships and enable those with difficulty accessing support to get the help they need.

Chris Bennett-Taylor, development lead at Aberdeen Cyrenians, said that from its beginning as a soup kitchen in the Castlegate Cyrenians quickly learned that additional support is vital to helping people move on. For those who are marginalised by society and most need help, the conditions put upon them to receive it can create barriers.

"This project is an exciting new chapter for the organisation" he said. "Since our Street Alternatives project had to pause during the pandemic, we have worked hard to provide continued support, but nothing beats that face-to-face interaction with another human being.

"To ensure its success, we're committing more resources to support volunteering and creating a new service manager role we're currently recruiting for."

Aberdeen Cyrenians currently operates with around 100 volunteers a year but hopes to expand this to 150.



Chief executive officer Kenneth Simpson

VSA launches heritage website to help families stay connected

NORTH-EAST social care charity VSA has launched a heritage website.

The charity launched a heritage project earlier this year as part of funding received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which aims to showcase social care throughout the North-east.

VSA, which marked its 150th anniversary in 2020, is inviting people whose lives have been touched by the organisation in some way to share their stories.

There is a section dedicated to sharing memories and all you have to do is submit a story and the charity will be in contact and display it on the website.

Kenneth Simpson, chief executive of VSA, said: "We would love to gather as many stories as possible to help us bring this project to life, so please do get in touch if you have a story to share.

"We are also delighted to launch as part of our new website heritage postcards so you can send a digital VSA postcard to a loved one to let them know you're thinking of them. After such a challenging year, we wanted to create something that helped families stay connected."

Expro's safety record honoured

OILFIELD services company Expro has been honoured with an Order of Distinction after receiving its 17th consecutive Gold award in the RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Health and Safety Awards.

These are the UK's longest running health and safety awards with approximately 2,000 entrants each year.

The honour is presented to organisations which exhibit leading global health and safety practices and recognises Expro's continued success in safety, as well as a range of new safety initiatives the company has carried out during the past year.

Seven foot Lego ship model for port

A SEVEN foot long scale model of an offshore vessel made famous in recent film Tenet from Batman director, Christopher Nolan, has gone on display at an Angus port.

The giant 1:37 scale replica of the Norwegian-registered Magne Viking vessel was created entirely from Lego bricks and is complete with realistic features such as retractable anchor chains and lighting on deck and in the bridge.

The Magne Viking regularly visits Montrose and the model was commissioned by Montrose Port Authority and built by port employee Jim McDonough who lives near Arbroath and has already had his version of the Royal Yacht Britannia immortalised at Ocean Terminal, Edinburgh.

According to professional Lego builder Jim there are around 120,000 bricks in the Magne Viking model with no glue used so everything can be removed and replaced when required.

After a nine-month kitchen table build, the model has now been sealed in a bespoke glass cabinet in the reception area of the port's South Quay offices with Montrose Port hopeful that school groups will soon be able to visit it.

Captain Tom Hutchison, chief executive officer and harbour master at Montrose Port Authority, said: "With the ongoing construction of the Seagreen wind farm operations and maintenance base and increasing levels of vessel traffic, including regular visitors like the Magne Viking, it is an extremely exciting time for the port and Montrose in general and we hope visitors are as amazed by this stunning model as we are."

Legal firm's emissions target

MULTINATIONAL law firm Pinsent Masons has unveiled targets to cut absolute carbon emissions by a minimum of 50% by 2030 as it continues to reduce its environmental impact and support clients in tackling the climate crisis.

The firm's targets, which are among the first law firm targets to be verified by the Science Based Target initiative (SBTi), commit to reducing absolute global greenhouse gas emissions by FY2030, from a base year of FY2019.

The SBTi defines and promotes best practice in science-based target setting and independently assesses companies' targets.

Furthermore, the SBTi has approved an additional target for the firm to source 100% renewable electricity across its global estate by 2030. Currently, 100% of the electricity purchased in the UK, Republic of Ireland and France is from renewable sources.

Pinsent Masons employs more than 500 lawyers and support staff at its three Scottish offices in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh.



YOU can quite often tell, just by looking at someone's face, if they are suffering ill health. However, the chances are if you looked a pig straight in the eye you wouldn't gain a great deal of insight into its wellbeing.

That's where technology can better humans. Using facial recognition software farmers may soon be able to not only identify individual pigs but spot signs of ill health long before it becomes apparent even to an expert that there is a problem.

This is just one example of the growing importance of technology in the agriculture sector according to Paul Mayfield, senior consultant at SAC Consulting, which turns research into advice and advantage for agriculture and land-based businesses and where colleagues are looking at the face recognition technology.

Paul, a former farmer, pointed out that the agriculture sector has been using satellite technology for around two decades for yield mapping using sensors attached to the elevators of combine harvesters.

"That data gets sent to a satellite where it is mapped and provides a picture of what the yield is in different parts of the field and it can

be surprising how it changes across what looks like a uniform field," he said.

"In the early days farmers would then choose whether they put more fertiliser on the most productive parts or least productive parts.

"Now those decisions are much better understood because the yield maps are being combined with maps looking at soil types within a field and a lot of this sensor and sensing technology, as well as imagery, is

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“That data gets sent to a satellite where it is mapped and provides a picture of what the yield is in different parts of the field and it can be surprising how it changes across what looks like a uniform field,”

Paul Mayfield,
senior consultant
SAC Consulting

beginning to be pulled together to produce a really in-depth picture.”

He explained that spreading fertiliser only on areas where it would have maximum benefit could produce enormous savings on large farms and estates. And that flying drones are now used which, in some cases, are able to examine individual plants.

“That can perhaps identify disease before it appears across the field or an issue within the field itself,” he added.

As well as technology becoming much more advanced and able to measure many more things much more efficiently, it is also becoming more robust.

“As you can imagine on a farm the environment can be pretty hostile for electronics and that was a problem in the early stages but now these things are being built for the farming environment.

“Also sensors generally require batteries to operate and while initially you were always changing batteries, these small sensors will now go on for years before a battery needs changed. As with all technologies they start off relatively crude and become more sophisticated given time.



"Satellite imagery is becoming increasingly important and that's because it's improved. It's got down to a fairly high resolution so you can identify crops in a field and sometimes you can identify problem areas in fields like flooding. The amount of different types of information you can now obtain is increasing exponentially and becoming much more economic as well."

As well as helping with animal welfare, technology is becoming increasingly important to overcome labour shortages in the agriculture industry.

Robotic milking is long established and now cattle can be fitted with an ID collar which means when they go to be milked and fed they are given a specific amount of feed depending on their yield.

"One of the rewards for the cattle for going into the robotic milker is that they are fed," he said, "but the machine can also tell when they were last fed. The sly ones want to go in more often than they should to be milked but the machine won't milk them if they have been in within a certain timescale.

"I think technology will probably take over some of the mundane tasks on farms. In indoor dairy herds there are

robots which go up and down a track and scrape slurry into the pit which at one time a cowman would have had to do a couple or three times a day.

"These sort of developments actually gives the cowman a lot more time to look after the cattle, to assess them and perhaps do various things to improve their health and wellbeing which is not possible when you're flat out busy all day as many farmers are.

“

"We have a Highland research farm near Crianlarich and they've been using a system with a tracker sensor on a sheep collar and they are able, in real time, to produce a map that shows where the individual sheep are - and I'm talking across 2,500 acres of hill land."

Paul Mayfield,
senior consultant
SAC Consulting

"We have a Highland research farm near Crianlarich and they've been using a system with a tracker sensor on a sheep collar and they are able, in real time, to produce a map that shows where the individual sheep are - and I'm talking across 2,500 acres of hill land.

"From that they are able to identify how individual sheep act differently, where they feed, where they move to, how they group together and that sort of thing.

"That can allow a farmer to see whether there may be a sheep in trouble because it hasn't moved from one particular spot for some time, or, when rounding up making sure they've got them all. It is quite a big bonus, rather than going out on the quad bike or on foot to try to find them."

Paul believes that, particularly in Scotland where there are still many relatively small farms, the introduction of new technology will be incremental as farmers watch and weigh up the potential time or money savings it can bring to assess whether it is viable.

He believes that labour shortages will be one of the drivers for new technology.



“People are no longer being able to come over from abroad so we are seeing developments in things like robotic fruit pickers and I know one or two fruit farms which have been trying that out. They don’t pick as fast as a humans but they work 24 hours a day and the lack of labour is certainly driving interest in that area.

“Farming is no longer a career you go into when you can’t find anything else and the skills required in future will potentially involve electronics, mechanics, data management and analysis and possibly coding, a far cry from many people’s traditional view of farm work.”

Technology now plays a vital role for ANM Group, one of the largest and most progressive co-operative farming, food and finance businesses in Scotland which celebrates its 150th anniversary next year.

Over the last 30 years it has had a successful track record of diversification to providing additional and relevant services for its members and that served it well when the pandemic hit.

“ANM has always sought to be an innovator in all of the businesses we operate, so that we can provide the best possible service and return for our members,” said chief executive Grant Rogerson.

“Thanks to our strategy of continued investment in routes to market we were in the privileged position last March that we had an online bidding system readily available alongside the traditional live sales.”

He said that when lockdown started the platform, which had been in place and working consistently for ANM for several years, allowed a smooth transition into fully online based auctions and hybrid auctions – where both live and online bidding can happen concurrently.

“With the increased demands on our systems from additional users caused by the lockdown measures and social distancing requirements, activity through our online platform increased by over 950%.

“Our customers and members found the ability to follow sales from home, the office or vehicle cab and bid on items they were interested in buying was almost as straightforward online as in person and they embraced the changes wholeheartedly.

“While it is important for us to host live sales at our centres, there is no doubt our online bidding system and online marketplace has played a vital role within the industry over the past 18 months. Continuing to use the competitive price discovery

mechanism of live auctions with a professional auctioneer, provides all buyers and sellers the same price transparency and sale integrity when buying and selling. As we look to the future, we continue to invest in our online bidding system with a newly upgraded version just implemented.

“We have felt the benefits of using online selling but as a co-operative society we continue to listen to our customers and we will strike a balance in the routes to market we use. We will never lose sight of the value we place on face-to-face interaction around the auction ring. Bringing people together into a hub is as much about both business transactions and social interaction – this will always be at our core here at ANM.

“However we are proud to be moving forward with a dynamic mix of traditional and digital options for all our clients to ensure that we are embracing our relationship with technology while not forgetting our traditional values.”

What is your favourite app?



"My favourite app is IMDB (Internet Movie Database) but not for the reasons that you may think. The movie trailers? Nope. Actors' birthdays? Absolutely not. Releases dates of movies? Not a chance. It is for the movie trivia section.

"After watching a movie, I immediately go to its trivia page on the app. Here you will find gems such as: Sean Connery wore a toupee in every James Bond film, OJ Simpson was originally considered to be the Terminator ahead of Arnie, R2-D2 and C3PO appear in the background of Raiders of the Lost Ark; and finally, the 'You talkin' to me?' scene from Taxi Driver was 100% improvised by De Niro. How can anyone watch a movie without it?"

David Jamieson, *founder and managing director, Salus Technical*



"I can't single out one app in particular that's my favourite. However, any app that makes productivity that much better, or makes my life easier, especially at work, is a lifesaver. Due to the work I do, certain apps like Canva and Adobe Spark are great for creating quick graphics on the go and other apps like Google Keep and Monday.com are great for tracking tasks. If you were to look at the time spent on my apps on my phone the most used would definitely be TikTok but let's not speak about that!

"At Doqaru we have our own app. We mainly use this for any courses we have (Value Proposition Crafter and Social Selling Essentials). It's currently getting redesigned so I'm excited to see what it will look like once it's finalised."

Sarah Dickie, *marketing team leader, Doqaru*



"The LinkedIn app is invaluable for my day-to-day operations. As a technology-led business with an international reach, LinkedIn gives the capability to quickly build relationships with people across the world and spot any trends. In addition, we can communicate on LinkedIn what we do as a business and how we can reduce time and costs for immigration and visa services.

"We have built a following of decision-makers and influencers who read our content on LinkedIn. It's been a first-rate way of spreading the word about Nomadic and we have won business by engaging with others on the platform. My own profile can be found and again this is a way to start a conversation, often with someone from outside the UK. I simply couldn't do without LinkedIn. It's an important part of our business strategy."

Neil Thomson, *EMEA director, Nomadic*



Ken and Janet Hoskins

Solar powered e-bikes development

A NORTH-EAST company has announced plans to deploy potentially more than 15,000 e-bikes powered by the sun around the world by 2026.

Aberdeen-based Frisco e-Bikes are the brainchild of Ken and Janet Hoskins and work in tandem with the innovative Frisco Solar Docks which are believed to be unique to the sector thanks to their green power source.

By harnessing sustainable solar power the flexible systems do not need to be connected to the electricity grid and can, therefore, be set up in any location with minimal infrastructure and management. Target markets include city centre contactless public hire opportunities and green commuting or transfer options for employers or educational settings.

With the development of the prototypes already well underway, the search is now on to secure additional pre-launch investment which will enable the company to launch in the UK in 2022 and overseas the following year. Kit assembly and maintenance of the click and connect system will take place as close to the end location as possible, creating social enterprise employment opportunities with a particular focus on work for ex-offenders and adaptive tooling to maximise inclusive employment opportunities.

A portion of hire revenue will be donated to charities, including those which support people affected by issues of homelessness and transport poverty.

Progress to date has been bolstered thanks to work with a range of institutions such as the University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde, plus participation in Dundee's Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc (MSIP) Accelerator. The 16-week support programme targets ambitious, early-stage companies using an incubator environment to underpin Scotland's response to the global climate emergency.

University's course for farmers' safety skills

RESEARCHERS from the University of Aberdeen have teamed up with industry partners KURA Human Factors to develop a training course designed specifically for farmers. The course is the first to emphasise the importance of non-technical skills (NTS) for farmers using techniques borrowed from the aviation industry.

