

OCTOBER 2023 | LOCAL HEROES

BUSINESS BULLETIN

The scoop on Mackie's major growth

We speak to Mac Mackie about cows, climate and cones.

Page 8

Incentive package to lure businesses to Union Street

New firms to benefit from best set of incentives anywhere in the UK.

Page 20

Full steam ahead for Buchan rail study

Plans to reinstate rail links between Aberdeen and Buchan move forward.

Page 46

**Exclusive:
The local heroes
making sure no
child goes without**



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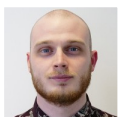
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Contents

OCTOBER 2023

Focus on **Local Heroes**



I'm green, you're green, we're all green for ice cream



The local heroes making sure no child goes without



Man behind Aberdeen's big market dream

Regulars

PAGE |

HOT TOPIC

Your thoughts on the burning issues of the day

12

POLICY UPDATE

Ryan Crighton, AGCC

22

TRAINING CALENDAR

Upcoming courses

42

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

William Bain, British Chambers of Commerce

65

ON THE MOVE

Who is going places in the region?

68

Aberdeen a hero through to net zero

This region may be known as Europe's oil and gas capital, but long before that it was famous for its rich agriculture and fisheries produce, textiles, granite, paper production, international trade and historic education institutions.

Aberdeen is a global brand. A region of just half a million people, on the North-east coast of Scotland, through the ages we have and continue to punch above our weight and exert our influence right around the planet.

Our people and businesses have always been enterprising.

Established way back in 1136, Aberdeen Harbour Board is Britain's oldest registered company.

From our waterfronts, we have always reached out beyond our shores. And with millions of pounds being invested, our ports will continue to be at the heart of our economy for decades to come.

Spin on to 1498 - just six years after Columbus discovered America - and one of the world's oldest transport companies, The Shore Porters Society of Aberdeen was set up.

A son of Aberdeenshire, Thomas Blake Glover, even founded the Mitsubishi Corporation becoming known as the Scottish Samurai.

The Press & Journal - currently celebrating its 275th birthday - is one of the oldest existing English-language newspapers in the world and remains one of the best-read regional dailies in the UK.

The first Scottish company to be listed on the London Stock Exchange was the City of Aberdeen Land Association, now known as CALA Homes.

Aberdonian inventor and energy pioneer Robert Davidson built

the world's first known electric locomotive here in 1837. And talented and versatile Robert Thomson from Stonehaven, is acknowledged as the inventor of the fountain pen and the original inventor of the pneumatic tyre.

And the terraces of the Houses of Parliament and the original Waterloo Bridge in London were constructed with Aberdeen granite.

All of this and much more prompted Richard Brown to write in his book *Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850*, that:

"Aberdeen had a number of striking characteristics one of which was its economic resilience based on the adaptability of business leaders who found new means of investment and employment when old ones faded".

Those words were written around 170 years ago and remain as appropriate today as they were then.

This region has a long and proud tradition of invention and discovery. Perhaps there's something in our culture and DNA that has always made this a magnet for global innovators with the area boasting no fewer than five Nobel Prize winners.

It was back in 1922 that one of these, biochemist John MacLeod, helped to discover insulin. Aberdeenshire-born physician Patrick Manson made the momentous discovery that malaria is spread by mosquitoes, credited as one of the most important medical breakthroughs of its time. And the world's first MRI scanner was developed at the University of Aberdeen.

That drive and dynamism continues apace, and today we have Europe's largest single-site health campus where ground breaking research into cures for contemporary diseases is being carried out and one of the largest concentrations of life scientists on the continent.

We are home to food and drink brands that are enjoyed right across the planet with our produce being exported to more than 100 countries around the globe.

Our menu of household names includes Aberdeen Angus, iconic rule breakers BrewDog, some of the greatest whiskies in the world, Mackies ice cream, Walkers Shortbread and Europe's biggest seafood catches are landed at Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

Our internationalism goes both ways. After centuries of global trade accelerated by our energy capital status, we have an incredibly diverse population and in any restaurant, café or the airport arrivals hall, you'll hear voices from a myriad of nations.

Looking ahead, Aberdeen will be at the forefront of our transition to a lower carbon world.

We boast the highest concentration of engineering and related employment per head of any part of the UK and 75% of the world's subsea engineering capability is based here.

The collective expertise, innovation and skills built up in the area over the last 50+ years across operators, our world class energy supply chain, universities, agencies and other partners means we are well placed to once again be at the vanguard of innovation and change.

This is just a tiny excerpt of our story, of the amazing impact we've had on the world through the ages, and the things that make our city region a great place to live, work, study, visit, invest and do business in today.



Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive

Our premier partners

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

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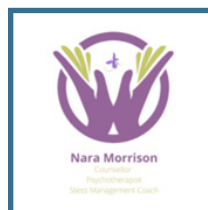
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I'm green, you're green, we're all green for ice cream

Generating its own renewable energy is proving a recipe for success for Aberdeenshire firm Mackie's of Scotland.

The ice cream and chocolate maker has spent millions of pounds on sustainable initiatives.

Mackie's has a lofty mission - to become a trusted global brand from the greenest company in Britain.

The family firm's Executive Chairman is Mac Mackie, who joined the business in 1992 and took over as Managing Director from his father Maitland in 1998.

Since then, Mac has overseen a number of large sustainable development projects on the family

farm, including installation of wind turbines, thousands of solar panels and a low-carbon refrigeration system.

As well as being good for the planet, these energy initiatives also have major financial benefits for the North-east business which has been less exposed to the massive energy bills experienced in the UK in the last couple of years.

Mackie's is on a roll with its ice-cream sales, which have doubled in the last decade.

It recently announced that, for the first time ever, it has hit £20million in annual ice-cream sales.

The business now exports to 13 countries around the world - Taiwan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai and the US.

The Executive Chairman said: "Mackie's plans to continue to grow its export sales over the coming years - so is well on its way towards becoming a Scottish global brand.

"As a farming business and a family business, Mackie's is naturally concerned with sustainability because it's an inherent goal that the land is passed to

the next generation in a better state than it was found.

"Mackie's takes every effort to carry out its business sustainably and is always open to new technologies and processes."

The family have been farming at Westertown farm near Rothienorman since 1912.

Over the years, the farm has seen many changes, as the country, times and technology surrounding it have changed.

Mac explained: "Before Mackie's started making ice cream, Westertown was a typical dairy farm selling milk locally.

“

As a farming business and a family business, Mackie's is naturally concerned with sustainability because it's an inherent goal that the land is passed to the next generation in a better state than it was found.

Mac Mackie,
Executive Chairman,
Mackie's of Scotland

"The Mackie's dairy farm had around 80 milk roundsmen delivering fresh milk around the Aberdeenshire area.

"Having milk delivered to your door by the milkman became less popular, with more people buying their milk from the supermarket while they carried out their other grocery shopping.

"Around the same time, another change in shopping behaviour was occurring.

"Demand began to rise for skimmed and semi-skimmed milk, rather than the fresh whole milk that Mackie's had been used to producing.

"To make skimmed and semi-skimmed milk, the whole milk is placed into a machine called a centrifugal separator which spins the milk.

"This results in the fattier milk and cream ending up on the outside and the thinner, skimmed, milk in the middle.

"Once the skimmed milk was taken away and sold, dairy farmers found themselves with an excess of thicker milk and cream.

"In wondering what to do with this excess, Mackie's landed firmly on making ice cream.

"And so, in adapting to the demands for changing milk palates, Mackie's delicious ice cream came into being.

"The first tubs of ice cream were made in 1986 and were sold in the local shops surrounding the farm.

"By 1994, the popularity of the ice cream brought enough confidence for Mackie's to commit completely to ice cream and the milk retail business was sold to Robert Wiseman's dairies.

"Now, Mackie's makes over 13.5million litres of ice cream a year.

"Despite changes over the years, one thing that has remained the same is that our traditional ice cream - which has no added flavours - remains the

best-seller, with a recipe almost exactly the same as it was back in 1986."

The company's focus on sustainability goes back 40 years to 1983, when late Chairman Maitland Mackie installed a small wind turbine to power the old piggery, making Mackie's one of the first UK companies to install a grid-connected wind turbine. Mac added: "My father was a pioneer and ardent supporter of renewable energy.

"That first wind turbine was largely a result of his general curiosity and interest.

"After seeing it worked on this small scale, Maitland and I embarked upon the installation of the first of the four large wind turbines which now sit atop the hillside family farm.

"The statistics showed us both that it worked from a financial perspective, and my father set about trying to convince other farmers across the country to follow suit - both for the good of the planet, and to provide an economic boost to Scotland's farming sector.

Mackie's investment in sustainable initiatives to date is around £10million.

The business currently produces more than twice as much energy as it uses, with the extra going to the national grid.

Mackie's energy production comes from four wind turbines,

MACKIE'S

more than 7,000 solar panels at the top of the hill and dotted around the roofs of the factory buildings and byre, and two biomass boilers which supply the energy to heat the farm's buildings and refrigerate Mackie's ice cream.

Energy reduction has been a more recent focus.

Two years ago, Mackie's made its biggest-ever single investment - beginning installation of a low-carbon refrigeration system. Part-funded by the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme, the £4.5million project has improved the quality of Mackie's products and reduced its refrigeration related energy use.

The Executive Chairman said completing the low-carbon refrigeration system had been a huge undertaking.

But Mackie's is now looking ahead to other projects which will help improve its sustainable credentials even further.

One near-term way is by extending its solar farm. New panels to be installed over the coming 12 months will be smaller, more efficient and provide more energy.

In addition to the obvious benefits to the environment, Mackie's has seen its green initiatives benefit the business in many ways.

Mac stated: "The most obvious of these has been the insulating effect they have on Mackie's exposure to energy prices, which have been particularly volatile over the past two years.

"This has allowed Mackie's to resist making price rises as extreme as its competitors over the course of the cost-of-living crisis, protecting shoppers while also allowing Mackie's to grow its market share in the UK."

The Executive Chairman also said that many studies have shown that consumers do care about sustainability in principle.

"However, most also show that sustainability consistently ranks below taste and price. This makes sustainability a bonus for them, which can help to sway the decision in favour of the more sustainable of two similar products.

"We hope that consumers will increasingly value sustainability and, of course, that this translates into more choosing Mackie's," he added.

Alongside its larger green projects, Mackie's sets itself green resolutions to make smaller changes.

Mac said: "Last year, these included the purchase of electric bikes for use by staff, who can book out the bikes to use at weekends, on their lunches, or before/after work.

"We like to think that the bikes are double-green because they are charged up from energy from the wind turbines.

"A second green resolution last year was to begin preparing to host bees on the farm, to help boost biodiversity in the surrounding countryside.

"While there are already lots of varieties of plants and flowers around the farm, not least in the arboretum, which contains over 112 varieties of tree and makes a wonderful place for a lunchtime stroll, the bees will need a variety of year-round flowers.

"Last year, grass was removed in strips between some of the solar panels at the top of the hillside farm.

"In autumn, the first batch of year-round wildflowers were planted, and a second batch are to be planted.

"Once these have been given a year to take, the solar farm will be a fantastic green home for bees year-round.

"We think it's important to focus not only on the big projects like energy production and saving, but to instil the business (and the farmland it sits on) with sustainable initiatives wherever possible.

"Mackie's smaller, shorter-term, green resolutions like its bee-hosting help it make these improvements on a continuous basis.

"They are also easier for staff to relate to, helping to put them in an environmentally-conscious mindset."



Offshore wind contract underscores Balmoral renewables pedigree

Offshore energy supply chain company, Balmoral, has adapted and transitioned a number of its proven buoyancy and protection solutions for use in the fixed and floating offshore wind sector.

The company provides an extensive range of products to the renewables market backed by a four decade-plus track record in the subsea sector and, with the recent announcements of increased offshore wind activity nationally and internationally, it is finding significant traction for its products around the world.

A recent multi-million pound contract award for a fixed wind cable protection system (CPS) in UK waters has further enhanced the company's order books and demonstrates customer confidence in Balmoral's technology, according to Sales Director, Gary Yeoman. He said: "While our oil and gas activity remains robust, more than 60% of current enquiries relate to renewables projects while over the past year around 40% of order intake has come directly from the offshore wind sector.

"Proven technologies such as our cable protection systems, distributed buoyancy and tether clamps have been welcomed by the renewables industry and, as such, we are well placed to meet local content criteria for the forthcoming Scotwind and INTOG projects with discussions continuing at pace with developers, installation contractors and cable suppliers."

These core products have been readily accepted by the wind sector that is keen to build an experienced and reliable supply chain.

MTL increases turnover by £2.1million

FPSO and marine integrity management and repair specialist Marine Technical Limits (MTL) has celebrated 20 years in business with a significant increase in activities. The firm, which is based in Kintore, has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 2003.

Headed up by Calum MacLean and Matthew Lewin, the organisation started its journey in the global energy sector from their home offices.

Since then, it has grown significantly, with headquarters in Kintore and more than 40 members of staff.

Projects Director Mr MacLean said: "The last 20 years have been incredible for MTL. We have established ourselves as specialist vendors in the industry and that's thanks to the incredible people we employ. With our specialists on board, we can deliver exceptional services and outcomes for our clients and that's been proven through their continued support and custom. This year we have greatly increased our annual workload, welcoming eight new assets and increasing turnover by £2.1million."



Office development in Aberdeen launched to market

Global real estate advisor CBRE has announced the launch to market of an office development at The Apex in Dyce, Aberdeen.

Acting alongside Graham and Sibbald, CBRE has been instructed to let the building which recently featured in the blockbuster movie "Tetris", with the accommodation currently undergoing extensive refurbishment works.

Extending to 70,000 sq ft over three levels, The Apex benefits from high quality, modern office space and an EPC A rating. There are offices available from 1,000 sq ft and provisions for a refurbished canteen, business lounge, cafe and gym which would provide great accommodation for both local and national operators.

Dominic Millar from CBRE in Aberdeen commented: "We are delighted to be marketing The Apex for let. It is a new generation of office building which integrates work, wellness and the environment with the highest standard of design and technology."

Chris Ion, Partner with Graham & Sibbald added: "With the significant reduction in Grade A space throughout the city, we are delighted to be working with the landlord and CBRE to bring to market The Apex. The Apex ticks all the boxes companies are seeking from a modern office in Aberdeen with its energy efficiency, car parking including EV charging, wellness provision and excellent views."

HOT TOPIC

Who is your hero and why?"



Everyone has someone or even numerous people that they look up to in their lifetime. It may be a family member, a teacher, celebrity, influential speaker or many more. Hero and legend are words that I often feel are thrown about too easily in today's society and sometimes people don't take time to realise the true meaning of hero. My hero as an Aberdonian would have to be none other than Sir Alex Ferguson, not only from a football-fan perspective allowing us AFC fans to hold on to European stories, but for what he achieved. Everyone loves the underdog story, but to sustain greatness is the true test of the influential mastermind that is Sir Alex. Not only did his management have to be tailored to each individual - he had to sustain numerous egos, issues, and demonstrate true professionalism throughout his career. I always keep one quote from him close to me which is: "Once you bid farewell to discipline, you say goodbye to success."

Craig Fraser, *Managing Director, Granite Elite*



As a trained psychologist and counsellor, one of my heroes is John Lilly, known for both his contributions to and controversial and pioneering work in science. During World War II, Mr Lilly served as a scientist in the US Army and was involved in high-altitude research, particularly studying the effects on pilots. This early research experience shaped his later interests in physiology, consciousness and sensory deprivation. In the 1950s, Mr Lilly gained significant recognition for his development of the isolation tank, also known as a sensory-deprivation tank, now renamed float therapy. These tanks were designed to isolate individuals from almost all external sensory stimuli, allowing them to explore altered states of consciousness. This invention became a focal point for Mr Lilly's research into human consciousness. In the 1960s, NASA used his isolation chamber to develop its astronaut-weightlessness acclimatisation, for a pseudo zero-gravity environment. His work inspired both scientific research and popular culture. Mr Lilly's life and work exemplify the intersection of science, philosophy, and unconventional thinking, making him a notable figure in the history of 20th-Century science. Little did he know, his invention was a gift to the world, that has helped so many people deal with PTSD, anxiety, sleep disorder and mental health issues. Plus, many more conditions he didn't envisage nor imagine when developing his isolation tank.

