OCTOBER 2022 | PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE

BUSINESS BULLEIN

Time to shine for finalists

Northern Star shortlist unveiled by AGCC and principle sponsor Brodies. Page 30

Landlords are not fat cats

Ryan Crighton on why government needs to lay off property investors. Page 22

Rocking the right documentation

Don't leave your goods Livin' on a Prayer. Page 51

Exclusive:

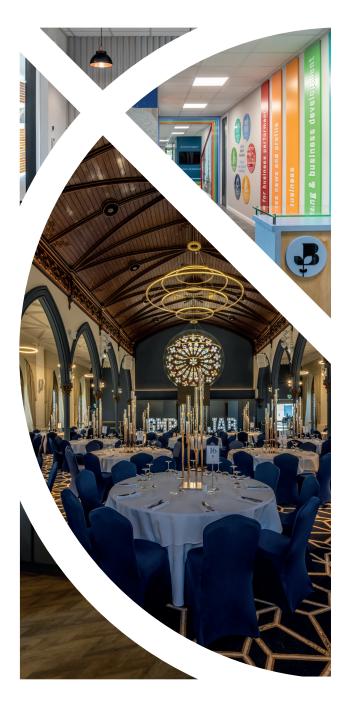
Can the North-east property market buck the trend once again?



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We need strong leadership prepared to make bold decisions

A LEADING asset manager has warned that commercial property values across the UK could fall by as much as 15% by the end of next year as rising interest rates make financing deals more expensive.

Just in case you didn't know, commercial landlords make money when the rental yield outweighs borrowing costs! But five-year rates, used to determine finance terms for borrowers fixing debt, have risen from 0.55% in September last year to 3.60% with further rises likely. The related risks of increasing costs of doing business and a recession also threaten to slow growth, however there are signs that Aberdeen could buck the wider trend.

After a series of challenges since the oil price downturn in 2015, there are signs that the Aberdeen commercial property market is as upbeat as it has been for over seven years.

Aberdeen office market figures from CBRE show that the total take-up in the first half of this year was 256,426 sq. ft - a 361% rise from the same period in 2021.

These figures are also backed-up by Savills, who say office take-up in the first half of 2022 across the three largest Scottish cities saw Aberdeen outstrip activity in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

So what's driving this and what is needed to see it continue?

Dan Smith, Office Agency Director and Head of Savills Aberdeen office, comments: "As energy security concerns move the focus back to domestic oil and gas production and the Aberdeen region gears up to take advantage of the opportunities in renewables we are seeing the best office space filling up".

In terms of related industrial property, occupier interest in larger units is also growing - specifically south of the city as the new harbour nears completion and Energy Transition Zone continues to gain momentum - all of which would be turbo-charged by the award of Green Freeport status to the North East bid.

However, there is limited supply of bigger new commercial units, creating an opportunity for developers to get building to meet this demand.

"As we wrestle with the issue of work location post-pandemic, there is a real drive from occupiers to improve their office accommodation to attract staff back to their rightful desks. They understand that having cutting edge facilities, in a great location with amenities on the doorstep can play a part" said Head of CBRE's Aberdeen office Derren McRae

Shell is the latest big name to make such a move relocating 1,000 staff from Tullos to The Silver Fin Building on Union Street. It is vital to the future wellbeing of the city centre that others continue this trend.

However, we are about to enter a key phase for the Aberdeen office market with the supply of best quality Grade A space going fast and no new office development coming through due to rising construction costs and general dampening of investor appetite.

Where will the next Shell size requirement go if there is no suitable and ready to occupy space available?

Meantime, we are seeing potential occupiers striking non energy efficient properties off viewing shortlists so the onus is on property owners to improve the environmental credentials of their buildings as a matter of urgency.

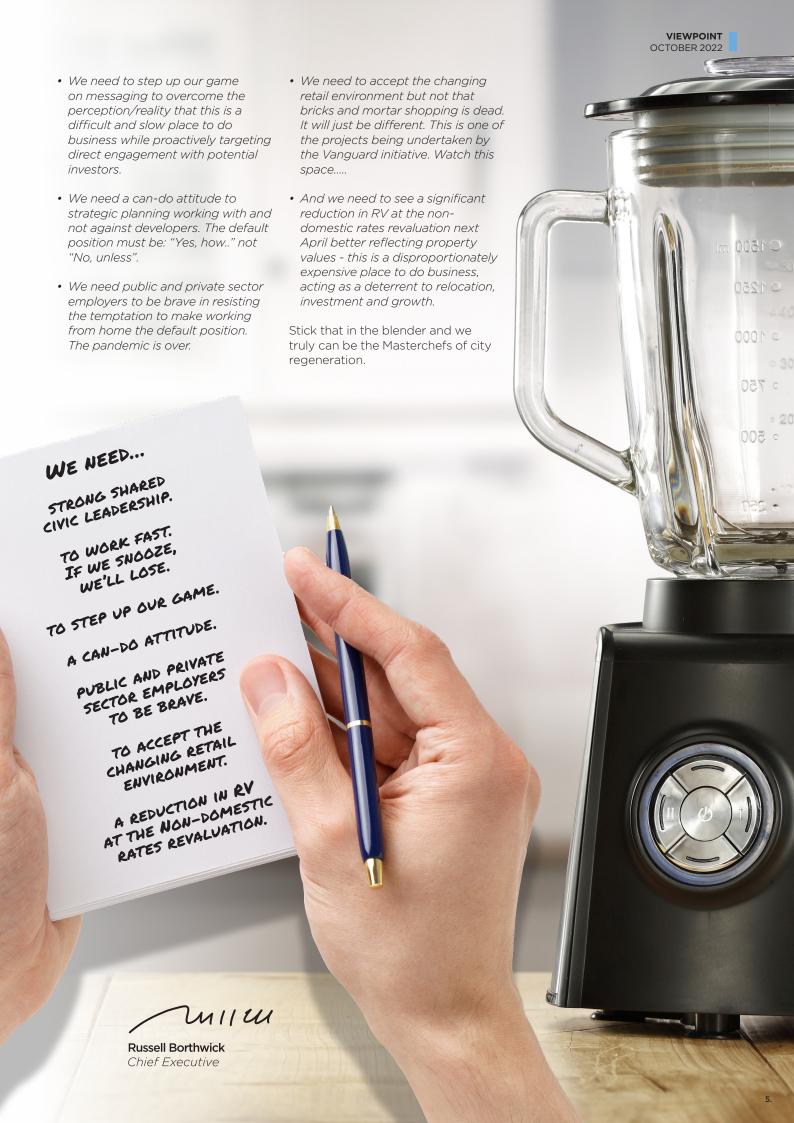
With both Trinity Centre and Bon Accord Centre due to come to the market soon there is a once in a lifetime chance to tackle this challenge while making a transformational structural change to the city centre.

Despite the regular trotting out of "Union Street's a disgrace" by the naysayers, Aberdeen is not the only place in the UK feeling the effects of a changing retail environment. You just have to look at Glasgow where a modern shopping centre on the second strongest retail street in the UK is being demolished and replaced with a largely office led mixed use development.

Glasgow City Council is taking a leading role in this plan with the centre owners Land Securities as they recognise the importance of future-proofing their city centre. Building on the strong Masterplan progress since 2016, there is a massive opportunity for our city council to follow suit. Not necessarily to fund the projects but to work in partnership with potential developers and the private sector to create the ambition and conditions for this to happen.

Successful cities are based on one simple main ingredient. People. To live, to work and to spend leisure time there. But there are other parts of the recipe that are equally important to the end product. So, what's on our 'shopping' list?

- We need strong shared civic leadership, prepared to make bold decisions and work with partners to deliver the vision
- We need to work fast. If we snooze, we'll lose. And too many things seem to be taking too long.



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Exclusive:

North-east property market set to buck the national trend





one-bedroom or modern two bedroom because a lot of those were developed in the last 15-20 years and many were rented out and are now back on the market for sale.

"The middle section of the market isn't doing badly but the one thing a slower market in Aberdeen has taught us is that if you dress your property well for sale, with little to do to it, and it is pitched right price-wise, it will sell and you will probably get competition to buy it.

"The bulk of the good market is between £250,000 to £450,000. Once you get above around £500,000 things are a little bit slower but there is still activity.

"The shire is where there has been the biggest jump in activity because, as a result of CV19, everybody understands that hybrid working does work. You can spend two days at home and three days in the office. So why not spend the same money as you would spend in Aberdeen outwith the city and get something bigger?"

Alan Cumming, National Estate Agency Director for Aberdein Considine, commented on the desire for country living and its positive impact on the market as he reflected over the past 14 years.

"Throughout the noughties the UK property market experienced a



When the property market restarted after the first lockdown in July 2020 there was this huge explosion of pent-up demand which has fuelled the market for the past two years.

boom and the North-east, like the rest of Scotland, was performing exceptionally well until 2008 when it was severely impacted by the global financial crisis.

"However, Aberdeen was fairly resilient and although the average sale price and volume of sales experienced a sharp decline, it wasn't to the same severity as the rest of the UK.

"In the North-east we bounced back pretty quickly but the oil price decline of 2014 had a much bigger impact while the rest of Scotland experienced a resurgence in the market fuelled largely by lower interest rates.

"Aberdeen slowly recovered and by January 2020 the market had turned a corner, prices in the city were beginning to level out and the shire was starting to see a rise in demand - then came CV19. When the property market restarted after the first lockdown in July 2020 there was this huge explosion of pent-up demand which has fuelled the market for the past two years."

Lynne Stewart, Partner, Ledingham Chalmers Estate Agency, said the latest market report from ASPC puts the area essentially back where it was in terms of property prices before the energy industry downturn.

"There's more encouraging news too from the latest Registers of Scotland Property Market Report which says Aberdeen saw the largest increase (39%) in residential sales volumes in Scottish cities in 2021/22," she said.

"However, while the market value of residential property sales increased

42% compared with the previous year, it was still 48% down on 2007/8, peak market value year for the granite city.

"We're seeing more closing dates and properties are generally selling around valuation price. Recently a three-bed semi in Bridge of Don went to a closing date 10 days after we placed it on the market. The sellers ultimately received an offer 10% over valuation.

"Similarly, in Elrick, a three-bed home went to a closing date after just eight days, with the offer coming in at almost 5.5% above valuation.

"We're seeing a rise in activity and demand for homes in the suburbs, in particular Bridge of Don, as well as in Aberdeenshire towns like Westhill, Banchory and Braemar.



We're hearing from people looking further afield for a new home than they might have before, because they're not commuting as often.

"We're hearing from people looking further afield for a new home than they might have before, because they're not commuting as often.

This trend is coupled with increased demand for properties with, for example, a spare room for an office, a summer house or garden room, as well as outside space.

"It's hard to predict what we may see in the next few years — after all, who could have foreseen what's happened over the last two?

"However, I'd expect these trends to continue for now, not least because of changes in work/life patterns as well as improved infrastructure as well as investment in the Northeast."

Savills pointed out that while the average price in Aberdeen city has remained stable, at around £147,000 in June this year, in Aberdeenshire it was £207,261 - 9% higher than June 2019 and 2% higher than the oil and gas-led peak of the market in 2013/2014.



new patterns of hybrid working including super-commuting to London - have all fuelled demand for properties, particularly in scenic and more remote locations like Aberdeenshire.

"The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, completed a couple of years before the pandemic, has made some Aberdeenshire locations more accessible to the city, increasing their desirability. In addition, the new build market in these locations, which has often been supported by housebuilder incentives, has seen a marked improvement in sales."

Faisal Choudhry, Head of Residential Research in Scotland for Savills, said the number of residential transactions in Aberdeen city rose to 4,978 between July 2021 and June 2022, 29% more than the pre-pandemic period. In addition to more sales prices rose in the 'evergreen' AB15 and AB13 postcodes - the West End, Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber.

"The million pound plus market across the entire region is small. However, it is predicted to expand in line with the wider local economy which is primed for further growth over the next five years, driven by the expanding energy sector."

Fiona added: "Dalhebity (the house belonging to Stewart Milne currently on the market for £7.5million) in highly sought after Bieldside is currently Scotland's most expensive residential listing. It has attracted more than 55,000 people from all over the world to view the property on Savills website. Typically, we see approximately 18% of traffic coming from international locations, but for Dalhebity the figure has risen to 31%, with the US accounting for approximately 20% of overall views. Despite its sale price, the property represents relative value for money when compared with other international locations. The average price per square foot for prime property in London is £1,500, whereas for Dalhebity it sits at £247."



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The new-build market has also

part by new working practices.

Sara McCraw, Sales Advisor at

CALA, said: "We're seeing the

the 'race for space' and the

pull of the city buzz as

people settle into new

routines of hybrid

working, so we

return of some balance between

enjoyed a buoyant spell, driven in

expect demand to continue for developments that blend city convenience with a 'village' feel.

"That's why Grandhome in Bridge of Don has proven so popular, as it offers room to breathe and lots of green space with fantastic local amenities and the city on its doorstep.

"Over the last couple of years there has been a real shift in what house hunters are looking for – buyers are considering in much more detail what they really want and need from their home, and on truly optimising their space, so the 'wish list' for a new property has become more sophisticated.

"The key is having options that are suited to different family set ups and lifestyles – again, this is where Grandhome really delivers as there's such a wide choice of flexible house styles available, from two bedroom terraced properties to detached five bedroom homes."

If you could connect Aberdeen with one other city in the world which would it be and why?