NTS' refer to a subset of 'human factor' skills such as task management and situation awareness and have been examined extensively in other high-risk industries including aviation, offshore drilling and healthcare. However, the research team at the University of Aberdeen is the only group studying these skills in farming, and this will be the first farmer specific NTS training course developed anywhere.

Farming is the most dangerous industry in the UK with 14,000 non-fatal injuries and 39 deaths in the UK during 2018 and 2019. This translates to a fatality rate 18 times higher than the general industry average.

Causes of death remain broadly the same over the past five years with being struck by a moving vehicle, injured by an animal and falls from height being the most frequent killers. Such a consistently high fatality rate has prompted farming organisations and safety professionals to look for a new approach to improve farm safety and ultimately reduce fatalities.

Bring back face-to-face meetings and sirloin steaks

LONDON North Eastern Railway (LNER) has revealed research showing the pent-up demand for face-to-face meetings and business lunches once lockdown restrictions lift.

More than 92% of Scottish workers who now work from home say that they are desperately missing in person contact with colleagues and clients.

According to the study of business people 95% of Scotland respondents felt that the inability to have after work drinks or lunches with colleagues has had a negative effect on the morale in their workplace and 17% yearn to be able to travel for work again.

When it comes to the perfect meal to seal a deal with clients the majority (36%) insisted that a sirloin steak and a glass of Malbec is the lunch to land a deal. Just 7% of those polled thought the best way to impress a client is by treating them to a vegan burger and a dairy free shake, showing that the traditional approach of wining and dining still has a place for businesses.

While many companies are adopting more flexible daily working arrangements for employees the research has shown that there is still plenty of room for the face-to-face business meetings – 99% of respondents admitted that they are better communicators in face-to-face meetings, while 94% also said they're more likely to seal a deal in person than via a video or telephone call.

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Or contact our retained agents

Graeme Nisbet

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graeme.nisbet@fgburnett.co.uk

Jonathan Nesbitt

Tel. 01224 597531 / 07771 923401

jonathan.nesbitt@fgburnett.co.uk

Matt Park

Tel. 01224 415951

matthew.park@knightfrank.com

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Managing partner Simon Cowie

Infinity Partnership wins top award

INFINITY Partnership has been named Accounting Practice of the Year at the 2021 Sage Impact Awards.

The Aberdeen-based accountancy and business advisory firm, a five-time winner at the British Accountancy Awards, was praised for its commitment to excellence by Sage, the global accountancy software firm.

In addition, Infinity senior accounts assistant Chloe Leslie was shortlisted in the Apprentice of the Year Award category.

Infinity has made a substantial investment in cloud-based technology solutions to assist in providing first-rate support and advice to clients. Infinity also set up a CV19 information hub within hours of the pandemic becoming a national emergency.

AFC's partnership with Konica Minolta

ABERDEEN Football Club has signed a new strategic partnership with global technology, service and support company Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK).

The partnership, which runs for the following two seasons, builds on an existing five-year relationship with Konica Minolta which becomes the club's first official document solutions partner.

TEXO, the engineering fabrication, asset management and survey company, has also renewed its long-standing commitment to Aberdeen Football Club with the announcement of a substantial new advertising deal for the next three seasons.

Four businesses win STV Growth Fund awards

FOUR Scottish businesses with diversity and inclusion at their hearts have each been awarded £25,000 airtime from the STV Growth Fund, which exists to make advertising more accessible for the Scottish business community.

Finalists presented the ways in which they champion diversity, along with details of how they will grow their businesses through their focus on inclusion, to an expert panel of judges earlier. The four winning businesses will now develop a commercial airtime campaign to run on STV within the next year.

The successful businesses are Social Stories Club – an Edinburgh based social enterprise which produces gift boxes containing products from social enterprises, each with a fascinating story of social impact and helping communities and the environment.

Daisy Tree Baby Boutique – a family run high street and online store based in Aberdeenshire which only sells toys and clothes that are ethically and sustainably sourced, some of which are Fair Trade too. It strives to ensure that its marketing is diverse and representative of children across Scotland.

Deaf Action – exists to support the diversity of deaf people. Based in Edinburgh, its work is geared towards empowering all deaf people to achieve their potential and fully participate in society, with equality of rights, access and opportunity.

Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES) – WES is a research-led, not-for-profit community interest company which champions women-led and women-owned businesses.

STV has ring-fenced £1m in total for businesses specifically championing inclusivity from its £20m Growth Fund. Danielle Kelly, director of sales and strategy Scotland at STV said: "We were blown away by the passion shown by these businesses and their commitment to ensuring that diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything they do. We're delighted to have them on board with the STV Growth Fund and can't wait to develop and air what we know will be inspiring campaigns."

Aker and AF Gruppen join forces

AKER Solutions and AF Gruppen have signed a Letter of Intent to merge the two companies' existing offshore decommissioning operations into a 50/50 owned company with the goal of creating a leading global player for environmentally friendly recycling of offshore assets.

"By combining Aker Solutions' offshore, engineering and project execution capabilities with AF Gruppen's decommissioning and construction capabilities, we aim to increase customer efficiency throughout the decommissioning process and maximise the total recycling potential," said Kjetel Digre, chief executive officer of Aker Solutions.



Plugging the digital skills shortage

Mary Holland,
director,
Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)
North East



IMAGINE a SWOT analysis of Scotland's economy. Atop the strengths quadrant is our digital technology sector, growing at one and a half times the speed of the rest of the economy.

The stats make for impressive reading: 9,400 tech companies contribute £4.9bn to the Scottish economy and support nearly 100,000 jobs, with an annual requirement for 13,000 new roles each year. So far, so positive.

Until we come to threats. A glaring gap is emerging between demand and supply in Scotland's digital sector. The sector may be creating 13,000 new digital roles annually but there's a significant shortfall of people to fill them. According to ScotlandIS, the trade association for the digital technologies industry, the country only produces around 5,000 new recruits each year through apprenticeships or graduates.

Which brings us to opportunities. How can we support the growth of our dynamic tech sector so that Scotland continues to lead from the front? While there's no immediate solution, there's undoubtedly an immediate need for action, involving both industry and education.

Encouragingly, efforts are already underway. The Digital Technology Education Charter has been established as a catalyst for change. The Charter brings together organisations, individuals and schools to support and inspire the next generation of computing science at school – a subject that is intrinsic to tech careers.

The Charter is more than a mere list of signatories: there's substance behind it. The website allows schools and companies to connect and plan activities to bring the subject of computer science to life for pupils. Signatories are also joining forces to raise awareness among pupils, parents and carers about the wealth of opportunities that choosing computer science can open up.

For parents and carers, it seems mind-boggling to encourage your teenager to pursue a job that might not yet exist. Yet this is the reality across the broader careers landscape. Tech is arguably a far broader driver of change – as seen by the growing profile of sub-sectors such as fintech, agri-tech, healthcare technology and esports.

We may not be able to give young people concise descriptions of the roles they'll be applying for in

five years' time but we can lay the foundations and whet their appetites. Studying computing science sows the seeds of interest in a young person's mind. Notably, employers also place a huge importance on curiosity, creativity and critical thinking; skills that a young person with a passion for technology can bring to their business, particularly if nurtured through industry input in the classroom.

Closer to home the value of tech is evidenced by Opportunity North East's stated ambition to establish the region as a global hub for the industrial digital economy with a high-growth company cluster. The ONE Tech Hub provides a dedicated environment for North-east digital start-ups and existing companies to grow.

This explosion of positive tech activity on our doorstep will require bright young minds to continue the growth journey. Igniting the spark in their schooldays is key to preventing the digital skills shortage from becoming Scotland's weakness.



Thirst for knowledge

ABERDEEN & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has long been aware of the immense value of data, one of the most valuable resources for modern businesses.

It was a pioneer when it had a bespoke Customer Relations Management (CRM) system designed for it and Rubi, as it is called, is now used by around half of the Chambers of Commerce in the UK.

However, as chief executive Russell Borthwick explained, now is the time to ensure the Chamber is able to maximise the benefits of Rubi 4, the latest and recently launched iteration.

To help achieve that aim the Chamber, having been in discussions with Robert Gordon University (RGU) since last year, has been awarded a Management Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) funded by the UK Government department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through Innovate UK.

A KTP is a UK Government funded knowledge transfer mechanism designed to increase the competitiveness of the UK's

industrial base and companies can benefit from up to a 67% grant.

"This will allow us to bring in a level of expertise and knowledge about this subject which, with respect to the current team, no one has had. The two-year project isn't about the system, it's about the usage and the information that we put in and

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“We want to understand what relates to who within the organisations. Rather than shouting loudly about all of the things that we do to everybody we can start being much more selective and relevant about the conversations we’re having we’re having and about the communications we are putting out.”

Russell Borthwick,
chief executive
AGCC

extract from it. That will allow us to better understand our customers and to communicate more clearly and relevantly with them about the topics that interest them.

“At the end of the day it will improve the levels of service we give to our members and customers and hopefully we will recruit more members and have more satisfied members. Those members will be able to take advantage, more regularly, of some of our other commercial services.

“The question we must ask is how adept we have been at making sure that our data is relevant, up-to-date and clean. People may have seen Rubi as being an add-on to the day job and not something which can really add value to the way that the team operates rather than just being something ‘nice to have.’ We need to change the way that we use it and the management mindset.”

Russell said that the Chamber has a myriad of different types and sizes of members and the aim is to ensure that communications reach the right people in each.

“We want to understand what relates to who within the organisations. Rather than shouting



loudly about all of the things that we do to everybody we can start being much more selective and relevant about the conversations we're having and about the communications we are putting out. It will also give us much better management information so we start to understand how people are reacting to certain things, what's working really well or not and then we can actually start to adjust the way that we operate."

He said the KTP will allow them to bring in a CRM specialist, someone multi-skilled who can not only help hone Rubi to fulfil the requirements of the Chamber team but also help guide the team on how best to use Rubi for the benefit of themselves and the members.

"This person isn't just going to be sitting in front of a screen, they will actually be holding workshops and talking to staff about the challenges. We are already gathering a list of those currently impacting on people because they are not efficient, meaning instead of focusing on their performance they are having to deal with problems.

"We want to analyse what we do so we can be sharper and better at it so our customers receive a better service."

He said recruitment for the CRM specialist, who will be employed by RGU but based at the Chamber, is underway and the intention is to have someone in the post in the last quarter of this year.

Jack Keenan, learning enhancement coordinator at RGU's School of Creative and Cultural Business and academic project lead for the KTP, said: "A KTP is a very effective means by which business and industry can capitalise on the wide-ranging expertise within academia."

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"A KTP is a very effective means by which business and industry can capitalise on the wide-ranging expertise within academia."

Jack Keenan,
learning enhancement
coordinator,
RGU's School of Creative and
Cultural Business

"At RGU, our strong collaboration and links with industry are very much embedded in all of our teaching and research and these connections provide many benefits for each of the partners but, ultimately, they exist to build knowledge, capability and to help our economy grow.

"This latest KTP with the Chamber of Commerce will harness expertise from RGU's School of Creative and Cultural Business and Aberdeen Business School. It is part of the Management KTP programme, which aims to help businesses improve their efficiency and productivity through the better use of the knowledge and expertise held within UK Business Schools."

KTPs are a nationwide programme which, for the past 40 years, have been helping businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within academia.

A KTP is a three-way partnership between a business, university or college and a graduate, known as the associate. It offers a company the chance to collaborate on a business opportunity, idea or innovation.



Aberdeen Football Club is another organisation which has long been aware of the importance of technology, having been the first club in the UK to sign up to mobile ticketing with SeatGeek.

Now the club has taken a major technological step forward by signing a contract for an overarching umbrella CRM system which pulls together all the disparate activities of the club under one banner.

Rob Wicks, AFC's commercial director, said that after assessing the needs of the club together with the business case it had decided that Sports Alliance offered the best solution.

"It was critical to look at the investment required and the likely return before making the commitment to the new system. Sports Alliance has an established reputation across several European countries and already works with around 120 clubs worldwide including Barcelona, PSV, Spurs and Leicester. They have really good credentials and work with some very big clubs, but also smaller and midsize clubs like ourselves."

He explained that they will integrate existing club systems and vendors

into an overarching system from which AFC is able to build, segment, track and customise fans' journeys depending on their specific interests.

"This takes us to another level. We are able to take the data and compare it against demographic profiles and really try to tailor the journey more and more for the fans as they engage and interact with the club.

"At the moment if I go into the retail system, I could get a flavour of what a fan purchases, but not a lot more. I'd have to go separately into the ticketing system and get our insight manager to pull together the data from the ticketing system and the data from the retail system to get a full picture. These insights will help us to better understand how each individual fan interacts with the club, what content they prefer, what products they purchase and their attendance at events.

"The new technology will enable us rapidly to build a profile, tailor and customise content to better meet fan interests and expectations.

"We want to make it as strong a proposition as we grow and evolve as a club and this will come once we integrate data from our

website, from Red TV, from our retail website, our ticketing system SeatGeek and Fortress, our access control system.

"A key part of the success of the system is to have all fans committed to single-sign-on so instead of having different passwords and usernames for Red TV, the retail website and the ticketing site, they will have one username and one password and a single point of access. This will make their customer journey a lot simpler and more enjoyable.

"We also have access through the Sports Alliance platform to about 35,000 separate marketing campaigns which different clubs have run. Fundamentally we're not competing with one another so we can see, for example, a range of different campaigns, creative content and best practice from some of the world's leading clubs which will undoubtedly provide insight and inspiration.

"It's going to improve our marketing and commercial abilities as a club, but more importantly, it's going to make the user experience for our supporters much better."

IoT cameras to Offshore Energy and Renewables

As a sector specialist, 4MS bring to market the latest, smartest solutions to everyday challenges in Offshore Oil & Gas and Renewable energy. Let's explore the capabilities of Computer Vision and explain how IoT and AI can support your health and safety efforts by improving the monitoring of people, equipment and physical spaces.

What does Computer Vision look like?