Fiona Ross, *Co-owner, Urban Wellness Float*

Aberdeen's annual display of bravery

For a few months every year, Gilson Gray Partner Findlay Anderson swaps his business suit for dancing shoes, helping 24 local men prepare for a catwalk show with a twist. Gifting his time for the weekly rehearsals, Findlay coaxes the models out of their shells, amping up their confidence and preparing them for two professionally-produced shows in front of 1000+ guests.

Findlay sat down with Friends of Anchor Chief Executive Sarah-Jane Hogg, to find out what's next for Brave, which moves to a new home at P&J Live next year, having raised £724,000 since 2017.

SH: Our last show in May doesn't feel so long ago! It felt poignant to be bidding farewell to the Beach Ballroom, where Brave has done all its growing up. You've been involved since we launched the first show there in 2017. Can you summarise it in a nutshell?

FA: Brave is really about taking 24 gents of all ages who have faced a cancer diagnosis and getting them ready to put on the show of their lives. They come in as complete strangers but form a real brotherhood as they walk the catwalk together and raise an exceptional amount for the charity.

SH: You play a real key part in the Brave model experience – there's no one else who could bring the guys out of their shells so well. The nerves at the first rehearsal are tangible but within 20 minutes you have the guys shaking off any inhibitions and giving it their all! What does it mean to you to see the changes in their confidence as the weeks go by?

FA: It is a huge privilege to watch these guys find the courage to step out of their comfort zone and take to the stage – particularly those still undergoing treatment.

We even had one of our models a few years ago who had a major operation the week of the show and turned up at the rehearsal that night. Each of the guys really want to be there for themselves, each other, and their loved ones. It helps seeing one another 'strut their stuff'.

SH: The atmosphere generated by our models on the show days is pretty extraordinary. What about the event itself – how would you describe it?

FA: Quite simply, it is one of the most incredible nights in the North East events calendar. The atmosphere in the room is difficult to describe, it's extremely uplifting while also being very poignant. Everyone is there to celebrate these guys while raising money for such a wonderful cause.

SH: What can we expect from Brave next year?

FA: Brave and its sister event, Courage on the Catwalk, are moving to P&J Live – a huge step-up in terms of the size and scale. With 75 tables per show, there will be an incredible atmosphere, brilliant entertainment and excellent food.

SH: Brave is always a highlight for our team. What is it about the event that you hold particularly dear?

FA: The models come from all walks of life, getting to know each one is such a privilege. Partners or family members often tell us the experience has given them their loved one back, or let them find their mojo during or after a really difficult time. That is hard to beat.

SH: We wish we could bottle the feeling that Brave gives us. So how can anyone reading this get involved?

FA: Book a table! It would be great to see more companies or groups of friends getting together to come along. We want to see a jam-packed audience at May's Brave events. For more info and tickets, go to: friendsofanchor.org/index.php/events/brave





Paul Smith comes to P&J Live in 2024

Paul Smith is bringing his latest comedy show, 'Pablo', to P&J Live on Friday, August 23, 2024. This is Paul Smith's biggest and funniest tour yet, and it promises to have you rolling around in laughter with every joke.

Paul Smith hails from Liverpool and has taken the comedy scene by storm – his quick wit makes him popular with any crowd. He has been crowned Liverpool's New Comedian of the Year and was a Finalist at The Leicester Comedian of the Year competition.

Paul has incredible skills in interacting with the audience, drawing material from the smallest suggestion, and turning it into hilarious comedy.

The 2024/2025 tour, 'Pablo', will see feature Paul's trademark audience interaction mixed in with hilarious true stories from his everyday life. The Aberdeen audience can expect hysterics from start to finish, you won't want to miss a minute.

RGU makes £20,000 investment in city through Aberdeen Gift Card

Aberdeen's Robert Gordon University (RGU) is making a £20,000 investment in the city by choosing the Aberdeen Gift Card as a reward for staff in its newly introduced long service awards.

The move by RGU has been welcomed by Aberdeen Inspired – who launched the gift card scheme in 2020 – as a powerful vote of confidence in local businesses and a significant investment in the city by one of Scotland's top universities.

The £20,000 gift card order by RGU will see cards spent locally in the Granite City with a range of businesses, keeping spend locked into Aberdeen and boosting the local economy.



Brimmond granted coveted Fit4Offshore Renewables status

Aberdeenshire-based engineering and manufacturing specialists, Brimmond, has been granted ORE Catapult's Fit4Offshore Renewables (F4OR) accreditation.

Developed with input from the offshore renewable energy industry, the Fit4Offshore programme recognises UK supply chain businesses which have the relevant knowledge, capability and competence to do business in the offshore renewables sector.

Over the past year, Brimmond's senior leadership team have been working through the programme, demonstrating their competence and commitment to forming an energised supply chain for the growing offshore renewables sector.

During this time the team have liaised extensively with ORE Catapult – a leading innovation centre for offshore renewable energy – to show that their systems, processes and knowledge are deeply embedded within the company. Simultaneously, the Brimmond team has been working on their largest manufacturing project to date with a client in the offshore wind sector. The 7-figure project has seen Brimmond design, manufacture, install and commission a 1.8 Mega Watt seawater jetting package. The package consists of two 660kW Pump Units, two Umbilical Reelers with integrated 45kW Electric Hydraulic Power Units, two 250kW Submersible Pumps, Filter and Valve Skids and a Launch and Recovery System. The system is to be installed for the full duration of the campaign and will assist with the installation of foundations of wind turbines off the coast of Northern France.

Tom Murdoch, Managing Director added: "We are very proud to see our team's hard work and extensive experience recognised by ORE Catapult. We have played a growing role in the supply chain of the offshore renewables sector for a number of years now, and our most recent project in offshore wind, is due for handover later this year.

"We're particularly proud that our most challenging and ambitious project to date, which has involved designing and manufacturing a bespoke package for our client, is in the renewables space. We very much welcome this Fit4Offshore industry accreditation which recognises our expertise and proposition as an integral part of the renewables supply chain."



MANUFACTURES/STOCKS&SUPPLIES/PIPING MATERIALS/PIPES&TUBES/
BUTT WELD FITTINGS/FLANGES/AUSTENITICS STAINLESS STEEL/
DUPLEX&SUPERDUPLEX/6MO/NICKEL ALLOYS/TITANIUM



PIPES/FITTINGS/FLANGES

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raccortubigroup.com



MEET THE MEMBERS



Margo Milne,
Director,
Developing the Young
Workforce (DYW) North East

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

DYW was founded in 2014 as the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy. DYW North East is one of 20 regional groups serving Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. We expanded significantly in 2021 to support the delivery of the

Young Person's Guarantee, which is a commitment to connect every 16-24-year-old to an opportunity.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

DYW makes it easier for employers to connect with, and recruit, young people. We help companies to support young people while they are still in school; this allows pupils to develop the skills they need to enter the world of work, while enabling companies to build their future talent pipeline.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Everyone! We encourage organisations of all sizes and types to engage with us. Young people benefit from exposure to as many industry sectors and job roles as possible. Our employer base ranges from sole traders to multinationals and commercial companies to charities – and there's always room for more.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

There are a huge number of projects and initiatives available to employers

who want to support young people: this can be overwhelming. We want to cut through the noise and become the go-to organisation that helps employers access the activities that suit them best.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

See above! However much or little time you have – and whichever sector you are a part of – there's something meaningful you can do to support the next generation. We'll help you find it – and we'll tailor the activity to meet your own business goals too.

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

Young people are at the heart of everything we do; we want to empower the youngsters of our region with knowledge, inspiration and experience before entering the workforce. The North-east is abundant with opportunities – it is a privilege to play a part in sharing that with the next generation.



Kevin Wyness,
Director and Co-founder,
Escone Solutions

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Mike Charles and I set up Escone Solutions in August 2015 after months of working out of the back of a café, scraping a couple of coffees together with what little money we had left. We were on the verge of giving up when we got our first break.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Escone provides support and consultancy for financial application software, specifically OpenAccounts and eBIS, including superuser systems support and business intelligence dashboards. Our bespoke managed support service - Escone Assist – allows us to manage client systems so that they can focus on their core business and day-to-day work.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We support clients in a range of industries, from transport to retail, oil and gas and housing associations. Most are well-known household names, but we also help smaller organisations improve their processes and create efficiencies. The diversity of clients allows us to continually expand our knowledge and keep our ideas fresh.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Like most other business, our biggest challenge currently is the increase in running costs, business rates and utilities.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Businesses considering their running costs has created opportunities for us in terms of helping them review their internal processes, reporting, and best use of their financial applications. Our reputation means that we are trusted to identify and deliver any recommendations and cost savings that we can bring with system licences and efficiency.

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

Our biggest pride is in the team we have built, with colleagues who are happy to come to work and develop their potential in a positive environment. This also benefits our clients. We will never take that for granted and we are passionate about moving forward to be the best in our business.

NSTA grants carbon storage licences to Acorn

Acorn has received licences from the North Sea Transition Authority for the Acorn East and East Mey CO₂ stores, expanding its transport and storage system's capacity deep beneath the North Sea to around 240 megatonnes (Mt) of CO₂.

Awarded its first storage licence in 2018, Acorn will provide the transport and storage network for the Scottish Cluster to capture and permanently store CO₂ emissions 100km offshore, in geological formations 2.5km below the seabed.

A spokesperson for Acorn said: "These extensive areas of subsea acreage are key elements in Acorn's long-term strategy. The North Sea Transition Authority's award of these carbon storage licences is welcome news, as we continue to respond to Government's Track-2 process.

"Acorn's stores, 2.5km below the seabed some 100km north-east of Peterhead on the Aberdeenshire coastline, have the potential to store c.240 million tonnes of CO₂."

The Acorn Development Partners – lead developer Storegga, technical developer Shell, Harbour Energy, and North Sea Midstream Partners – are currently preparing for detailed commercial negotiations with Government in Track-2.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak confirmed Acorn had entered the Track-2 process in July 2023, making it one of four UK Government Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) clusters selected to deliver storage of 20-30 Mt of CO₂ per year by 2030.

Before 2030, the Scottish Cluster could include nine different UK CO₂ sources, spanning a variety of high-emitting sectors including industrial sites and power generation plants, as well as new hydrogen generation plant technology. Primary early sources of CO₂ include: two of the gas terminals at the St Fergus Gas Complex; SSE and Equinor's Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station; a new blue hydrogen plant supplying INEOS and Petroineos sites at Grangemouth; and ExxonMobil and Shell's facilities at Mossmorran.

Peterhead Port provides an additional opportunity for shipped emissions – increasing domestic reach and opportunities for international emitters, such as European and other international emitters, to utilise UK storage, further reducing costs for UK emitters.

The Scottish Cluster can help enable a just transition, delivering a sustainable future for hard-to-abate sectors, protecting jobs, supporting communities and creating value adding activity for Scotland and the UK.



Photography by Shiprow Village & Michal Wachucik at Abermedia

Aberdeen Douglas Hotel, Grand Ballroom - THE space for your next event!

The Grand Ballroom is the perfect place to host your next event, with capacity for 400 guests - drinks reception or conference theatre set-up, or 250 for a sit-down meal. It is a flexible event space that can be transformed to suit any occasion like charity dinner dances, sports dinners or conferences.

With the recently upgraded state-of-the-art sound system, high quality lighting, numerous screens and free Wi-Fi, the Grand Ballroom is both spacious and elegant. Our experienced events team will help you plan and create a successful event tailored to your exact requirements.

A short walking distance from many local attractions, close to Shiprow Village food & drink hub and a 3-minute walk to Aberdeen's main transport centre.

Contact us for all enquiries
www.aberdeendouglas.com / reservations@aberdeendouglas.com



OEG Renewables strengthens position in survey market

OEG Renewables (OEGR), a leading provider of offshore wind solutions, is pleased to announce its acquisition of GEOSIGHT Ltd (GEOSIGHT), a specialist marine surveying company operating across a range of sectors, including offshore renewable energy, subsea cables and civils in the UK and Europe.

GEOSIGHT, founded by Brian and Kirsten Gamet in 2016, has established itself as a trusted provider of hydrographic and multi-sensor geophysical surveys, marine engineering, and dimensional control surveys, and boasts a team of skilled surveyors based from their head office in the historic cathedral city of Salisbury in Wiltshire, England.

The acquisition of GEOSIGHT by OEGR marks an exciting milestone for both companies. By joining forces with group company Manor Renewable Energy (MRE) and an existing and well-respected survey team led by Alex Richards, OEGR aims to strengthen their survey and positioning offering in UK and overseas markets. GEOSIGHT will operate under the guidance of Brian Gamet as Managing Director, supported by Alex Richards as Operations Director and their newly combined team of dedicated survey professionals.

New HQ for Vysus

Global engineering and technical consultancy Vysus Group has relocated its headquarters to Westhill.

The firm, which has more than 20 offices across the globe, has taken occupancy of the first floor of Proserv House.

Vysus was formed in November 2020 and has now moved from Kingswells.

Knight Property Group secures further west end office deal

Knight Property Group has secured a further new tenant at 1 St Swithin Row, in the heart of Aberdeen's prestigious west end.

Daniel Mitchell, Management Surveyor at Knight Property Group added: "Securing Barra Energy is a positive deal highlighting the demand for office space within Aberdeen's west end. Three out of four office suites at St Swithin Row are now occupied and there is strong interest in the final suite."

St Swithin Row has been refurbished by Knight and offers open plan office suites within a modern two-storey building. The property offers car parking and is only a short distance from Queen's Road, Albyn Place and Carden Place, with Union Street only a short five-minute walk away. Other occupiers at St Swithin Row are Braemar Shipbroking Limited and Ardyne.



Francesca Ogilvie, James Bream and Nadine Hanssen

AFC Women score new sponsorship with Katoni Engineering

Katoni Engineering, a specialist Consulting, Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) company, has increased its support of Aberdeen FC, agreeing a new partnership that will see their brand proudly displayed on the shorts of the AFC Women's team this season.

As part of this exciting local collaboration, Katoni Engineering will continue its valued sponsorship of the Aberdeen FC Youth Academy's highly respected and enjoyed tournament, aptly named the "Katoni Cup."

Commenting on the new partnership, Robbie Hedderman, AFC Business Development Manager added: "This deal with Katoni underlines our desire at AFC to bring our partners on a journey with the club as we look to evolve their support, not only offering profile but also tangible ways for businesses to increase their exposure and connection with our varied fanbase.

"Their commitment to our Women's team and the Katoni Cup speaks volumes about their dedication to local talent and their desire to make a positive impact. We are proud to offer businesses like Katoni the opportunity to engage and support the development of both women's football and youth talent in Aberdeen."

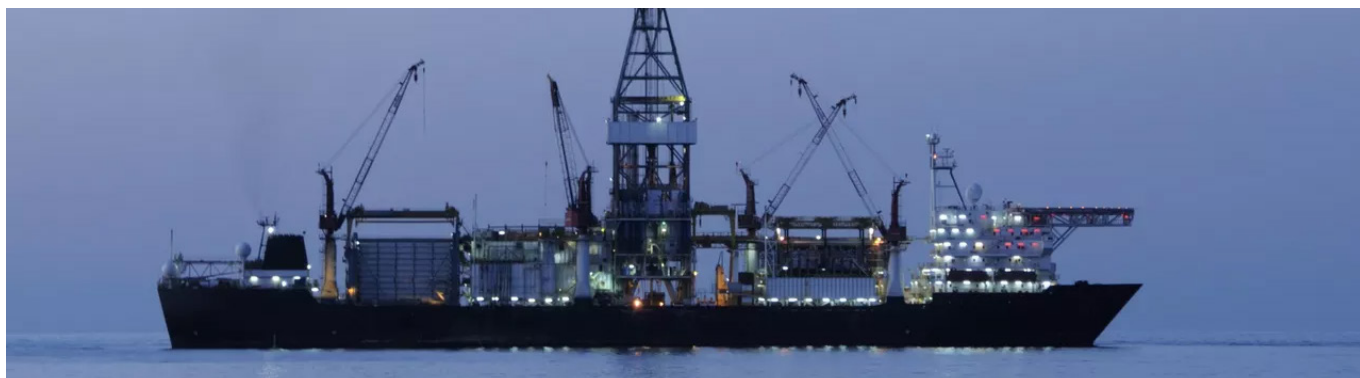
£300,000 renovation at Specsavers' Aberdeen

The locally-owned store was thrilled to share the news that it has completed an impressive £300,000 refurbishment of their Union Street Practice.

