

## Bricks and mortar

North-east market round up

## Change of venue

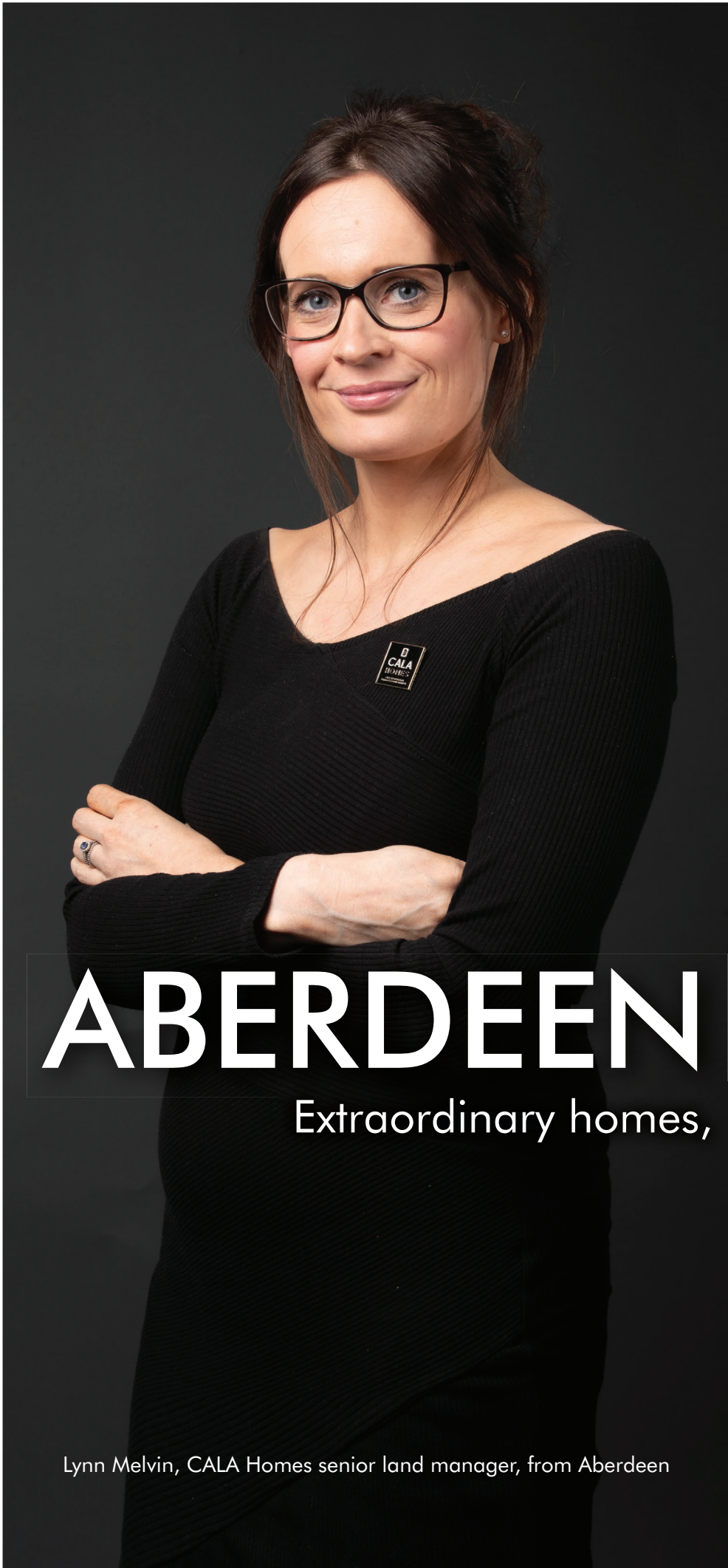
The impact of P&J Live

## Second rate

What's next for business rates



# Moving up



# ABERDEEN

Extraordinary homes,

Lynn Melvin, CALA Homes senior land manager, from Aberdeen



A typical CALA street scene



The Darroch showhome at The Grove



A typical CALA street scene

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This is where it all began for CALA. Since 1875, we've built an outstanding reputation for outstanding homes. And we're proud of our Aberdeen roots, because home is where our heart is.