"This is something that I have thought about long and hard and whilst the obvious options are clear in London, New York and Paris I wanted to delve a little further into some of the cities that I have been fortunate enough to visit whilst working. The city that stands out would be Zurich in Switzerland. Zurich is one of the smartest cities in the world, has a flourishing creative economy and consistently ranks as one of the best places to live in the world. Surely connecting with a city of such calibre would allow us to learn, shape and build our own city. 70% of people in Zurich use public transport across the city, Zurich has an old town that is popular with tourists (Old Aberdeen....), world class museums, outdoor café pedestrianised eating areas and like most other cities around the globe they also have electric scooters for people to explore and get around the city on. The city centre is full of shops, bars, restaurants and cafes. It also has the largest chocolate museum in the world. What could the financial capital of Europe and oil capital of Europe share? It would be very interesting to find out!"

Keith Robertson, Group Operations Director, AVC Immedia



"I think it would be Frankfurt. I lived in Germany for a year and for them there is no such thing as mistakes or failures. It's all about learnings and they never waste time with things which are out with their control. They do a wrap up of what did work and what didn't work and move forward. They also work to live rather than live to work and are not materialistically driven. They are almost quite frugal in terms of their existence, they don't have the worry of overheads and burdens and they end up being much more productive because they don't have that fear of being unable to pay bills - which is great in the times we are in just now. Culturally they are results driven and incredibly focused so do their jobs really well, which as a result means they have more time for themselves. Another thing I like is that process is everything for them. If you start a project with them everything is documented, everything is planned out. So they've got everything covered before you start so it's super, super efficient and I absolutely love that."

Sheryl Newman, Managing Director, Appetite for Business



"It would have to be Melbourne, Australia, because Melbourne's aspirations are similar to Aberdeen's in terms of our compatible ambitions to become sustainable and resilient cities – and that's before you mention the offshore wildlife we have in common, like dolphins (Indian Ocean) and the dolphins we have here at Torry Battery, as well as striking coastline that both cities enjoy. We're also both cities that love our sport, from football and cycling here, to Aussie rules and rugby there. In terms of Tidy Green Clean's values, the sustainability both cities seek makes us highly attractive to bright, innovative people, from engineers to entrepreneurs who are instrumental in ensuring both our cities achieve their goals. Aberdeen will always be an energy capital, which now includes helping our nation decarbonise, through harnessing tech of all kinds to change the way we live, travel and go about our business. Like Melbourne, we attract the people and have the vision to be a sustainable global city leader that other cities will look to as peer leaders of the future."

Andrew Alleway, Co-Founder, Tidy Green Clean



TAQA signs off major decommissioning contract for four North Sea platforms

ALLSEAS has won what it has described as the largest ever single decommissioning contract for the UK North Sea by weight with operator TAQA.

The deal covers removal and disposal of several platforms across the Northern North Sea - the Eider Alpha, Tern Alpha, North Cormorant and Cormorant Alpha installations.

The combined weight of the topsides and jackets to be removed is around 114,000 tonnes, making this the largest single offshore UK Continental Shelf decommissioning contract scope to date.

The aim of the project is to reuse or recycle a minimum of 95% of the materials from the dismantling process.

The platforms are located close to each other, approximately 100 kilometres North-east of Shetland, in water depths ranging from 150 to 167 metres.

All structures will be lifted and removed to shore as single units using Allseas' heavy lift vessel Pioneering Spirit.

A spokesman for Allseas said: "We are proud to be TAQA's contractor for this major decommissioning contract and looks forward to close collaboration with TAQA to prepare and execute the safe and sustainable decommissioning of these NNS assets. Platform removals are planned post 2025."

Kingswells-based TAQA manages the UK North Sea exploration and production portfolio for UAEheadquartered utilities and energy group Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA).

The company's extensive late-life portfolio positions it at the forefront of decommissioning in the UK.

Earlier this summer, the company completed the safe and successful removal of the Brae Alpha West drilling rig and the Brae Bravo upper main jacket.

Aker, Schlumberger and Subsea 7 JV

AKER Solutions ASA, Schlumberger and Subsea 7 have entered into agreements to form a joint venture to deliver a step change in subsea production economics by helping customers unlock reserves, reduce time to first oil and lower development costs while simultaneously delivering on their decarbonization objectives.

Aker Solutions and Schlumberger will contribute their subsea businesses into the JV which, following the transactions. will be owned by Schlumberger (70%), Aker Solutions (20%) and Subsea 7 (10%).

This combination brings together deep reservoir domain and engineering design expertise, an extensive field-proven subsea production and processing technology portfolio, world-class manufacturing scale and capabilities and a comprehensive suite of life-of-field solutions to customers all over the world.

ECITB launch new £87m skills strategy to support industry growth

THE ECITB has launched a new strategy to support growth in the engineering construction industry, pledging more than £87million to support workforce training and tackle labour shortages and skills gaps over the next three years.

Developed following extensive consultation with industry, training providers and UK, Scottish and Welsh governments, the strategy builds on measures enacted by the ECITB to secure skills during the pandemic. The focus now is on supporting growth by helping to address industry recruitment and retention challenges, as employers look to expand the workforce to deliver a growing number of projects earmarked on the horizon.

The priorities identified by the ECITB aim to help industry tackle a looming workforce and skills crisis. The ECITB forecasts 25,000 additional workers are needed for major projects, including those related to net zero by 2026, placing employers in direct competition for labour from £650billion of infrastructure projects in the wider UK economy. And the UK Government's Energy Security Strategy has upped the stakes further, placing greater pressure on industry and the engineering construction supply chain to expand to meet new energy generating capacity targets.

Chris Claydon, Chief Executive of the ECITB, said: "The new strategy is designed to help address the main workforce challenges facing this critical industry over the next three years. We have prioritised support for new entrants and new pathways to industry in anticipation of the forecast labour shortages and will fund training to bridge skills gaps through support for new training around net zero projects, including digital skills.

"For the ECITB, our mission to lead industry learning has never been more important than it is now."



UK accountancy award for Infinity's Simon Cowie

SIMON Cowie, who established Infinity Partnership in 2009, has been named 2022 Practice Pioneer of the Year at the Accounting Excellence Awards.

Simon said: "It's a tremendous honour to be named Practice Pioneer of the Year. This award is not only recognition for myself but also for the amazing team here at Infinity.

"We understood the requirement to support our clients when they have needed us during the pandemic and through this challenging period of rising costs for businesses

"Between the use of technology and the demand for broader services, the accountancy world is changing and I'm delighted that our modern-day approach has been recognised."

As a practice, Infinity is a five-time winner at the British Accountancy Awards. The firm has won more than 30 awards in total, including successes at awards ceremonies held by leading accountancy software brands Iris and Sage. Simon is also a two-time winner of the Scottish Dealmaker of the Year title. He has completed more than 100 deals worth more than £300million in total.

Neptune contract for Sentinel

NEPTUNE Energy has awarded a £10million three-year vessel services contract to Sentinel Marine to provide offshore support for its operated Cygnus gas field in the UK southern North Sea.

The contract, awarded following a competitive tendering process, will involve Sentinel Marine continuing to deploy its multi role, emergency response and rescue vessel, Cygnus Sentinel, on the gas field. The vessel will also support an upcoming drilling campaign on the Cygnus field.

The Cygnus Sentinel's fuel-efficient, multi-role specification enables the vessel to provide both emergency response and platform supply services, thereby reducing costs and CO₂ emissions, and maximising efficiency.

New cost management tool

TURNER & Townsend has called for a fundamental reevaluation of the role of the cost manager, as the built environment sector tackles the need to quantify carbon as well as capital cost when planning and delivering new investment.

The global professional services company has launched its Embodied Carbon Calculator, a bespoke software tool which enables clients to evaluate the carbon footprint of projects from an early design stage, covering cradle to practical completion of the product and construction process.

The calculator allows Turner & Townsend's cost managers to benchmark, model and track carbon values for materials across the full cycle of a construction process. The tool is designed to follow established project planning stages, starting from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage 2. It aligns with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) New Rules of Measurement 1 (NRM1) and third-party standards such as the UK Green Building Council, as well as benchmarking performance against industry targets proposed by LETI.

Turner & Townsend's ambition is that the tool will allow it to create a market-leading database of global benchmarks and best practice.

The proprietary software fully integrates with its existing benchmarking and cost planning applications, incorporating the management of carbon as a currency seamlessly with its capital equivalent. Both currencies are managed in parallel via the same custom application.

Denholm Environmental makes key acquisition

DENHOLM Environmental Limited has acquired Carlislebased specialist industrial services experts, Andidrain Ltd for an undisclosed sum.

The move is seen as key to increasing the company's foothold in traditional markets and growing its UK presence to reach from the Scottish Highlands to the English Midlands.

Andidrain was formed by Andrew Little in 1990 and has a reputation for reliable, ethical and high-quality service provision. Andrew will remain with the company for at least the next two years to ensure a smooth transition for both staff and customers.

All 52 Andidrain personnel will transfer to Denholm Environmental taking the company-wide permanent staff to 200 across its Aberdeenshire headquarters in Inverurie and operational sites in Carlisle, Grangemouth and Invergordon.

The acquisition - the third in three years for Denholm Environmental - will also increase tanker capacity by one third and will add more than 30 vehicles.

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Acquisition marks new chapter for HSEQ and HR consultancies

ABERDEENSHIRE-based Quensh Specialists Limited has acquired Involve HR LLP in a move which brings together two complementary consultative businesses to add value through an extended service offering.

Managing Director, Andy James who joined Quensh in 2020, confirmed the acquisition is the latest step on a planned growth trajectory which has doubled revenues in the past year and recruited ten people in the last six months.

Involve HR Co-founders Emma Barker and Gillian Tierney said: "We are fortunate to have built up a very loyal customer base during more than a decade in business. This move is important in taking us and, in turn, the services our clients can access to the next level, and we are excited by the new opportunities this will open up."

Quensh Executive Director, Andrew Bruce added: "This is a very exciting opportunity allowing us to provide an even wider portfolio of services to our customers and further accelerate the business to the next stage".

Significant acquisition for EnerQuip

ABERDEEN-based torque machine specialist EnerQuip has announced a significant expansion to its portfolio by acquiring the AMC product line from Forum Energy Technologies for an undisclosed sum.

EnerQuip Ltd has taken ownership of the intellectual property, people and assets in a move which will consolidate its position ahead of a forecast return to prepandemic revenues.

As part of the acquisition, EnerQuip Ltd has sought to ensure a smooth transition for all staff involved.

The acquisition is a major step towards growing its global presence with new locations in Abu Dhabi and Australia coming online this year.

New strategic partnership

TWO innovative Scottish companies have announced a strategic partnership, enabling them to deliver a comprehensive suite of communication services spanning brand development, creative and digital strategy, advocacy and impactful media campaigns.

Aberdeen-based strategic advisory firm True North and Edinburgh creative, brand and advertising agency The Lane and will work together to build their client bases, while providing bespoke consultancy services tailored to their clients' different needs.

Ali Findlay, Founder and CEO of The Lane, said: "We've been supporting Scottish entrepreneurs, SMEs and larger corporates to engage with new audiences since 2008 and believe True North's offering complements our own for those clients with communications challenges.

"Renewables and sustainability marketing is a key interest of ours and we are confident that our combined offering with True North offers clients in this space an unrivalled range of expertise under one roof."

Geoff Aberdein, Managing Partner of True North, said: "We're a new company but we want to ensure from the outset that we're able to offer a full service.

"Now, in partnership with the outstanding team at The Lane, we can offer much more in terms of brand and marketing expertise, design capacity and advertising and digital specialism too.

"For both firms, having a footing in Scotland's capital city and Europe's energy capital is going to be critical to our shared ambitions for growth - and we are confident that this new partnership will lay solid foundations for that expansion."

8848 support Kenyan charity initiative

An Aberdeen restaurant has become the first business to back a charity initiative which provides a meal for a child in Kenya every time a customer enjoys a meal.

8848, the Union Street restaurant which serves authentic Nepalese and Indian cuisine, has signed up with Aberdeen-based charity Gathimba Edwards Foundation's 'Eat to Feed' initiative.

An optional 50 pence will be added to each customer's bill, with 8848 match funding donations. All funds raised through the initiative will go towards the three key focuses of the programme: monthly food packages, farming and school meals/fees support.

8848 Owner Krish Bhetuwal said: "We consider it a great honour to participate in this endeavour as part of our CSR. There is no better sensation than this. When we serve lunch or dinner here at 8848, the same number of people are receiving meals in the other half of the world, especially at this challenging time."



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MEET THE



David McWilliam, Director Sales, Icon Scotland Ltd

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Icon Relocation was established in 2001. Since then, to better service and our client's employee mobility needs, we have opened offices in Singapore and now Icon Scotland in Aberdeen.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We are an international and domestic relocation company. We successfully

relocate our clients' employees and families and settle them quickly and efficiently into their new assignment surroundings. We do this by offering a selection of services to cater for all types of employee assignments namely, home and school search programmes, removal and storage services, advisory services (tax and immigration) and training support (cultural, language and spousal).

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Our clients cover all industry sectors and generally have a strong focus on employee mobility as part of their company culture and vision. They could either be small or large, venturing into new territories or established companies who have relocated staff for years. The common factor is they all come to Icon for solutions to their employee relocation needs.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

There are many! As employee mobility resumes some form of normality,

those that challenge us the most are the global state of the housing rental market, the ever-increasing air, sea and road freight costs, and shortages of labour in key areas (airports, customs, ports).