The extensive work means enhanced testing diagnostics (including an OCT diagnostic machine), upgraded emergency eyecare provision, and a significant increase in the capacity for audiology services.

Directors David, Laura, Adam, and Ian, as well as the wider 70-strong team, take pride in providing the highest quality care and tailored services to each customer who comes through their door.

The investment has been welcomed by the local community, demonstrating Specsavers' long-term commitment to Union Street.



ModuSpec announces frame agreement extension with bp

ModuSpec is extremely pleased to announce the extension of a multi-million-dollar global frame agreement for BOP inspection services with upstream operator, bp.

ModuSpec, a Vysus Group company, has been delivering BOP inspection services support to bp for more than eight years. With this five-year extension, which could be worth circa \$10million per year, ModuSpec could be called upon to provide support across bp's global operations.

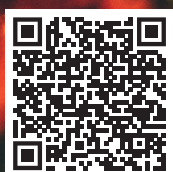
Johnny Benoit, SVP ModuSpec, said: "To continue our trusted relationship with bp is extremely pleasing and is testament to the value that they place in our ability to support their operations. With rig market activity and demand for drilling continuing to rise globally, it's as

important as ever to our clients that we are there to support with our technical expertise, backed up by the knowledge and experience a long-term relationship brings to the table.

"This contract award demonstrates ModuSpec's ability to support bp with their specific requirements across their suite of global operations. From deepwater subsea BOP compliance and verification support across all assets operating in the USGOM, to the reactivation of three semi-submersible rigs in the North Sea and Caspian Sea, our teams have already been extremely engaged with bp in 2023 alone, and we look forward to the future as we continue to develop the relationship with the introduction of new services such as Argus, our new BOP real-time monitoring system."



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New Union Street businesses to benefit from most generous incentive package

Businesses which open on Aberdeen's flagship high street will be offered one of the most generous set of incentives available anywhere in the UK.

New occupiers taking on long-term vacant units will benefit from up to two years rent and business rate free under a support package drawn-up by the Our Union Street group.

Grants of up to £35,000 are also being offered to incoming businesses as efforts to restore the Granite Mile to its former glory gather pace.

The community-led Our Union Street organisation, led by entrepreneur and former FTSE100 Chief Executive Bob Keiller, was set-up in March to arrest soaring vacancy rates and plummeting footfall.

Since then, the group has received over 10,000 ideas from the public and engaged with hundreds of local groups and organisations to plot a new future for the street.

How the packages will be structured

Of the 43 vacant units on Union Street, all but two are eligible for Fresh Start Relief, which gives the occupier a 12-month period without having to pay business rates.

Those grants will be topped up to two years, funded by Our Union Street, on eligible units where landlords agree to offer the equivalent of two years' rent free.

Taken together, this would give a new occupiers 24-months within a tenancy to establish their business without having to pay rent or rates.

The support will supplement a new £500,000 Empty Shops Grant Scheme being provided by Aberdeen City Council between now and 2025.

The scheme offers grant awards of up to 50% of project costs, up to £35,000, towards eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration of vacant shops on Union Street to enable reoccupation by new businesses and tenants.

Local companies are also rallying around the plans by offering additional sweeteners, including marketing support and free internet supply.

Mr Keiller said he believes the collective package on offer now ranks as one of the best anywhere in the UK.

'Bringing sparkle back'

He said: "We've spent several months listening to what the city wants – and people unanimously want to see the units which line Union Street brought back to life with new occupiers.

"We want to attract and incubate a vibrant new set of businesses to bring footfall, excitement and sparkle back to the Granite Mile.

"To do this, we need to create an environment which is attractive to the best emerging entrepreneurs both locally and nationally – one which takes the risk out of the high street and allows firms time to find their feet.

"We believe the package put together here will catch the eye of business owners across the UK and we look forward with working with local landlords and property agents to create new beginnings for multiple businesses on our high street."

Never a better time

Mr Keiller said there has rarely been a better time to locate on Union Street after a dramatic downward shift in rateable values.

He added: "One of the misconceptions we've observed is people think it is expensive to locate on Union Street. However, the reality is very different following the most recent rates revaluation, which has seen the rateable value of many premises fall by more than a third.

"Aberdeen City Council has also, uniquely among its peer cities, cut many vacant property reliefs from 100% to just 10%, meaning that the owners of vacant premises are now having to pay rates. This means that it is in a landlord's interest to get deals done, which we believe will also bring rents down.

"Everyone has a part to play if we are to bring prosperity back to this street; we need landlords to be pragmatic about rentals, we need agents to be upfront about what units cost and how much can be saved, and we ultimately need the public to come out and support all of the brilliant businesses on Union Street both today and in the future."

Coretrax expanding following increased global contracts

John Fraser,
CEO, Coretrax



Coretrax, the global well integrity and production optimisation leader, is planning for further growth following recent project wins with headcount rising by 20% to 300 people in the last twelve months.

The Aberdeen headquartered business has expanding operational bases in the US, Middle East and South East Asia with further growth planned in Asia Pacific with the first senior appointments in Australia. The business expects to recruit a further 50 people this year to deal with demand.

The well integrity specialist has also recently supported its first carbon capture (CCS) and geothermal campaigns and sees significant potential in the lower carbon sector to bring its technology and expertise to emerging opportunities.

John Fraser, CEO of Coretrax said: "We have experienced growth across our operations and are currently running live projects on 250 rigs in the Middle East, with support provided from our teams in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Dubai.

"In the US, our unique expandables technology is being used to bring wells back on stream, delivering cost savings and efficiencies with international orders mounting up for this technology that can add value in one run. In the UK, the majority of our work is in wellbore clean up and plugging and abandonment as we help operators to safely decommission their assets."

Coretrax continues to invest in research and development and currently has a portfolio of over 50 technologies across its four product lines.

One recent multi-year contract is with a major service company in MENA and involves the deployment of Coretrax's expandable technology to isolate trouble zones and maximise recovery on existing wells.

With a strong engineering focus, Coretrax offers a range of solutions and tools designed to deliver measurable cost and rig time savings. The team brings the solutions together in an integrated package to provide a full well lifecycle solution.

Private equity firm Buckthorn Partners has held a majority stake in the business since 2018.

ABOUT CORETRAX

Coretrax is a global leader in oil and gas well integrity and production optimization. The company acquired Churchill Drilling Tools and expandable tubular well specialist Mohawk Energy in March 2020 to offer the global oil and gas industry an integrated and boundary pushing approach to well lifecycle integrity and production optimization.

The company has a portfolio of over 50 technologies offered through four product lines with bases in key oil and gas hubs across the UK, North America, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

www.coretrax.com



Our local heroes need backing from government

John Wooden – considered one of the greatest basketball coaches of all time – once said that the greatest failure of all is the failure to act when action is needed.

It's a great quote, and one I always try to keep in mind when I see or hear something which makes me uncomfortable.

And his wise words were at the forefront of my mind recently when I read about Police Scotland's plans to pilot a scheme where they basically, in some cases, stop policing.

The force has confirmed that some minor crimes will no longer be investigated as part of a new approach being tested here in the North-east of Scotland.

One example of where no further action may be taken was a theft with no CCTV or eye-witness evidence.

I find this quite staggering, but place none of the blame at the door of Police Scotland, who rightly deserve a place in our 'Local Heroes' edition for the great work they do.

The force said the pilot is in response to the "hard choices" which are being made to deliver effective policing within the funding available.

To me, that is a clear statement that the force is being squeezed and can no longer deliver the level of service expected by businesses and members of the public.

How on earth has it come to this?

Behind every crime is a victim – and increasingly that victim has become businesses and business owners.

Just last month, Dame Sharon White, the boss of John Lewis, said that shoplifting on the high street has become an "epidemic" in the past year.

She told the BBC Today programme the retailer had seen offences double over the past 12 months.

Dame Sharon said it was also "not right" that shop workers were "having to put up with abuse and attacks".

You don't have to look far to find tales of similar issues in Union Street, or Union Square in

Aberdeen, where a lack of police intervention has left many people afraid to visit these destinations, particularly at night.

All this at a time when tens of millions of pounds is being pumped into regenerating our city centre.

In a round of media interviews, Scottish Police Federation Chairman David Threadgold said that no police officer in Scotland wishes to provide a poorer service than they "are already being forced to."

He added: "It is quite enlightening that the service is now being honest with the public of what it potentially will not be able to do in the future as a result of reductions in numbers and budget cuts.

"But I think for a national police force to say to its citizens that it potentially will no longer investigate certain crimes sets a dangerous precedent and we should be very careful."

Wow.

The new pilot has been described as a "proportionate response to crime".

POLICE

I think David and I agree that a proportionate response to crime is to investigate it, catch those responsible and bring them to justice.

And the SNP-Green government will say it has increased police funding year-on-year since 2016-17, investing more than £11.6billion since the creation of Police Scotland in 2013, despite difficult financial circumstances.

However, the uplift clearly hasn't kept up.

A huge amount of public and private sector money is going into efforts to regenerate our high streets and make them attractive places to live, work and visit.

Creating a safe and welcoming environment is of paramount importance to all of this, so for local police to say that it potentially will no longer investigate certain crimes sets a worrying precedent indeed.

Businesses are paying record levels of tax and expect, as a minimum, for the law to be upheld in return. The Scottish Government needs to ensure that sufficient funding is in place to allow that basic ask to be met.

Failure to do so is a dereliction of the local heroes fighting to bring fresh life to Union Street, and those charged with keeping us safe when we visit.



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





Instant Neighbour

We are a small local charity who have been supporting people of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire for almost 40 years.

So what do we do?

We generate our income by asking for donations of good quality household items, including white goods and clothing, we take great care to ensure they are clean and fit for purpose and sell these in 3 locations, including 2 bricks and mortar shops and an online shop. Not only are we helping people to set up home, but we are diverting from landfill too, so purchasing reuse is great for the environment.

Our social enterprises are Joinerinc and Carpetinc, both professional services that are competitively priced, giving those on lower budgets access to them, of course, anyone is welcome to use these services and shop in our shops.

We couldn't do what we do without the support of our wonderful volunteers, we work with several organisations across the city who support people back into the workplace. We can offer work experience through volunteering in retail, as van hands, warehousing and in admin. We offer tailored training so that the individual can achieve what they want to achieve, this could be building confidence/self-esteem, learning a new skill etc. We work in a non-judgemental environment, so that people can feel safe, thrive and learn at their own pace. Though we can't offer paid work to everyone, we are proud to say that 50% of our staff come from our client group.



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Gerard O'Hare,
Legal Director Scotland,
WorkNest

Area of expertise?

Employment law and employee relations

What should people know?

Be kind, curious and adaptable to foster positive relationships and enable personal growth. Embrace diversity and respect others' opinions. Diversity brings a wealth of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, leading to innovation and creativity. By embracing diversity, individuals can cultivate empathy and understanding, fostering an inclusive and tolerant society. Respecting others' opinions, even when they differ from our own, promotes healthy dialogue and the exchange of ideas. Lastly, make the most of every day; prioritise mental health and personal growth to create a more meaningful and purposeful life.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Neglecting to listen to their customers/employees and adapting to their needs and feedback. By actively seeking and valuing their input, companies can gain valuable insights and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation. Neglecting this feedback can result in customer dissatisfaction (internal and external), missed opportunities for growth, and hinder the company's ability to adapt to changing market dynamics, emerging trends, and customer expectations.

What's your top tip?

My top tip is to stay focussed on your goals and work diligently, breaking them down into actionable steps. Persistence, maintaining a positive attitude, and embracing a growth mindset are essential for overcoming obstacles and achieving success. By staying dedicated, continuously learning, and viewing failures as opportunities for growth, you can increase your chances of reaching your goals and unlocking your full potential.



Corrie Deans,
Director - Commercial Property
Management,
FG Burnett

Area of expertise?

FG Burnett's experienced Commercial Property Management team can assist in all aspects of building management and more importantly asset management to optimise the return on your investment. As part of our energy and sustainability service we offer building efficiency monitoring and provide clients with recommendations on how they can reduce business energy consumption and carbon emissions.

What should people know?

Approximately 50% of energy imported into a property is wasted. 25% of that is attributed to staff behaviour, the other 25% is inefficient plant and equipment. Whether you are working to improve your ESG performance or reduce energy costs and carbon emissions, we can monitor energy consumption within your commercial property and provide a real time report identifying how energy consumption is being distributed and give recommendations for energy saving initiatives. We can then implement easy wins, advise on and monitor standalone upgrade works or feed these results into larger refurbishment proposals in conjunction with our building consultancy team.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

The biggest mistake companies make is not training staff to be energy conscious. Training and engaging with staff is the most cost effective way to gain traction and see tangible results.

What's your top tip?

Appoint a green representative and train staff in order to save money and then use that money to invest in more efficient plant, equipment and technology.

Peterson wins logistics contract from Harbour Energy

Peterson Energy Logistics has been awarded a contract from Harbour Energy to support its North Sea operations from Aberdeen.

The five-year fixed-term contract includes an option to extend for a further five years and will see Peterson deliver the full spectrum of carbon-neutral logistics services for Harbour Energy.

The new agreement secures local jobs in Aberdeen and the North-east, and the longer contract duration provides a high degree of certainty for Peterson's future operations.

Chris Coull, Managing Director for Scotland at Peterson, said: "We are pleased to announce this significant contract award and we will continue to support Harbour Energy's operations in the North-east with best-in-class delivery of critical logistics services."

Relocation for RAM Tubulars

An Aberdeen-based provider of tubular products for use in the energy and construction sectors recently marked its three decades in business with a relocation to Queen's Road.

RAM Tubulars - originally known as Re-usables and Metals, and based at the Fordoun Airfield in Kincardineshire - began life in 1993. It was purchasing surplus and used tubulars from the oil and gas industry and finding new uses for them in the construction, water well and utility drilling markets.

Jim Stewart, Managing Director, said: "Identifying new ways for businesses to make the most of their metal waste has been a hallmark of RAM Tubulars since its inception, and is more relevant than ever in today's marketplace, where sustainability and a move towards a circular economy are essential ingredients for any responsible and progressive business.

"Looking back over the last 30 years, I'm proud of the part we've played in promoting such things and excited about what the future holds for RAM Tubulars."

Double success for Brodies

Brodies has received double honours at the Scottish Business Insider Deals and Dealmakers awards 2023. The firm was named Legal Advisor of the Year and received the award for Diversity and Inclusion.

The honours were presented at a prestigious ceremony at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Glasgow. Now in its 25th year, the Deals and Dealmakers Awards acknowledge and reward excellence in corporate financial transactions.



Michael Cruickshank and Stuart Munro

A green energy business charging the way to a brighter future

Solar contractor i-Protech is on a mission to provide Scotland's homes and businesses with energy efficient solutions after securing a funding deal from Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Kintore business designs and supplies solar panels, solar battery storage and electric vehicle chargers and has been a customer of the bank since its inception in 2015.

i-Protech plans to use the funding to expand the business by developing new energy-efficient products and services in response to rising energy costs, which have driven more interest in green energy solutions as customers seek to become self-sufficient and reduce bills.

Montrose Port Authority celebrates growth

Montrose Port Authority has announced an exceptional increase in growth this past year, exceeding previous financial milestones.

The port's performance in the 2022/23 financial year has seen a significant turnover increase with a 10% rise in vessel numbers and 31% upturn in gross tonnage.

A 34% boost in revenue compared to the previous year signifies the highest revenue outcome ever achieved by the port.

Noteworthy amongst these achievements is the emerging offshore wind sector, which contributed 22% of total vessel revenue for the year.

Montrose Port has also unveiled its new economic impact study, revealing its significant contribution to Montrose and Angus. The port directly and indirectly sustains 384 permanent, full-time employees, generating £13.6million in annual salaries and £25.7million net GVA to the regional economy.

40 years of Clan Cancer Support – a charity built and sustained by local heroes

Fiona Fernie,
CEO,
Clan Cancer Support



In 1983 a small but dedicated group of people took action to address the shortage of physical and emotional support on offer to anyone impacted by cancer in the North-east.