Imagine a worker arriving at a facility. Pre checked for the right PPE, issued with equipment and granted access to restricted areas with no human intervention. Real Time Location System will tell you the whereabouts of every worker in the need of Emergency Mustering, bringing visibility to unmanned spaces such as offshore rigs and windfarms. This means Computer Vision can be transformative, reducing risk, streamlining operations and simplifying remote monitoring.

The foundation for these capabilities are Cisco Meraki MV cameras. These powerful AI computers, in real-time,

process what they see and hear at the edge of the network. As an IoT sensor, with enhanced Computer Vision AI software, they can watch, learn and automate actions in response to what they see. Everything captured by Meraki MV cameras can be converted into insightful dashboards that reveal valuable information, such as space utilisation metrics, health & safety and compliance adherence meaning these cameras generate value for non-IT stakeholders, such as Operations Managers, HR and Remote Platform monitoring teams.

No more issues over Bandwidth

Meraki's simplified deployment of smart cameras remove both the cost of complex digital video (DVR) storage and high bandwidth networks required to retrieve and view footage. With considerable AI edge processing capability in the cameras, video is analysed on the camera itself, with minimal bandwidth required to stream the AI-processed metadata onto the Meraki Cloud. Offshore users benefit from 24/7 automated AI monitoring, reduced cost of streaming multiple video cameras to an onshore central

video processing and security facility. The system automatically recognises an event and emails you the relevant clip saving costly manual search times.

With our in-depth sector experience and Cisco Premier partner certification, 4MS is uniquely positioned to create Computer Vision solutions for customers in the Energy industry.

From site survey to design, consulting to procurement, testing to implementation and 24/7/365 support services, we simplify the whole conversation around the art of the possible for offshore and vessel-based monitoring, connectivity and digital transformation. We can also offer low or zero-cost proof of concepts, giving you certainty about your move into IoT and Computer Vision.

Discover what we can do for your organisation. Get in touch and arrange a demo of the Meraki MV smart camera and Meraki Technology Partner enhanced software.



Networks | Telecoms | Procurement

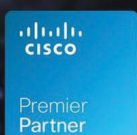
Specialists in design, installation and support of communications infrastructure for all corporate and industrial locations

Networks

- Secure enterprise and industrial network systems consultation, design, supply and installation
- 24/7/365 support from experienced professionals
- Industrial automation and control systems consultancy
- Fully managed offshore Wi-Fi services for crew welfare
- Cyber security consulting, audit and testing
- Asset transitions

Telecoms

- Telecommunications engineering consultancy, survey, design, commissioning and support
- Obsolescence studies and reporting
- Telecoms maintenance campaigns, permanent and ad-hoc personnel, specialist telecoms engineers
- Specialist telecoms project delivery
- Telecoms test equipment and procurement services



Cryptoassets: further reforms and regulatory scrutiny

by **Jamie Hunter**,
senior associate - corporate,
Stronachs LLP



CRYPTOASSETS continue to attract significant attention from consumers and, as a consequence, governments and regulators worldwide. With the cryptoasset market growing rapidly an increase in regulatory scrutiny is to be expected and the recently published 2021/22 business plan from The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) suggests that a broader regulatory approach to cryptoassets is being considered.

The FCA business plan, published last month, takes the opportunity to highlight the risks faced by consumers in the unregulated cryptocurrency market and to reference its recent consultations on extending the scope of the UK's regulatory approach to cryptoassets. Before going on to review some of the proposed regulatory changes we look at the existing regulatory regime and the different categories of regulated and unregulated cryptoassets.

FCA regulatory perimeter

In short, the FCA classifies cryptoassets into three categories: electronic (e-money), security and unregulated tokens (utility and exchange tokens). To date only security tokens and e-money tokens are regulated by the FCA. Exchange tokens (ie. Bitcoin) and utility tokens are currently unregulated tokens and fall outside the FCA's regulatory perimeter such that there is no protection for individuals who purchase them.

The FCA guidance on cryptoassets notes that if you carry on a specified activity, by way of business in the UK, involving a cryptoasset which is a specified investment (ie. a security token) FCA authorisation may be required.

If a cryptoasset business is marketing products or services relating to regulated tokens they will be required to comply with the financial promotion regime. Section 21 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 contains a general restriction on the communication of financial promotions and prohibits unauthorised persons from communicating an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity. Currently only a promotion of security tokens or e-money tokens is caught by the financial promotion regime. Other unregulated tokens are not.

While exchange tokens fall outside the FCA regulatory perimeter, cryptoasset businesses which are determined to be "relevant persons" under the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 (which came into force January 2020) are required to comply with anti-money laundering obligations. "Relevant persons" for the purposes of the Act include cryptoasset exchange providers and custodian wallet providers acting in the course of business carried on in the UK.

Ongoing consultation

HM Treasury has recently carried out consultations on bringing certain unregulated cryptoassets into the scope of financial promotions

regulations to enhance consumer protection and on the broader regulatory approach to cryptoassets, including new challenges from so called 'stablecoins'.

The government's view is that many of these unregulated cryptoassets expose consumers to unacceptable levels of risk and identified misleading advertising and a lack of suitable information as a key consumer protection issue.

The government's proposals are to introduce a new category of 'qualifying cryptoasset' which will be covered by the financial promotion regulations (with the intention that the majority of stablecoins be caught either as security tokens or under this new category) and to bring 'stablecoins' into the UK regulatory perimeter.

As noted in the most recent consultation paper (setting out proposals to bring 'stable tokens' into the FCA's regulatory perimeter) the government is considering an approach in which the use of currently unregulated tokens used for speculative investment could remain outside the perimeter for conduct and prudential purposes but subject to restrictions with respect to marketing, promotion or money laundering requirements.

As the cryptoasset market continues to grow in popularity it would seem prudent for those engaged in cryptoasset businesses to assume that a further expansion of the FCA's regulatory perimeter to other unregulated cryptoassets is likely.

Stronachs



Keith Bradford

Appointments as Coretrax gears up for growth

CORETRAX, the global well integrity and production optimisation leader, has strengthened its senior leadership team and moved to new regional headquarters as the business gears up for further growth.

The Aberdeen-based company has recently consolidated its European headquarters into a new facility at Badentoy industrial estate, Aberdeen. The premises have 70,000 ft² of offices, warehouse and yard space to support increased business demand across the region. A total of 60 employees will be based at the site, with plans to increase staff this year.

The company's newly appointed Europe, Africa, Russia and Caspian regional manager, Keith Bradford, will be located at the new facility. He joins Coretrax from Varel Energy Solutions where he was most recently region director. Mr Bradford has a proven track record in delivering international projects.

Coretrax has also doubled the size of its Middle East headquarters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, after moving into a new office space in the city and an operations hub in Abu Dhabi.

Murray Forbes has been appointed vice president of sales and marketing and will be located at the new site. He has more than 25 years' experience in well operations, technical support and product development. He is supported by Bob Murdoch who has been appointed as Eastern Hemisphere expandables operations manager.

To support increasing demand for the Coretrax's technology in the US, the company has also appointed Emile Sevadjan as vice president of expandables engineering and he will be based in Houston.

Cyrenians launch 'Hug in a Box'

NORTH-EAST charity Aberdeen Cyrenians has teamed up with local businesses to launch 'Hug in a Box', a mental health gift box designed to boost resilience and encourage self-care.

All profits from Hug in a Box will go towards giving care and support to anyone experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their home through poverty, crisis, abuse, mental ill-health or addiction in the North-east.

With CV19 restrictions continuing to impact lives across the city, the charity has seen a large increase in demand for support services, with mental health a common theme leading to crisis.

Hug in a Box has been developed to harness the experience within Aberdeen Cyrenians along with the team's compassion and kindness. A new self-care and wellness resource page has also been launched on the charity's website to help support anyone struggling.

Local sustainable businesses picked for the Hug in a Box have been keen to contribute to make a difference to those in need, with purchases of the gift boxes in turn supporting North-east employers.

Creating new skills for energy transition

A NEW National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) is being established in Aberdeen to prepare the workforce for the energy transition and to provide access to new skills and capabilities required for delivering the net zero agenda.

The NESA will form part of the Energy Transition Zone, which secured funding from both UK and Scottish Governments earlier this year. The Energy Transition Zone is an ambitious project aimed at repositioning the North-east as a globally recognised integrated energy cluster focussed on the delivery of net zero and which delivers sustainable jobs and growth for the region.

The NESA is a collaborative initiative between Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen and the North East Scotland College and is supported by key regional partners, including Skills Development Scotland and Energy Transition Zone Ltd. It is anticipated that other partners may join the NESA over time.

Acting as a collaborative umbrella organisation, the NESA will provide a 'one stop shop' for industry to access a wide range of energy courses, skills development programmes and R&D capabilities in the partner institutions.

Commenting on the creation of the new initiative, Paul de Leeuw, chair of the NESA development board, said: "The energy transition will require the creation of a more flexible, more agile and more diverse energy workforce. With thousands of people to be new-skilled and re-skilled on an annual basis, NESA can play a critical role to ensure the industry has access to the key skills and capabilities required."

Make a difference to a child's life

ABERDEEN children's charity Befriend a Child is appealing for volunteer befrienders and mentors as the waiting list of children continues to grow.

Befriend a Child has been supporting school aged children and young people growing up in difficult life circumstances across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire since 1975 and never has the charity experienced such a surge in referrals as it has as a result of the CV19 pandemic.

"We receive referrals from a number of sources including education, healthcare and third sector partners with partners citing social isolation, child's mental health and parental mental health as just some of the reasons for a child's referral," said Jean Gordon, head of operations.

"Currently we have 45 children in need of a befriender or mentor, and we'd love to get them matched and start making a real difference to the children's lives."

The charity is looking for volunteer befrienders and mentors who can bring enthusiasm, fun and stability to the life of a local child or young person through regular outings and activities. Volunteers can apply individually or as a couple and aren't required to have worked with children before as full training and regular support is given from the experienced Befriend a Child staff team.

If you are interested get in touch by emailing volunteer@befriendachild.org.uk or visit www.befriendachild.org.uk to find out more about joining the charity as a volunteer befriender or mentor.

World first for Nevis Technology

NEVIS Technology has secured Civil Aviation Authority certification for its Elements Helideck Monitoring System (HMS) –the first in the world to do so.

Aberdeenshire-based Nevis Technology was founded in December 2018 and has ambitious growth plans. It is already supplying major companies in the UK, Australia, Brazil, Dubai and West Africa with a vision to combine software, technical and operational expertise to become the UK's leading provider of offshore aviation weather systems.

Elements HMS is central to the company's growth. The system is targeted at moving offshore helidecks, of which there are well over 100 in the North Sea, and displays information which is critical in helping pilots decide on whether it is safe to land.

Elements HMS was fully developed in-house and is based on the Nevis' system for fixed helidecks – Elements MET, which is widely deployed around the globe. Elements HMS is compliant with the latest CAP437 requirements which came into force earlier this year. Building on Elements MET, the new system features include helideck motion monitoring, on-deck relative wind monitoring and an output to drive helideck-mounted status lights.



Design and Code V&A project

ABERDEEN-BASED studio Design and Code is celebrating after the successful launch of a new collaborative project with V&A Dundee as part of its latest exhibition Night Fever: Designing Club Culture.

The studio was one of a handful of Scottish companies to be approached and commissioned to design an exclusive range of merchandise for the exhibition.

The exhibition explores the relationship between club culture and design from the 1960s to present day and its far-reaching influence on popular culture. The merchandise items will be inspired by the exhibition's core themes and will be produced as part of Design and Code's first online store - Disco and Coffee.

Disco and Coffee was initially started as a side project to provide a creative outlet for the studio's team of designers, illustrators, coders, and animators to experiment and learn new skills. Now, as its own established business, the studio plans to add new product collections and further collaborations in the coming months.

The collection, which includes a series of typographic prints, enamel pins and a one-off V&A Dundee tote, is available for purchase in-person or online via V&A Dundee's online shop.

Airports net zero pledge

AGS Airports, which owns Aberdeen International, Glasgow and Southampton airports, has committed to achieving net zero for its direct emissions by the mid-2030s as part of its new sustainability strategy.

All three AGS airports achieved carbon neutrality status in 2020 and the group has now set a roadmap for its transition to net zero by the mid-2030s which will involve the decarbonisation of AGS' infrastructure.

The strategy, which is anchored in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, sets commitments against a wide range of material issues including decarbonisation, biodiversity, modern slavery, circular economy, community support and how it will support its people.



Catriona Leggat and Elaine Bowie

Osprey creates key tenant support role

LIKE all Scottish social landlords Osprey Housing Group has over the past 16 months had to rethink how to stay in touch with tenants and address the complex issues created by the CV19 pandemic response.

Osprey has around 1,800 tenants in a wide range of properties across Aberdeenshire, Moray and Aberdeen city and from the start of the first lockdown face-to-face interactions with tenants had to switch almost exclusively to the phone and online.

But now Osprey has built on the unexpected positives that have flowed from that enforced move to create a new role of tenancy sustainment officer.

Recruitment was carried out internally to ensure Aberdeenshire and Moray were both fully covered by staff already familiar with Osprey's way of working and objectives.

Taking up the job-share position are Elaine Bowie, an Aberdeenshire Osprey housing officer for the past five years, and Catriona, who is based in Moray. She works three days a week and Catriona Leggat works two.

Housing services manager Stacy Angus said: "During our response to CV19, we have very much adopted a 'support first' approach in our service delivery to tenants. As well as providing households with the additional help they need when they need it most, this approach has also seen an improvement in arrears performance and higher tenant satisfaction levels.

"To continue to build on this, we have introduced this new role to focus solely on tenancy support. This move enables us to increase our early intervention practises and make a real difference in helping those facing difficult times sustain their tenancy."

A word of advice



Mark Cochrane,
director, Vchauffeur

Area of expertise?

Vchauffeur provides a luxury chauffeur service unlike many others in Scotland. Our policing background enables the driving team to bring a unique range of transferrable skills and experience which directly benefits clients in the level of service and professionalism they receive.