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

We are lucky as we are not industry specific, we provide employee relocation services for everyone. Our business is global and so is our customer base. But to focus on the specific and the local, we see great opportunity in the whole area of renewables in Aberdeen. What is important to us is organic growth, we are gearing up for workers and their families to settle in Aberdeen once again.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

We get the job done, we make sure our clients assignees and families are in the right place, at the right time and in the right frame of mind to achieve their business goals.



Neale Bisset, *Managing Director,*PMC Property Management & Lettings

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

PMC Property Management and Lettings is an independent property management company that was established in 1995 and is based in Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

As one of the leading independent property factoring and management

companies in Scotland, we take care of our clients' most valuable assets. We factor over 9,000 residential properties at various developments across Scotland, provide a lettings service for residential, commercial and holiday lets, as well as commercial factoring and property management.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We are proud to be an independent family company and work with the best local partners to provide an excellent and unmatched service to our customers. We are passionate about empowering local businesses and helping to grow the reputation of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's professional tradespeople.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

The most obvious challenge would be the ongoing energy price crisis. This is creating fear and uncertainty with many people, but through proper management and forward planning, we were able to fix a large proportion of our energy contracts to protect our customers from these price rises, as much as possible.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Since taking over PMC, we have been able to mould the company into our own image and improve the service we provide, whilst expanding into new areas, including commercial factoring and lettings. This has given us a great platform for sustained, organic growth.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

I am proud of the fact we are an independent, family-owned business, local to the area and that we stay true to these roots. We are invested in the local communities through various sponsorships and initiatives and partner with local, independent contractors. Personally, I am passionate about education and raising the standard of the industry as a whole. This is something we push with all our staff at PMC, as well as across the country with my work at the Property Managers Association Scotland.

MEMBERS



David Mackay, Co-CEO, Scarf

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Scarf is a leading energy efficiency charity with offices in Aberdeen and Dundee. We support businesses and individuals by offering free and impartial energy efficiency advice, including providing information about the latest grants and funding.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We work with businesses and organisations across the North-east, including those looking to improve their corporate social responsibility (CSR), through the delivery of programmes and projects on behalf of private enterprise. We also provide in-home advice services to individuals funded and supported by the relevant local authorities.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

As the country faces unprecedented pressure on energy bills, Scarf continues to work in close partnership with local and national government and other third-sector organisations to help reach those most in need of our services.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Wider recruitment challenges have given us the opportunity to look at staff benefits and enhance packages to attract and retain staff, including providing genuine opportunities for career progression. As a charity, it's an extremely rewarding job that impacts so many people and helps change their lives for the better.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

I'm extremely proud of our results and the impact we've made in the Northeast, now supporting around 40,000 unique households each year with meaningful advice and information. This includes installing more than 8,000 housing improvements every year, such as energy-efficient boilers, insulation, and renewable technologies.

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

We've benefitted from the ability to raise our profile among the wider membership, engage with key stakeholders at various networking events, and gain valuable insight into the North-east business community.



Eileen Brown, Director, T.A.P. Ltd, Karcher Store (Turriff Agri Parts)

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

With a large and varied customer base, we offer an extensive range of professional products tailored precisely to our industrial and commercial customers, as well as to the public. Our store stocks an extensive range of Karcher machines from the home and gardens product line (yellow machines) through to the commercial machines (anthracite grey), including all the accessories and detergents.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Locally and globally, we work with oil and gas, fishing and farming, haulage and garage industries.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Online shopping habits have meant people often buy from online sites that don't offer any advice or support, therefore people end up purchasing the incorrect product for their job application. They then have no real aftercare service to help solve any issue, or offer the right support during their warranty.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

We stock an extreme range of machines and parts to suit all industries. Our customers continue to collaborate with us, when they see our product range and receive the best advice. They also appreciate the comprehensive after-sales service we offer, with servicing carried out by our own team of highly experienced Karcher trained engineers.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

We provide an upstanding approach to the industries, coupled with the advantage of our extensive product knowledge. We treat the customer as number one and deliver all commercial machines ourselves, so that we can install and provide advice on how to operate them correctly. Our aim is to ensure the customer is completely satisfied with their new equipment.

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

The ongoing help and support available whenever we have needed it and the ease of using the exporting goods documentation service.



Sovereign Grooming is named 'Scotland's Best Barbershop'

A leading Scottish male grooming business is officially a cut above the rest after being named Scotland's Best Barbershop.

Sovereign Grooming - which has salons in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow - picked up the title at the SHABA Awards, Scotland's hair and beauty 'Oscars'.

Sovereign founder Kyle Ross made it a double by also picking up the Best Barber Colourist award.

Edinburgh-based Liam Allen and Nathan Robb, of Aberdeen, were also shortlisted in the Barber of the Year category.

The silverware follow significant expansion by the business, which is being backed by a group of investors led by MB Martin & Partners Ltd, a boutique investment house that specialises in helping high-potential early-stage companies grow.

Kyle Ross said: "It is great to see the hard work and talent of the entire Sovereign team recognised in this way, and this award is testament to their commitment to quality and service

"Like almost every other SME in Scotland, particularly those based on the high street, the last two years have been an enormous challenge for our business.

"However, our teams have shown extreme resilience to deal with the challenges posed by CV19, and to help the business rebound in the way it has.

"I am incredibly proud of what has been achieved - and this recognition gives us a great platform to build upon."

Kyle launched his first salon in the West End of Aberdeen's Union Street in 2016 to provide a high-quality grooming service for men.

The business, which initially launched as 'Huntsman', rebranded as Sovereign in 2018 and now has major city centre salons in New Waverley, Edinburgh, and Renfield Street in Glasgow.

It also operates two unique barber academies in Edinburgh and Glasgow, where students can become fully-qualified barbers in just 15 weeks.

Since launching the business, Kyle has won a catalogue of industry awards. In 2017 Kyle was named Scottish Men's Stylist of the Year as well as winning Best Barber UK at the International Barber Awards in Germany.

He was subsequently named Best Barber at the Scottish Hair and Beauty Awards 2018 and was named as one of Scotland's 'Coolest People' by The Herald newspaper.

Marketing expert and former journalist Ryan Crighton became a shareholder and Director in the business in 2018.

MB Martin & Partners Ltd Chief Executive, Moray Martin, later joined Sovereign's board as Chairman following the investment deal to support the business founders through its growth phase.

Together, they are seeking to establish Sovereign as a major player in the male grooming industry across the UK.



With ambitious growth plans to double our revenue by 2025, we're focused on strategic acquisitions as well as having the right people in the right roles across all our offices.

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Find out more



Landlords are not fat cats, most are everyday working folk...

THERE are many ways to measure the success of an economy; employment rates, GDP, income per head, social indicators, to name but a few.

However, I prefer to use a method tried and tested over many decades...taxi drivers.

I have always found that the prosperity of a city can be measured by the happiness of its taxi drivers.

They are typically a miserable bunch, but if things are going well in a region, the in-journey chat is for more tolerable.

Right now, in Aberdeen, they are as happy as I can remember. So much so, that they might even let you eat your chips on the way home.

How can that be, when we face of roaring inflation, a flatlining economy tipping into recession and a cost-of-living crisis so intense that even middle-income households are teetering on the brink of financial viability?

It's simple, the North-east economy is just a little bit different.

The cyclical nature of the global oil and gas sector, and its importance to the economy of the North-east, means the price of oil trumps all.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the property sector, which is the subject of this month's Business Bulletin.

I was fortunate to spend eight years in the property industry, during which time I paid more attention to Brent Crude than any other factor in the global or UK economy.

And a little research shows just how closely this region's property

market has followed the fortunes of the energy industry over the past 35 years.

Parallels can be drawn between today and the aftermath of 1985 oil downturn, which led to property prices falling to £38,000 in 1987.

The job cuts made then caused a labour shortage in the supply chain just a few years later – sounds familiar – and an influx of skilled workers in the decade which followed helped push property prices to almost £75,000 by 1997.

That trend may now be repeated as buyers return to the market in Aberdeen and the wider Northeast. And with the outlook for the energy industry looking good, there is every chance that the property market in this region could again decouple from national trends.

But all is not rosy. And if you catch a taxi driver with a buy-to-let, they'll tell you why.

Landlords have been left feeling bruised by the Scottish Government's decision to freeze rents, without consultation, until March next year, adding to growing unrest with the SNP-Green administration.

Mark my words, this is going to starve the market of new rental stock, just at the time it is needed most.

At the 2014 market peak, there were around 3,000 properties for sale at any time in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. That number sits at over 4,500 today, with a continuing oversupply of city centre flats.



And that is why the Scottish Government needs to keep a very close eye on what is happening in Ireland, where the rental sector is in crisis.

The Irish Times recently reported that the country's biggest property listing site had just 716 properties available to rent across the entire

sting site had just 716 properties vailable to rent across the entire State on August 1st - down from 2,500 a

year ago.

The same report found rents grew by their fastest rate on record between April and June, with the average nationally now €1,618 a month - 3.3% higher than in the previous three months and more than double the €765 average in 2011.

Private landlords are fleeing the market, arguing rent pressure zones, capping annual rent increases at 2%, as well as inequitable tax treatment, makes the prospect of continuing in the sector unviable for many.

Unless there is a dramatic change in the rhetoric coming from our government, we could be staring down the barrel of the same gun here in Scotland.

Rents only go up when there is not enough stock to meet demand. So, if you drive landlords away from the sector, you only make the

problem worse for the people (tenants) you are trying to help.

We cannot allow the government to go on demonising landlords, creating a narrative that they are fat cats without scruples.

They are not. They are normal folk
- like our taxi drivers - who have
planned and invested for their
future.



We cannot allow the government to go on demonising landlords, creating a narrative that they are fat cats without scruples.



Ryan Crighton,Director of Policy
and Marketing,
Aberdeen & Grampian
Chamber of Commerce



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We strive to provide the perfect work-life balance for the forward-thinking employer with flexible terms available.

If you think you might like to join our thriving business community of over 30 companies based on site and over 30 Quay Life members, please get in touch, we would love to show you around.

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Business lessons I've learned



Heather Stephen,

Partner, Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace LLP

What does your company do that others don't?

Unique to Aberdeen, we are a full service partner led law firm with our headquarters in the city centre, complemented by our branch network operating across the Northeast of Scotland. "Full service" means we offer a range of legal services for both private individuals and businesses – from doing a simple Will to undertaking major development and corporate work for large national organisations. Our work is partner led – so that our clients benefit from years of expertise and experience in whatever area we are instructed.

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

Like many businesses throughout the North-east, the employment and retention of quality staff is an ongoing challenge. We are competing against salaries and other benefits offered by other parts of the country – including London – which have not suffered the economic downturn seen recently in this area.

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

Whilst not the hardest lesson, a valuable one to share is that you never stop learning. Approach every encounter and transaction as an opportunity to learn and grow, both from successes and failures. Also, be courageous and ask for help when you need it.

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

Rising to Partner at RCCW early in my career and then becoming the Head of the Commercial Property Department in 2018 managing a predominately female team. Women remain underrepresented at partner level in firms of all sizes and as a department head I also hold a role which has traditionally been held by men. I am proud to be part of the change taking place to rebalance gender representation at this senior level and to encourage and inspire other women to pursue their career ambitions, whatever they may be.

Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Whilst at school I had a part time iob as a delicatessen assistant

When would you like to retire?

When I feel I am ready to but not for a long time yet!

What did you have for breakfast?

Fruit smoothie

Who, or what, inspires you?

People who embrace being positive rather than admitting defeat when the odds are stacked up against them, people with "rebellious hope"-like Dame Deborah James and Captain Tom.

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

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

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

Local decision making bodies looking across party lines to promote ideas and initiatives which help the Northeast and make up for the recession which we have experienced since the oil downturn. We risk being left behind by cities like Edinburgh and Dundee who seem able to adopt a broad based approach to change.

£5.6m for Torry Heat Network

ABERDEEN City Council has received an additional capital funding grant from the Scottish Government's Heat Network Fund.

The £5.617million grant will be used to fund the second phase of the Torry Heat Network.

The infrastructure within this next phase of the Heat Network is the main spine heat distribution pipes. These will connect with the heating network being delivered under the previously approved first phase of the Torry Heat Network project.

With this infrastructure in place, it will be capable of supplying heat to: up to an additional 500 homes; the new Torry Primary School and Community Hub; Grampian Housing Association's Victoria Road School site; and Ark Housing Association's Balnagask Court premises.

It is expected the work in phase two will be completed by March 2026.

The project will help residents across the city who are experiencing severe cost of living pressures caused by, among other things, the CV19 pandemic, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and rising inflation.

New Highlands office for Brodies

LAW firm Brodies LLP, has opened a new Highlands and Islands office in Inverness, following a busy year for its clients in the region.

In the past 12 months, Brodies has worked with businesses, organisations and individuals, including Inverness College, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Lerwick Port Authority and Stornoway Port Authority.

The firm acted for clients in the renewable energy sector, including windfarms on Shetland and the Orkney Islands Council community windfarm project, which is worth an estimated £371million to the local economy.

In the food and drink sector, Brodies was appointed by Tomatin Distillery Company Limited to provide legal and commercial advice to support a new market access strategy in the United States.

The firm also assisted Parklands Group - one of the largest independent care home providers in Scotland - in its buyout of British growth fund equity, and the refinancing of its facilities, to enable it to develop a new multi-million-pound care project in Inverness.