Monthly meetings to offer a 'listening ear' first started taking place in Albyn Place, with an office in Justice Mill Lane later becoming the charity's first permanent base.

Cancer Link Aberdeen and North, later to be known as Clan Cancer Support, was born.

Clan is now the longest standing commercially independent cancer charity in the North of Scotland, supporting people of all ages and with all types of cancer.

Clan was built by local heroes and it's local heroes who continue to support and sustain our charity today.

In the business community we are lucky to have a wealth of local heroes who work with us across various projects. The most recent example is The Big Hop Trail, supported by headline sponsor Hellmann Worldwide Logistics and

presenting partners Colin Lawson Transport and DC Thomson.

The full sponsor list includes 47 companies – too many to list here – but what's important to note is that absolutely every contribution, financial or otherwise, played a significant role in helping us deliver the project and our services.

Before the trail kicked off, we were lucky to have a team of volunteers from Bilfinger UK Limited who helped get our sculptures ready by affixing plaques before they were installed in their public locations with support from John Mutch Building Services and Colin Lawson Transport.

Another kind-hearted volunteer from TechnipFMC sacrificed four hours to deliver maps around the City and Shire.

During the live phase local businesses embraced the project and raised funds for Clan. Examples include Northwood Lettings and Estate Agency and Tax Assist arranging a staff Munro climbing challenge which, at the time of writing, raised more than £7,500. Another team of six colleagues from Meston Reid plunged 160ft in

The Big Hop Bungee, raising more than £1,100.

These people are all heroes in our eyes and as a charity, we can't function without them.

For our anniversary year, we're launching a campaign to celebrate the heroes who have made Clan the charity it is today and encourage more heroes to come forward.

Entitled 'Part of the Clan' the campaign is a rallying call to support Clan to achieve our £2million annual funding target, attract 100 new volunteers and engage more service users.

From organising a ceilidh to taking on a sponsored challenge, volunteering or choosing us as your charity partner for the year – there are loads of ways your company can be #PartofTheClan

We'd love you to join us and help us provide another 40 years of support to the people in your local area who need us.

For more information visit:
www.clancancersupport.org/part-of-the-clan



Camphill School Aberdeen celebrates major milestone

North-east charity, Camphill School Aberdeen, has marked a major step forward in the first phase of its campaign to open its doors to even more children and young people with learning disabilities and complex additional needs. The organisation celebrated breaking ground on a modern residential home and announced a £250,000 funding boost towards the sustainable social enterprise charity called Murtle Market, which has also broken ground.

The organisation has been providing day and residential support to children and young people with complex

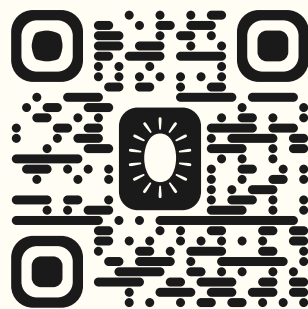
additional support needs and learning disabilities in the region for more than 80 years. It currently supports over 100 students and is aiming to raise £10million over 10 years to expand its capacity by 60%.

Phase one of the Building Futures, Transforming Lives capital appeal will see the construction of a state-of-the-art sustainable 11-bedroom residential home on the charity's Murtle Estate, near Bieldside, along with a zero waste social enterprise called Murtle Market, which is also situated on the Murtle Estate. It will sell organic produce, provide a refillery service, showcase the arts and crafts made by the students, as well as providing vital skills development and work experience for the young people.

The start of construction coincides with the announcement of a significant cash injection of £250,000 to Murtle Market from Social Investment Scotland (SIS), as part of the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to accelerate the construction of Murtle Market. The fund is a £500 million, 10-year commitment to support projects in the North-east and Moray that contribute towards the region's transition to net zero.

Alex Busch, Executive Director at Camphill School Aberdeen, said: "This is the culmination of two years of hard work to raise enough funding for us to be able to begin construction on the first phase of our 10-year vision. We would like to thank everyone who has supported our campaign so far. However, this is only the beginning – we still have some way to go before we reach our phase one target on our way to raising the full £10million in 10 years."

It's a Fine Day to...





Gareth Innes

TWMA launches RotoMill 2.0 wellsite processing solution

Specialist drilling waste management company TWMA has launched the latest evolution of its award-winning RotoMill technology.

RotoMill 2.0 is the most energy efficient RotoMill and promises to deliver operators with an environmentally sustainable wellsite processing solution. It features TWMA's XLink™ remote monitoring software, delivering greater operational insights, while automating the wellsite processing system.

The technology provides operators with lower costs, improved safety and lower carbon emissions. The state-of-the-art control scheme allows enhanced condition monitoring of the system, providing a predictive maintenance approach.

Gareth Innes, Chief Engineering & Commercial Officer at TWMA said: "RotoMill 2.0 offers all the benefits of its predecessor while increasing operators' overall efficiency. Our team of specialist engineers have worked hard for more than a year to develop and build the RotoMill 2.0, incorporating feedback from our customers along the way.

"By integrating our XLink technology into the RotoMill 2.0, we are offering customers with real-time insight into their operations. In addition to removing the requirement to ship drilling waste to shore, the RotoMill 2.0 features an improved engine design, working to further advance operators' decarbonisation goals."

Aberdeen rises to highest ever position in Guardian University Guide

The University of Aberdeen has risen to its highest ever position in the Guardian University Guide coming in 12th place in the UK overall and top in the UK for Medicine.

Aberdeen's strong performance – a rise of one place in the UK – improves its position in Scotland from fourth in 2023 to second in 2024.



Matt Jacobs and Amanda McCulloch

TMM Recruitment and X-Academy join forces

North-east recruitment firm, TMM Recruitment, has teamed up with X-Academy to deliver the final module of its two-year program to the first cohort of xccelerators. The career-based sessions will equip the xccelerators with the skills they need to transition to work.

X-Academy focuses on developing skills and delivering jobs across the energy transition. Its goal is to provide the xccelerators with the knowledge, skills and experience required to enable them to thrive in a career in the energy sector.

Amanda McCulloch, Chief Executive of TMM Recruitment, said: "Even those with an established background in the world of work can find the move to a new role, never mind a new sector, a challenge. We are pleased to be collaborating with X-Academy and will be using our extensive recruitment experience and renewables sector knowledge to provide in-depth information and advice that will prove invaluable to the xccelerators."

Matt Jacobs, VP Operations and Partnerships, X-Academy said: "The next generation of energy professionals is crucial to solving the capacity problem which is being faced by the sector.

"X-Academy is on a mission to develop people who can deliver transformational change across the energy industry. Our xccelerators are drawn from all walks of life and includes individuals at the start of their career journey, those upskilling from existing energy sector jobs and those reskilling from completely different sectors. The one thing they all have in common is a desire to make an impact on real-life energy transition challenges.

Amanda continued: "The sessions the xccelerators participate in will cover several aspects of looking for a new job. The way you present yourself is at the very heart of finding a new role. It is important to consider your personal brand style, and how this comes across – both on your CV and on platforms such as LinkedIn."

The Transition to Work sessions will be delivered by TMM Recruitment's experienced recruiters.

They will work with the xccelerators to help them to develop a personal brand which highlights each person's uniqueness and as a result, means they stand out from the competition. The sessions will also cover writing a CV.

Business lessons I've learned



Steven Murray,
Business Development Manager, Sureclean

What does your company do that others don't?

Sureclean is a company that knows the value of motivated, empowered employees and operational flexibility – both key aspects for business growth. We achieve this by creating an environment where our workforce is encouraged to have a voice and continually challenge how we do things. Our best assets are our people. They have many years of learning experiences, good and bad that can be drawn upon to continually improve process and procedure.

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

The UKCS market is facing a shortage of skilled workers with our current offshore workforce rapidly aging. The current environmental social message paints a black picture of oil and gas, and this discourages young people from entering our sector, often not seeing a long-term future in the industry. Perhaps this makes remote and robotic options more and more prevalent for the future of the North Sea.

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

Personally, the hardest lesson I've learned is never get too comfortable and never think you are at the summit. Never stop improving or you'll stop achieving and your competitors will overtake you. Always challenge yourself, colleagues, and customers, listening first before you speak.

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

Never over sell and promise what you can't deliver. This is why you must know your product and/or service and be real about capacity and capability. Nothing will turn a client or potential client off and damage your reputation more than not delivering on a promise. You must treat a business agreement like a personal promise.

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

My proudest life achievement will always be raising my son and daughter, but from a career

Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Boiler makers apprentice in Western Australia

When would you like to retire?

When I'm still fit enough to enjoy it

What did you have for breakfast?

Two poached eggs on toast

Who, or what, inspires you?

Achievement

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

Gold Mines Effect by Rasmus Ankersen

perspective, becoming a General Manager for a half a billion-dollar multi-national company across the UK and Continental Europe was a real highlight. With a growth remit and focus on strengthening the team and processes led to a lot of hard graft, resilience, and persistence. It paid off as we achieved multiple ISO accreditations and won some major contracts, worth in excess of \$10million.

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

I would like to inspire the future generations to be better than the last one. They need to be mentored and driven to make positive change, by being more socially inclusive and forward thinking. We need to embrace technology and identify areas it will improve our lives. Applying that knowledge, we can improve our model for the North-east and build that blueprint of inclusivity and innovation.

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MEET THE MEMBERS



Craig Fraser,
Managing Director,
Granite Elite Ltd

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Granite Elite was established in November 2019 only a few months before CV19.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We are a security services and soft facilities management company. Our

core services cover all aspects of security guards, stewards for events through to our soft facilities, where we supply porters, reception services, car parking attendants and other core people for business requirements. We deliver professional, reliable solutions to all industries.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

The company has a range of customers from small to large covering many sectors. Oil and gas, medical, pubs and clubs, retail, sports venues, aviation, construction and the public sector. We also cover events of all sizes that require security, stewarding and medical services in order that they can comply to all the new rules and regulations.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

We have one big challenge and that is getting people. In our market many of our staff require to be licenced and that leads to training, which can also be hard to procure. It is said that the industry is short by tens of thousands of licenced

guards and that with retirement and other factors, this problem will be hard to overcome.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

We are in a market that is growing but is also competitive. We have taken the stance that with good people, experienced and new, a mix of technology to aid the client and our staff, the desire to supply what the customer wants, as opposed to what we can give them, is our biggest opportunity.

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

Our passion comes from being able to do a job that we love and to get it right. We are very proud of our people who go beyond for not only us, but our customers. This has been a major factor in how we have progressed as a company and the growth in so many ways is down to our staff.



Steven Harris,
Managing Director,
Integrity HSE

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

We were incorporated on December 9, 2022, but didn't launch the business and start trading until March 20, 2023. We used the space in-between those dates to formalise our strategy map and put the final plans in place to take Integrity HSE to market.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

As an HSE partner, we offer a cost effective and scalable outsourced HSE department. As a consultancy, we have an unrivalled community of experts with extensive upstream and downstream experience. As an HSE training provider, Integrity HSE is the only company in Scotland licensed by both IOSH and the IIRSM.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We work within the energy sector. Our clients are drilling contractors and operators, as well as some brilliant supply chain organisations. They range in maturity from established tier 1 (often looking to optimise) to brand new market entrants that need expert guidance on regulator interface, legislative compliance, management system etc.

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

We are in a good place, and I cannot think of any specific thing that I would

class as a 'challenge'. But, if I had to name one of the things that I think about the most, then it would be getting our messaging to the right people. This article will help!

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

We offer something very different due to our broad experience across the entire sector. I have worked in oil and gas and renewables, and others in our team have similar backgrounds. This means we are perfectly placed to help our clients find their low carbon path within the energy transition.

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

We are most passionate about solving client problems by matching our community of experts with their HSE challenges. The real payoff is then watching our clients flourish because of the solutions that we created. The pride comes from knowing that we had a hand to play in a great outcome.

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Assembly
and Test



Machining



Specialised
Welding



Site Services



Quality

We build trust and act with honesty in all our business dealings



Integrity

With every project, task and solution we surpass customer expectations



Reliability

Our aim is to be your 1st choice solution provider

Business lessons I've learned



Lisa Wilson,

Global Mobility Services - Senior Manager, Vialto Partners

What does your company do that others don't?

We have formed the first independent global mobility tax and immigration company and are now able to address many of the challenges that we faced when previously part of an accountancy practice. We are no longer constrained by audit independence rules so can invest in our clients and develop solutions for the long term. We have an unrivalled investment in global mobility technology enabling us to provide world-class technology solutions at the heart of which is the employee experience to support organisations for today and tomorrow.

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

Organisations are operating in an increasingly complex regulatory environment which is subject to change, and staying compliant is a continuous challenge. Immigration, tax, payroll and social security compliance can all have an impact on getting talent to the right place, at the right time. Against this backdrop, employee expectations

have changed and they are demanding greater flexibility including opportunities to work remotely outside of their country of employment. We help companies navigate these regulatory challenges whilst attracting and retaining talent.

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

The sunken cost fallacy - you can pour your heart and soul into something and it still may not work out. Sometimes the best decision is to walk away rather than invest more resources.

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

An old one but is always relevant 'Revenue is vanity, profit is sanity, but cash is king'.

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

Keeping ethics and integrity at the forefront of what I do each day. Challenging people on behaviors and standing up for what is right. This includes educating and influencing

Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Saturday girl at the local corner shop when I was 14.

When would you like to retire?

The thought of retiring fills me with dread! I clearly need some more hobbies.

What did you have for breakfast?

Bagel with peanut butter

Who, or what, inspires you?

Female leaders that lead with compassion. Mel Robbins and Brene Brown are two great examples.

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

Book 'The First 90 Days' - Michael D. Watkins. Film - of course Barbie.

peoples' attitudes to tax compliance and individual responsibility.

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

Abandon the Energy Profits Levy to encourage long term investment both locally and nationally. The energy transition will not happen overnight and therefore we need to continue to support fossil fuel extraction for some time yet in order to retain talent who will support transition, and to help fund transition.



Aberdeen company scoops international award

Aberdeen-based digital media company, Signal has won an international Silver Award at the prestigious US International Awards in Los Angeles.

The recognition came for one of the films it produced for Aberdeen event venue P&J Live. 'Back to Live' was commissioned to launch the reopening of the venue after the CV19 pandemic.

Signal's Creative Director, Mark Turner said, "As a local business we're proud to have been able to support another

one of our local venues. We created an energetic film designed to reflect the excitement and anticipation of audience's visiting a live gig. Every shot has its own unique sound effect so that, under the music, the audio has its own rhythm which helps drive the film."

Signal's Managing Director, Jamie Baikie, sees this award as consolidating a series of successes so far this year.

He commented: "I'm thrilled for our team to have won this award, amongst some very high calibre international work. We've won a five-figure sum contract with a new US client, secured 15 new clients so far this year, including some high profile and varied projects, which has resulted in our turnover increasing by 20% compared to this time last year".

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Exclusive:

The local heroes making sure no child goes without

Grandmother Michelle Herd is one of the driving forces behind an Aberdeen-based charity which provides disadvantaged families with the essential and basic necessities that no child should go without.

Since she and daughter Danielle launched AberNecessities in March 2019, it has helped more than 12,000 children and families in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Michelle, who has extensive experience in the charity sector, said they never imagined at the start how significant the organisation's work would become.

She added: "We knew there was a need for our service, but the sheer volume of requests for support still shocks us daily.

"Over the past few years, our charity has grown exponentially.

"At the start, we aimed to provide the basics - nappies, formula milk, and clothing.

"But, as the operation grew, it became evident that we needed to address a wider range of needs.

"In the early stages, we aimed to support children up to 12, but within a few weeks of operation we realised that we couldn't overlook older children in the family.

"Consequently, we expanded our scope to include young people up to the age of 18.

"As time passed, we remained flexible, constantly adapting to the diverse needs that emerged.

"We provided small things like towels - a need highlighted when a family of five had to share a single towel in their damp home.

"We also introduced birthday packs, bringing joy to children who had never celebrated their birthdays or would receive nothing due to their parent or carer's financial challenges.

"Furthermore, we recognised the importance of supporting mums-to-be.