★★★★★ 5 star customer service

2. Image shown is taken from a previous CALA showhome and features fittings, décor, flooring and soft furnishings which are not included as standard in a CALA home. Images are used to suggest possible finishes that can be achieved in your home at an additional cost. Please ask a CALA representative for further details. 5 stars awarded for customers' willingness to 'Recommend to a Friend' in findings of the survey undertaken by the Home Builders Federation 2017/18.

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Cover image  
Property

Next month's theme  
All energy

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AUGUST 2019  
Focus on **PROPERTY**



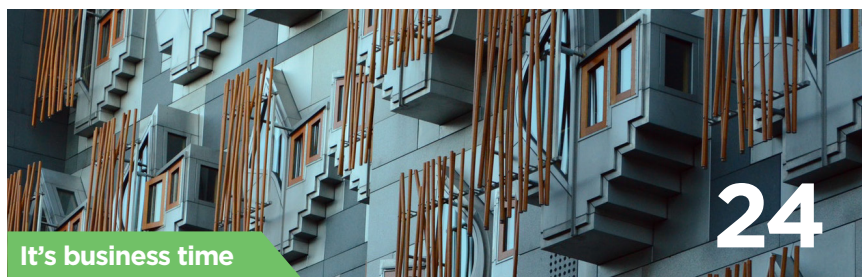
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## Our Partners

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

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

If you'd like to find out more contact our head of membership, Seona Shand

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CHRYSAOR



# Taking care of our community

**LIKE many people in the North-east, I came to Aberdeen in search of opportunity. Now, with fulfilling careers and lifelong friends here, and I am proud that four generations of my family enjoy everything the region has to offer.**

For this reason, I am honoured and excited to be president of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. I intend to bring a wealth of experience to the role and look forward to working with the team to build on the impressive work being done to support businesses and grow the economy of the area.

One of our major opportunities is that we are a large and diverse region. However, that brings its challenges. From Portsoy to Laurencekirk and as far west as Braemar, the Chamber covers not only a major city but also a varied and thriving rural economy.

There are thousands of businesses in Aberdeenshire, many of which are family-run enterprises or small companies employing just a few people – business owners who have chosen to work where they live and enjoy the natural beauty of our surroundings. But big business exists in our rural communities as well. You will find large energy companies where you might not expect them and, of course, our tourism, agriculture, food and fishing sectors are unrivalled.

As director of the Scottish Food and Drink Federation, I campaigned for the people who work in that sector across Scotland. As chief executive of CLAN, I work hard to ensure that appropriate levels of health and social care are available to those who need it.

I look forward to using my extensive political engagement background to help lobby for our communities. Building the economy across the city region brings benefits to Scotland as a whole and I see it as my remit to get that message across.

Employment in our local communities relies upon many factors. We need to make it easy to get to work – that means a progressive transport network. We need connectivity to match our ambition – it means 5G not just 3G. Our local communities need health and other

services nearby, which meet their needs, or a transport network to get them there.

On a wider scale we need to anchor our skilled workforce in the North-east; and secure a competitive business environment for the region. We also need to revitalise our exporting ambitions and play a key role in the energy transition agenda.

My appointment as president comes at a great time for the Chamber. The Absolutely initiative sets the scene for sharing our enthusiasm for our city region and we will share that excitement with our key audiences to help build a diverse and sustainable economy.

As president I chair a board of 12 non-executive and three executive directors and will be ably supported by our vice presidents Jennifer Young and the newly appointed Padraig McCloskey, who brings a wealth of experience from his time with Shell and having worked in the US, Netherlands and Canada. Our latest board recruit is Spencer Buchan, a native Aberdonian who has built AVC Immedia into a global creative entity; and we look forward to working with him.

The Chamber is here to support you, together we can achieve what we could not individually.



**Dr Colette Backwell,**  
*president*





## New event says people are key to growth

THE importance of looking after people to drive growth has emerged as one of the key themes of a brand-new event celebrating local entrepreneurs and business success.

The recent Granite Growth Summit at the International School Aberdeen (ISA) was the result of a partnership between Prospect 13 and Granite PR. The one-day event brought together representatives of the North-east business community including top performing organisations, brands and industry bodies to discuss the challenges encountered and triumphs enjoyed by companies during their growth journeys.