Brodies' growing team will continue to support its clients from its new Highlands and Islands base, Clava House, in the Cradlehall Business Park in Inverness.

Brodies aims to grow from its existing team of 12 lawyers currently based in the Highlands and Islands.



Six figure growth for CFN Solutions

TELECOMMUNICATIONS specialist, CFN Solutions, is reporting a record turnover following key contract wins. The organisation equates more than 50% of its growth to strategic partnerships formed in 2022.

With a range of business products and services which include office telephone systems, Wi-Fi solutions, mobile phones and more, CFN already works with a number of key partners. But new agreements with IT service providers, utility brokers and professional service companies, have allowed the organisation, which has offices in Banchory and Inverness, to build further upon its client base.

Company Director Ian MacIntosh said: "The recent contract wins valued at over £100,000 have been a big boost to business and we've now got Scottish customers stretching from Wick to Glasgow and have even secured a number of new clients south of the border. This increase in business is a combination of the new agreements we've put in place and some great work by our sales team who are really driving growth."

Green award for city

ABERDEEN City Council has won the Best Practice Award for its climate change plan at the inaugural Scottish Renewables Net-Zero Energy Transition Awards.

The council's plan sets net zero emission targets for assets and operations as well as measures to build climate resilience. It includes over 100 projects such as the hydrogen refuse collection vehicle, HECTOR; the transition to hydrogen, electric and dual-fuel vehicles in the council's transport fleet; and the creation of low carbon buildings.

Projects also focus on an expanding programme of tree planting, creating naturalised grasslands and wildflower meadows, and the development of green infrastructure on council land for water management and increasing biodiversity.

Wood lands deal on 100 million-barrel development

WOOD will deliver the detailed design of subsea pipelines for Equinor's Halten Øst project offshore Norway.

Halten Øst is a multi-field development which is estimated to hold approximately 100 million barrels of oil equivalent of hydrocarbons, mostly gas.

The development will utilise existing facilities and infrastructure as well as a new subsea pipeline system to tie-back to the Åsgard B platform in the Norwegian sea.

The scope will be executed by Wood's subsea and pipeline engineering specialists in Norway, following the successful delivery of the concept design and front-end engineering design scopes.

The contract was awarded under an evergreen master services agreement for engineering services with Equinor.

Matt Kirk, Wood's President of Specialist Engineering and Consulting, said: "We are delighted to support the development of the Halten Øst project and the role it will play in supplying secure energy across Europe. We have developed a strong relationship with Equinor, one that is built on trust and confidence in our delivery, and we look forward to continuing our global track record in supporting Equinor to realise the full potential of their assets and portfolios."

Too many processes to mask competency gaps

A STUDY has revealed that unnecessary growth in the number of processes and procedures and lack of equipment reliability are the biggest concerns for maintenance managers in the oil and gas industry.

The survey, conducted by asset integrity management specialist Add Energy, was completed by more than 400 maintenance managers worldwide, from large multinational companies to smaller regional businesses.

"The purpose of the study is to enable maintenance managers to utilise its findings and conclusions to develop approaches and solutions for common maintenance challenges," says Peter Adam, EVP of Asset and Integrity Management at Add Energy.

"More processes and procedures are created in the belief that they are the solution for skills and competency gaps. However, most of the time this documentation is created by back-office staff who do not rely on the insight of their field colleagues as much they should. Instead of masking issues with processes and procedures, the oil and gas industry should be focusing on valuable training instead of the tick-the-box style of training. This will enhance competence and eliminate skills gaps, which in turn means that we can trust people to do their jobs correctly, efficiently and safely."



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Converged offers new cybersecurity training

ABERDEEN-based internet service provider, IT support and security specialist, Converged Communication Solutions, has added cybersecurity to the mix of training topics covered in the Growth500 programme operated by not-for-profit business collaborative, CeeD.

Established in 2014, to "guide 500 ambitious Scottish businesses on a journey to growth," CeeD's training programme comprises eight days run over nine months, offering members peer-to-peer insights into the areas of business activity considered key to growth, including finance, direct selling, leadership and customer mapping.

Converged's CSO, Robbie Ross, delivered the first training session on cybersecurity at the University of the West of Scotland's Lanarkshire Campus in Hamilton.

He explained: "Having benefitted from a number of learning and networking opportunities since joining CeeD in 2018 - with several of our staff having completed the Growth500 training programme in that time - we were keen to share our skills and expertise to ensure that fellow members are armed with the tools they need to protect their own businesses."

Robbie's 2.5 hour module covered the cyber fundamentals, from the definition of cybersecurity to the steps an organisation should take to be better protected, including a tabletop exercise in which participants worked through a series of scenarios to form an action plan for their business.

"I hope these sessions will enable businesses to proactively manage their own security, and maybe even encourage a longer-term culture of security that future-proofs them against cyber-attacks as they continue to grow."

Tidy Green Clean achieves further accreditations

Tidy Green Clean has achieved a fresh set of accreditations this summer, including Safe Contractor and BICSc, to support its growth ambitions and commitment to putting people – both customers and employees - at the centre of its business.

Co-Founder and Managing Director Andrew Alleway stated: "Tidy Green Clean continues to drive standards up in our industry, by putting our people and our customers first. We are committed to creating a culture where our staff are well-trained, and properly paid, where they know well in advance the shifts they're working; and where our customers are immediately confident in our abilities to perform well because they see the investment we've made to achieve recognised sector and global standards."



ISA celebrates 50 years

STUDENTS and staff at International School Aberdeen (ISA) are marking a milestone anniversary this year as they celebrate 50 years since the school first opened its doors.

Established in August 1972, ISA is Scotland's first international school and over the last five decades, the school has continued its mission to deliver educational excellence while helping children find their place in the world

Head of School, Nick Little said: "We are thrilled to be celebrating our 50th Anniversary and are very much looking forward to an exciting and diverse programme of events in the year ahead.

"It is great to feel the excitement building within the school and to see our entire school community joining together to help commemorate this very special occasion is wonderful.

"ISA embodies the essence of an international school as a gateway to the wider world, yet as a school community, we are immensely proud of our homegrown roots and our heritage in the Granite City.

"As we honour the last 50 years in Aberdeen, we also look to the future as we continue to thrive in our beautiful campus, maintaining a global approach to education and embracing contemporary teaching and learning methods."

Aker's Trell and Trine contract

AKER Solutions has been awarded a contract from Aker BP to provide the subsea production system for the Trell & Trine field development, in the Alvheim area of the North Sea.

The development concept is a subsea tie-back to the Alvheim FPSO, using existing facilities and infrastructure.

Aker Solutions will deliver a subsea production system including three horizontal subsea trees, two manifolds, control systems, close to 30 kilometres of subsea umbilicals, as well as associated equipment and installation work. The work will start immediately with final deliveries scheduled for the first quarter of 2024.





Finalists for the 2023 Northern Star Business Awards are unveiled

THE FINALISTS in the running for a Northern Star Business Award have been revealed by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Brodies LLP.

A total of 65 organisations have been shortlisted across 13 categories for what will be the biggest business celebration of 2023.

The glittering ceremony - which will take place at P&J Live on April 28th - celebrates the exceptional accomplishments of organisations across the North-east of Scotland.

Neal Richardson, Partner at title sponsors Brodies LLP, said: "The Northern Star Business Awards holds a unique place at the heart of the business community in the Northeast. Brodies is pleased to lend our support to the awards and all of the brilliant work being carried out by businesses, from all sectors, and of all sizes, across the region.

"It is more than a decade since we first opened our office in Aberdeen, and in that time we have grown to a team of more than 100, working with clients across the City, Shire and beyond.

"It is no secret that this year has thrown up some distinct challenges for many people and businesses here. The awards provide an opportunity for everyone from start-ups, to large multi-national organisations to come together, learn from each other and celebrate the people, initiatives and ideas that have brought some inspiration to all of us here over the last 12 months."

Aberdeen International Airport, Balmoral, Bancon Group, University of Aberdeen, Port of Aberdeen, bp, Gray & Adams, Aberdeenshire Council, Shell, RGU, True North, Colin Lawson Transport and Ledingham Chalmers LLP are also among the key sponsors of the event. Russell Borthwick, Chief Executive of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: "Northern Star provides a unique stage to showcase and celebrate the brilliant work being done by businesses of all sizes, from all sectors and across the length and breadth of our fantastic area.

"Running a business has never been tougher and companies here have endured a seemingly never ending and diverse range of challenges. However, yet again, they have risen to the challenge, turning adversity into triumph."

The awards - hosted by BBC Scotland's Fiona Stalker - will also raise money for four local charities, Mental Health Aberdeen, Aberdeen Science Centre, The Archie Foundation and Kayleigh's Wee Stars.



Principal sponsor

BRODIES

The companies shortlisted for the 2023 Northern Star Business Award winners are:



Business of the Year

- Maryculter House
- Nomadic
- North Star Shipping Ltd
- Port of Aberdeen
- Sport Aberdeen



Making the Difference

- · Aberdeen Sports Village
- CFINE
- · Charlie House
- Denis Law Legacy Trust
- Mental Health Aberdeen (MHA)



Customer First

- · Aberdeen Performing Arts
- Gray & Adams
- · Healthoutfit Ltd
- No 45, Ballater
- Petrasco



Marketing Magic

- Korero
- Lawrence of Kemnay Competitions
- Mission 10 and Kirkwood Homes
- Tricker Communications
- VisitAberdeenshire



Driving Sustainability

- ASCO
- Burnobennie Distillery
- · Carbon-Zero
- KR Group
- Tidy Green Clean



Rising Star

- AVC Immedia Angus Turner
- Entier Ltd Shane Pirie
- ESS Energy Izabela Ginter
- J+S Subsea Limited Tom Hutchinson
- Wood Jamie McCallum



Family Business

- City Restoration Project
- ITC Hydraulic Services Ltd
- J G Ross (Bakers) Ltd
- Schoolhill Hydraulic Engineering Co Ltd
- TPS Fruit & Veg Ltd



Staff Matter

- Acumen Financial Planning
- Hilton and Aloft Aberdeen
- ITI Operations Limited
- Rubberatkins
- WM Donald Ltd



Going Global

- Collabro
- Craig International
- JBS Group
- Load Monitoring Systems Limited (LMS)
- Schoolhill Hydraulic Engineering Co Ltd



Start-up Business of the Year

- ABERDAM
- Devenick Drinks Co. Ltd
- Raw Culture Ltd
- SpringGen Advice Ltd
- The Key Health Café Ltd



Inspiration from Innovation

- Deep Casing Tools
- Delmar Systems Ltd
- DeltaTek Global
- Fennex
- North East Scotland College



Student Placement

- CFINE
- Diversity Energy Solutions
- Prospect 13
- RSM
- Sport Aberdeen



Inspiring Futures

- Aberdeen FC Community Trust
- · Aberdeen Science Centre
- KR Group
- University of Aberdeen
- WM Donald Ltd



Regional Contribution Award

To be announced on the night

Winds of change for North Sea energy sector

ABERDEEN aspires to become the net zero energy capital of Europe and a globally recognised centre of excellence for renewable energy – but do we have the infrastructure in place for success?

What will be required and how far along the road are we to ensuring it is in place?

At the very heart of the effort to drive the city and shire's ambitions is ETZ Ltd, a not-for-profit, private sector led company, funded by the UK and Scottish Governments and Opportunity North East.

Its mission is to accelerate the transition to net zero, support a green economic recovery and deliver jobs for the area and it is already attracting global attention and investment interest from Australia to Taiwan and from America to Japan.

ETZ's Chief Executive is Maggie McGinlay, an expert in the energy sector and economic development.

She is optimistic that the unique strengths of the North-east, built on a platform of half a century of successful oil and gas exploration and production, will ensure success.

She explained that the area is one of the most attractive locations in Europe for investment in low carbon and net zero technologies and that the Energy Transition Zone being developed around the new Aberdeen South Harbour on the outskirts of the city will be at the core of the energy transition.

"It will be the catalyst for offshore renewables and production of green

"We need to think about the digital infrastructure needed to support these offshore developments which require investment in digital twinning, data analysis and remote operations"

hydrogen, making a significant contribution to the net zero objective. The Energy Transition Zone will support 2,500 direct jobs, with a further 10,000 energy transition-related jobs.

"It will support all the new developments that are happening offshore and, in particular, any supply chain activity linked to the new Scotland licencing rounds with up to 25 gigawatts of potential offshore wind generation – and 70% of those new offshore wind sites are within 100 nautical miles of Aberdeen."

She said that as well as shipping these would require onshore support including high value manufacturing for cabling, moorings and balance of plant activity linked to offshore wind. The sites will require operations and maintenance support and new technology will also be required to support the 14 GW potential for floating offshore wind.

"Floating wind is still pre-commercial and we don't know what some of those solutions will be in terms of how you get the cost down for floating wind," she said. "That's why we need investment in infrastructure related to test, demonstration and validation."

Maggie said that Kincardine offshore windfarm, 15 miles off Aberdeen and one of the world's largest floating wind sites, is helping to provide better understanding about how the technology works, how to get access to turbines for maintenance and how they all interact within an array.

"The next thing we are starting to see is how to deliver green hydrogen production at scale from these offshore wind locations and there is great interest in the ERM Dolphyn project, which is the first of its kind," she said.

"They are looking to trial green hydrogen production from one of the Kincardine floating offshore wind turbines. There's still more to learn in terms of how you combine floating wind with green hydrogen production at scale offshore, so it requires a strong focus around the test, demonstration and validation.