"Upon discovering that some women entered the hospital without even basic toiletries, we began distributing maternity bags filled with essentials.

"These bags cater not only to practical needs but also to the emotional well-being of new mothers, ensuring they feel as valued and dignified as any other during this special time."

The Granite City is known as the oil capital of Europe, and many outsiders think it is rich, but there are still numerous disadvantaged families in the area.

Michelle said: "According to Aberdeen City Council, 21.8% of children living in Aberdeen are experiencing the harsh reality of poverty, indicating that one in five children are affected.

"This distressing figure underscores the urgent and growing demand for the services provided by AberNecessities.

"Our organisation is needed now more than ever to address this pressing issue and support vulnerable children and families in desperate need.

"From maternity bundles to clothing, toys, and safety equipment, AberNecessities aims to meet the basic needs of youngsters of all ages up to 18."

AberNecessities collects pre-loved items from the community, and also raises funds to buy items such as new underwear, beds, mattresses and safety gear.

The charity operates on a referral basis, accepting applications from a network of professionals in health, social care and education.



It was clear that there was a huge need not being met and barriers in place which meant children were not going to school - from not having underwear, shoes and clothes to not having a safe bed to sleep in at night.

Michelle said: "We recognise that these professionals are in the best position to assess the needs of families and provide them with the necessary emotional support, while we focus on providing essential physical items."

"Our referral system enables us to distribute items in a fair and efficient way, ensuring they reach the families who need them the most."

"We either deliver these items directly to the family home - we have a team of volunteers who deliver the items to families for us - or on many occasions the professional working with the family collects the items to deliver themselves."

So how did AberNecessities come about?

Michelle explained: "My daughter Danielle is a specialist and early-intervention teacher, working with some of the most vulnerable children and families in Aberdeen."

"It was clear that there was a huge need not being met and barriers in place which meant children were not going to school - from not having underwear, shoes and clothes to not having a safe bed to sleep in at night."

"So between Danielle's professional knowledge and experience and my extensive experience in the charity sector we decided we had the ability to make a wonderful impact in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire."

AberNecessities now has a regular team of around 70 people, including four full-time employees, 11 part-time staff, as well as around 50 volunteers.

In addition, there are others who volunteer sporadically, as well as corporate volunteers who join as teams for a day to support the operation.

Michelle said: "Our team of volunteers are the beating heart of AberNecessities and play a crucial role in accomplishing our charitable goals. Each of them play a vital part in contributing to improving the wellbeing of local families. They really are a wonderful group of individuals and many

have been with us since we opened our doors in 2019."

Families supported by the charity face a multitude of issues and hurdles, including low-income situations, single-parent households, kinship caregiving, unemployment stemming from the pandemic's aftermath, domestic abuse, lack of access to public funds, and refugees forced to flee conflicts in their home countries.

"Additionally, the current cost of living crisis has intensified their difficulties, driving numerous families into severe poverty and even destitution, making their journey to recovery extremely challenging," explained Michelle.

She said that AberNecessities is immensely fortunate to have the unwavering backing of the local community, which includes numerous corporate supporters.

"Many of these companies have chosen us as their nominated charity - a partnership that bolsters our operation hugely."

"To sustain our vital work, we organise various fundraising events and campaigns, and we actively seek support from trusts and foundations."

"Ensuring the well-being of so many children each month incurs significant expenses, so we are always exploring innovative strategies to secure additional funds."

"Our ultimate goal is to never find ourselves in a situation where we are unable to provide assistance to those who rely on us."

Michelle said the devastating impact of CV19 saw an unprecedented 900% surge in applications to AberNecessities.

Asked what is the best part about her job, she replied: "It is an immense privilege to have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of local families and their children, even in our own modest capacity."



Michelle Herd,
Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer,
AberNecessities

"I am proud of our extraordinary team of individuals who share a deep and unwavering commitment to providing assistance.

"While our office may witness its fair share of tears, it is these heartfelt emotions that drive us forward, knowing that each item we provide can create a profoundly-positive impact on a family's life."

Michelle said the worst part of her job is learning exactly why families and children need the help of AberNecessities.

She went on: "It's a heartbreaking reality that these stories exist, and, if I'm honest, I deeply wish that circumstances were different, and our charity's services weren't in such high demand.

"Reading about the numerous situations and challenges is hugely emotional, as it unveils the stark challenges and hardships that so many families in our community face daily. Yet, it is this very compassion that motivates us to continue our work.

"Our collective hope is that, some day, the need for our charity reduces, and every family can access the support they require without such extreme struggle. Until that day arrives, we remain dedicated in our commitment to making a difference in the lives of those we serve."

A LONG HISTORY IN THE CHARITY SECTOR

“

It's a heartbreaking reality that these stories exist, and, if I'm honest, I deeply wish that circumstances were different, and our charity's services weren't in such high demand.

Michelle Herd started fundraising as a teenager while working at her family's Aberdeen restaurant, Gerards.

She was mainly collecting money for local charity Instant Neighbour where she also volunteered.

Michelle then volunteered for Crimestoppers, before working as a Project Organiser then Charity Manager at Northsound Cash for Kids.

She also worked as a part-time Trusts and Foundation Officer for North East Sensory Services.

In addition, she has carried out fundraising for organisations such as the Archie Foundation, the Dennis Law Legacy Trust, Friends of Anchor and the Tsunami Appeal and she also walked the Great Wall of China for Cancer Research UK.

All three of Michelle's children are now involved with AberNecessities.

Older daughter Danielle is Co-founder of the charity, while son Paul is a Solicitor and he volunteers for AberNecessities, and daughter Emilie is a probationary Primary School Teacher and also works part-time for the charity.





Sandy Bonner

50 Years of Bilfinger: A Legacy of Growth and Diversification

In a world where longevity stands as a testament to excellence, Bilfinger is celebrating 50 years of remarkable growth, countless milestones, and enduring success.

On October 10th, the Bilfinger offshore maintenance business based in Aberdeen commemorates five decades in the industry, evolving into an industry leader providing industrial support to the oil and gas sector, while marking a new era of growth and expanded capabilities.

The company's journey began in 1973, when it started as Salamis (Marine and Industrial) Limited, at its Torry location. Over the years, the firm expanded its operations, moving to its current headquarters on Greenhole Place in Aberdeen with just seven office staff, three yard staff, and around 30 offshore employees.

In 1982, Bilfinger further broadened its capabilities with offshore work coming from clients including Shell, BP, Chevron, and ExxonMobil. The company's success story continued with Joint Ventures such as SGB/Salamis (SSL) and APG/Salamis (later becoming a part of Petrofac). The rapid growth of the business in the eighties led to its acquisition by Maersk in 1984, followed by further organic growth, acquisitions, and joint ventures.

In 2006, Bilfinger Salamis - now a multi-service contracting company - was acquired by Munich-based Bilfinger Berger Industrial Services marking a significant milestone in its history. March 2013 witnessed a crucial rebranding as the company transitioned into Bilfinger Salamis UK, boasting over 350 onshore staff across bases in Aberdeen and Lowestoft, as well as more than 2,000 offshore employees.

In 2022, Bilfinger Salamis and Bilfinger UK merged, uniting under the Bilfinger UK brand. This merger created one of the UK's largest tier-one engineering and maintenance

contractors with a turnover of €400 million. With over 5,000 employees during peak periods and a presence in 14 onshore locations across key industrial hubs, the merger seamlessly integrated onshore and offshore capabilities. This strategic move positioned Bilfinger UK as a key contractor for delivering large renewable energy projects, playing a pivotal role in the UK's transition to net-zero emissions.

Coincidentally born in 1973 in Aberdeen - on the exact same day in October as the local Salamis company was originally founded - is Bilfinger UK's Executive President, Sandy Bonner. He started with the company upon leaving University as a Project Engineer in 1995, and his Bilfinger journey has included the role of Operations Manager, Operations Director, Managing Director, and latterly Executive President.

Evolving with the company, Sandy has grown the business to become the largest employer in the North Sea Offshore Maintenance market. He said: "Our journey reflects our unwavering commitment to innovation, safety, and delivering top-tier solutions. Over the years, we've witnessed profound changes in the oil and gas industry, and as it evolves, we evolve with it."

"As the industry shifts towards cleaner, more sustainable energy solutions, Bilfinger UK is at the forefront of embracing these changes. We've leveraged our decades of expertise to venture into new markets such as offshore wind, biopharma, nuclear, and other emerging markets. We recognize the global demand for energy is changing, and so are we."

**To read more
about Bilfinger's
history and the
services they
offer scan the
QR Code:**



Planning applications officially launched for new beach attractions

Planning applications have been submitted to create new areas at Aberdeen beach which would be attractions in their own right, complement existing natural areas, and have been shaped by the city's youngsters.

The applications, for a beach park and events park, with supporting blue badge parking, are all at the Queen's Links either side of the Beach Boulevard which are currently maintained grassy areas.

They are part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan which is designed to reinvigorate the areas culturally and economically, attracting people to spend time in them.

This first phase of works would upgrade the green spaces which already attract visitors to the area while providing a higher quality environment and broadening the range of activities which can be enjoyed at the beach.

The applications said the beach park area, at the south end of the site, will focus on a variety of landscaped play and sports areas with built structures including a gateway building, a hub building, two canopies, and a play structure called The Rope Factory.

The proposed car park and junction would be from Links Road and would provide dedicated blue badge parking spaces to the beach park area.

The proposed events park, at the Beach Ballroom end of the site, would have several structures including a canopy and an amphitheatre building.

The planning applications also include details of additional public realm and landscaping at the site which would be covered under Permitted Development.

The planning applications referred to the extensive consultation which has taken place with children and young people, who have helped to influence and shape the facilities in the beach park and the events park.

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan is designed to capitalise on the built and natural assets of the area which is a tourism priority in its own right and will continue to be in demand as people seek safe, outdoor, wildlife, and active experiences. The beach area is also an intrinsic component of the Aberdeen Coastal Trail, and the wide variety of tourism offer that includes nature, golf, maritime history, and dolphin watching.

The planning applications can be viewed at Simple Search (aberdeencity.gov.uk) using the reference numbers 231082/DPP, 231083/DPP and 231084/DPP. It should be emphasised that the designs may evolve during the planning process and consequently the artists' impressions may change.



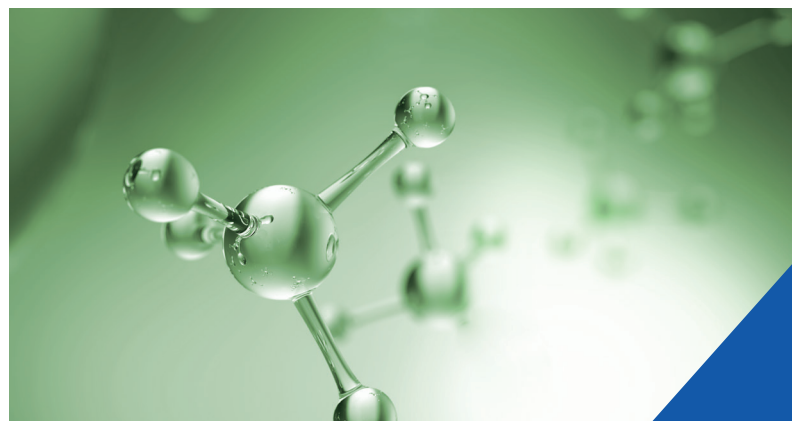
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Quick fire round

What was your first job?

While at school I had a paper round in Ellon, 6 days a week.

When would you like to retire?

Probably when my two boys are grown up and financially independent, however I can see myself continuing to work in an ad hoc capacity.

What did you have for breakfast?

Bagel with peanut butter.

Who, or what, inspires you?

The first person who ran a sub 2-hour marathon – Eliud Kipchoge.

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

How to be an Ex-Footballer by Peter Crouch.

Business lessons I've learned



Euan Macalister ,
Energy Sales Director, Sword Group

What does your company do that others don't?

At Sword we work with our customers to help them capture, manage and utilise their data to make informed business decisions. We offer a host of complementary capabilities across platform, data and applications. By combining a domain understanding and technical expertise with tried-and-tested processes, we deliver fit-for-purpose technology solutions from managed IT services to digital engineering projects.

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

Over the past few years, we have seen significant brain drain, with valuable skills built up over the years, retiring and leaving the industry. Not enough young people are coming into the industry, so we are facing a considerable hurdle in the transfer of knowledge. Additionally, those entering the industry are also faced with the new challenge of navigating a hybrid working environment, which will inevitably make it even harder for them to adapt. We must also get comfortable with working smarter and doing more with less resources.

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

This would have been almost 20 years ago, working on my first significant deal. We had verbal confirmation it was going ahead but at the very last minute it fell through as a key person we were unaware of hadn't been consulted. The deal did happen three months later but ultimately it taught me, it's vitally important to have an understanding of all stakeholders and decision makers and that they have an appreciation of the value being offered.

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

My first boss taught me this at the start of my career - you shouldn't give up no matter how difficult something gets. There is always a way to get something done so by showing determination, you usually succeed. I guess what this advice taught me was hard things don't happen easily.

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

I was part of the leadership team who took a technology company of 50 people from its early stages to the sale of it to a global consultancy with over 5,000 employees. To add to this achievement, we carried out the majority of this process during lockdown. Being part of a strong, resilient team, ensured we continued to focus on the end goal.

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

This has to be Aberdeen winning the league and getting into the Champions League! On top of the celebrations the city would have this would massively benefit the North-east through increasing the profile of Aberdeen, increasing footfall and opening up opportunities of employment through the growth of the team.

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October 04 *£330 +VAT

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The ability to identify and manage emotion as a tool to gain an advantage in the workplace can be invaluable.



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November 02 *£330 +VAT
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SQA's Customised Awards are the perfect solution for organisations looking to invest in their workforce, establish competitive advantage and demonstrate quality and compliance.

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A Customised Award can be integrated with your company's existing business and staff development processes. It offers a large range of benefits, from achieving business objectives and increasing skill level, to providing development opportunities for employees and providing an official credit rating on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The Actif4 Leadership Diploma is a Customised Award awarded by SQA at SCQF level 10. Ian Gourlay, co-founder of the Aberdeen-based business, says the selling point of their qualification is the rigorous process that comes with being awarded by SQA.

He says, "At Actif4, we are independent consultants in the world of change and leadership who all came together to provide this nine-month programme. We're a small business and always wanted to differentiate ourselves by being accredited. Being in Scotland, it made sense to go through SQA."

When it came to getting accredited, Ian worked closely with Alistair McKay, Regional Manager for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire at SQA.

Ian explains, "We worked with SQA early in the process as we also wanted to become an SQA centre. It was a year of hard work, involving us writing the course material to share with SQA, who then steered it into a proper qualification."

"Without Alistair, we wouldn't have gotten to where we are now. His knowledge and guidance were vital, especially when it comes to building our case for approval."

Michelle Fowler from North Star Shipping completed the Leadership Diploma earlier this year, and says it provided her with long-lasting skills for the next step in her career:

She says, "I have been in the marine industry for twenty years and have worked my way up to my current position as group Quality, Health, Safety and Environment Manager, leading my team in all things health and safety related onshore and offshore. The course was a personal journey to leadership, underpinned by core material from the programme. At the end of the course, I produced project material and evidenced how I developed my skills as part of my daily routine. The course was excellent with a range of leaders from all industries and different career paths, and having my own personal coach to discuss my challenges with was worth its weight in gold."

Find out more about how Customised Awards can benefit your organisation at www.sqa.org.uk/customisedawards.



As the Regional Manager for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Alistair McKay has extensive knowledge of SQA qualifications, from those delivered in schools and colleges, to workplace-based qualifications. He supports and engages with organisations delivering SQA qualifications in his area and aids the development of new qualifications to meet the changing needs of learners and employers. If you'd like advice on delivering SQA qualifications, please contact Alistair at alistair.mckay@sqa.org.uk.

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SQA qualifications ensure Scotland's economy has the skills it needs to thrive. We work with industry, employers, and skills specialists to develop qualifications that support businesses at a local level.

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Plans to reinstate rail links between Aberdeen and Buchan move forward

Ambitious plans to reinstate rail links between Aberdeen and Buchan have taken a major step forward, with the contract awarded for a new Sustainable Transport Study.