What should people know?

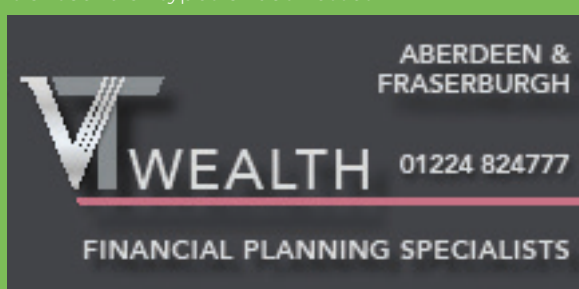
Albeit only in year two of business, Vchauffeur is building a reputation for professionalism, service and quality but we intend to continue development to further enhance our offering. There seems to be a that thought using a chauffeur service means it is going to be significantly more expensive. This is not always the case, but there is a difference between a taxi and a chauffeur service and occasionally it may be worth the extra cost to receive that personal and attentive service we can provide.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

One thing I have learned so far as a new and small business is that there is always room for improvement! Seeking customer feedback and using this constructively enables a business to use an evidence-based approach to develop and improve specific areas of the business. By not having a process to capture that information is a lost opportunity.

What's your top tip?

A small catchphrase I have used in the last year is 'Although I am new to business, I am not new to life!' My previous career and many other personal experiences shaped my thinking towards my own business and what we provide for clients. Personally, having strong values such as an honest and sincere approach to provide the best possible service to clients will gain trust and this ethos can surely transcend all types of businesses.



Funding for offshore windfarm research project

AN ABERDEEN-LED project to explore more efficient ways of installing offshore windfarms will share in £800,000 of new funding to support the renewable energy sector.

The collaborative research proposal between the National Decommissioning Centre (NDC) – a partnership between the University of Aberdeen and Net Zero Technology Centre – and Ellon-based Aubin Group, will examine novel and more cost-effective methods of development, within the context of the quest to obtain net zero goals in the industry.

The project builds on Aubin's patented pumpable variable buoyancy technology (Deepbuoy), which offers a more precise and controlled lifting solution to commonly used air bags, making lifting operations easier and safer for cranes, divers and ROVs.

Detailed modelling simulations will be performed by the NDC, using its state-of-the-art, real-time, real-physics marine simulator, to build models of Aubin's Deepbuoy technology to assess its applicability, benefits in terms of costs and reduced carbon footprint for installation of wind farms infrastructure.

The Aberdeen project is one of eight across the UK to receive support from the Supergen Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub through its Flexible Funding Scheme, designed to support ambitious research in offshore renewable energy.

Bringing brewers and investors together

A NEW, first of its kind investment platform designed to bring brewers and potential investors together has opened for business. The move comes as the drinks industry receives a significant boost with the continued relaxation of CV19 restrictions.

BrewFunder is the brainchild of Toby Chantrell, the creator of the brewery procurement platform BrewBroker and co-founder of Brew//LDN, the UK's largest craft beer festival. This new venture aims to pair up breweries which are ready for additional funding with investors who have a specific interest in the brewing industry.

To maximise the effectiveness of the platform for both investors and brewers, Johnston Carmichael, one of the UK's top 20 accountancy firms and a member of the PKF network, will perform comprehensive assessments of each potential investee to ensure they are 'flight checked' and ready for investment.

BrewFunder chief executive officer Toby Chantrell said: "It's incredibly encouraging that we already have breweries from all across the UK ready to sign up. The potential of the sector, combined with the innovative and ambitious nature of many of the country's best small breweries, make it an industry that is ripe for further investment. By partnering with Johnston Carmichael, we hope to prepare the breweries we work with so that they are ready to take the next step in their growth."



Comic Con comes to Aberdeen

MONOPOLY Events is excited to announce that it will be working with ASM Global to bring Comic Con to the North-east of Scotland in the brand-new state of the art events complex, P&J Live on March 12-13, 2022.

Monopoly Events chief executive officer Andy Kleek said: "We are very excited to announce our next Scottish event and venue P&J Live, a true state of the art, super facility. When we came to Scotland, our commitment to the Scottish public was that we promised to bring the best pop culture events north of the border and we are sticking to that promise."

In previous years Monopoly Events has established Comic Con in Edinburgh with huge guests such as Christopher Lloyd, Jean Claude Van Damme and The Undertaker.

"We realise there are other areas in the country that also wanted to see Comic Con closer to them. One of the areas we outlined was the North-east, so we have acted on feedback and have decided to bring Comic Con to the city of Aberdeen," added Andy.

"Monopoly Events ethos has always been to look at areas other companies have failed to acknowledge the demand for. Monopoly is doubling down on its commitment to its Scottish fans by putting on a second Comic Con Scotland at P&J Live Aberdeen."

Claire-Lena Miller-Davis, exhibition sales manager at P&J Live said: "We are delighted to have been selected as the venue of choice in the North-east of Scotland for next year's Comic Con and look forward to hosting the two-day event within the Baker Hughes Exhibition and Conference Hub.

"These events always prove hugely popular, drawing the comic book and film fan community together to share in their passion for heroes and villains. With opportunities to explore many awe-inspiring stands, meet and greet film favourites and see film props up close, comic con fans should start planning their cosplay outfits now for an event to remember."

Reimagining a different city region

Moray Barber,
licensee and host,
TEDxAberdeen



SPURRED on by my participation in the Chamber's Vanguard movement, I applied for a TEDx event licence about 18 months ago. I believed it was a great way of discussing and sharing new ideas to keep the region moving forward.

TEDx events are independently run to help share ideas in local communities and are operated under licence from global brand TED (a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas in the form of short, powerful talks). TED began in 1984 as a conference where technology, entertainment and design converged and today covers almost all topics, from science to business, culture to education.

My application went in at the beginning of lockdown and, after some negotiation, it was granted. Gulp.

The event

TEDxAberdeen took place on Saturday, July 31 at the Aberdeen Arts Centre with 100 attendees sharing the TEDx experience. On the day 10 inspirational speakers from the community took to the stage. Our theme 'New Ways of Seeing Old Things' asked us to re-think the

assets, behaviours and mindset of the North-east and find ways of reimagining a different region in three, five - 10 years.

I've disappeared down many a TED talk rabbit-hole but that can't prepare you to stage a whole day of these talks. In truth, my initial vision for the event bore little resemblance to what ended up on stage, mainly thanks to the talented and strong-minded Vanguard volunteers who joined my TEDx team. They challenged me to think more broadly, to enhance the audience experience and to think community, not business.

Our speakers

The quality and quantity of applications to be a speaker was incredibly high. We received over 100 applications for 10 speaking slots.

I knew the North-east had great people but the diversity, passion and expertise that shone throughout filled me with such hope.

It is an act of bravery to stand on that famous TED red dot and talk, without notes, in a compelling and powerful way. Each speaker dominated their talk. They were magnificent. The audience laughed, they cried, they learned. Any assumptions they might

have had coming into the event were challenged.

We heard about the wealth of forensic information available from soil, about the carbon footprint of our locally grown strawberry, what we can learn from animals and, most importantly, the true value of grit! Where else do you get that diversity?

What next?

We continue the conversation and renew our TEDx licence, we build on the foundations through co-creation and collaboration, we grow our army of those who seek change and demand action. As we emerge from a global pandemic, harnessing our collective grit to keep moving forward despite any setbacks and naysayers, is all-important.

To quote one of our partners TEDxAberdeen was like 'an education without the study'. When the videos of our speakers hit the TED web and social media, I promise that you'll be better educated, inspired and entertained. And, to use a phrase coined on the day, you'll agree the North-east is 'bloody marvellous'.



Doctor in the mouse

ALMOST every day the health sector is advancing thanks to new and innovative high quality data and digital technologies which are becoming available and CV19 has accelerated that process.

International SOS is in the business of saving and protecting lives when involved in health or security situations. It has more than 12,000 multi-cultural health, security and logistics experts on stand-by to provide support and assistance from over 1,000 locations in 90 countries.

Aberdeen-based medical director Dr Stuart Scott believes the biggest and most significant change for it has been the switch from paper to digital records.

“Originally, longitudinal records of individuals were all on paper and every consultation was handled as individual episodic care, with any historical medical data of an individual having to be part of a telephone conversation,” he said.

“Having moved to a fully digital platform, our clinical system allows the medics offshore to enter data and to interact with the topside doctors in a much more efficient manner, with access to patient information at their fingertips.

“Every platform in the North Sea with more than 25 people has a medic on board and they must be supported by a doctor onshore, which is topside services. Previously, all the interaction between the offshore medic and the topside doctor was by telephone. Now we are on a shared clinical record system.

“The medic phones the topside doctor who can look at the record, which includes any historical medical data, and enter any new information or advice directly into the system. With patient consent we can capture a lot of data in the system and see every contact the person offshore has had with our service.

“We recently replaced our onshore clinical system with exactly the same system and now, again with patient consent, the medic can see all the details recorded when a patient arrives for an Oil and Gas UK medical onshore.

“It saves the patient a lot of time having to repeat things and we have evidenced patient history. In extreme circumstances, for instance if an offshore patient is unconscious, the onshore records can be accessed to see whether or not there may be a potential reason

in their medical history, such as an allergy or any significant underlying medical conditions. The integrated electronic record makes it much easier and safer for everybody.”

He said the system is completely separate from NHS records but later this year International SOS will have the option, with patient consent, to access GP records but not to make any changes.

“If a patient comes to us for an offshore medical and has a history of diabetes, we would normally have to write to their GP for details of how their diabetic control has been and how well they’ve been monitored. If we can go straight into the GP record and see that, we don’t have to bother the GP and there is no delay in the system while we wait for a GP report. It makes things happen much more smoothly for the patient and reduces work for everybody.

“The other thing which has happened, driven largely by the CV19 pandemic, was a switch from face-to-face consultations to the widespread use of telemedicine. Before CV19, 80% of the work we carried out was face-to-face. Now it’s the other way around, with 20% being face-to-face. The vast majority of what we do is supported by the latest technology and our



new system has video consultations built into the system.

“Previously people were very reluctant to move to telemedicine because they were so used to face-to-face but we’ve been able to evidence during the pandemic that it is just as efficient and a good experience for the patient. In fact, for most employees it’s much more efficient because if they live somewhere remote and there isn’t a clinic easily accessible we can do it by video and it works extremely well. The feedback from our customers is that their employees think it’s a wonderful service and the employees themselves prefer it.”

Technology has enabled independent optician and hearing care specialist Duncan and Todd Group to create innovative solutions to everyday problems for glasses wearers, from face masks causing steaming up to the glare of a computer screen and headlights on the road at night.

Duncan and Todd manufactures lenses for all its branches as well as clients across the UK in its specialist lab, Aberdeen-based Caledonian Optical, which employs 45 people. Head of manufacturing Mark Robertson said investment in digital technology has led to far greater clarity for patients.

“We use digital production and highly sophisticated machines to make digital lenses, which ensures they are as accurate as possible. When you have your eyes tested, the optometrist will determine the strength of lenses you need to be able to see clearly.

“The centre of the lens is cut to the shape of the frame and positioned where your pupil sits - this is the strongest point but when you move your eyes to the side of the lens, it becomes less sharp.

“

“The anti-fog lenses were completely born out of the pandemic and were developed in response to problems with glasses steaming up when people were wearing a face mask”

Mark Robertson
Head of manufacturing,
Duncan and Todd

“About 90% of our glasses have digital lenses, which use technology to map out the exact shape of the lenses and pinpoint 10,000 individual points so your sight is sharp wherever you look and with near perfect accuracy.”

Digital solutions are also being used to create next generation glasses, as well as coming up with new products, such as Duncan and Todd’s Gemini anti-fog lenses.

“The anti-fog lenses were completely born out of the pandemic and were developed in response to problems with glasses steaming up when people were wearing a face mask,” said Mark.

“Anti-fog technology has been around for a long time but it’s usually on generic lenses such as sport lenses, however we can apply it to individual prescription lenses. We found some manufacturers were using a wipe which creates a semi-permanent layer but that had issues with smearing and the coating would wear off.

“After talking to our supplier of anti-reflection coatings we were able to develop a more permanent solution, which had been tested in Asia but not the UK or Europe. We were keen to test it and invested in chemicals and computer programmes.



“We use a 12-layer process and the final layer of anti-reflective coating is replaced with the anti-fog layer. Patients use a reactivation cloth every so often, which reinvigorates the chemicals in the top layer, so it’s more or less permanent.”

The Gemini anti-fog lenses have been a bestseller since being launched during the pandemic and Mark and his team are now working on new products.”

In the NHS developing technology is literally life-saving and in 2015, surgeons in Grampian were the first at a territorial board in Scotland to have a surgical robot. Since then surgical bosses have hoped to develop a regional training centre and specialist robotic division in the North-east in an effort to maximise capacity, improve patient care and attract staff to the region.

During the last few months those ambitions took a massive step forward as the board installed a further three robotic-assisted surgical systems, at a cost of £3.5m to ensure it remains at the cutting edge of technology – benefiting both patients and medics.

“The devices help improve patient care and will ultimately reduce waiting times in the region by creating extra capacity – something

made even more important as the region moves beyond CV19,” an NHS Grampian spokesperson said.

“On average, patients should have shorter hospital stays following robotic-assisted surgery, quicker recovery times, they need less pain control and less anaesthetic – all factors which benefit individual patients. More widely it benefits everyone in the region, as with people in hospital less time, it increases our capacity and allows us to see more patients.

“This investment really ensures we can give our patients the best experience and that NHS Grampian’s surgeons have the most modern tools available to do their job. It also equips us to partner with the University of Aberdeen to develop ground-breaking research, further improving patient care in the future.”

The region’s original device has been used for urology and gynaecology patients since 2015. The latest additions are allowing NHS Grampian to increase its robotic surgery offering to cover general surgery and other sub-specialities over time as well as developing other specialities.