"I think the energy crisis has really drawn attention to the need to accelerate green energy solutions and to look at what we need to do to get this happening at scale. But it is important to understand there aren't quick fixes.

"They need investment in terms of research, development, testing, deployment and access to funding. A co-ordinated approach by both governments and agencies in terms of upgrades to the grid infrastructure is essential for offshore wind as is an efficient and responsive planning environment.

"We need to think about the digital infrastructure needed to support these offshore developments which require investment in digital twinning, data analysis and remote operations for example. For the Energy Transition Zone, that's about providing land and the required infrastructure for new private sector investment linked to high value manufacturing. It's also about providing the necessary research and development infrastructure, understanding what skills are needed and to do all of this in a way that provides real tangible benefit to

the community and also the supply chain."

She said that was why their first major project has been investment in the National Floating Wind Innovation Centre, a partnership between ETZ Ltd and ORE Catapult, the UK's leading innovation centre for offshore renewable energy.

"That's about providing a physical innovation centre where companies can come and test their technology and validate its performance before it goes offshore. It will be about helping anyone involved in the floating wind industry to access the necessary expertise and know-how. Some learnings will come from fixed wind, some of it from subsea and some of it will be new, but it will ensure that we can really help accelerate the commercialisation of floating offshore wind."

She said Aberdeen was in a unique position to capitalise on the opportunities the energy transition offers for a number of reasons. As well as the proximity to the offshore wind licence sites - many of which are in deeper water for which floating wind solutions are more appropriate - there is the oil and gas infrastructure which could be vital for decarbonisation of the industry.

Existing offshore aquifers and pipelines could be used for the storage of carbon providing the area with a unique point of differentiation.

In addition, there is St Fergus through which a third of the UK's natural gas flows. There are two Acorn projects currently focused on St Fergus, one looking at carbon capture and storage by re-utilisation of the existing oil and gas infrastructure and one to transform the natural gas produced in the North Sea into blue hydrogen.

It will also be important to ensure the transport and communication networks in the North-east are of a standard to support the future developments.

Aberdeen is benefitting from a £59million investment by Cityfibre in full fibre across the city but transport links are not as far advanced.

Maggie said that improved access to the harbour linking to the successful AWPR was part of the Aberdeen City Region deal but with the new harbour now operational and the National Floating Wind Innovation Centre due to open early next year, it was important to accelerate that to maximise potential for business and for cruise passengers using the new Aberdeen South Harbour.

"It is important to ensure that, as the needs of the energy industry grow and change, the road infrastructure catches up.

"In terms of rail we have to look at continual investment in freight and what happens if, for example, over time we get hydrogen trains. We need to ensure that we're thinking through how we look at transport infrastructure needs, but obviously making sure we're doing that in the most energy efficient and sustainable way.

"Nestrans is examining what that future strategy needs to look like and working collaboratively with all the key partners. It takes a lot of joined up thinking to make sure that we're investing in the right way for the future.

"We also need to think about active travel. If we're thinking about sustainable transport that means cycle paths and improved walking networks. We need to consider how people can get to key work locations, using alternative modes

of transport via improved bus routes for example.

"As we're approaching the master planning for the Energy Transition Zone, we're looking at the road transport links and having a better understanding of connectivity with the harbour. Sometimes materials arrive by boat, they're then manufactured or assembled and go straight offshore again, so you're minimising the amount of road transport.

"The ongoing investment in harbours that we are seeing is critical to support electrification and the new alternative fuels that are coming through.

"Priority has always been given to roads and car parking in the past. While we must be pragmatic and recognise that sustainable transport by cars is still an important part of getting around in this region given the rural environment, we do need to think more holistically about alternatives."

Fundamental to future success, as well as the necessary infrastructure will be having a workforce with the skills required.

"One of the first things we did as ETZ Ltd was to set up the National Energy Skills Accelerator, a partnership between ourselves the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, NESCol and Skills Development Scotland. Its purpose is to make sure that we're understanding what industry needs are and how they're evolving and to ensure we've got the right long term further education courses, short term courses for upskilling and reskilling and the right type of apprenticeships coming into play.

"I'm really positive and confident about the future we've got here in Aberdeen and the North-east. We've got amazing talent and know-how through our workforce and through the companies here. We've got great universities, a great college and organisations and facilities such as NZTC and the One Tech Hub as well as active councils. We need all these things to be in place to really make sure that this region is evolving. By utilising and harnessing all that knowledge, know-how and experience this region can really help accelerate the road to net zero."

Aberdeen is benefitting from a £59million investment by Cityfibre in full fibre across the city but transport links are not as far advanced.



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Let's start a conversation

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MEET THE



Lee Kemp,Operations Director,
Celera Support Services

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

December 2011. We've recently celebrated our 10th anniversary.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We provide bespoke project and soft facilities management, catering and hotel services for the global offshore energy industry. Our expertise is also utilised at the early phase of infrastructure construction when we advise on facility requirements.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Our clients are all active in the global offshore energy market whether that's the oil and gas or renewable energy sectors. We also support large infrastructure construction projects in the UK.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Unsurprisingly, the ramifications of the CV19 pandemic continue to offer up daily challenges, particularly from a personnel logistics point of view. Restrictions, testing procedures, isolation rules... when you're working on a global scale, there can be developments in each area for us to contend with on an almost-daily basis. Equally we've had to contend with the impact CV19 has had on the logistics of provisions, and the well-documented rise in produce prices.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

The current regeneration of Aberdeen city centre - spearheaded by the redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens - brings a number of opportunities to us, not least to our onshore corporate catering division. We've been working with our city centre-based partners to provide them with an innovative catering service designed to make the return to office and a hybrid working model as positive and stress-free as possible. We've had some tremendous feedback so far and are looking forward to rolling this service out across the city centre as the months progress.

WHAT HAS BEEN MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AS MEMBERS OF AGCC?

We're relatively new members, but already we can see the value AGCC brings through its commitment to the development of Aberdeen businesses. AGCC is not afraid to put its head above the parapet, providing support to the offshore and onshore business communities.



Grant Shewan, *Managing Director,*GPH Builders Merchants Ltd

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

The business was established on April 12. 1982.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

The company supplies trade and DIY enthusiasts with professional products and services required to complete any

project. Alongside supplying products for every construction or DIY project you can imagine, the company offers services including the hire of tools and equipment, equipment servicing, on site concrete service and delivery with our fleet of HGV's. Operating from four locations in Inverurie, Westhill, Stonehaven and Ellon, employing over 100 members of staff.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We are open to everyone. Our customer base is hugely diverse and ranges from the general public to large national contractors.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

The rapid increase in the cost of products we sell due to rising energy and production costs is limiting activity in the new build and RMI markets. Whilst some of these cost increases may be temporary, unfortunately the changing regulatory landscape, particularly around the UK Emission Trading Scheme, is causing major cost inflation in products such as cement.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

With around 35,000 council houses in the city and shire, there is a considerable amount of work required over the next decade to make these homes as energy efficient as possible through retrofitting and improvements. This offers enormous opportunities for local tradespeople and contractors, along with supply chain partners like GPH to play a big part in the local effort to meet global net zero targets.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

We are celebrating 40 years in business this year and it's been a great opportunity to learn more about the history of the business before I became Managing Director in 2017. It's clear that the success of the company has been down to the hard work and dedication of the staff who have worked in the business since 1982. It certainly makes me more passionate about creating an environment for our staff now and in the future to thrive and grow the business in the years ahead.

MEMBERS



Peter Foreman, Surveyor, Graham Pest Control

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

As a pest control company, we offer bespoke solutions for all manner of pests, from gulls to pigeons, flies to wasps, mice to rats. We serve businesses and domestic properties alike, offering one-off treatments and proactive programs to help protect against pests. Critically, our surveys and report documents are entirely free and no obligation.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Any company with a physical property, such as offices or warehouses. Since we also serve domestic properties and can assist any type of home.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Given that some of our key clients are in the food and hotel industries, the aftermath of CV19 remains a big challenge for us. We are excited to see these industries begin to bounce back, but we are of course aware of the continuing difficulties our clients face post-CV19.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Since we have recently acquired our ISO certifications, we are now able to offer our services to more companies which require such accreditation. We see an exciting opportunity in Aberdeen to serve companies who require their suppliers to have their ISO certification in place.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

Since starting work for Graham Pest Control around two years ago, I have come to love our personable and honest approach to pest control. We were honoured to win Large Company of the Year and Pest Business of the Year at the National Pest Awards.

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

We only joined the Chamber recently, but one key area for us is the networking events. These events give us the chance to get to know the businesses and people in Aberdeen.



Edward Obi, Director, HR Hub Plus Limited

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

HR Hub Plus Limited was established in April 2018.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

HR Hub Plus is a professional service provider that provides all-in-one HR

solutions, support, and expertise to business owners who do not have an onsite HR support function. HR Hub Plus has supported more than 130 organisations with its cost-effective personalised employment law advice and HR solutions approach, leaving business owners free to concentrate on growing their business and increasing their bottom line.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

From a business owner with one employee to business owners that have up to 250 employees. We have a team of specialists who are available to support and assist with any employee query, swiftly, professionally, and promptly.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Adapting to the everchanging landscape. The world is evolving at a fast pace, and we strive to evolve with it

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

HR Hub Plus has adapted accordingly and has positioned itself withing the community, fast becoming the go to HR provider in the North-east.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIGNATE AND PROUD OF?

The team and the clients we support. From starting the business over four years ago with no clients and then becoming a multiple award-winning business supporting over 130 organisations across the UK from its base in Aberdeen. Its unreal.

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

The networking and the connections. Our Relationship Manager, John Shaw, is very helpful connecting us with other business owners which has resulted in commercial value.



Next phase of project CAELUS to develop UK's first medical delivery drone

A CONSORTIUM led by AGS Airports in partnership with NHS Scotland to deliver what will be the UK's first medical distribution network using drones has launched its next phase.

CAELUS (Care & Equity - Healthcare Logistics UAS Scotland), secured £10.1million funding from the Future Flight Challenge at UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) last month.

CAELUS brings together 16 partners who together are working to deliver what will be the first national drone network that can transport essential medicines, bloods and other medical supplies throughout Scotland including to remote communities.

Since securing £1.5million in January 2020, the CAELUS consortium has designed drone landing stations for NHS sites across Scotland and developed a virtual model (digital twin) of the proposed delivery network which connects hospitals, pathology laboratories, distribution centres and GP surgeries across Scotland.

Fiona Smith, AGS Airports Group Head of Aerodrome Strategy and CAELUS Project Director, said: "We were delighted when we heard we were receiving the £10.1million funding from UKRI to move onto the next phase of the project.

"The CAELUS project is set to revolutionise the way in which healthcare services are delivered in Scotland. A drone network can ensure critical medical supplies can be delivered more efficiently, it can reduce waiting times for test results and, more importantly, it can provide equity of care between urban and remote rural communities.

"As well as being able to undertake live flights we can begin to deploy the physical infrastructure needed to support the drones across Scotland. This will involve building prototype landing bases as well as digital and communication infrastructure. We will also work with local communities to ensure they understand why and how the drones will be used."

Pop up Decom at MRS Training & Rescue

MRS Training & Rescue are in final preparations to officially open its brand-new training facility in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen this month.

The new state-of-the-art facility has been specifically designed to support the safety and welfare of businesses in the region and throughout North Scotland, offering bespoke training for Working at Height and Confined Spaces – two fundamental requirements for Scotland's critical sectors.

The open day, held in partnership with Decom North Sea, is the first in a new series of events titled 'Pop Up Decom', which will enable DNS members to profile their organisation to the decommissioning community. The open day will include interactive sessions for all those who attend, including the chance to learn life saving skills as well as abseil from their 14m tower.

MRS' Aberdeen Operations Manager, Andy Watson said: "Our new centre has six training rooms where we will offer a full range of health and safety training courses including first aid, safe entry into confined spaces, work at height and CCNSG safety passport courses. We particularly target all aspects of confined space training, especially the provision of rescue cover for the high-risk categorised work. Unfortunately, accidents still occur in confined space working being undertaken and awareness of the hazards still needs to be communicated better."

Seaton Park named best in Scotland

A POPULAR Aberdeen park has been crowned the mostloved in the country following a nationwide vote.

Seaton Park received the most votes to take the title of Scotland's Favourite Park 2022.

The park on the banks of the River Don is known for its colourful floral displays, memorial fountain, Wallace Tower and the iconic Mr Therm steam engine in the play area.

Fields in Trust's competition saw 364 local parks and green spaces entered into the mix, to be crowned the UK's Favourite Park. With tens of thousands of people voting, Scotland's national title went to Seaton Park.

A total of five parks in Scotland were included on the Local Favourites list, including the 230-acre Aden Country Park in Mintlaw.

The charity said these votes show the love that local communities have for their parks, with each to receive a special certificate to mark its success.

Can Aberdeen Market Buck **Economic Recession?**



ABERDEEN and Aberdeenshire operate a unique market within the UK with a prominent focus on energy production, creating ongoing employment opportunities which in-turn lead to greater demand for housing and commercial property, compared to elsewhere across the country where markets are currently flatlining.

While Aberdeen is not immune to economic issues, of course, it has been argued that it is an area of the UK which could potentially buck the economic recession as the city was reported to be "largely unaffected" by the financial crisis in 2008 and experienced a boom period in the years that followed buoyed by high sustained oil prices.