The Campaign for North East Rail (CNER) has championed the case for reinstating and upgrading rail infrastructure right across the North East of Scotland among communities and with policymakers.

Their successful application to the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund saw £250,000 awarded to undertake this latest phase of feasibility work.

The study, which will be carried out in partnership by two of the world's leading infrastructure consultancies AECOM and Stantec, will explore in depth the possibility of passenger and freight services running north of Dyce and onwards to Peterhead and Fraserburgh for the first time in over fifty years.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has given carrying out the study the backing of the region's business community and will work in close partnership with AECOM and Stantec, Nestrans, CNER, Scottish Government, Scotland's Railway & Network Rail and Transport Scotland to support and deliver the case for change and preliminary options appraisal by March 2024.

While building on previous studies to improve public transport north of Aberdeen, the study will examine CNER's proposals in greater detail, notably the opportunities afforded by using the former Boddam Branch line not previously assessed. It will also take account of the shift in transport policy objectives over recent years, the recently announced Acorn CCUS project at St Fergus, which could significantly impact on travel and freight demand to and from Buchan alongside other regional transport studies.

Jordan Jack of the Campaign for North East Rail said: "We're delighted that the study to reconnect the communities of Peterhead and Fraserburgh is now proceeding.

"Since the last study was published in 2016, much has changed from a policy perspective, specifically the focus on lower carbon transport and the Just Transition, both of which are crucial to the future competitiveness and subsequent prosperity the North-east.

"However, several issues faced by businesses and communities are as valid today as they have been for decades. New railways directly address issues such as investment, social inclusion, modal shift and many others, as clearly demonstrated by Borders rail and the soon to open Levenmouth rail link.

"CNER believes that Fraserburgh and Peterhead — currently the two largest towns in the UK furthest from the rail network — stand to benefit hugely from reconnection to rail and this study serves to make the conclusive case for why this part of the North-east needs to be reconnected.

"This is the next step on the journey to making Peterhead, Fraserburgh and other communities in North-east Aberdeenshire more connected, thereby making them better places than ever to live, work, and enjoy.

"We look forward to the upcoming public engagement and thank all our partners and stakeholders for getting the campaign to this important milestone, whose support and collaboration are invaluable."

Russell Borthwick, Chief Executive of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce said: "This marks a significant step forward in the campaign to reinstate rail to the towns and industrial heartlands of North-east Aberdeenshire.

"If we want to see our region's economy firing on all cylinders, we need better transport links to major centres of industry and commerce such as Peterhead and Fraserburgh, joining up settlements of significant size and population along the way.

"The next phase of work is not about a consultant being appointed to carry out some desk research in isolation. Instead, it will be delivered in a spirit of true partnership, between the stakeholders and in conjunction with the local community to explore the strategic case for future investment."

Mairi McAllan, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition said: "It is clear the Campaign for North East Rail group are passionate about this proposal. This award of up to £250,000 from the Scottish Government Just Transition Fund to conduct a multimodal study into transport options in the North-east of Scotland builds on their previous work.

"We expect that the appraisal will take due consideration of any future development in the corridor, including potentially at St Fergus and we look forward to receiving the output of this work in due course."

Reaching New Depths of Success: Deep Casing Tools Surpasses £50 Million in Revenue!



Local technology development company for the global energy market celebrates its revenue growth success this year thanks to dedicated team and support from valued clients and partners.

A move to a larger, fit-for-purpose facility in 2022 has widely contributed to this success. Internal machinery within the Westhill workshop has improved capabilities including turning and milling and the ability to torque in-house. This has allowed the team to better meet customer needs, improving efficiencies, and reducing lead time.

Looking ahead, Deep Casing Tools aim to continue pushing the boundaries of innovation across the well life cycle. If you would like to be involved in the next chapter of their growth and innovation, contact the team.

At the very core of Deep Casing Tool's success is their innovative suite of technologies, built and manufactured locally since establishment in 2008:

- 100% of technologies is designed and built at headquarters in Westhill, Aberdeen.
- Over 95% of components are manufactured in the UK.
- 90% of technologies are exported worldwide.



Duncan Massey,
Carbon and Energy Consultant,
Auditel

Area of expertise?

Auditel are a leading cost, procurement and carbon solutions company. We help businesses understand and reduce their carbon emissions and energy costs. Helping companies make sense of what is happening around carbon and to look at carbon and energy in a measurable, meaningful and potentially self-funding way. We deliver solutions such as carbon footprint reports, carbon and energy reduction planning and cost savings through tariff reviews and energy reduction.

What should people know?

Rules and regulations regarding carbon emissions are evolving all the time. Demands on business are also ever increasing with growing pressure from customers, investors, finance providers and even staff to understand a company's emissions.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

This is a challenging area for businesses and many organisations want to avoid thinking about these issues and put off thinking about carbon until they absolutely have to. This is the wrong approach!

What's your top tip?

All businesses are going to have to think about carbon and energy use. We think it makes sense to be pro-active and start looking at this now. Focusing on emissions can also help reduce energy use and costs. We are here to help companies get started on their carbon journey.



Angela Main,
Infrared Analyst,
James Hutton Limited

Area of expertise?

One of our main areas of expertise is being able to identify standard and non-standard contaminants that are present in many different processes within a range of industries. This includes the oil and gas industries, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, food and drink, marine sediments and agriculture and more.

What should people know?

As part of The James Hutton Institute, we have access to a team of world-leading scientists working with a range of different analytical techniques using some of the most up to date instrumentation. Their expert knowledge and decades of experience provides professional analysis and detailed data interpretation. We often work with several techniques in conjunction with each other to find the best solution for clients. Our analytical laboratories are UKAS accredited so you can be assured of a high standard of service.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Companies can be reluctant to spend time and money to find out the root cause of contaminants. But this can be shortsighted. Contaminants, when ignored or not identified, can cause major problems down the line. This could be, for example, blocked pipes curtailing or even halting oil production, which can have significant financial implications and could also potentially damage equipment and reputation.

What's your top tip?

To ensure that any problems are quickly addressed, and the right solution is found, it's worth spending time consulting with us here at James Hutton Limited to find out the best course of action to take. We can offer a range of analytical services with a turnaround time to meet your needs.

International Quality Management Certification for Cranach Patent Attorneys

Craig Watson,
*Founder of Cranach
Patent Attorneys*



With corporation tax rising to 25%, an increasing number of companies are choosing to patent their innovations and take advantage of the reduced 10% “patent box” corporation tax rate.

It's reflected in a busy year for Aberdeen's newest Patent Attorney firm, Cranach Patent Attorneys, who have taken on over 900 client files in their first year in business. After over 20 years with multi-national patent firms, their founder Craig Watson – a former Aberdeen Junior Chamber President – explained his thinking:

“We wanted to raise the standard of Patent Attorney services in Aberdeen, by understanding the wider business context better, knowing the local industries and having an experienced local team running an absolutely water-tight ship.”

To achieve this, Craig completed multiple online business courses with Harvard Business School in addition to energy industry courses. Not content with sitting exams, he's also the only Scottish-based Patent Attorney to set and mark some of the exams required to become a

European Patent Attorney, marking candidate answers in English and French.

Cranach Patent Attorneys have also opened up their systems and procedures to external audit, and secured the optional ISO9001:2015 certification.

“It's surprising that so many patent firms, large and small, are not certified in this way” commented Craig, “but I always wanted a tight ship. Clients' patents are too valuable”.

Craig is highly regarded in the profession, being one of the few listed in both Managing Intellectual Property (MIP) magazine as an IP Star, and also in the Intellectual Asset Magazine (IAM) 1000.

As for gaining a patent for access to favourable corporation tax, Craig indicated that it is generally easier than people perceive:

“Patents for patent box can be effective with a narrow scope, making it easier to get them granted at the Patent Office. You don't need to file abroad. I've seen many companies successfully patent aspects they had planned keeping

secret, without giving too much of their know-how away, and then enjoy the favourable tax regime.”

To discuss your IP with Cranach Patent Attorneys, contact craig@cranach.co.uk

“

We wanted to raise the standard of Patent Attorney services in Aberdeen, by understanding the wider business context better



CRANACH
PATENT ATTORNEYS

Man behind Aberdeen's big market dream

Prominent Aberdeen entrepreneur Allan Henderson is just one of the driving forces behind efforts to turn around the fortunes of the city centre.

Among his varied interests, he is Co-owner of one of the leading independent hospitality operators in Aberdeen.

McGinty's Group, which was launched in 2008, has now grown to have 10 sites - including some of the best pubs, restaurants and hotels in the city.

And Allan knows all about breathing new life into operations that appear to be on their last legs.

He said: "I take particular pleasure from the fact we re-opened four venues which were closed and two others were in danger of closing.

"This is the type of economic activity and regeneration which our city centre currently needs."

The proud Aberdonian has also been on the Board of the Aberdeen Inspired business improvement district for more than 10 years and Chairman since March 2016.

Allan has no shortage of ideas on what should be done to give new life to the city centre, and here he shares his wish list for the heart of Aberdeen:

- Get everybody to talk up our city at all times
- Increase city-centre living
- Develop the great beach we have - and go beyond the current plans and have hotels, restaurants and more leisure facilities
- Fill all vacant units in the city centre with vibrant, new, independent businesses

- Create a brand Aberdeen
- Make the city the gateway to the North-east and promote as such
- Develop a more vibrant Aberdeen to retain students after they qualify from our great universities

Allan already has plenty of influential people on board with his can-do attitude for improving the city centre, including at Aberdeen City Council.

At the start of August, McGinty's was named preferred operator for the new multi-million-pound Aberdeen Market development.

The local authority has agreed heads of terms with McGinty's for the site which is to be a destination venue featuring international-style food, drink, and a retail market.

Allan's business - which was chosen after an open selection process - plans to work alongside some of the region's best up-and-coming producers in order to deliver a world-class attraction for the North-east.

The development will also improve pedestrian connectivity between Union Street and the bus and railway stations via The Green and enliven Hadden Street and Market Street with urban-realm improvements in and around The Green.

There is to be a mixture of small retail units alongside space for temporary and pop-up facilities to allow for increased variety and would be flexible to seasonal requirements.

There will also be a flexible-use outside space on the Green which could be used for events or pop-up market space.

Allan said: "I firmly believe the new Aberdeen Market will be a transformational milestone for the city.

"We are delighted to be working with Aberdeen City Council on what is a key development for the city centre.

"As a long-term advocate for the City Centre Masterplan, I am thrilled to see this project come to fruition. We have proven throughout the bidding process that our passion for the city and expertise in the hospitality industry is unmatched.

"The key purpose of the market is to drive economic activity and footfall in the city centre.

"It is likely that the new market will employ up to 200 people. I am very excited the McGinty's Group will play its part in this project that will transform the city."

The entrepreneur says that, like every other city in the country, Aberdeen has had to deal with the rise of internet shopping and a raft of high-street closures.

"In the last few years, over 30% of national chain shops and restaurants have closed - Aberdeen is no exception.

"The current business-rates model is not fit for purpose! I know many retailers got reductions in the 2023 revaluations, but the hospitality industry continues to get hammered - for example, one of McGinty's venues, the Ferryhill House Hotel, pays around £85,000 per annum for business rates."

The businessman also wants to see a zero-tolerance policy towards anti-social behaviour in the city centre.

He added: "It drives away footfall and discourages businesses to move into the centre."

But Allan is also seeing a number of positive developments happening.

“

The key purpose of the market is to drive economic activity and footfall in the city centre.

He explained: “Following the Aberdeen Inspired/Chamber of Commerce city centre summit on Union Street last November, the formation of Our Union Street was a bold initiative.

“I really believe that with Bob Keiller’s passion and drive, this organisation can galvanise community support to improve our city centre and attract new businesses.

“It has got everybody talking about improving the centre and we now need to see that produce results in terms of improved occupancy rates.

“We are so lucky in Aberdeen to have people like Bob who give up their time to make the city better.

“I firmly believe that to give of your time for free also makes a fantastic contribution to the city, but I would like to see others whom Aberdeen has served well do the same.”

Allan also highlighted the “phenomenal” contribution to the area from Sir Ian Wood’s Opportunity North-east organisation.



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ALLAN HENDERSON

Allan was brought up in Fittie in Aberdeen and went to Robert Gordon's College for both junior and secondary school.

He later graduated from Aberdeen University with a degree in accountancy and economics.

Allan then worked in the accountancy profession after university as a Corporate Finance Manager at RMD.

His journey into hospitality management started in 1999 when serial Aberdeen entrepreneur Jim Clark persuaded him to run a small contract catering company which he owned.

Allan later bought the business in a management buy-out.

He grew the Workshop UK operation from an annual turnover of £300,000 to £5.5million employing around 120 staff. It provided staff canteens throughout the UK at some 30 locations.

However, the pandemic had a devastating effect on the business as nobody was allowed to go to their workplace.

Allan said: "Regretfully, I had to close 20 sites laying off around 80 people, but the business still operates 10 sites across the UK.

Meanwhile, McGinty's came about 15 years ago after the businessman and his friend Derren McRae spent some time in Glasgow where they bemoaned about the lack of good bars in Aberdeen.

Allan added: "We agreed to look into acquiring one, so in 2008 we bought the old Frankenstein's Bar in Union Street, renamed it McGinty's Meal An' Ale, and opened it early 2009 after a refurbishment.

"It is amazing to think from that first venue we now have 10 sites in Aberdeen - the others being the Stag, No.10 Bar and Restaurant, the Ferryhill House Hotel, the Four Mile, the Silver Darling, Esslemont's, Mac's Pizzeria, the Grill and Under The Hammer."

McGinty's Group now employs 250 people in the city.

Allan believes that the hospitality industry is a fantastic sector to work in.

He added: "There are an incredible number of talented people in it, many of whom did not have a traditional college / university education.

"One of the best parts of my job is seeing individuals progressing as we always look to promote from within the group when positions arise.

"I always worked in bars and restaurants in my school/student days and it gave me the bug for the industry which I am so glad returned to."

“

One of the best parts of my job is seeing individuals progressing as we always look to promote from within the group when positions arise.



Henderson,
Company Director

Allan



Bob Sanguinetti

UK Government backs Port of Aberdeen's multi-million pound shore power project

Port of Aberdeen has been awarded funding from the UK Government for a multi-million pound project to design and deliver the first large-scale landside and vessel-side shore power system in Scotland.

The demonstrator project will cut vessel emissions at the berths by more than 80% compared with burning marine fuel and save in excess of 60,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent over the next 20 years.

Crucially, 'Shore Power in Operation' will pave the way for the roll-out of green shore power across North Harbour. This could slash the port's total emissions by 78%, equivalent to an annual reduction of 34,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

Details of the 'Shore Power in Operation' project, part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emissions Vessels and Infrastructure (ZEVI) competition, were unveiled at London International Shipping Week. Port of Aberdeen is leading an industry and academia consortium, including Connected Places Catapult, DOF Subsea, Tidewater Marine UK Ltd, OSM Offshore and The University of Manchester's Tyndall Centre, to deliver the ground-breaking initiative.

The project follows a successful Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition (CMDCC)-funded feasibility study completed in March 2022. The new funding will see the design and installation of shore power facilities at seven berths on Albert Quay and Mearns Quay in the port's North Harbour which will be operational by April 2025 or sooner.

Bob Sanguinetti, Chief Executive, Port of Aberdeen, said: "We have a bold ambition to become the UK's first net zero port by 2040 and are investing £55million over the next 10 years to turn this into reality. Shore power is critical to achieving our ambition and we look forward to working with our industry partners to deliver this ground-breaking emissions reduction project."



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MEET THE MEMBERS



Nathan Morgan,
CEO,
Kellas Midstream

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Based in Aberdeen, Kellas started in 2014 when we acquired CATS (Central Area Transmission System) which includes the riser platform in the Central North Sea, a 404km pipeline and an onshore terminal in Teesside.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We are an energy infrastructure company. We own, manage, and operate critical midstream infrastructure that transports and processes around 40% of UK gas production. We are also bringing our experience to clean energy infrastructure projects, specifically low carbon hydrogen production, to help the UK achieve its 2050 net zero ambitions.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including existing upstream customers, and operating partners who we work closely with to ensure the safe and reliable operation of our assets. Our hydrogen operations will support industrial customers on Teesside looking to decarbonise through fuel switching from gas to hydrogen.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

There are key external factors impacting our planned hydrogen

developments, such as government decision-making over CO₂ storage and funding, and headwinds facing the UK upstream sector that may impact future gas developments. We draw on our experience with delivering large-scale projects to work through these sorts of challenges.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

The energy transition presents us with a huge opportunity to support industry decarbonisation and energy security by creating clean energy infrastructure to help the UK reach net zero.