Two new da Vinci robotic-assisted surgical systems are based at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with

the Mako system at Woodend Hospital, to be used on hip and knee replacement patients.

Woodend Hospital already has one of the lowest length of stays for patients in the country for knee and hip patients and it is hoped the new technology will improve this further.

In May surgeons at Woodend Hospital became the first at a territorial board to undertake a hip replacement using the equipment.

With the machines now in place, the focus is on ensuring as many surgeons are trained to use them as possible. This will allow for surgical capacity to be maximised going forward.

It is hoped that having the latest technology in the region will attract robotic fellows to Aberdeen before they move on to substantive posts elsewhere, or indeed they decide to stay in the North-east

People: Attracting Tech Talent in a Booming Market

Sasha Jaypalan



Scotland's digital and technology industries are thriving - growing one and half times faster than the overall economy. There are over eleven thousand tech companies contributing £6.5 billion to the Scottish economy and employing 100,000 people. ¹

A vibrant tech market is rapidly expanding across the country and on our own doorstep here in Aberdeen. Ambitious plans exist to drive transformational growth across the north east. Investments in high potential and start-up digital businesses, across a multitude of sectors, is encouraging growth at a significant pace.

This presents a challenge to attract the top talent required to aid this successful growth.

In the first quarter of this year tech sector firms hired employees at the fastest pace for nearly two years.² It really is a booming, candidate-driven market right now, they have doors to lots of opportunities.

This means employers are facing intense competition for talent. We're seeing multiple job offers for strong candidates and an increased volume of counter offers.

Throw that in with a post-pandemic world where priorities are shifting and shaping the future of how individuals and companies want and need to work, businesses of all sizes are going to be under increasing pressure to have the right 'ingredients' to differentiate themselves. They will need to create environments and opportunities that draw in (and retain) the best talent.

Workplace flexibility and the right company culture 'fit' are proving to far outweigh salary and benefits, to those considering a new role right now.

Many candidates are looking to work for businesses that have a culture that aligns with their own personal values; employers who demonstrate flexibility and an openness to working differently.

It's not about the money first and foremost. People want to work on innovative projects, with leading technology, and in roles that provide creative stimulation and opportunities for intellectual challenge and growth.

At Grace May one of our first steps is to help our clients create an attractive value proposition, driven from an in-depth understanding of the business needs and the desires of the candidates.

Specialising in technology recruitment we're celebrating our 6th year in business this month. Over that time we've worked closely with our clients, with a consultative approach, to build and retain great teams.

One such client is The Marsden Group, a leader in industrial technology innovation and rapid prototyping, and a business recently acquired by Microsoft.

"Grace May was recommended to us when we were looking to take the business to the next stage. Sasha and the team took the time to get to know our business, culture and requirements.

As a company they shared our spirit of innovation and through our recruitment partnership and help with several key placements, they have gone on to become an important part of our journey and our success," commented Derek MacLeod, CTO, The Marsden Group.

I believe it's a hugely exciting time in the Tech sector where employers and candidates will need to be open with one another and embrace change.

We're always here for recruitment advice, support and guidance so please feel free to reach out and contact us.

1: Source: Scotland Development International

2: Source: The KPMG quarterly Tech Monitor Q1 2021



www.gracemaypeople.com

Triple win for ASCO

GLOBAL integrated logistics and materials management company ASCO has been awarded three major contracts which will be serviced via its Southern North Sea (SNS) base in Great Yarmouth.

The company has secured a three-year contract extension with an SNS-based operator for the provision of marine base services, including quayside, logistics, waste management and marine gas oil (MGO). Consolidating another long-term relationship, a five-year waste management and industrial services contract has also been awarded by a major independent oil and gas operator.

ASCO has also embarked upon a new relationship with THREE60 Energy Group. The company's operations service line awarded ASCO a two-year contract for the provision of quayside, MGO and waste management services in support of Schooner and Ketch asset production.

MoD contract for JFD

JFD, the underwater capability provider serving the commercial and defence diving markets, has been awarded a support contract of more than £20m by the UK Ministry of Defence for the Astute class submarine.

The four-year contract is to provide equipment-level in-service support including core and non-core tasking and the provision of spares.

Razor Digital expands to new office

ABERDEEN-BASED Razor Digital Media has moved to a new office following six-figure growth over the past year during which the team has doubled to meet growing demand.

The firm, led by managing directors Ian MacIntosh and Melissa Forrest, has moved to offices at Citibase Aberdeen, on Queen's Road. The fully serviced business centre provides a platform to support its continued growth and development plans for 2022.

Baby loss memory books

THE Miscarriage Information Support Service has partnered with Loss Books UK to create a baby loss memory book series.

There are four titles in this series, Our Baby, My Baby Brother, My Baby Sister and My Twin. They are available in paperback and hardback and in a range of skin tones.

The aim of the series is to educate bereaved families who have suffered baby loss and to help them talk about their feelings. The books also help parents in teaching children about loss and can be retained as a keepsake. Also, as £1 from every book gets donated to MISS, it allows them to continue providing support and raise awareness of miscarriages.



Aberdeen set for Tour debut

SEPTEMBER sees Britain's biggest professional cycle race racing into Aberdeen as the culmination of the Tour of Britain on Sunday, September 11.

A total of 18 of the world's top teams featuring the likes of INEOS Grenadiers, Deceuninck – Quick-Step and Jumbo Visma and global stars like Mark Cavendish, Wout van Aert and Julian Alaphillipe will be taking part in this year's Tour of Britain.

After seven days of racing the Tour of Britain arrives in Aberdeenshire for the

173-kilometre (107-mile) final stage of the 2021 race beginning in Stonehaven.

The stage will get underway from Stonehaven at 10:30, heading west to Fettercairn and over the famed climb of Cairn o'Mount, before racing through Strachan and Aboyne to Ballater.

The stage then heads back east via Tarland, the final ŠKODA King of the Mountains climb of Queen's View and Westhill for the finish on Aberdeen's Esplanade that will see riders sprinting south for the finish alongside the Kings

Links between 14:27 and 15:16 and the winner of the 2021 Tour of Britain crowned.

And if you can't be at the roadside to see the action ITV4 will have live coverage from 10:15 in the morning giving you the best seat in the house to see the racing unfold with commentary from Ned Boulting and Adam Blythe.

Check out a detailed map and timings of the stage at tourofbritain.co.uk/stages/stage-eight

I miss 'do you have a minute?'

Gary Downs,
managing director,
Practical Business Improvements Ltd



AS we start to return to work to an office-based, remote working or hybrid model, we ask ourselves: 'How are we going to work together now?' The current methods of trying to address the challenges of collaboration, team working and feeling of isolation have many opportunities for improvement.

During the lockdown, most companies used video-conferencing applications to keep connected and check-in with employees. However, as one meeting merged into another, the day became a day of video meetings, then a week of video meetings.

In an article presented in the Stanford News in February 2021 the Virtual Human Interaction Lab highlighted the draining impact of the current implementations of video conferencing technologies on employee wellbeing. The main causes of exhaustion are:

- Excessive amounts of close-up eye contact is highly intense
- Seeing yourself during video chats constantly in real time is fatiguing
- Video chats dramatically reduce our usual mobility

- The cognitive load is much higher in video chat due to transforming an in-person conversation into something that needs a lot of thought

When working remotely, a virtual meeting is one of the limited interactions with our colleagues and, often, there are many other people on the call. Agenda items in a public forum that asked the team one by one how they were managing working from home was an ineffective approach to ask about an individual's wellbeing. As the months of remote working passed by, many individuals spoke of feeling lonely and isolated. As the majority of interaction with work colleagues was work related over video.

Practical Business Improvements has used the data from studies and feedback from teams and partnered with the creators of The Grapevine to design a virtual office that addresses the issues of effective collaboration, teamworking, isolation and the wellbeing of individuals by making the use of existing and new emerging technologies. Our goal was to create a virtual working space which is as close to real life interactions as possible.

The beta tribes involved in the creation of the virtual office have been providing feedback on

what they want in an office. Most importantly, they also point out what they do not want.

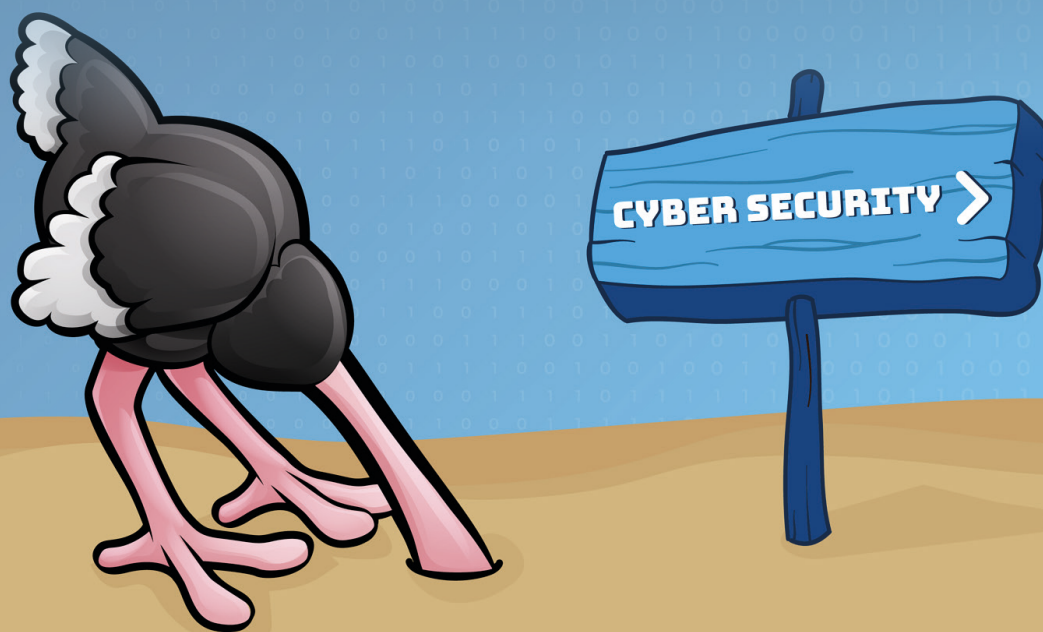
They want the ability to chat at their desks without people overhearing their conversations, the ability to ask a quick question, leave a note on a colleague's desk, coffee table or water cooler chats. At the same time, they want the ability to hold a private and confidential discussion without being disturbed. Interactions with other applications, such as Mural, are also required.

Another interesting piece of feedback is that there should be a video call option but only in a private meeting room within the office.

An option of seeing a list of available people has been rejected over an option to walk to a colleague's desk to see if they are free. The beta tribes have noted a drastic reduction of the email traffic and meeting requests.

Personally, I love walking over and asking my colleagues, 'do you have a minute?'

The Hybrid Workplace... are you burying your head in the sand?



In today's landscape we are almost entirely dependent on hackable technology, yet are we doing enough to protect our mission critical tech and tool up our employees? Stats suggest that humans are somehow involved in the success of 91% of cyber attacks; we use weak passwords, we re-use them, we click links, download attachments, reply to dubious emails and some even steal company data to take to the next job, the list goes on. With a limitless choice of security options, do you know what solution is right for your business? Do you know what risks to invest in and what risks your business could live with?

According to GOV.UK's official Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2021, 39% of businesses are reporting security breaches, with a whopping 65% of these being medium sized businesses. Fewer are spotting security breaches and, alarmingly, a quarter were experiencing breaches or attacks at least once per week. The most common being phishing, which accounted for 83% of attempts, and impersonation coming in at 27% of attacks. With stats like this you should be alarmed to know that fewer businesses are deploying security

monitoring tools or undertaking any form of cyber hygiene and protecting your data. Are business owners simply less aware of the breaches and attacks their staff are facing, or worse, apathetic? Do you know if your clients, customers, suppliers or partners are protecting their data and the data they hold on you?

The modern-day workplace looks different for every business, utilising many different workstation setups. What does yours look like? None are exempt from cybercrime...

Top 5 Cybercrimes

- Phishing Scams: Curiosity, fear, or a sense of urgency entices someone to enter personal data or click on a link. ...
- Website Spoofing: A scam where cyber criminals create a website that replicates a trusted brand, to gain customer, supplier or partner sensitive info, like login credentials, credit card details or bank account numbers.
- Ransomware: Your data is encrypted by criminals and can only be recovered by paying a hefty ransom.

- Malware: This covers nasties like viruses, worms, trojans etc. These infect computers to steal data, compromise accounts or disrupt operations.
- IoT Hacking: "Internet of Things" refers to the billions of devices that are connected to the web and collect and transmit data without human interaction; smart thermostats, smart watches, lightbulbs and doorbells, these devices are vulnerable to a host of attacks that expose data.

How well armed is your data and your employees?

Sign up for your FREE Cyber Security training session.....Can you afford not to?

Join our brand new interactive, gamified Cyber Security taster session, where you will learn how to mitigate against the most common cyber attacks; sign up at; <https://nimbusblue.com/agcc>

Accelerating your own digital journey

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



GIVEN that our focus for the Bulletin this month is on technology I thought it might be worthwhile to take a look at what the data is telling us on adoption of digital tech by businesses in Scotland and some of the opportunities out there to accelerate your own digital journey.

In August the Scottish Government published the results of its Digital Economy Business Survey, or DEBS, alongside a digital maturity index. On initial glance it's clear that despite progress on rolling out infrastructure and businesses ramping up the use of tech following the impact of the pandemic there's still work to do. The majority of businesses in Scotland still fall into the 'basic' and 'intermediate' levels of the digital maturity scale – accounting for 72% of firms.

Even current levels of digital adoption are reaping real benefits for Scottish firms though, with the survey highlighting that digital technology has made businesses more efficient, more competitive and helped them to reduce their carbon footprint. Just under half of businesses said that incorporating digital technology had helped to increase the skills of their workforce.

However it was clear that sourcing the right digital skills remains a challenge, with only around a fifth of

businesses stating that they were 'fully equipped to meet the business's digital technology needs'.