Market competition at present sees housebuilders struggling with the market being so hot with activity that developers either have a confident finger on the pulse or are being priced out of the central belt entirely. The purchase of both land and property for development is increasing in demand and we are seeing smaller or more niche development opportunities being considered by developers to keep a foothold.

Chris Ion,

Graham + Sibbald

Director of Commercial Agency,

Housebuilders are seeing greater demand for family homes, despite the current economic worries, as families continue to rebase their needs postpandemic, however, rising construction costs and labour supply are having an impact on property prices with buyers stretching savings to their maximum.

The Commercial investment market is following a similar trend of exciting activity and it begs the question, will Aberdeen be counter cyclical once again?

Graham + Sibbald's Aberdeen Commercial Team led by Director, Chris Ion, have recently brought to the market a unique development site in Stonehaven which extends to 0.53 acres is situated approximately 80 metres from Stonehaven Harbour. This popular costal town is in an idyllic location with a population of around 11.150 and was named as one of the 'five most beautiful towns in Scotland' in 2018.

At a guide price of £250,000 exclusive of VAT, the proposed development site is located within the settlement boundary and would constitute an infill site in terms of policy P3 (Infill and householder developments within settlements - including home and work proposals) of the adopted local development plan. The site sits within

House, which comprises a detached granite building and former nursery. A hidden gem, with a total site area extending to 0.55 acres, the subjects boast an impressive Grade C Listed building built in the mid-19th century. Arranged over three stories and a basement, the property has kept many original period features.

Priced at £800.000 exclusive of VAT for the heritable interest, the site is situated within an area zoned for Residential (Policy H1) with a recommendation to interested parties to submit an enquiry with the Aberdeen City Council direct to find out more

Chris Ion commented: "We are pleased

to be marketing these two quite

which are located within a local

economy which has the

potential to ride out the

next period of economic

uncertainty better

than most."

unique development opportunities



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This workshop is designed for Business Owners and CEO's to find leads, humanise the brand and grow your international network using LinkedIn.







Area of expertise?

Greenwell Equipment specialises in four divisions - containers, warehouse, cabins, and office furniture. You will see our cabins and modular buildings all across the region and further afield across the UK. The office division is my particular focus as we sell new and quality used office furniture. However, my biggest passion is supporting the circular economy and encouraging people to re-use and recycle items and that's why we also specialise in supplying preloved office furniture, racking, shipping containers and modular buildings.

What should people know?

Greenwell has worked and continues to work on a number of large-scale infrastructure projects across the UK, so we punch well above our weight for an Aberdeen family business. We have the largest showroom in the North-east for office furniture and the largest range of quality used furniture too. Getting the right desks and chairs can make an unbelievable difference to health and wellbeing, so if you are choosing office furniture for a home office or a workplace, always spend time choosing the right chair and perhaps look to invest in sit/stand desks as these are proven to improve posture.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

In my years of experience in the industry, most companies are guilty of going down the new route first, without considering other options. There is an unbelievable amount of quality used office furniture available and some of our stock is as good as new. Not only is this a more cost-effective approach, there are no lead times, and it helps companies to tick that environmental box as it reduces the amount of unnecessary waste going to landfill.

What's your top tip?

Look into the circular economy and see where your business can help because if we all make little changes, we could collectively make a massive difference to the world we live in now and for future generations. At Greenwell, we try to always offer our customers the option of new or used products and we hold a large selection of both.



Area of expertise?

I have more than 20 years' experience working in human resources – I thoroughly enjoy working with people and place them at the forefront of everything that I do. In the last 12 years of my career, I have been a member of Sport Aberdeen's senior leadership team with a focus on driving the Human Resources and Organisational Development strategy forward.

What should people know?

People should appreciate the importance of having a rigorous recruitment and selection process for onboarding staff. It goes without saying that CV19 presented challenges and changes to the working landscape beyond measure, but we were lucky at Sport Aberdeen. Despite having more than 500 members of staff on furlough during the pandemic, we were able to successfully re-engage everyone back into the workplace and keep our teams motivated.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Relying on the traditional route of recruitment and not keeping up with the times. It is important to try new approaches and adopt modern techniques for reaching your desired target audience. At Sport Aberdeen, we are proud to have a diverse workforce and we appreciate that everyone is different. We recognise transferable skills which can be applied from different industries. For example, we work closely with the Ministry of Defence to recruit those who serve, veterans and their families. In recognition of our outstanding support, Sport Aberdeen recently achieved a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award.

What's your top tip?

My biggest piece of advice is to invest in your people – support them throughout their career journey and give them the chance to develop and flourish on their chosen path. A motivated workforce is a happy workforce – help your employees to realise the value of their work and encourage open dialogue along the way.

Area of expertise?

We help business owners and leaders get what they want out of life and improve business performance. They work on their business, not just in it. It's lonely at the top, members value confidential advice, support, challenge and accountability from colleagues who really know what it's like at the top.

What should people know?

TAB provides peer advisory groups and 1-1 coaching for business leaders from non-competing sectors, who value the chance to learn from others and contribute to their success. Members get to know each other well and work closely on one another's businesses, achieving long term accountability and taking better decisions faster.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Not recognising leadership as a distinct skill when recruiting and developing people. People often complain about excellent specialists being promoted into supervisory roles when they're not good at it. Often whoever gave them the job didn't recognise or select for the leadership skill required.

What's your top tip?

Invest in leadership skills for you and your people. When you last coached a manager working for you, was that conversation so good that they'd like to copy your approach with their own staff? How do you hold managers accountable for leading and developing their people? If you don't, start.



Area of expertise?

Headquartered in Aberdeen, at IT Hotdesk we provide IT strategy, support and cyber security services across Scotland. We help customers accelerate and achieve business success by unlocking opportunities through technology.

What should people know?

As much as 46% of UK businesses have recently reported having cyber security breaches or attacks in the last 12 months. Cyber attacks are evolving, becoming more sophisticated and happening more frequently, so it's more important than ever to enhance your cyber security to protect your organisations infrastructure, data and users. From targeted industrial espionage or phishing to ransomware or viruses, cyber attacks are very real and can cause serious damage to businesses if they don't put safety measures in place. Our team of cyber security specialists help detect and mitigate security vulnerabilities, defend against security breaches and attacks, and train teams to enhance a company's protection.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

When budgets are tight, businesses often cut back on any third-party spending, which usually includes its IT support. What people don't realise is that the correct IT strategy should work for your business, streamline operations, increase security and improve communications both internally and with customers and suppliers - ultimately helping to save costs in the long run. A conversation costs nothing, so engaging with your local IT provider could potentially save you time and money.

What's your top tip?

Set aside 10 minutes to complete our simple cyber security checklist on our website to understand where to prioritise your time and resources to plug any security gaps and ensure your business is protected, for both now and the future. By identifying potential vulnerabilities, and creating a remediation strategy, you are more likely to prevent or reduce security incidents which can save your business money and reputational damage.



Fruit brings sweet returns for Mackie's

MACKIE'S of Scotland has recorded a 95% increase in the sales of its fruit-based products resulting in a recordbreaking summer for the firm.

The Aberdeenshire family-run business has doubled sales on last year for its fruity ice creams including strawberry swirl, raspberry ripple and white chocolate and raspberry.

Mackie's attributes this huge spike to having brought its fruit-sauce production on-site. Instead of purchasing in fruit sauces, Mackie's now buys in Scottish whole-fruit from Aberdeenshire's Castleton Farm and makes all of its fruit sauces and compotes itself on the family farm.

It is estimated that this year alone, Mackie's has used 23.5 tonnes of Scottish fruit provided by Castleton Farm – already surpassing its overall totals for 2020 (3.2 tonnes) and 2021 (17.2 tonnes) combined.

The production of fruit products has contributed to Mackie's overall summer sales growth of 8% on 2021.

ICR's long term TAQA hire

ICR INTEGRITY, a global provider of specialist maintenance, integrity and inspection solutions, has been awarded a long-term hire contract with TAQA Bratani Limited (TAQA), for the provision of its Quickflange $^{\text{TM}}$ weldless connections for TAQA's UK-based operations.

The contract is for two years with a two-year extension option.

Lindsay Anderson, Head of Sales - Quickflange™ at ICR, said: "Quickflange™ offers clients permanent repair options minimising downtime or the need for hot work permits, making it a cost effective and efficient way of performing repairs. The technology has a long-standing track record, particularly in the North Sea and Norway sectors, but we are now seeing a growing demand for solutions onshore, outwith the traditional oil and gas sector as well as our international locations throughout the globe."

Infinity helps clients cut overheads

ACCOUNTANCY firm Infinity Partnership has announced a new venture to help clients reduce operational costs.

The award-winning Aberdeen firm has teamed up with Great Annual Savings Group (GAS).

In a challenging economic climate, GAS has proven to be a valued partner to help companies to reduce costs on utilities such as water, gas and electricity. In addition, it has supported efficiencies in EV charging, merchant and payment services, insurance, telecoms, office equipment and much more.

Simon Cowie, managing partner at Infinity Partnership, said: "We support our clients from an accountancy and tax point of view. However, in recent times we have secured a number of partnerships that have helped our clients reduce their costs or improved processes during what has been an extremely challenging period for all business.

"Our clients will be offered the opportunity to gain support from Great Annual Savings. We are using GAS expertise and working with them to help reduce our overheads."

Sportschallenge boosts North-east charities to tune of £75k

SPORTSCHALLENGE, the North-east's premier sportsthemed corporate fundraising dinner, has raised £75,000 for four Aberdeen-based charities.

The funds will be split between the event's long-term beneficiaries, Maggie's Aberdeen and Children's Aid (Scotland) and three other worthy, local causes.

The event, sponsored by Piper Sandler with support from CNR International, attracted over 55 teams of 10 from businesses across the region who battled it out over five rounds of sports trivia in the Question of Sport style quiz, hosted by sports personalities Alan McInally and Andy Walker in Aberdeen's P&J Live.

In addition to Maggie's and Children's Aid (Scotland), Aberdeen Sands, Home-Start Aberdeen and Living Well Café will also be benefitting from the generosity of Sportschallenge sponsors and participants.

Nick Dalgarno, Sportschallenge Trustee and Managing Director of Piper Sandler, said: "The success of the event and the generosity of our guests mean that we have yet again been able to support the same number of charities as we did in 2019, which is testament to the loyalty extended to us by the business community. It is a privilege to be able to contribute to local organisations who care for those in every stage of life from pregnancy, through childhood and parenthood, right up to those in their twilight years."

Proserv in MoU for software development

GLOBAL controls technology company Proserv has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UK based start-up company Ortomation.

The tie-up is intended to facilitate the development and commercialisation of unique real-time optimisation (RTO) software.

The agreement is the latest development in Proserv's ambitious technology roadmap which is focused on delivering impactful, disruptive monitoring and optimisation solutions, harnessing the power of data analytics, to bring gains right across the broad energy sector.

By targeting production and yield increases, as well as a reduction in energy consumption and other operating costs, effective RTO software can increase performance by up to 5%. As businesses align themselves towards the needs of the energy transition and a net zero future, RTO can offer tangible upside around improved operational efficiencies and reduced emissions footprints.

Proserv and Ortomation will collaborate on deploying the latter's innovative and novel model free, self-learning "autonomous agent" technology, enabling a simple, scalable and transparent solution, fundamentally distinct from the status quo method of providing "asset optimisation."



North Star launches Grace Darling

NORTH Star's new UK built hybrid powered daughter craft, the first of its type specifically designed for the offshore wind market, has been launched at a naming ceremony held at the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht club in Lowestoft, adjacent to the firm's regional operations hub.

The vessel was christened "Grace Darling" in honour of a famous lighthouse keeper's daughter from the North-east of England who risked her life in 1838 to save the stranded survivors of a wrecked merchant ship travelling from Hull to Dundee.

Her life changed dramatically after her feat of bravery made the front pages of the national press and was reportedly read by Queen Victoria. A RNLI museum to mark her life was established in Bamburgh, Northumberland, in 1938.



Business lessons I've learned



Ronald Holden,

Consultant, ITI Group Limited

What does your company do that others don't?

ITI has built a reputation over its 50-year history for producing innovative, yet reliable, technological solutions to problems experienced in industry. Whilst many companies carry out systems integration, ITI's experienced engineers have an attitude of mind that looks for ways of doing things to overcome the apparently insurmountable. Often these solutions seem incredibly straightforward once they have been put in place, but nonetheless the idea may have eluded others for a long time. When we work with customers who understand their business well and have a clear idea of what they want to achieve, this approach really flourishes.

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

The world is changing faster than ever before and the role of technology in these changes is astonishing; things that were barely imaginable when I was starting work are now seen as essential components of everyday life. Encouraging young people to

choose a career path that uses STEM skills to design and deliver solutions that benefit society is a key challenge in achieving these goals.

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

When I transitioned from a very technical role to one in which I was leading a team, I had to learn how to work best with and through others. I had to consider what individuals were best at, and where they were weaker, often because of their particular strengths. I was then able to blend these characteristics across the group to achieve a harmonious work environment that consistently delivered excellent results. In later years this lesson proved invaluable when opportunities arose to work collaboratively in wider teams that embraced customers and other suppliers.

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

Building a strong, successful team in which members feel valued. My Christian faith is the driving force in my life, and that applies to work

Quick fire <u>round</u>

What was your first job?

My first job was working in the loca library on Saturdays

When would you like to retire?

I retired in March 2022

What did you have for breakfast?

Granola and skimmed milk

Who, or what, inspires you?