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

I joined Kellas in February, impressed by its core gas transportation and processing business and future growth prospects in clean energy infrastructure. Kellas has been critical to UK North Sea development and is positioned to play a significant role in its future which I am excited to be part of.



Connor Knight,
Director,
Knight Engineering
Solutions Ltd

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Knight Engineering Solutions was started in 2019. We have our office and operations in Meikle Wartle just outside Inverurie.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

KES specialises in prototype design, testing, manufacture, and development of parts. We put great time and care into each job, producing accurate, high quality, bespoke products. We follow a product from the concept sketches to the tested and functional finished product, giving us a deep-rooted understanding of each product and its capabilities.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We primarily work with large oil and gas companies. We have also done some work with TAU (Team Aberdeen University) Racing team which was great fun and very rewarding.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Like all businesses we are feeling the effects of continued high inflation meaning running costs and the price of materials are greater than ever. The CV19 pandemic and Brexit were tough, especially as a new business, but we are

proud that we managed to weather the storm and come out the other side.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

As a business KES is extremely adaptable, meaning we are not tied to one industry. We have our own design, machining and testing capabilities on site which means we can manufacture, test, adapt and test again in a short space of time. Our experience and expertise could be applied to any small scale, bespoke manufacturing requirement.

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

We are a small, family run business but we pride ourselves on maintaining high standards of safety and quality, to rival our larger competitors. We like to say we are a small company with a big company mentality! We have a great team of hard working and passionate people and being a small company means everyone gets involved in all aspects of the business.

The importance of audience and sector understanding in crafting exceptional corporate events

David McDonald,
Ops Director,
Luxe Scot Events



Luxe Scot Events, the esteemed luxury event management company based in Aberdeen, is shedding light on the crucial role of understanding audiences and industry sectors in the creation of remarkable corporate events. David McDonald, Operations Director at Luxe Scot Events, shares insights into what truly sets their corporate events apart.

"In the realm of luxury event management, the distinction between an average event and an exceptional one hinges on two essential elements: comprehending your audience and grasping the sector's dynamics. These principles form the bedrock upon which every Luxe Scot Events experience is built.

Understanding your audience extends beyond demographic data; it involves delving into their motivations, aspirations, and unique viewpoints. It's about designing an experience that resonates with each participant on a personal level. Whether it's a high-profile corporate conference or an

intimate executive retreat, we invest time and effort into grasping the subtleties of our attendees. In Aberdeen, a city where diverse sectors such as energy, finance, and technology converge, this dual understanding becomes especially pertinent. Each sector brings its unique demands and opportunities. Our ability to navigate these intricacies allows us to deliver events that genuinely leave an impact.

At Luxe Scot Events, we consider crafting exceptional corporate events to be an art form. It involves merging creativity with strategy, luxury with purpose, and innovation with tradition. It's about recognizing who our audience is and the context in which our event unfolds."

Aberdeen: A Hub for Corporate Excellence

As Aberdeen continues to flourish as a centre for business and innovation, Luxe Scot Events acknowledges the need for corporate events that align with the city's vibrancy. Luxe Scot Events specialises in creating events that mirror this diversity and cater to the unique demands of each sector.

Conclusion

In the realm of corporate events, Luxe Scot Events serves as a guide for companies striving for success. Their steadfast commitment to understanding audiences and industry sectors positions them as leaders in the field. Luxe Scot Events believes that an exceptional corporate event is more than just an occasion; it's an opportunity to build connections, inspire change, and elevate businesses.

Luxe Scot Events is a distinguished luxury event management company based in Aberdeen. With a track record of curating exquisite corporate events, Luxe Scot Events specialises in creating tailored experiences that captivate and leave a lasting impact.

For more information about Luxe Scot Events and their unparalleled expertise in organising exceptional corporate events in Aberdeen, please visit **www.luxescot.events**



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Lyn Spence and Alison Paton

The Changing HR Landscape – Reflections over 30 years

Alison Paton, CEO of Align People HR, and Lyn Spence, HR Consultant, have both recently reached the milestone of 30 years' membership with the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD). Inevitably, during their 60 combined years, the HR landscape has shifted dramatically. In this article, we find out from Alison and Lyn what they view as the most pertinent changes, as well as a look ahead to the future of Human Resources.

Alison said: "When I joined the CIPD in 1993, it was known as the Institute of Personnel Management. There has been a big shift to the HR profession becoming more strategic with a focus on aligning HR with overall business objectives. More recently, there has been a shift from the HR function to being known as the 'people' function and in my view, it better represents us all as individuals rather than mere resources."

Lyn Spence, who joined the CIPD in 1992, added: "My motivation for joining the CIPD was to develop my knowledge in the personnel function, and the CIPD qualification was delivered across three main areas - employee resourcing, employee relations and employee development. At the time, this was fresh thinking and moving personnel away from being an administrative function."

Over the course of their 30-year memberships, Alison and Lyn have borne witness to a multitude of significant changes and advancements within the realm of personnel and development. Alison noted: "The major shifts I've seen include a strategic focus for HR, a growing commitment to fostering positive work environments, a focus on equality

and inclusion, an emphasis on work-life balance, and the pervasive influence of technology."

Both Alison and Lyn acknowledged the profound impact of technology on the HR profession. Alison recollected: "In my first role after graduating, we didn't even have computers. Instead, we maintained employee records in an office dedicated to paper records. Today, regardless of a business's size, efficient and cost-effective digital HR systems are readily available."

Lyn added: "Technology has undoubtedly enhanced the effectiveness of HR professionals. The prevalence of online meetings is here to stay, and we anticipate that the rapid emergence of AI will further reshape the landscape. For instance, AI-generated CVs will necessitate a greater emphasis on skills testing during the recruitment process."

Looking towards the future, Alison and Lyn believe that technological advancements, particularly AI, will demand a shift in skill sets and redefine the nature of work available. Assisting businesses in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the right talent as they grow will be even more important, in Alison's opinion.

The opportunity for HR professionals lies in their ability to continue making a positive impact through HR strategy and contributing to management-level decision-making. A strong HR presence within an organisation can provide business with a valuable competitive edge.

For more information on Align People HR, visit: www.alignpeoplehr.com

MORE TIME FOR LOCAL SERVICE

In the current climate, getting value for money is high on everyone's list, especially when it comes to insurance policies. Whether you're a homeowner, run a business or own a commercial property, searching for the right insurance (not necessarily the cheapest) drives your decision.



NFU Mutual team: Ross Silvers, Tommy Brodie, Sarah Law and Stephen Hepburn.

NFU Mutual has a nationwide network of agency offices including one serving Aberdeenshire, in Thainstone. Today, that NFU Mutual agency – run by the partnership of Hepburn, Brodie, Silvers and Law – is led by Stephen Hepburn. The financial expert, who grew up on a farm and spent more than 30 years with Clydesdale Bank, now leads this experienced and growing team of insurance experts. NFU Mutual Aberdeen City and Shire agency offer a wide range of products for farming and non-farming customers including Property Owners, Retailer, Trades, as well as cover for a vast range of other businesses. It's an exciting time at the agency because in the last couple of years, it's almost doubled the size of its team, bringing the headcount up to 18. Most new appointments have been created in the commercial team which

includes the arrival of Development Executive, John Cullion.

Agents Stephen Hepburn, Tommy Brodie, Ross Silvers and Sarah Law were delighted to welcome the new Development Executive to the team in August 2023. His ambitions for the agency involve building on the successful growth of the business by increasing the number of new commercial customers joining the agency. Stephen said: "There's a demand for sound business advice when it comes to insurance. If you think about the business environment at the moment – given the risks associated with cyber security – customers are facing so many changes. This emphasises the need to sit down with an insurance agent to discuss the risks facing your business. There's so much diversification in businesses and farms, as business models are changing, so their insurance policy should be able to adapt to these changes. Speaking with a trusted adviser is more important than ever. If you need an insurance product, choosing one which offers the opportunity of a physical face to face meeting so you can deal directly with your insurer is very attractive."

Despite the transformation plans and opportunities for expansion and diversification of the local NFU Mutual agency in Thainstone, one thing has remained, the award-winning, highly rated service from this well-known mutual insurer.

NFU Mutual Aberdeen City and Shire
Thainstone Centre, Thainstone,
Inverurie, AB51 5WU

01467 625424

aberdeen_agency@nfumutual.co.uk



NFU Mutual
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Amity Fish achieves Great Taste Producer Status

After three consecutive wins, Amity Fish Company has been awarded 'Great Taste Producer Status' by the Guild of Fine Foods.

The bestselling Panko Breaded Single Wholetail Scampi has been re-awarded a Great Taste star for the third consecutive year, after first winning the accolade in 2021, with judges adoring the "sweet and plump" scampi that delivered on flavour.

In a welcome surprise, the award earns the Peterhead-based seafood supplier 'Great Taste Producer Status', a title only bestowed upon entries winning stars three consecutive years in a row.

Amity Managing Director Jimmy Buchan said: "Picking up a third Great Taste award for our signature Panko breaded Scampi is testament that the product is making an impact on judges. We are thrilled to receive this latest award, which is a story of pride and success from sea to plate and is reflected in the response of our customers to this product."

Global Underwater Hub opens North England office

Global Underwater Hub (GUH), the trade and industry development body representing the UK's growing £8billion underwater industry, has opened a new north England regional office in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The new premises mark the next phase in the organisation's plans to support the future growth of this diverse, world-leading industry and the wider blue economy.

Neil Gordon, Chief Executive at GUH, said: "Opening our Newcastle office is a vital part of GUH's vision for the future of the underwater industry. By establishing our presence here, we are strategically located to champion and connect underwater businesses across the UK to ensure that the country remains at the forefront of the industry and creates a robust and transparent supply chain that leads the world and others can learn from."

"It's an exciting milestone for GUH and we're looking forward to meeting new faces from the underwater sector to support them along their growth trajectory."

NHV Helicopters awarded contract

NHV Helicopters has secured a significant deal to support Buchan Well Abandonment operations in the central North Sea.

The contract, awarded by WellSafe Guardian on behalf of its client Repsol Sinopec Resources UK will see NHV deliver approximately four flights per week, using its H175 helicopters.



Gidi Grill team

Fusion dining experience brings £1.5million Union Street investment

Aberdeen's iconic Union Street has been spiced up by investment totalling more than £1.5million, thanks to the completion of a unique fusion casual dining experience, and a residential development.

Gidi Grill opened its doors in the heart of the city in November, bringing to Aberdeen a brand-new, distinctive West African/Caribbean inspired fusion cuisine and creating more than 20 jobs in the process.

Already well known for the original Gidi Grill in Dundee which opened in 2018 and now employs 50 people at City Square, the completion of the Aberdeen project represents not only a significant commitment to the city centre but also a major scaling up of the dynamic business which prides itself on using local produce wherever possible.

Commenting on their investment in Aberdeen city centre, owner Mobolaji Adeniyi said: "Our investment in Union Street demonstrates just what can be done to grow the culinary landscape of the city centre in new and exciting ways. We hope that others will be inspired to help breathe new life into this part of the city."

Owner Eniola Odejayi added: "By taking a successful Dundee business and expanding it into Aberdeen, we are delighted to add something new and fresh to the city's hospitality offering. The combination of our restaurant and recently completed rental apartments ensures a diversified income stream and we now look to the future with confidence and optimism."

Test programme success

A collaborative renewable subsea power project has successfully completed its initial four-month test programme in the UK North Sea, proving that a subsea battery storage system can reliably power subsea equipment through being recharged by a wave energy device.

Deployed in the waters off Orkney, the Blue X wave energy converter - built by Edinburgh company Mocean Energy - was connected with a Halo underwater battery developed by Aberdeen intelligent energy management specialist Verlume in a first-of-its-kind project.

Business lessons I've learned



Alan Walsh,
Managing Director, ANSA

What does your company do that others don't?

ANSA Data Analytics, a HydraWell company, is an independent team of multidisciplinary, multilingual, fully qualified log analysis experts, offering unbiased data analysis within the energy sector. Based at data hubs in the UK, US, and Middle East the team has more than 150 years of collective experience. We are now proud to offer our unique software Clarity™ which is the next generation in multifinger caliper data processing and allows users to go from raw data to actionable intelligence in minutes rather than days. It is the first generation of digital oilfield software tools to be powered by PRISM™, our proprietary suite of AI-driven automated solutions.

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

Attracting younger people to the industry is an ongoing challenge for us, and others. The industry has been so up and down, especially in the last five years or so, that it is no wonder that the energy sector and in particular oil and gas sector is now suffering due to a lack of succession management and planning. More

schemes are required to attract young talent to the area and sector and companies need to walk the talk. ANSA managed to hire two great individuals recently via the Kickstart programme run by the Department for Work and Pensions. Both the team and the individuals have flourished since.

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

Limitations and those of the people around us. Play to people's strengths as well as your own, admit when help is needed and do the things that you do well and enjoy. It's better to do one thing well than many things poorly.

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

One bit of advice that has always stuck with me is not to procrastinate. Make a decision – whether it turns out to be right or wrong, at least making a decision moves the process forward. Sometimes we need to just admit that we are “winging it” and realise that this is not a bad thing – better than endlessly overthinking.

Quick fire round

What was your first job?

My first real job was working in the butchery department of Tesco.

When would you like to retire?

Having just turned 50, it's natural to start thinking about these things but, so long as I can still offer experience and knowledge to the energy sector, I will keep them only as thoughts and put actions on hold.

What did you have for breakfast?

I always start the morning with nuts, fresh fruit and yoghurt with soaked oats when I remember to do it the night before!

Who, or what, inspires you?

The team that I work with inspire me every day.

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

I feel truly fortunate to have lots of very special moments to choose from, but I always feel particularly proud when I see individuals develop and succeed from the point of needing lots of support and guidance to little or no mentoring. Bringing out these qualities and seeing the smiles and rewards when successes are celebrated is such a great feeling.

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

I adore being beside water and we are spoilt for choice in the North-east of Scotland. The plans for Aberdeen beach look really good and I hope that they will rejuvenate the area so that people can make the most of the beautiful beaches that we have.



Alan McNally

Piper Sandler's Sportschallenge scores over £100,000 for North-east charities

Sportschallenge, the North-east's premier sports-themed corporate fundraising dinner, has raised over £100,000 for five local charities.

Funds raised during the popular event, which is now in its ninth year, will be split between three worthy North-east causes as well as its long-term beneficiaries, Maggie's Aberdeen and Children's Aid (Scotland).

The event, which was sponsored by Piper Sandler with support from CNR International, brought together 70 teams of ten from businesses across Scotland to battle it out at P&J Live in a Question of Sport-style quiz for the coveted Sportschallenge trophy. The night was hosted by former footballers and sports personalities Alan McNally and Charlie Nicholas.

As well as Maggie's Aberdeen and Children's Aid (Scotland), funds from the event will be going to Autism & Neurodiversity North Scotland (A-ND), The Bread Maker and Inchgarth Community Centre.

The amount raised is an increase of at least £30,000 on the total from last year's event.

Nick Dalgarno, Sportschallenge trustee and Managing Director of Piper Sandler, said: "This year's total has surpassed all expectations and we're thrilled that more charities will now benefit as a result of the generosity of local businesses.

"Every year, I am blown away by the level of support we receive from the Aberdeen business community, who have yet again come out in force, with a 20% increase in our attendance from last year.

"The funds raised will help these local charities continue to provide essential services to the people of Aberdeen and the North-east."