It's important to note that whether you're just making the first steps into adoption of new tech or have big plans to integrate new technologies into your business there are a wealth of support schemes out there. Services like DigitalBoost, offered by Business Gateway, give access to a dedicated adviser who can walk through the steps to enhance your presence online or build a digital strategy.

If you are an SME that is a little more advanced in your planning and know that a key piece of software will help you make a leap forward, you should keep an eye out for the UK Government's new Help to Grow Digital scheme, due to launch in the autumn. Alongside advice, businesses will be able to secure a discount of up to 50% on ecommerce, CRM or accounting software, via a grant token of up to £5,000.

In addition to government schemes, education providers across the region continue to evolve their offerings to ensure firms are ready to tackle skills gaps. Check out the 'Future Skills Partnership' online – a hub which showcases the digital courses and events running throughout the North-east.

Chambers of Commerce also continue to campaign for infrastructure improvements to support digital connectivity too. If your premises doesn't yet have the opportunity to access a superfast connection there are a range of grant schemes available as the Scottish Government's main 'R100' programme looks to roll out faster speeds nationally. The level of grant depends on if the national scheme will eventually reach your premises and ranges from £400 to £5,000 – certainly worth exploring if an outdated connection is holding back your ambitions.

If reading through the Bulletin this month has inspired you to take your business on the next part of its digital journey make sure you take advantage of the support out there. As always, if you need help getting oriented in the right direction, get in touch with the Chamber team – we promise not to ask if you've tried switching it off then on again...

2021 training calendar

Business Development	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Business Development Accelerator Develop a powerful strategy to drive sales	10			
Sales and Account Management Develop a structured approach to selling			5	

Finance	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction Learn how to establish and maintain budgets		21		
Cash Flow Management Maximise cash flow with effective cash collection techniques	28			
Finance - The Basics Develop a broad understanding of business finance			26	
Finance for Non-finance Managers (2 days) Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business	7-8			8-9

Critical Skills for Business	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Communication and Interpersonal Skills Develop effective communication techniques	30			
Customer Service Excellence Discover the techniques to excel at customer service			16	
Dealing with Difficult Situations Understand the variety of personalities and determine how to alter your approach for each			17	
Emotional Intelligence for Business Develop situational awareness and influence outcomes			18	
Improve your Professional Confidence Promote a positive and confident self-image in a professional manner				
Negotiating and influencing Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success			24	
Personal Effectiveness Improve your self-management by changing the way you work		7		
Presentation Skills Deliver a dynamic and motivational presentation confidently		5		
Project Management - The Fundamentals Understand the principles of project management and the complexities of scale	22			
Renewable Energy and the UK (half day) Gain an understanding of the basics of the UK renewable energy industry			30	
Taking Notes and Minutes (half day) Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes			23	
Time Management (half day) Identify time wasting activities and manage time more effectively			9	
Train the Trainer Feel confident whilst developing and presenting different types of training			2	
Train the Trainer Advanced Improve training delivery techniques			30	
Understanding the Oil & Gas Industry (half day) Gain an understanding of the basics of oil and gas production and processing			30	

Management and Leadership	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Essential Management Skills (2 days) Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager				1-2
Essential Supervisory Skills Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks			10	
HR for Non-HR Managers Understand responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements			4	
Motivation and Delegation Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation		27		
Performance Management Establish processes to improve employee performance in line with organisation objectives	9			
Reviews and Appraisals Assess performance constructively and increase reviewee's motivation		6		
Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management Identify and engage with stakeholders to build effective and lasting relationships	2			
Supervisors Next Steps Improve techniques and add new areas of awareness and understanding			3	

International Business and Exporting	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beginners Practical Guide to Exporting Gain a high level overview of the exporting process				
Customs Declaration Training Learn how to complete customs requirements accurately and efficiently	21	26		
Customs Procedures and Documentation Explore the various customs systems, procedures and documentation	23			9
Understanding Export & Export Documentation Understand what is involved in exporting and export documentation to save time and money	15		18	
Import Procedures Avoid the obvious pitfalls in importing to reduce complexities and errors			24	
INCOTerms 2020 (half day) Benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers	21			2
Letters of Credit - Methods of Payment Ensure your Letter of Credit is not rejected and compare payment methods		5		
Preference Rules of Origin (half day) Learn about the difference between Preference and Non-Preference Origin; understand the rules and how to apply the percentage rule.	16			

Content correct at the time of printing.

For a full and up to date list of courses visit agcc.co.uk/training for full details.

Contact us: **01224 343902** or training@agcc.co.uk



**NORTHERN
STAR2022**
BUSINESS
AWARDS

Host announced for Northern Star Business Awards 2022

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

Radzi will anchor the 2022 awards, organised by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, when they take place on Friday, February 11 at TECA.

A familiar face on our screens, he started out his career on the BBC's landmark children's show Blue Peter and has since gone on present shows for the BBC, Sky Sports and Channel 4. In 2020 he appeared as a contestant on ITV's Dancing on Ice and as the main presenter on the BBC show, Our World. He was the official weightlifting presenter at the 2012 Olympics, co-presented the 2012 Paralympics and joined the 2018 BBC Winter Olympics presenting team alongside Clare Balding in PyeongChang.

His passion and knowledge for athletics was evident when he presented the BBC's coverage of the World Athletics Championships 2019 in Qatar.

Now in their 18th year, the high profile awards recognise companies around the region for exceptional accomplishments across a range of fields, from energy to innovation, customer service to people development. Held in association with principal sponsor Nucore Group, they highlight the diversity and success of organisations large and small across the city and Aberdeenshire.

Seona Shand, commercial director at Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: "The Northern Star Business Awards celebrate the best aspects of our region's businesses and the qualities that have created such a strong and diverse economy here.

"We have been blown away by the quantity and quality of entries this year which show the passion and commitment that exists in local businesses and wanted to make sure the event itself reflects this. Radzi is known by millions of people across the country for his personable yet professional style and will be a fantastic host for the awards."

The 2022 awards are supported by a wide range of companies, including category sponsors Kaefer, Aberdeenshire Council, STV, Aberdeen International Airport, Balmoral Group, Gary Walker Wealth Management, DYW North East, RGU and the University of Aberdeen Business School; as well as associate sponsors XIC, Fierce Beer and TaxAssist Accountants.

Table bookings are open now with discounted rates available for Chamber members. Full details of the awards can be found at www.agcc.co.uk



Fantastic four raise £53,000 in Munro challenge

A TEAM which set out to raise funds for Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust's (AFCCT) Brighter Futures Legacy Fund has bagged £53,000 after completing a challenge which saw them conquer seven Munros in 24 hours.

The legacy fund was set up in memory of former AFCCT chairman Duncan Skinner who died in April year after losing a year-long battle with cancer. It supports the Trust's work with young people, including a year-long programme which helps 14-18 year olds reach their full potential.

Liz Bowie, chief executive of AFCCT, along with Mark Wilson, Iain Landsman and Eric Harper decided the Munro challenge would be a fitting way to raise funds in memory of Duncan, who was himself a keen hillwalker.

Over the course of the challenge their Munro tally included five of the six highest Munros in Scotland. They ascended a total of 10,000 feet and walked 40 miles and over 90,000 steps in a day.

Liz said: "It's been humbling to see the level of support that we have received from across the community. Duncan touched the lives of so many people and he was influential in making the Trust what it is today.

"The challenge was the toughest walk of my life and definitely befitting of the cause we raised money for. The highlight was reaching the top of Ben Macdui at first sunlight to find the summit sitting just above a full cloud inversion. It's an experience that I'll never forget and I know Duncan was proudly looking down on us."

In total over £53,000 was raised by the walk including a £20,000 donation from businessman Bob Keiller, £10,000 from AFC chairman Dave Cormack, an anonymous donation of £5,000, as well as more than £17,000 through the Just Giving page. Helping them put their best foot forward was Adidas Terrex which donated footwear and outdoor apparel for the mission.

Your Home Expo postponed for a year

ADVENTUM Events has postponed Your Home Expo at P&J Live until September 9-11, 2022.

"We appreciate this is a difficult time for our exhibitors but with cases rising in Scotland and no guidelines to how many visitors we will be allowed to welcome to the show we have been given no option but to postpone," the organisers said.

Those who have purchased tickets will be offered the opportunity to move them to the new dates or have a refund.

Wood joins the Hydrogen Council

WOOD, the global consulting and engineering company, has become a steering member of the Hydrogen Council, a group of leading companies working together to ensure hydrogen plays a key role in accelerating the energy transition and the journey towards a low-carbon future.

The CEO-led initiative brings together more than 100 companies from across the hydrogen value chain including energy majors, technology providers, private equity firms and car manufacturers who all share a commitment to decarbonisation.

Major contract for Escone Solutions

FINANCIAL applications support company Escone Solutions has been awarded a major new contract with the UK's biggest sofa retailer, DFS. Lincolnshire Housing Project (LHP) and Aberdeen based charity VSA have also signing up to 'Escone Assist' - the company's remote super user helpdesk to support 'business as usual' operations.

The new agreements will boost Escone's growth plans as it continues to expand its client portfolio to include sectors outwith the oil and gas industry, including construction, transport, housing, media, retail and sport.

Success for Brodies

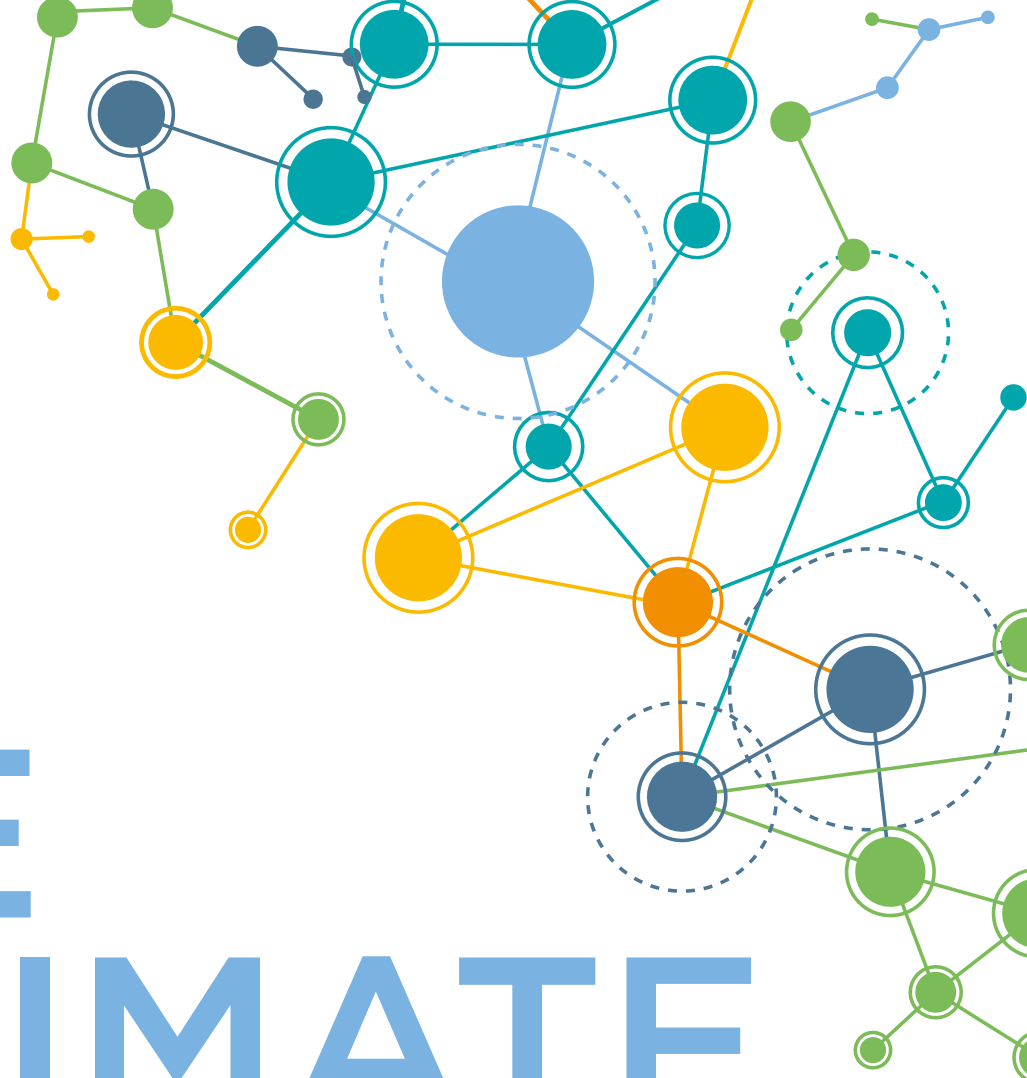
LAW firm Brodies LLP has been appointed to the London Universities Purchasing Consortium's (LUPC) legal services framework agreement, to provide legal support to consortia members across England and Wales.

17 law firms were appointed across four lots, with Brodies being one of two firms to secure appointment to three of the lots: commercial services, dispute resolution and human resources.

The LUPC supports consortia members in the procurement of goods and services, with its membership extending to universities and colleges, as well as museums, libraries, research institutes, and organisations operating in science and the arts.



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Bugs and the changing face of the digital tech landscape

Kevin Coll,
managing director,
Solab IT Services



HAS the coronavirus been the great, digital disrupter? It hasn't been the COO, the CEO or the CIO that's been driving the rate of digital acceleration over the last 18 months, it's been the COVID.

Despite many companies identifying, scoping out and budgeting for change it wasn't until the pandemic struck that they committed to changes to facilitate people working from home - and the change is remarkable. The rapid upward shift towards 'going digital' has unlocked a new mindset as well as opening up a variety of business opportunity improvements across the North-east.

You could argue that the last 'once in a generation' digital disrupter was also a 'bug' - the millennium bug. Both of these events have been digital enablers that have created a need and urgency for change that was long overdue.

If the global pandemic has taught us anything it's that technology must be valued as a crucial component for future success - it's time to step up and embrace intelligent digital solutions that drive businesses forward.