People who live selflessly, the greatest example of whom is Jesus Christ.

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

Last book I read was The Pilgrim Church by Edmund Hamer Broadbent; the last film was "Shane", the biography of Shane Warne

life as much as to my private life. Valuing others and helping them to develop their potential fits into that philosophy and when I retired recently it was very touching to receive good wishes from many colleagues with whom I had worked over the years expressing their thanks for opportunities they were give, for advice and "pearls of wisdom".

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

Opinions around energy sources are often polarised, making agreement on progress towards a sustainable future very difficult to achieve. If the public, and politicians, were to pay more attention to the path to be travelled than to an idealistic view of having the end goal now, then progress could be achieved. The engineering strengths in the North-east could be sustained and an effective transition made without losing the richness of community that has developed over a long time.



Decom hub for Port of Aberdeen

CESSCON Decom is to launch a decommissioning hub at the Port of Aberdeen's £400million South Harbour expansion this year, creating up to 50 new jobs.

The hub will be within Crathes Quay at South Harbour and deliver dismantling, recycling and reuse services with a key focus on subsea infrastructure. The jobs boost is expected over the next 12 months and CessCon will be encouraging applications from people living locally.

The facility is being established under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Port and CessCon, which aims to establish Aberdeen as a centre of excellence and port of choice for the offshore decommissioning sector. The agreement complements and expands the decommissioning services currently offered at the Port's North Harbour and CessCon's Energy Park Fife Decommissioning Facility.

The South Harbour decommissioning hub will offer heavy lift zones, impermeable concrete dismantlement and processing areas, water collection and treatment facilities, material storage areas, offices, and canteen facilities.

CessCon is committed to the circular economy and the reuse and repurposing of equipment is a primary objective on all projects. The company has a minimum target on all projects of 98% reuse and recycling (by weight) of all material and has achieved over 99% reuse and recycling on several projects to date.

Wellsafe partners with Trendsetter

WELL decommissioning experts Well-Safe Solutions has partnered with Trendsetter Engineering, Inc. to fit the Well-Safe Guardian semi-submersible rig with the Trident Intervention System.

The Trident is an effective single-system solution which can be configured for hydraulic intervention, riserless light well intervention and open water intervention riser operations.

The partnership provides Well-Safe Solutions with exclusive access to the system in the UK for well plug and abandonment.

McHardy's final acquisition

THE Scotland-wide McHardy Group has acquired Tom Munro Financial Solutions for an undisclosed sum, adding £52million to it assets under management.

The self-funded buy-out marks the end of its acquisition run, during which it has bought Wishart Wealth Management and Peebles Financial These three firms, along with McHardy Financial, make up the McHardy Group.

Andy Kerr, Managing Director of McHardy Group, said that the immediate plan is to rebrand Tom Munro Financial Solutions, Wishart Wealth Management and Peebles Financial to operate under the name "McHardy Private Wealth." The three companies will officially merge in 2023, and McHardy Financial will continue to operate separately.

The head office for McHardy Private Wealth will be in Edinburgh.



New coffee house and bar opens in Union Terrace Gardens

THE DOORS of the first business to take space in Aberdeen's new-look £30million Union Terrace Gardens have opened.

Common Sense Coffee House and Bar opened for business last month.

Celera Support Services has made a making a six-figure investment in the project, which includes a custom fit-out of the interior, equipment and terrace furniture.

The venue, which will open from 8am to 8pm next week, plans to operate across three Acts; Act 1 - drop-in and takeaway in the morning, Act 2 - indoor and al fresco grazing food and drinks later in the day, and the Finale - evening drinks, food for pre-theatre goers and the opportunity to simply enjoy the terrace.

With the management team already in place, Common Sense is set to create a total of 15 new hospitality roles, including five full-time and 10 part-time positions.

Driven by an ethos inspired by the 18th century Scottish School of Common Sense, founded by Aberdeen-born enlightenment Philosopher, Thomas Reid, the venue will be showcasing North-east produce on its menu, with suppliers including the city's Two Raccoons Winery, as well as the Shire's Burnside Brewery and Wark Farm Pies.



Shell CEO Ben van Beurden to step down

SHELL PLC has announced that Ben van Beurden will step down as CEO at the end of 2022, and that his successor will be Wael Sawan.

Wael's appointment is effective January 1, 2023, when he will also join Shell's Board of Directors. Ben van Beurden will continue working as adviser to the Board until June 30, 2023, after which he will leave the group.

Shell's Chair, Sir Andrew Mackenzie said: "Wael Sawan is an exceptional leader, with all the qualities needed to drive Shell safely and profitably through its next phase of transition and growth. His track record of commercial, operational and transformational success reflects not only his broad, deep experience and understanding of Shell and the energy sector, but also his strategic clarity. He combines these qualities with a passion for people, which enables him to get the best from those around him. The outcome of the Board's managed succession process resulted both in the appointment of an outstanding CEO and proved the strength and depth of Shell's leadership talent. I look forward to working with Wael as we accelerate the delivery of our strategy."

Wael Sawan said: "It's been a privilege to work alongside Ben and I'm honoured to take over the leadership of this great company from him. I'm looking forward to channelling the pioneering spirit and passion of our incredible people to rise to the immense challenges, and grasp the opportunities presented by the energy transition. We will be disciplined and value focused, as we work with our customers and partners to deliver the reliable, affordable and cleaner energy the world needs."

Commenting on Ben van Beurden, Sir Andrew said: "Ben can look back with great pride on an extraordinary 39-year

Shell career, culminating in nine years as an exceptional CEO. During the last decade, he has been in the vanguard for the transition of Shell to a net zero emissions energy business by 2050 and has become a leading industry voice on some of the most important issues affecting society.

"He leaves a financially strong and profitable company with a robust balance sheet, very strong cash generation capability and a compelling set of options for growth. These were all enabled by bold moves he has led, including the 2016 acquisition of BG and the transformational \$30 billion divestment of non-core assets that followed. He took firm, decisive action to marshal the company through the global pandemic, seizing the opportunity for a major reset to ensure we emerged fitter, stronger and equipped to succeed in the energy transition. Powering Progress, Shell's detailed strategy to accelerate our profitable transition to a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050, was unveiled in February 2021 and was quickly followed by moves to simplify both our organisational and share structures. Ben's legacy will frame Shell's success for decades to come."

Ben van Beurden said: "It has been a privilege and an honour to have served Shell for nearly four decades and to lead the company for the past nine years. In my journey from LNG design engineer to CEO, I have been fortunate to work alongside so many talented people from diverse backgrounds - all committed to the company's goal of providing the world with the essential commodities of modern life. I am very proud of what we have achieved together. I have great confidence in Wael as my successor. He is a smart, principled and dynamic leader, who I know will continue to serve Shell with conviction and dedication. I wish him and his family all the best for the journey ahead."



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MORNING BULLETIN

UK electricity generators are warming to idea of windfall tax



Some of Britain's biggest electricity generators are today reported to be more in favour of being hit by a windfall tax than being pushed into signing cut-price power-supply contracts this winter.

Prime Minister Liz Truss has pledged that the Government will subsidise a freeze on energy bills for households and firms, with details of the business-support package expected on Wednesday.

It is understood the idea of a one-off levy is gaining popularity amid fears that other proposals for tackling excess profits may be too complex to implement at short notice and could

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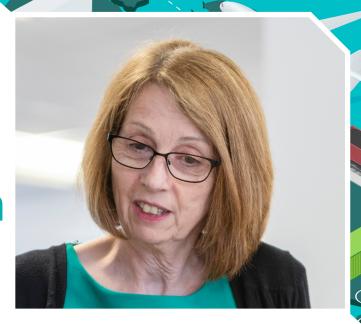
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Lorraine Neish,

International Documentation Team Leader,



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

We deal with all sorts in the **Chamber's International Trade** Documentation team.

We help send tatties, ice cream, craft beer and other world-renowned North-east produce to pretty much every continent on Earth.

And every now and then, we get an unusual request, liked sending a burger machine to China, or toy dinosaur eggs to the Middle East.

However, we had one of our most exciting projects this summer, when a well-known rock band got in touch, looking for us to support them on their European Tour (not as a warmup act, sadly).

Born to Run

The band - which can't be named had a nine-gig tour and needed to get their equipment across multiple borders on a tight schedule.

We recommended an ATA Carnet and explained the advantages of using one, and how it could save them time and money.

The ATA Carnet is an international customs document which allows

the temporary importation of commercial samples, professional equipment or goods going to either a trade fair or exhibition to countries which are part of the ATA Carnet

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Man, I feel like a Carnet...

An ATA Carnet acts as a passport for goods.

It simplifies the customs formalities by allowing a single document to be used for clearing goods through countries that are part of the ATA Carnet system.

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The band played in several countries and covered lots of miles ensuring each time that the ATA Carnet was presented at customs and the

appropriate signatures/stamps obtained going out and coming back

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Increased profits and new jobs for Razor

ABERDEEN-based digital and communications agency, Razor Marketing Group, has increased turnover by 100% during the financial year to the end of July 2022.

During the same period two new strategic roles were created - Group Commercial Director and Marketing Manager.

Razor's work has spanned the energy, hospitality, food and beverage, retail, fashion and education sectors at home and overseas.

Derek Emslie was appointed Commercial Director and Jeannie Price joined as Marketing Manager. Energy communications and marketing expert, Rachel Creegan, has also joined the team in a specialist PR consultancy role.

Emerald Airlines launch Dublin route from Aberdeen International Airport

EMERALD Airlines, exclusive operator of Aer Lingus Regional, has announced increased capacity with new daily flights from Aberdeen International Airport to Dublin.

The route will take off from October 30 and is part of the airline's increased capacity for this upcoming winter.

Mark Beveridge, Operations Director at Aberdeen International Airport, said: "We look forward to welcoming Aer Lingus Regional's operator Emerald Airlines to our airport with the launch of the Dublin route. The North-east has a lot to offer so we look forward to anyone coming to visit our region."

PTL's transformational acquisition

PIPELINE Technique (PTL) has completed its transformational acquisition of a trio of industry-leading energy infrastructure businesses from Stanley Black & Decker.

This marks the second acquisition of 2022 for PTL - in April, the company acquired Global Project Services.

PTL, which is backed by specialist energy private equity firm Bluewater, has acquired CRC-Evans, Pipeline Induction Heat (PIH) and Stanley Inspection (including MicroAlloying, part of Stanley Inspection).

The acquisition creates a global leader in welding, coating, and technical engineering. It immediately delivers a threefold increase in revenue for PTL, which is now expected to exceed \$200million. The deal also results in more than doubling of staff from around 350 to over 1,000.

Well-Safe Solutions awarded major decommissioning contract

NEPTUNE Energy announced the award of a \$30million decommissioning contract to Well-Safe Solutions, for a campaign covering more than 20 wells located across eight Dutch and UK North Sea fields.

It is the first multi-region, multi-well decommissioning campaign awarded by Neptune to a single rig contractor and will significantly reduce time and costs associated with the work.

Well-Safe Solutions' Well-Safe Protector jack-up rig will carry out the plug and abandonment of at least four subsea and 17 platform wells located in Dutch and UK waters.

Neptune Energy's Managing Director in the Netherlands, Lex de Groot, said: "Safely decommissioning assets at the end of their economic producing lives is an important part of our work. We plug and abandon the wells, taking everything with us and leaving the seabed in a clean state. That is our responsibility, and we don't take it lightly. Working with a single rig contractor for this extensive, cross-border decommissioning campaign is an innovative way reduce time and costs."

Duncan Morison, Rig Manager of the Well-Safe Protector, said: "The Well-Safe Protector boasts a large volume of deck space for tubing, casing and conductor recovery, allowing effective batch operations and will help Neptune Energy realise considerable operational savings."

The Well-Safe Protector is scheduled to mobilise in Q1 2023 to the Dutch and UK sectors for P&A operations in fields including D18a-A, G14-B, K12-S2, L10-S2 and K9c-A in the Netherlands and the Neptune-operated Minke and Orca fields.

Neptune has the option to extend the one-year contract by a further two years, via eight three-month extension.





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James Keachie, Duncan Brown and James Bream

Katoni and Dana sign agreement

KATONI Engineering has signed a three-year frame agreement with Dana Petroleum with an option to be extended to August 2027.

The contract covers consultancy, engineering, procurement and construction services including services focused on net zero and emissions reduction.

It follows four years of previous work between the companies during which a strong partnership has been built based on the delivery of projects including subsea tie backs, life extension modifications and production optimisation scopes.

James Bream, Katoni Engineer CEO, said: "The scope of this agreement reflects the growing importance of our consulting and net zero work. We aim to help Dana drive change in this space as well as supporting with core modification and optimisation scopes too therefore delivering MER.

"The North Sea Transition Authority and OEUK have an aspiration for collaboration and shared visions between contractors and operators and Dana and Katoni live that vision together. We work together closely and respect each other's commercial drivers which leads to better project outcomes."

A leading strategy for successful salespeople

RECENT research by Doqaru shows a strong link between meeting and exceeding sales targets and social media use. Digitally-savvy salespeople drive more sales than their digitally silent counterparts.

A clear social selling strategy will drive meaningful engagement from your ideal customers. Such engagement supports salespeople and could shorten sales cycles, for instance.

This November, Doqaru will be holding its third Social Selling Essentials Programme, designed for teams and individuals looking to optimise LinkedIn for business. Over two 3-hour sessions, Doqaru directors pack in all the essentials to equip sellers with robust sales strategies.