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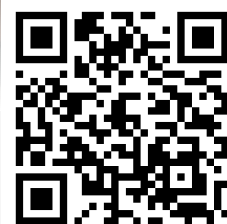
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MEET THE MEMBERS



Ivan Houston,
Director,
Scholes Chartered
Accountants

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Scholes CA was founded in the late 1960's, and incorporated in 2008. We have offices in Aberdeen, Laurencekirk, Edinburgh and Kirkwall, but serve clients further afield as well.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Scholes CA advises small businesses on a wide range of tax, accountancy and financial matters, with a strong emphasis on helping businesses with big growth ambitions and good potential. Our culture, like that of our clients, is very entrepreneurial.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We support small companies and their owners with all the traditional compliance aspects, but also slightly more complex areas - think share schemes, reorganisations and M&A. So, we work with small companies who are looking to grow, attract investment, raise finance, launch new products.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Attracting and nurturing talented people is essential to any business that wants to succeed and prosper. There is an acute nationwide shortage of young people wanting to train as accountants. It's a structural problem and there is no overnight solution.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

There will always be strong demand in the business community for quality tax, accountancy and advisory support. We are reaching out and connecting with small businesses who value compliance services but perhaps need a little extra help on top. We have a very entrepreneurial culture and understand the growth mindset, and the challenges of building up a business.

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

I am very proud of our team; they demonstrate the highest ethical and professional standards in all they do. They are generous with their time and expertise, and they strive to help our clients every single day. They are a dream to work with!



Emily Reid,
Business Development
Manager,
Solab IT Services (Solab)

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

July 4, 1991, marked the beginning of Solab IT Services so we celebrated our 32nd birthday this year.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Providing a complete portfolio of

Tier 1, 2 and 3 support services to our diverse client base, we tailor IT support packages to each client's unique needs. From helpdesk support to disaster recovery to infrastructure and procurement. We are also the company behind Onboard Tracker, the leading crew management software used by operators, service providers and SMEs across the energy, renewables and marine sectors to track and manage logistics, training and competence within one intelligent, integrated tool.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We work with a variety of cross-sector clients, from SME's to global corporations. We are proud to still hold many support contracts with our very first clients. With Onboard Tracker, built specifically for the energy, renewables and marine sectors and created for industry, by industry, our clients have an active role in its continuous development and work together to share best practice and ensure the safety and compliance of the wider industry.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

There is a heightened focus on security across our client base amid an increase in cyber-attacks globally. We are aligning our support mechanisms to reassure our clients on how we protect their data and end users, as well as upskilling our teams to ensure clients receive the best level of protection against cyber-attacks.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

There has been a shift among our users to collaborate and share best practice, particularly with Onboard Tracker. Recently two of our Operator Clients held a workshop to discuss how Onboard Tracker has supported them in various challenges. Safety of, and visibility over, our workforces should never be competitive. This open narrative and trust with our clients mean that we have a real opportunity to standardise in non-competitive areas and make the management and visibility of crew operations easier, accurate and connected.



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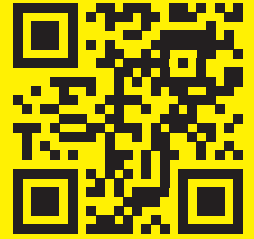
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Business in the dark over regulatory avalanche for EU trade

William Bain,
Head of Trade Policy,
British Chambers of Commerce

New research by the BCC has uncovered that the vast majority of businesses are unaware and unprepared for a swathe of fast approaching changes in EU/UK regulations.

When asked about their knowledge of a number of changes coming down the track, the survey of more than 700 firms found:

- 84% of manufacturers do not know about new reporting requirements on exports of goods containing high-carbon steel, and selected other products, to the EU starting in October
- 87% of exporters are either unaware or unprepared for new EU VAT requirements due in January 2025
- 43% of manufacturers are still unaware of the UK's, now voluntary, alternative product safety marking system to the EU's CE one

The lack of knowledge and preparation for the changes, mean that some traders with the EU could face a whole range of new delays and unexpected costs. In some cases exporters could also find their goods unable to be transited to EU customers.

While not all of the incoming changes to regulations will impact every firm, the wide range of new rules, and the complexity of their requirements, means many businesses will face new obstacles.

So, what are we to make of this data? It is a serious worry that more than four out of five manufacturers who export have no knowledge of the EU's new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

It is just the start of a series of changes, that will gradually ratchet up over the next three years, to deter the use of cheaper but higher-carbon steel, and other goods with highly embedded climate damaging emissions, being imported into the EU.

This first phase covers only a limited number of iron and steel products, fertilisers, hydrogen, cement, aluminium and electricity, but any UK company which then includes any of these items in their goods, for example in nuts and screws, will now have to declare them.

This is a very complex set of rules, the EU's published guidance runs to more than 200 pages. It is likely manufacturers that export will have to think about allocating dedicated staff resources just to deal with these reporting requirements.

So, they need to start thinking about this now, and working out what their response will be, but there are very few trusted sources of information.

The BCC and Chambers will be working hard to pull together as much guidance as we can to help businesses get to grips with this onslaught of changes.

Our research shows Government must also look again at how it communicates with firms about regulatory changes, especially given the likelihood of further divergence from EU rules in the future.

EU and UK policy makers also need to look at ways of simplifying a system that is over-burdensome for traders on both sides of the Channel. This could include reducing the complexity of exporting food and exempting smaller firms from the requirement to have a fiscal representative for VAT in the EU.

If it's done right the further embedding of digital trade through Single Trade Windows also has the potential to make exporting and importing much simpler. And there are other practical steps that should be considered like rejoining the Pan-Euro Mediterranean convention to ease rules of origin issues.





New business partnership to shine a light on the North-east economy

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and law firm Gilson Gray have agreed a new partnership to track business confidence in the North-east.

The organisations are combining forces to launch a quarterly survey which will map key economic indicators across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) will ask businesses if they have seen an increase, decrease or no change in a series of metrics, such as domestic sales, cash flow and investment.

It will also seek to shed light on issues companies in the region may be having with getting paid for their goods or services as customers continue to wrestle with cost increases, high interest rates and political and economic uncertainty.

The data gathered will be fed into a national version of the report, run by the British Chambers of Commerce, which is the largest and most representative independent business survey of its kind in the UK.

Its findings are closely watched by policymakers such as the Treasury, the Bank of England and the Office of Budget Responsibility.

Findlay Anderson, a Partner at Gilson Gray, said: "This is a pivotal time for our city and region. In the midst of ongoing and significant change it is critical in any business that you strive to have a clear view of the path forward and the challenges and opportunities around you.

"You can then develop a stronger plan to deliver whilst navigating the journey. We believe the Quarterly Economic Survey presents an excellent opportunity to support local businesses with an updated perspective every quarter on the financial drivers and impacts that other businesses are seeing and how they are responding.

"We are excited to see the outcomes of this and future surveys."

South Harbour now fully operational

Port of Aberdeen's transformational £420million expansion project is now fully operational.

Quayside construction is complete at Aberdeen South Harbour and the expanded port now offers its customers and port users 8km of quayside, making it Scotland's largest berthage port.

The Princess Royal officially opened South Harbour on September 22, marking the completion of the UK's largest marine infrastructure project.

Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, Port of Aberdeen said: "This is a momentous milestone for Port of Aberdeen, as the UK's oldest business completes construction of the country's newest harbour. This achievement reflects the dedication and determination of everyone involved in the project from concept to construction and now completion.

"The expanded Port of Aberdeen will play a pivotal role in supporting energy, trade and tourism growth across the region, and Scotland more widely, while supporting increased jobs and investment for decades to come.

Aberdeen International Airport confirmed as young person's guarantee employer

Aberdeen International Airport has successfully enrolled in the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) young person's guarantee employer scheme.

This is a joint commitment to provide opportunities for all 16-24 year olds in Scotland through jobs, apprenticeships, further and higher education, training programmes and volunteering.

Work already being carried out by Aberdeen airport visiting schools to show pathways to the aviation industry has been recognised by DYW North East.

Now, with the help from DYW North East, the North-east's major transport hub will explore options for modern and graduate apprenticeships in the coming years.

Capital Document Solutions relocates

Capital Document Solutions is investing in new premises to the south of Aberdeen.

It is moving from Grampian House in Aberdeen to City South Business Park near Portlethen.

MEET THE MEMBERS



Campbell Cartney,
Managing Director,
Camserv Ltd

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

2014

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Hydraulic tooling with patented technologies, pumps and pumping systems, power packs, industrial magnets, hydraulic welders/generators,

hydraulic components used on ROV's and bespoke subsea packaged systems for the energy sector, mining, agricultural, fishing industries and airport services, from high pressure cleaning, de-icing, environmental weed control to pumping/jetting operations, abrasive cutting and BOP intervention.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Due to the diverse nature of the business we work with other construction firms, utilities companies, offshore and onshore energy companies, operators and SME's.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

We find negotiating through the larger companies operating structures time consuming and labour intensive often having to work through third parties to meet our client needs and finding suitable experienced people.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Establishing key contacts withing the organisations and helping reduce their

workload by taking on some of the smaller projects leaving them to look at the bigger picture. We are dynamic and can move around operational challenges quickly offering design and bespoke build solutions while offering full visibility to the organisation we are trying to help.

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

I love working with the brilliant-minded people our industry have produced, provide solutions to problems, and the working relationships we have with our sponsors and partners is great.

WHAT HAS BEEN MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AS A MEMBER OF ABERDEEN + GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Expanding company profile and service capabilities to a larger audience and industry expert knowledge from the Chamber and Chamber members.



Matthew Pirie,
Scotland Regional Manager,
Willbox®

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Willbox® is part of the Williams Shipping Group which has been operating for 129 years. Willbox is the shipping container and site accommodation division and has been supplying shipping containers across the UK for 30 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We supply, hire and sell site accommodation and welfare units of all sizes, shapes, and specifications. These can either be hired or purchased. Willbox® also converts shipping containers into bespoke, modular structures including offices, cafes, gyms, and site accommodation units using our in-house workshop and team of fabricators.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

Our customers come from a variety of industries seeking containerised solutions. Construction, rail, oil and gas and renewable industries make up a large part of our market for our Scotland hire solutions. Self-storage sites, agriculture and residential customers prefer our sales options. If shipping containers can solve your problem, then we're happy to help.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

The economic downturn and the rising costs from manufacturers in Asia have made it a difficult market

in 2023. However, adding dedicated boots on the ground in Scotland ensures we are committed to growing the Willbox® brand in the region and that we will always provide a local and knowledgeable service to our Scottish customers.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Willbox® continues to grow and expand into new industries. Our 23 depots across the UK, including three in Scotland, ensures we remain local for customers, and that they are doing business with someone who understands their regional challenges and not a corporate company who could be hundreds of miles away.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

Growth and hearing our customers tell me how great our product is. We offer superior high quality but at competitive prices. The local, hands-on approach in Scotland and particularly the North-east helps us react so much faster than the competition. It also allows us to build meaningful long-term relationships with our customers.



Maryn Grieve, Laura Wilson, Gemma Laing and Alanna Fowler

VisitAberdeenshire has appointed four new team members to assist in the development and promotion of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire as a vibrant tourist destination. Maryn Grieve is the new Tourism Development Executive, Laura Wilson joins as Head of Convention Bureau, Gemma Laing has been appointed Partnerships Executive, and Alanna Fowler joins as Travel Trade Executive.



Keith Walton

Enerpro Group, an offshore construction support specialist, has appointed Keith Walton as Business Development Manager. He has been involved in the North Sea industry for over 20 years.



Craig Lennox

Aberdeen Science Centre has appointed a new Chair of its board. Craig Lennox has more than 30 years' experience and has led major energy, infrastructure and IT services businesses.



Steve Combe

International well plug and abandonment specialist Well-Safe Solutions has announced Well-Safe Resources - a new business function focusing on deploying well engineering and project management talent worldwide. It will be headed by Steve Combe; a team leader and recruitment adviser with over 15 years of experience in North Sea, Falklands and West African operations.



Craig Wiggins

Step Change in Safety has named Craig Wiggins as the successor to Steve Rae as Executive Director. In a career spanning almost 40 years, Mr Wiggins has extensive industry experience, having held senior leadership positions in operator and contracting companies both internationally and in the UK.



Lauren Allan and Niamh Johnston

Osprey Housing has appointed two new Apprentice Board Members to help widen diversity and deepen understanding of the communities that the social landlord serves. Joining as Osprey's first non-voting boardroom apprentices are Lauren Allan, an Assistant Technical Co-ordinator with Barratt Developments, and University of Aberdeen law graduate Niamh Johnston, a member of Brodies' Aberdeen banking and finance team and recently-qualified Solicitor.



Bruce McCormack

The University of Aberdeen has further strengthened its world-leading divinity department with the appointment of an internationally-recognised scholar of modern Christian theology. Bruce McCormack is joining the university as Professor of Systematic Theology after 30 years at Princeton Theological Seminary, latterly as Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology.



Kirsten Bell

Deeside Timberframe is bolstering its senior management team with the appointment of a new Finance Director and a realignment of roles to support its ambitious growth plans. The Stonehaven-based business is involved in the design, manufacture and installation of timber systems, has welcomed Kirsten Bell to its team.



Iain Fraser

Aberdeen accountant and business adviser Iain Fraser has been appointed an Executive Director of Scotland's leading farmers' co-operative ANM Group. As well as joining the board, he will also take on an executive role with the company on a part-time basis to advise the board and executive team on policy development.



Alisdair Cook

Optimal, a provider of physical asset-management solutions, has appointed Director Alisdair Cook as its new CEO. Mr Cook has more than 20 years of experience specialising in asset data and systems management. He has also been a key member of Optimal's management team for over a year.



Shona Coull

North-east estate agency, solicitor and financial services provider Raeburn Christie Clark and Wallace has appointed Shona Coull as a Property Consultant at its Banchory branch. She has extensive Scottish residential-property experience, having previously worked for a number of North-east lettings and estate agency firms.



Jordan Noble

Ice cream brand Mackie's of Scotland has expanded its HR team, appointing its first People and Development Manager as it continues to focus in on its commitment to employee engagement and workforce development. Jordan Noble secured the role after spending five years with food-manufacturing company Joseph Robertson.



Alison Bryce

Law firm Brodies has added to its commercial services practice with the appointment of Alison Bryce, who joins the firm as Partner. She joins Brodies from Dentons, and brings more than 20 years of experience. In addition to core commercial contracts, Alison specialises in IP and innovation, with sector expertise in food and drink, fintech and green energy.



Jane Merson

Raeburn Christie Clark and Wallace (RCCW) has promoted Jane Merson to Branch Principal at its Banchory branch. Jane started her legal career at RCCW, completing her traineeship at the firm in 2014. She then worked for another North-east law firm, returning to RCCW in October 2022.





Scott Barclay

CS Group has named Scott Barclay as its new Commercial Director. He has extensive experience in the security, banking and energy sectors.



Bruce Edmond

GPH Builders Merchants, a North-east supplier of building materials, has appointed Bruce Edmond as Finance Manager. He joins the company in its 41st year of trading, having grown from a single branch operation in Inverurie to a four-branch business servicing the North-east.



Hugh Yendole

Orsted, Simply Blue Group and Subsea 7 have appointed Hugh Yendole as Development Director for Salamander, a floating offshore wind joint venture. With over 25 years' experience in the wind industry, Hugh has played a crucial role in delivering and managing multiple offshore and onshore developments across the UK, Europe and the US.



Ann Rooney

Montrose Port Authority (MPA) has appointed Ann Rooney as its new Chief Commercial Officer, supporting CEO Captain Tom Hutchison, and the MPA team. She joins the trust port with over 15 years experience in the ports, maritime and international logistics sector.



Christine Cochrane

Ashtead Technology has bolstered its leadership team with the appointment of Christine Cochrane as HR Director. Christine joins the firm following a career spanning over 20 years in a breadth of HR disciplines covering talent acquisition, training and competency, employee relations, reward, leadership development and organisational culture.



Stuart Hamilton

Fugro, a geo-data specialist, has announced the appointment of Stuart Hamilton as Director of Positioning and Construction support for Europe and Africa. His journey with the firm began in 2013 when he joined the company as an Apprentice Tooling Technician.



Andy Williamson and Ricci Boston

Global Underwater Hub, the trade and development body representing the UK's growing £8billion underwater industry, has announced two appointments. Andy Williamson and Ricci Boston join to drive growth and foster innovation across the underwater sector. Andy has been appointed as the Business Development Director and Regional Manager for the South of England. He previously was Senior Vice President, Energy Transition at energy industry skills organisation OPITO. Ricci takes on the role of Regional Manager for the North of England.



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