The tech industry, the fastest growing sector in Scotland, is experiencing an undercurrent of change as more and more companies prioritise the use

of digital systems to transform the way they operate. In particular, the energy sector focused on 'transition', has triggered a shift in the digital tech landscape - a change that is long overdue.

While digital tech is not a new concept for the industry, it's only in the last few years that many organisations have begun to fully embrace its potential. But there is some catching up to do.

Technology and digital solutions must be embedded as routine and incorporated as a new standard to drive transformation. On the flip side, it's also crucial that tech businesses themselves develop robust growth strategies to capitalise on opportunities to meet the evolving needs of modern business.

The tech sector in the North-east is designed to cater for highly regulated industry, which in turn calls for highly advanced digital skills and support therefore it is vitally important we prioritise growth to attract and retain talent. We must focus on building Aberdeen's reputation as an exciting place to live and work for digital tech specialists as well as enabling stronger links between the universities and industry.

In this fast-evolving digital world, technology should never stand still. For tech companies, revised working

practices post-lockdown is our biggest opportunity. Companies now see the value of having their data in one place and are taking a much more lateral view of their digitalisation needs.

During tough market conditions over the last 18 months with pandemic restrictions affecting the energy sector, Solab stepped up to support our global client base in overcoming many logistical barriers as a consequence of CV19.

Our work with global subsea service provider Subsea 7 is a prime example of how we stayed ahead by adapting our software to continually evolve to meet the needs of modern business. Subsea 7 is now reaping the benefits of implementing a digitally connected system, Onboard Tracker™, that presents data in a clear way to enable decision making, improve forecasting and business performance.

Looking ahead to 2022, digital transformation should be about taking control. Refining processes, structuring data and bolstering infrastructure with an eco-system of modern, connected software applications that will play a key role in business growth and success.

Let's not have to wait 20 years for another 'bug' to keep the digital momentum going!

Masters of gin

RAVEN Spirits Limited, Aberdeenshire's award-winning gin company, secured a rare master medal for its new expression, HRAFN GIN 'Valkyrie,' during the International Gin Masters 2021 competition in London.

Hosted by The Spirits Business, the awards recognise the best of each category in spirit distillation, taking a special interest in global gin brands.

HRAFN GIN 'Valkyrie' was blind tasted against global competitors in the London Dry category by independent judges, with no brand affiliations. The award of a master medal is the pinnacle accolade and rare. HRAFN GIN Valkyrie was only released on the June 1 and also received a gold medal in the premium category. For the award of a master medal every judge must score the gin at over 90%. To achieve a gold medal requires an aggregate score of over 90%.

Ardyne and Equinor JIP

ARDYNE, the Aberdeen and Norway-based fishing, milling and casing recovery provider and Norwegian energy company Equinor, have agreed a second joint industry project (JIP) to develop a unique well decommissioning technology that will dramatically reduce the economic and environmental impacts of slot recovery and decommissioning.

Equinor and Ardyne are jointly funding the £1m project. Ardyne will manage all engineering, project management and onsite rig qualification testing before deployment for field trials.

The new JIP follows an initial agreement between Ardyne and Equinor in 2018 for the initial design and development of the resonance technology.

TITAN RS combines Ardyne's field proven bottom hole assembly (BHA) systems with the new resonance tool to aid casing recovery by using resonance to reduce the pulling force required to free stuck casing. Successful trial wells have been completed recovering casing encased in settled solids.

The system uses the novel and highly effective application of resonance or vibration technology as opposed to hammering to free stuck casing, allowing longer sections to be pulled more quickly from settled material in the well such as barite sag or settled solids.

Old newspapers wanted

TO HELP with packaging breakable items Stella's Voice needs your old newspapers. The newspaper will help the charity increase the number of items it diverts from landfill which is better for the environment. Old newspapers can be dropped off at any of its shops locations or larger quantities can be collected free of charge by contacting 0300 303 2520 or emailing europe@stellasvoice.org

TEXO launches 'Livestream'

TEXO, the engineering, fabrication, asset management and survey company has announced a new service offering: TEXO Livestream.

Based at the company's head office in Aberdeen, TEXO Livestream has been developed in partnership with Aberdeen-based KITE Technology.

"This partnership combines our technology with TEXO's sector expertise to create an industry led solution to address real industry challenges," said KITE Technology founder Pat McKay. "This allows customers across multiple projects and industry sectors to remotely monitor, repair and evaluate assets, sharing footage with teams who can be on different continents."

The solution, which TEXO has been involved in developing, trialling and promoting, helps to protect workers in remote or hazardous locations, reduces the need for travel to project sites, allows faster decision making and enhances the value of services being offered to clients.

"Livestream was originally conceived to provide live support to remote workers in a real-time environment," said Colin McHardy, TEXO Livestream commercial director. "We are already seeing it being adopted for monitoring and inspection activities, including lifting operations, test and inspection and witness verification. It removes the need for personnel to travel to sites and helps to improve the safety of people working in remote or hazardous areas."

AAB acquires Edinburgh based business

ANDERSON Anderson & Brown (AAB) has acquired a majority stake in Edinburgh-based Purpose HR.

Purpose HR provides human resources advice and support to early stage and high growth investor-backed businesses through tailored consultancy and 'HR as a service' outsourcing. It was founded in 2014 and was among the first cohort of businesses on the Scottish Enterprise-backed Unlocking Ambition programme.

Purpose HR is a strategic fit with AAB group, complementing the group's high growth areas including payroll and virtual finance. The acquisition, which is for an undisclosed sum, follows AAB announcing its ambitious growth plans to become a £50m revenue group by 2025 and its recent merger with Glasgow-based accountants Hardie Caldwell.

Shell contract for ICR

ICR Integrity, a global industrial maintenance and integrity company providing solutions for the oil and gas, power generation, defence, utilities and renewables industries, has been awarded a three-year contract with Shell UK, with extension options, for the provision of Technowrap™ engineered composite repairs, as well as Quickflange™ weldless connectors, for all its UKCS assets.



Bruce Skinner,
chief executive officer, Alto

What does your company do that others don't?

At Alto we invest in the people who power the organisation – our team. We believe that the quality of service we provide to our clients is inextricably linked to the wellbeing of the individuals we employ to fulfil our clients' requests. As a Managed IT Services and Cyber Security Provider (MSSP) our main focus is on developing strategic relationships with our clients. In a world where businesses are heavily reliant on technology, an MSSP who takes the time to understand the nature of their client's business is invaluable.

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

Adapting to the massive global shift in working practices of the last 18 months has certainly been challenging. Moving forward, the delivery of business applications, systems and cybersecurity are a clear priority. Once an employer takes people away from the office and asks them to work somewhere else, it's vital that the technology is in place for them to remain productive and secure.

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

For me, it was tricky but important to understand that there are no mistakes, only opportunities to learn. Sir Winston Churchill was spot-on when he said 'success is the ability to move from one failure to another without losing enthusiasm'. On my journey towards that discovery

however I spent many sleepless nights wrestling with the realisation that I couldn't do everything myself. Once I was able to reconcile this internally, the decision to devolve responsibility to my team was a gamechanger, not only for me as an individual but also for the future growth of the business.

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

To constantly educate yourself on a personal and professional level.

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

Since I was a teenager, I have aspired to run my own business so reaching that goal was a huge tick box for me. The compass to guide me on the journey was the importance of having freedom of choice. In terms of my own growth, I have worked hard on self-awareness over a long period of time. You have to constantly bear in mind that self-awareness is like fitness – if you don't exercise it, you lose it. I'm really proud I know this.

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

I would prioritise making available the fastest internet connections for every home and business (giga-speed internet). Nowadays, the transportation of data is as important as the transportation of people and we have to maximise this connectivity to survive and thrive.



Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Apprentice photocopier service engineer.

When would you like to retire?

I love the fact that my 82-year-old father still gets up every day to work on his farm and he has the life in his eyes that he has always had. The question for me is rather: 'when would life like to retire from me?'

What did you have for breakfast?

I tend to only have lunch and tea.

Who, or what, inspires you?

Standing at the top of a hill and realising how small we are in this world inspires greatness for me because we are so lucky to be a small part of such a vast planet.

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

Book was The Wim Hof Method by Wim Hof, last film was the Amazon original The Accountant.



CALA bursary helps to cultivate growth for community project

CULTIVATE Aberdeen, a community initiative that provides Aberdonians with food-growing and sustainable education facilities, has received a £2,000 donation from the CALA Homes community bursary to help purchase vital tools and equipment for its St Fittick's project in Torry.

The St Fittick's edible garden was launched in March 2021 and was established to provide the local community with access to an allotment space to grow fruit and vegetables in a safe and relaxing green space.

The edible garden space also has a dedicated area for education and outdoor learning to help encourage children and young people visiting the site to be more creative and enjoy learning about sustainability and self-sufficiency.

George Bellamy, founder and chairman of Cultivate Aberdeen, said: "The funding will go towards essential equipment needed to continue to transfer the former council depot into an edible garden fit for purpose which is centred around our core themes. As we move forward we will continue to share in the philosophy of the Natural Health Service - how nature can help mend the mind and to utilise fully the benefits of Scotland's green spaces."

Mike Naysmith, managing director of CALA Homes North, said: "The work carried out by the team at Cultivate Aberdeen is simply remarkable and it's fantastic to see so many residents in Aberdeen involved with cultivating their own fruit and veg. We are proud to be able to play our part in supporting this initiative and helping it to grow across the city and encourage healthy habits among our youth."

The donation was made as part of the CALA Homes (North) £10,000 Community Bursary scheme, which has helped a total of seven local groups, charities, and organisations this year. Now in its fifth year, the bursary aims to provide support for a wide range of organisations and projects within the communities in which CALA builds.

SME Spotlight



Nicky Carnie,
owner/director,
Cognition Coaching

When was your business established?

November 2017.

What does your business do?

We raise employees' self-awareness through workshops and coaching. We are two of only three C-me practitioners in Scotland and use this psychometric tool to help teams understand how their behaviour affects others and vice versa. We also design and deliver leadership development programmes specific to client requirements and support the leaders to perform to their full potential.

What sort of companies do you do business with?

We work with SME's from all sectors as people are people regardless of what they do. We have a wide variety of clients from those in IT, charities, recruitment through to an equestrian centre.

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

At the moment it's having enough hours in the day to fit in all the work we have...great challenge to have!

And the biggest opportunity?

As we are coming out of CV19 pandemic, businesses are focussing on bringing their staff back into the workplace safely and compassionately. They are looking to re-engage with staff and help them to transition into a hybrid way of working. The work we do using C-me colour profiling helps leaders to understand their staff, how they deal with change and how they as leaders can help support their staff through this transition.

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

As cheesy as it sounds we are passionate about helping staff and leaders unlock their potential to be the best version of themselves. We are proud of the fact that we are two of only three C-me practitioners in the whole of Scotland who can offer this valuable, cost-effective and value adding experience.



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Landing another UK first

Lorraine Neish,
international trade documentation manager,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

SOMETHING quite exciting happened recently. Your international trade documentation team here at the Chamber delivered a UK first – and added a new string to the international trade support bow that you need to keep your business moving.

We like to be ahead of the curve, thinking about what's coming down the line and getting the solution in place before you know you even need it.

The Chamber network, through British Chambers of Commerce, has worked closely with the UK Government since before voters put pencil to paper in the EU Referendum, being the voice of business, pushing for clarity and working to identify the most significant blockages for business and contribute to immediately resolving them.

The CV19 pandemic came at a pivotal moment for UK trade. Its impact on the global economy and the end of the transition period with the EU has resulted in the biggest shift in the way the UK trades with its biggest trading partner since the early 1970s.

UK businesses have seen a seismic decline in business growth, with export sales and investment intentions falling to their lowest since the last major economic crisis of 2008.

So what have we done about it?

In addition to the no small matter of the customs declaration service

that launched last year, we recently notched up a UK first for the network by becoming the first Chamber of Commerce to complete a T1 transit document. A T1 allows goods to travel from the UK to an EU destination country without the need to make an import declaration at the first port of entry into the EU.

For example, for goods travelling to Germany by road you can enter the EU through any coastal port without the need to declare customs. The import declaration can therefore be made in Germany once the transit movement has been completed.

In reality we helped get a shipment of frozen mackerel from Peterhead to Poland, on time and without any hitches – to much excitement from the team who were delighted to be able to help a long-time customer meet their commitment, reduce red tape and improve efficiency.

We create transit declarations on your behalf using TransitNet, a global transit service offered to approved clients. As holder of the Common Transit Convention (CTC) procedure, TransitNet acts as 'principal' with Customs Authorities in all CTC countries and we are your agent.

We submit and monitor transit declarations on your behalf; and arrange comprehensive bank guarantees through TransitNet to cover duty and tax due on your goods whilst they are in transit. TransitNet operates under EU Common Transit regulations and principles.

The main benefit of moving goods under transit is that no customs duties or taxes are payable as the shipment moves from one country to the next. Duties and tax are paid in the destination country once the goods have arrived and the transit movement is 'discharged'.

With direct links to the HMRC Customs handling system and all inventory linked ports, we can ensure that your goods, no matter where they enter or leave the UK, will be cleared for onward transportation smoothly. We can help you keep your time sensitive supply chains moving efficiently and economically ensuring custom clearance is accurate, timely and avoids additional costs through delays or errors.

This was a need Chambers identified. T1s were the solution and we took action to bring it to you. The good news is we're still doing that, with more support services coming in the future.

If you need international trade support, give us a call. Onboard with us for your transit documents and we will get your goods from A-Z.



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2021



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Get to know the Chamber and connect with other members.

Sept 10

08:30 – 10:00
AGCC
Free

Maximise your Membership

What support does your business need right now? Are you clear on how to get the most out of the Chamber resources at your fingertips?

Get to know us and your potential new business partners of the future at this interactive discussion in which you tell us what's important to your company – or pitch to other new Chamber members – and we provide a forum for knowledge-sharing, idea-generating and networking while connecting you with the experts across the Chamber team to help you take the next steps.