Private equity investment boost

PRIVATE equity investment in Scotland's mid-market businesses has surpassed pre-pandemic levels after £2billion was spent in the first six months of 2022, according to the latest analysis by KPMG UK.

35 private equity deals worth £2.1billion were recorded in the six months to June - the largest half year number in the last five years and a 75% increase in volumes compared with the first half of 2019 when 20 deals worth £1.4billion took place.

Despite uncertainty caused by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis, both volumes and value of mid-market investments in Scotland grew year on year by 46% and 100% respectively, with technology and life sciences the most in-demand sectors.

Despite the return to form, KPMG suggests that the market is likely to soften in the second half of 2022, as uncertainty returns.

Graeme Williams, Director, Corporate Finance M&A at KPMG UK, said: "After back-to-back years of disruption for dealmakers and investors we saw a real return to form in the first half of this year, as pent-up demand was released across Scotland's mid-market. It's heartening to see half year levels surpass pre-pandemic volumes and values, and we're very much on track for a record-breaking year well above five-year averages, even if investor activity cools off in the months before Christmas.

"However, with so much uncertainty globally and across the UK's economy, diligence and valuations may become more challenging, which in turn may make it harder for private equity houses to move forward with conviction when looking for the best investment opportunities.

"As private equity houses continue to be challenged by their institutional investors on their own environmental, social and governance agendas, those who have made the biggest strides in these areas continue to command significant market interest at high pricing multiples."

ON THE MOVE OCTOBER 2022



Peter Smith

Peter Smith has joined Shepherd and Wedderburn as a Commercial Property Partner, heading the firm's real estate team in the Aberdeen office and bringing 19 years' expertise advising clients in the real estate sector. Peter has a broad client base operating across many sectors and is individually ranked by Chambers and Partners, one of the UK's independent legal directories.



Claus Rødsgaard

Swire Energy Services has appointed Claus Rødsgaard as Head of Operations in a newly created role for the wind division. Claus will support and oversee operational activity and will be based in Lystrup, Denmark. He joined SES from Dominion Global where he was head of blades and composites.



Emma Hodge

Emma Hodge, who won the Rising Star category at the Chamber's Northern Star Business Awards this year, has been appointed a Director of ITC. She started at the company seven years ago as an Office Junior and through hard work has climbed the ranks. In her most recent role as Procurement Manager Emma has been responsible for more than £1.8million in purchases.



Jessica Nicol

Jessica Nicol has joined Align People HR as an HR Consultant amid significant business growth. Earlier this year, the firm reported a 20% increase in turnover and the team has now more than doubled over the past 12 months. Jessica has joined the team following a well-established HR career working across various sectors including retail and professional services.





Jamie Kelman and Daniel Richardson

Jamie Kelman has joined Savills as an Associate in Savills Earth and Infrastructure teams. Based in Savills Edinburgh office, Jamie will advise landowners, developers and investors on site identification, project structuring and the negotiation of commercial terms in connection with solar, hydro, wind and other clean energy projects, as well as large-scale infrastructure projects across the United Kingdom. Savills Earth has appointed Daniel Richardson to lead its solar consultancy service across the UK. Living in Aberdeen, but consulting right across the UK, Daniel has an academic research background in renewable engineering. He has significant experience in the design, delivery and operation of solar PV systems, both on a freelance and in-house basis, most recently with Powerstar and Styles & Wood Group PLC.



Jamie Smith

SBP Accountants and Business Advisers, is continuing to expand its team with the appointment of a specialist to support future growth. Jamie Smith joins the SBP team as Business Development Manager for the firm's Aberdeen headquarters following 25 years with RBS.



Andy Eagle

Andy Eagle has taken up his post as Chief Executive of Aberdeen Performing Arts which runs His Majesty's Theatre, the Music Hall and the Lemon Tree, as well as producing major festivals in the city including crime fiction fixture Granite Noir, music festival True North and youth arts extravaganza Light the Blue.



Anything's possible with the people your business needs



Sally Finnie, David Wood, Steven Morris and Ewelina Witkowska

Sally Finnie has joined the board of ZynQ 360 as Sales Director. Sally has a wealth of experience in building and leading effective global sales teams, as well as a background in mergers and acquisitions. David Wood, who joined as a Lead Photographer in 2018, has been promoted to Product Manager. He will work closely with the sales and technology teams, as well as customers, to ensure that continual innovation and the highest standards of customer care are at the forefront of everything the company does. Steven Morris has been appointed Head of Sales. He will lead the ZynQ 360 sales teams globally to develop the international growth of the business in oil and gas, as well as new markets. Ewelina Witkowska has been promoted to Production Manager. Since she started with the company almost four years ago Ewelina's skill set has developed beyond her original role.



Mark Perry

Mark Perry has joined the executive team at AAB as Chief People and Integration Officer. Mark joined AAB Group following more than a decade at Accelerate, where he was Executive Director. Mark will lead the strategy for people and integration across the group, which has grown its staff by more than 80% in the past 12 months and now employs more than 550 in offices in Scotland. England and Ireland.



Ross Cochrane

Ross Cochrane has been promoted to Commercial Manager at Petrasco Energy Logistics. Ross has spent the past three years as client solutions manager while completing his business management degree and will now assume responsibility for Petrasco's commercial function in the UK.



Beth Lord

The University of Aberdeen has appointed Professor Beth Lord as Head of its School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History. A leading academic with more than 20 years' experience as a researcher, educator and PhD supervisor, Professor Lord has held a range of leadership positions within the school since her arrival at Aberdeen in 2013.



Lawrence Johnston and David Mackay

Energy efficiency charity, Scarf, has strengthened its top team in response to the challenges created by the rising cost of living. Lawrence Johnston and David Mackay have been formally confirmed as joint CEOs, having shared the role on an interim basis since 2020. The multi awardwinning organisation supports businesses and individuals across the North-east by reducing fuel poverty, promoting energy efficiency and lowering carbon emissions. The co-CEOs will lead the social enterprise's 60-strong team at a pivotal moment in its 37-year history as the country faces unprecedented pressure on energy bills and increased fuel poverty.

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Senga Buntrock, Derek Wann, Ray Turner and Peter Barron

Aberdeenshire-based housebuilding and construction company, Bancon Group, has strengthened its senior team with the appointment of four new Directors. Senga Buntrock has joined Bancon Group from the energy sector, while Derek Wann, Ray Turner and Peter Barron have all been promoted to Director roles in Deeside Timberframe and Bancon Construction. As Director of People, Culture and Organisational Development at Bancon Group, Senga will play a key role in the group's strategy to attract, retain and develop the best people. Derek Wann has been appointed Commercial Director at Deeside Timberframe, where he will oversee the estimating and sales functions and work with the team to help achieve the company's ambitious five-year business plan. Peter Barron has been appointed to Business Development Director at Bancon Construction. Ray Turner has been appointed Framework Director at Bancon Construction, bringing extensive industry experience over 17 years.



Lesley Taylor

Aberdein Considine has strengthened its business development team with the appointment of a new Business Development Director. Lesley Taylor joins the firm from Barclays Bank where she was Eco System Manager at Barclays Eagle Lab based in Aberdeen. She will be replacing Graeme Ross who is retiring from the firm after four years in the role.



Dr Edward Green

Dr Edward Green has joined NCIMB as CEO. He takes over from Dr Carol Phillips who is retiring after 12 years in the post. Dr Green joins NCIMB from CHAIN Biotechnology, a microbiome therapeutics company, which he founded and has led since 2015. Prior to that he founded Green Biologics, a biotechnology company using bacteria to manufacture renewable chemicals.



David Jackson

David Jackson has joined VisitScotland as Regional Director for Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Speyside. David has spent the last 20 years working in travel, tourism and destination management across the UK and was previously Manager of Marketing Cheltenham.



Andy Martin, Paul Slorach and Jonny Moroney

Verlume, a specialist in intelligent energy management and energy storage, has bolstered its leadership team. The Aberdeen-based battery systems provider for harsh environments has appointed Andy Martin to the new role of Chief Commercial Officer in which he will be responsible for developing and implementing commercial strategies across the underwater, offshore and onshore sectors. Paul Slorach moves to the role of Chief Technology Officer following around eight years managing Verlume's business development activities. Jonny Moroney moves from his current role of Operations Director to Chief Operating Officer following almost eight years of operational and project management experience.

Have you changed role recently?

Send your on the move to **bulletin@agcc.co.uk** to feature in an upcoming edition.



Stephen Oates

Johnston Carmichael has bolstered its specialist support for entrepreneurial businesses and investors with a new senior appointment based in the central belt. Tax Director Stephen Oates, who has joined Johnston Carmichael from French Duncan, has more than 17 years' experience in tax, with significant expertise in working with ownermanaged businesses.



Lauren Neely, Lauren McDonald and Rosie Henderson

North-east solicitors and estate agents Raeburn Christie Clark and Wallace has hired three new trainees as part of its continued growth and investment in legal talent. The new trainees will support the residential property, commercial property and private client departments, all of which have seen a continued rise in the volume of work in recent months. All three trainees graduated with honours from universities in Aberdeen and will initially be based in RCCW's Aberdeen offices. Lauren Neely starts with the residential property team at the firm's Union Street property shop. Lauren McDonald and Rosie Henderson will both be based at the firm's Albyn Place HQ, supporting the private client team and commercial property team respectively. The new hires bring the firm's trainee staff to five, with further investment in trainees planned for 2023 and 2024.



Fraser Mitchell

Fraser Mitchell has re-joined Shepherd and Wedderburn as a Partner in the planning team, bringing to the firm and its clients almost two decades' planning expertise, with a particular focus on the housebuilding, commercial property and clean energy sectors.



Naveed Qamar

Port of Aberdeen has appointed Naveed Qamar as Head of Safety, Health, Environment and Quality as the organisation maintains its focus on safe operations at North Harbour and the construction of its major South Harbour expansion project.



Tyrone Miller

Tyrone will be based at the Arch Henderson Southampton office. A Chartered Engineer, Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and a Member of the Institution of Structural Engineers, Tyrone has over 24 years of experience in civil and structural engineering and joins Arch Henderson following an 18-year career with WSP.



Rebecca Lewis

Rebecca Lewis has joined digital marketing agency Mission10 as an Account Manager. Previously at the BIG Partnership, Rebecca has experience in PR, social media and project management and will be responsible for developing digital marketing strategies for a range of clients.







Law firm buzzing about biodiversity

THERE'S an unmistakable buzz in the air at the Aberdeen office of law firm CMS. Staff have welcomed a new addition to the team – a colony of bees in their own hive.

The legal firm's bee gardens are designed to enhance the environment and make sure life is sweet for the pollinators and their ecosystems.

Norman Wisely, Managing Director of CMS's Aberdeen office, said: "We will be encouraging staff and clients to get involved by offering them the opportunity to learn about beekeeping and how we can best support these insects in their new home.

"We are incredibly passionate about our bee programme, which is just one of the many projects we are undertaking as part of CMS's wider commitment towards sustainability."

STR invests £1m in technology and innovation centre

SUBSEA Technology and Rentals (STR), has invested £1million in a global technology and innovation centre of excellence to drive its innovative solutions and support its growth plans.

The 30,000sq ft facility in Great Yarmouth will be the home to its standalone technology and innovation team responsible for STR's research and development of its technical solutions and products.

The purpose-built facility features state-of-the-art engineering and product development suites, mechanical and electronic assembly and testing areas supported by the recruitment of 19 new employees bringing the Great Yarmouth staff to 53.

The firm has experienced rapid growth during 2022 following the earlier announcement of investment from Baird Capital to support the firm's growth with further plans to expand and strengthen its capabilities.

AAB expands HR consultancy services

AAB has made a key acquisition to expand the HR consultancy services offered across the group.

Think People Consulting Ltd is an HR consultancy with an annual revenue of around £1.7million and a team of 24 based across Belfast and Dublin.

Established by Anne Dougan and Emer Hinphey in 2006, Think People provides support to clients across a diverse suite of HR services, people development and organisational development. The company has a wide range of clients across both the private and public sector. Both Anne and Emer are remaining with the business to support ambitious growth plans.

AAB Group already has a strong track record in this field. Purpose HR joined the group in July 2021, and within 12 months reported the doubling of both turnover and headcount

Following investment from August Equity, AAB Group has begun building strong regional hubs across the UK and Ireland. In May 2022, FPM an independent audit, accounting, tax and business advisory firm was the first in Ireland to join the group. The addition of Think People is another significant step forward in building AAB's reputation as a diversified business critical services group in the region.

Burning ambition for fundraising

CLAN Cancer Support is looking for thrill seekers to bare their soles as part of a daring fundraising challenge this November.

The charity is calling for people to take on a fire-walk in the grounds of its Aberdeen base with participants going barefoot over two metres of burning embers, emitting temperatures of around 500 degrees Celsius.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, November 19, with all proceeds used to help the charity provide free services for people affected by cancer across North-east Scotland, Moray, Orkney and Shetland.

Clan's services include information and support, counselling, complementary therapies, social and wellbeing activities and dedicated support for children and families.

Clan is coordinating the event in partnership with Fire Walk Scotland with the organisation providing a 90-minute briefing session ahead of the activity and health and safety support available to participants throughout the evening.

The event will take place from 6pm - 8pm, refreshments will be provided and spectators are welcome.

Registration for the event costs £20 with individuals encouraged to achieve a £100 fundraising target. For more information contact fundraising@clancancersupport.org.



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