Free to attend, we encourage all participants to come ready to join in.



Missed networking? Us to! Sign up and meet new contacts.

Sept 17

09:00 – 10:30
AGCC
£30 member
£45 non member

Networking is back! Join in

Have you missed face to face networking over the past year? We know from a recent survey that 75% of businesses look to the Chamber to provide introductions via our networking events.

You asked. We responded. We've created a networking event where delegates can come together, shake hands, grab a cup of coffee and get well connected. Where they can network with others, exchange information, come up with new ideas among people with a common profession or interest and potentially win new business.



When can you afford to stop working?

Find out what you need to know from the experts at Gary Walker Wealth Management.

Sept 29

11:45 – 13:30
AGCC
Free

A Masterclass in Personal Financial Planning: When can you afford to stop working?

When thinking ahead to life beyond work, do you have an idea of where your retirement income will be coming from? Knowing how you will fund your retirement and how long you will need your funds to last are two areas that will ensure a seamless transition for you when the time comes.

Join Jenna McArthur of Gary Walker Wealth Management and find out if you are on track to retire when you want to.

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2021

Nov 4

08:00 – 10:00

P&J Live
£35 member /
£50 non member

COP26 Business Breakfast: Growing a Greener Future

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

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

Business Breakfast

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

Nov 11

08:30 – 16:30

The Marcliffe
Hotel & Spa
£390

Annual Employment Law Conference 2021

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

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

Since the conference's inception in 2007 it has grown significantly both in reputation and size and is now the largest event of its kind in North-east Scotland.

**THE ANNUAL
EMPLOYMENT
LAW CONFERENCE****21**

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

2022

Feb 1

07:30 – 9:30

P&J Live
£55 for members
£75 non-members

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

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

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



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



Ian McDonald

Henderson Loggie has appointed Ian McDonald as head of energy. Ian is corporate finance director with the accountancy firm providing lead advisory and transaction support to companies nationwide. As head of the energy group he will lead on providing insight and expert advice to guide companies navigating the transition from fossil-based to zero carbon energy.



Joanne Leng

Joanne Leng will become chief executive of NOF in January 2022. Joanne, who is currently deputy chief executive, will succeed George Rafferty who is stepping down after leading NOF for 16 years. Joanne has worked for NOF for 25 years, developing its unique culture in supporting members, expanding the service offering and playing an instrumental role in its growth.



Alan McInnes

Alan McInnes has joined TEMS International as a QHSE adviser to support its continued expansion. He has more than 30 years' experience and will work with the Aberdeen-headquartered company, which has overseas offices in Houston and Kuala Lumpur, to manage its quality assurance, health, safety and environmental management systems.



Josh Carmichael

Wood, the global consulting and engineering company, has appointed Josh Carmichael as vice president of hydrogen, to further strengthen its commitment to accelerating the global energy transition. Josh brings extensive knowledge of hydrogen having held several senior positions, most recently with Transdev in the Netherlands and the South Australian Government.



John O'Keeffe

John O'Keeffe has joined Blue Water Shipping as head of renewables, Americas. John, a former maritime captain with considerable experience in the US offshore wind industry, was formerly head of marine affairs North America at Orsted. He was an integral part of America's first offshore wind farm at Block Island.



Andrew Cook

Andrew Cook has joined the Electra Learning & Change Management consultancy UK team in the role of marketing co-ordinator. Andrew graduates from RGU this year with a first class BA honours in management with marketing.



Sarah Bremner

Sarah Bremner has joined the team at Mearns and Gill as account manager. Sarah has more than 17 years agency experience across a wide variety of sectors including construction, education, food and drink and energy. Her previous role was as director of marketing and communications at Charlie House, the Aberdeen-based charity.



James Andrew

James Andrew has joined the Electra Learning & Change Management Consultancy UK team. James has a wealth of experience across a multitude of industries and most recently he has been working within the oil and gas supply chain and freelancing as a web developer.

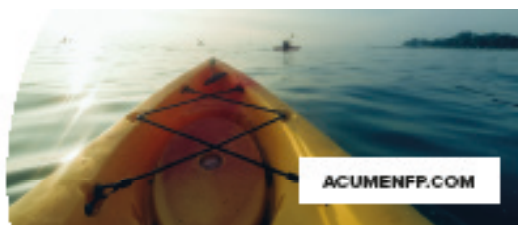


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Troy Bruce

Troy Bruce has been appointed as a financial planner with VT Wealth financial planning specialists. He has more than six years' experience in the oil and gas industry in project work as a drilling engineer working across the globe. Taking a proactive approach to a career shift into financial planning, Troy has recently completed the Academy programme with St James' Place.



Steve Myers

North Star Renewables has appointed Steve Myers to a new senior leadership role to oversee the company's service offshore vessel fleet, specifically designed to support the growing requirement for these specialist vessels within the offshore wind industry. He has worked in the energy sector for almost two decades, including 10 years in roles focused on renewables.



Allan Schultz

Wave Group has appointed Allan Schultz as its representative to service operations in the Americas. Wave's new operations in Houston will expand its core capabilities in casualty response, FFO damage, salvage and wreck and marine warranty surveys. It also builds on the successes of the Rotterdam and Singapore offices.



Fiona Booth

Intelligent lifting equipment specialists Load Monitoring Systems Ltd has appointed Fiona Booth as its finance and HR director. Fiona has more than 20 years' experience in senior management roles and will be responsible for building capability within LMS to support its imminent move into the US market and global expansion plans.

Other recent appointments

Damir Lane has joined Aberdeen Cyber Security as a cyber security technician. He will play an important part in supporting and securing the company's clients IT environments.

Michael Foy has been confirmed as the new head teacher of Aboyne Academy. He was depute head teacher prior to the retiral of Lorraine Scott.

Marine consulting and safety specialists AMS Global Group has added seven new members to the team. Four of the new starts, **Kenny MacDonald**, **Charlie Duncan** and **Danny Brown**, who are safety technicians, and **Karl Meadows**, a disinfection technician, have joined the safety division. **Colin Young** joins AMS as a marine assurance surveyor in the marine technical service, **Marc Taylor** is a new workshop operations supervisor with the company and **Ania Janiak** joins as finance controller.

Graham + Sibbald has appointed **Tom Meney** and **Pamela Mathieson** who will lead the firm's new carbon + sustainability department. Tom joins as head of carbon and sustainability and will lead the development of this new service provision. Pamela joins the business as an associate.

Aberdeen-based Escone Solutions has made two appointments as it advances its helpdesk support services for a growing client base. **Bridget Gray** has taken on the role of head of consulting and will coordinate the running of Escone's new consultancy service as well as managing and mentoring business analysts internally. Working alongside her will be **Alice Emmison**, who steps into the role of eBIS and operations lead.

Aberdeen Cyrenians has put an interim structure in place following the departure of its chief executive Mike Burns. **Chris Bennett-Taylor** has assumed the role of interim CEO and is supported by **Ruth Ogilvie** as head of services. **Lynda Reid-Fowler** is now services and operations lead and **Katie Strachan** has moved to support services lead.

Independent accountancy and business advisory firm Johnston Carmichael has made two director promotions in its Aberdeen office. **Raemond Jappy** joined the Aberdeen audit team in 2006 and during the last few years he has progressed to become the operational leader of the local audit team. **Stefano Vincini** has been with the firm for 14 years, joining as associate director following the merger with Ritson Smith in 2012.

Aspect, the strategic communication consultancy, has made six key appointments Scotland-wide. **Richard Booth** has joined from Stand as communication lead with 20 years' consultancy experience. **Ross Henderson**, **Fiona Murray** and **Luda Matkovska** have joined as senior communication advisors; and **Amy Gill** has joined as communication project.



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Kevin Short

Mintra has appointed Kevin Short as chief executive officer. Kevin, who has been chief commercial officer of the Norway-headquartered company since 2018, takes over the leadership role from Scott Kerr following his decision to join the firm's board of directors.

Kevin was previously CEO of Atlas Knowledge – a company acquired by Mintra in 2018.



Scott Bremner

Drillmar Resources has appointed Scott Bremner to lead the company's diversification into technical, subsea, inspection and project management services. Scott has more than 25 years' energy experience and prior to joining Drillmar Scott was the UK general manager of drilling technology and service provider Enhanced Drilling.



Minnie Lu

Wood has appointed Dr Minnie Lu as decommissioning services director to grow the company's differentiated decommissioning position in the UK and globally. Based in Aberdeen, and with her more than 20 years of engineering experience, Minnie will strengthen Wood's core decommissioning expertise and capabilities.



Andrew Duncan

Aberdeen headquartered North Star Renewables has created a new permanent senior role for offshore wind consultant Andrew Duncan to lead the UK firm's expansion in offshore wind and increase its foothold in other green offshore energy industries. Andrew has taken up the role of renewables director having worked with North Star in an advisory capacity since 2019.



Jasmine Webster

Form Digital is continuing to grow and expand its team following a number of recent contract wins. It has appointed Jasmine Webster as project manager to oversee all website and brand based projects while being the client's first point of contact. Jasmine has a background in both marketing and communications.



Ian Logan

Former Chivas Bros international brand ambassador Ian Logan has joined Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky as senior manager. Ian has made the move after nearly 21 years with Chivas. Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky recently announced the acquisition of the Castle Hotel in Huntly and will also be building a new warehouse in the town.



Sarah Downs

The Institute of Directors Scotland has appointed Sarah Downs as chair to lead its Aberdeen branch. Sarah is the cofounder of North-east based sales and marketing consultancy, Doqaru Ltd, and has held positions in the private and third sector in both advisory and non-executive roles.



Nicola Wilson

Hiretech Limited has appointed Nicola Wilson as finance manager. Since launching in 2010, the firm has seen continued expansion in the UK and overseas and aims to strategically increase its market share. She will be responsible for devising and implementing financial strategies to support further investment and growth.

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Euan Murray

Shepherd and Wedderburn has appointed Euan Murray as a partner in its construction and infrastructure team. He has 16 years' experience advising on the procurement, construction and operation of energy and infrastructure projects across the UK. Euan, who was previously a director at Shepherd and Wedderburn, re-joined the firm in June.



Gary McRobb

Specialist offshore and energy training consultancy Ann McRobb Associates has appointed Gary McRobb as its new operations director. Gary joins the company after nearly 40 years of experience working in the hydraulics sector. He will be in charge of business development and operational support to support the growing demands of the business.



Matthew Park

Knight Frank has promoted Matthew Park as a partner in its Aberdeen office. Matthew has been with the company since 2013, joining as a senior surveyor from DM Hall. He has more than 15 years' experience working in the commercial property market in the North-east of Scotland.



Kenny Robertson

PPE brand Red Wing Shoes has appointed Kenny Robertson as the regional industrial director for its UK division, headquartered in Aberdeen. Starting off in the banks of the Mississippi in 1905, Red Wing Shoes now distributes its safety footwear, workwear, eyewear and gloves to over 110 countries worldwide.

Other recent appointments

Marine consulting and safety specialists AMS Global Group is continuing its ongoing programme of growth with the addition of two new members of staff who have joined the company in response to a continuing increase in activity in the North Sea and beyond. **Kevin Smith** has joined the team as DP and mission critical equipment consultant and **Vitaliy Kornev** joins as bulk cargo surveyor.

Aberdeen-based people and culture consultancy Lindsay & Lang has bolstered its team with two strategic appointments which will help build on recent momentum and create opportunities for further growth. **Christina Mackay** and **Clare Murray** have been appointed associate directors – with the newly-created roles expected to allow Lindsay & Lang to provide additional, in-depth services to its growing client base.

FG Burnett has promoted senior building surveyor **Iona Foubister** to associate. A key player in the building consultancy group, Iona leads the company's commercial energy team. **Lisa Cowie** meanwhile has joined the company as surveyor within the agency department.

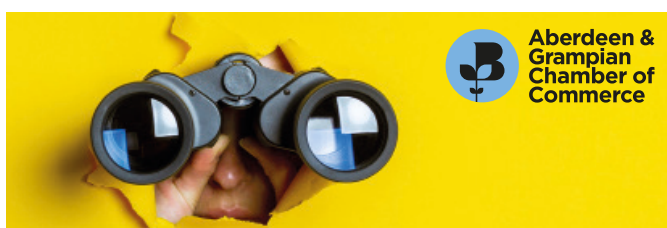
Fulkrum Technical Resources has appointed **Ross Jolly** as business development manager for the UK and Africa. Ross, who has more than two decades' experience in the oil and gas sector, will be responsible for managing and growing the business in the Europe and African oil and gas markets. His predecessor **James Dunsford** becomes business development manager – renewables, shifting focus from traditional energy sources to green energy, with a particular focus on the offshore wind industry.

Stronachs LLP has announced a number of internal promotions. **David Marshall** of the agriculture and rural team has been made a partner. In addition, **Adele Anderson** of the commercial property team and **Karen Oliver**, private client, are promoted to senior associate. **Annika Neukirch**, employment, becomes an associate; while **Patrick Norris**, energy, and **Jonathan Wemyss**, dispute resolution, are both promoted to senior solicitor.

Azets has hired **Matthew Allan** as an associate director based in the audit team within the firm's fast-growing Aberdeen office. Matthew has extensive experience auditing businesses in the oil and gas, food and drink, construction, manufacturing, retail and family business sectors.

Award-winning independent financial advisory firm Phil Anderson Financial Services has made two appointments. **Andrew Scouller** has joined as a financial adviser, while **Emma Reid** is working as a trainee financial adviser, bringing the team to 15 of staff, more than double the seven they numbered last year.

Jason Allen has been appointed chief executive officer of Tenzing portfolio company, activpayroll and will oversee the company's operations and clients in more than 150 countries. He replaces **Alison Sellar** who, after 20 years, has moved into a non-executive director position. Former chief operating officer **Euan Sellar** has also moved to non-executive director as the company welcomes a new generation of leadership. The new CEO will be joined by chief operating officer **Iain McGregor** and the existing senior management team.



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