The exhibition, conference and interactive workshops also offered business insights demonstrating that today's businesses must aim high with their growth strategies.

Cerri McDonald, Prospect 13 managing director, said: "We wanted to provide a platform which allowed entrepreneurs to share a different side to their business. The human side that many don't see. By telling these frank and moving stories, they suddenly became more real which was not only inspirational but motivational."

## Pinsent Masons make disability inclusion move

INTERNATIONAL law firm Pinsent Masons has signed up to the Valuable 500 campaign which seeks to place disability inclusion on the board agenda of 500 global businesses. The Valuable 500, which was launched at the World Economic Forum's annual summit, urges global business leaders to become accountable for disability inclusion in their businesses. Pinsent Masons joins 42 organisations in a pledge to table disability on its board agenda and make a commitment of action for 2019.

The firm, which employs 500 lawyers and support staff in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, will strive to remove barriers for employees with disabilities and promote an environment which supports health and wellbeing for all, including reviewing the firm's recruitment process to ensure it is fully inclusive and accessible.

## Oil and gas skills can help achieve climate change targets

OIL & GAS UK has reinforced the role the industry can play in supporting the UK to meet its climate change ambitions.

Speaking in response to the Prime Minister's commitment to deliver net zero emissions by 2050, OGUUK chief executive Deirdre Michie set out the role industry can play to enable the energy systems of the future and to help the development of technology that can mitigate carbon from other heavy emitting industries.

"Achieving net zero is a huge challenge that will affect all industries, businesses and people," she said. "Our sector needs to be involved in this agenda, work to realise the opportunities it presents and be an essential partner in supporting the UK to achieve its climate change ambitions."

"We can help design the diverse energy system we need for the future, and through our knowledge and experience can be a central part of developing some of the technology needed to mitigate carbon from other heavy emitting industries through for example, carbon capture usage and storage."

## Second decade success for Network DNA

AN ABERDEEN technology company has entered its second decade in business by securing work valued at a six-figure sum.

Since the beginning of this year, 11-year-old Network DNA has secured business worth more than £150,000 from a range of key and target sectors, including oil and gas and retail. The work comprises contract renewals along with new business won as a result of diversifying into the desktop and server support market.

The locally owned company, which employs a team of six specialists, provides bespoke networking solutions to oil and gas, third sector, professional service and other organisations. It has deployed worldwide communication systems ranging from a single office requirement to systems capable of being accessed by tens of thousands of users in numerous countries.

## Add Energy and Trendsetter patent success

ADD Energy, the international energy consultancy and software provider, and its partner Trendsetter Engineering, have secured a second US patent for their world-first well kill equipment.

The Relief Well Injection Spool (RWIS) is the world's only well kill solution capable of killing a blowing well with just one relief well – a process which typically would require two or more relief wells when faced with high discharge rated wells.

The RWIS received its first US patent in 2018 for the protection of the hardware. This second patent covers the process and system for killing a well through the use of relief well injection spools.

## Chamber announces new policy council

ABERDEEN & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has announced a number of additions to its policy council.

Jane Spiers, of Aberdeen Performing Arts; Tom Sanders of EY; Colin Campbell of Langstane Press; and Eileen McBay of Eastern Airways were re-elected to the policy council for a further three-year term.

Elected to the council for the first time are Allan McEwan of CityFibre; Joanna Fraser of Macphie Ltd; Jamie Wishart of John Lewis; Liz Rattray of University of Aberdeen; Emma White of Equinor; Jamie Coventry of Aberdeen City Council; Jill Walker of Anderson, Anderson & Brown; Moray Barber of KPMG; David Millar of OGTC; Moira Gordon of FG Burnett; Laurie Scott of VisitAberdeenshire; and Findlay Anderson of Baker Hughes.



## Turnover up 7% at legal firm Pinsent Masons

INTERNATIONAL law firm Pinsent Masons has announced details of its unaudited financial results for the year 2018-19 which shows global turnover increased by 7% to £482m.

The results follow a year in which the firm undertook a number of initiatives that reinforced its commitment to conducting business in the right way and for the right reasons.

The law firm employs 60 partners, lawyers and support staff at its Queen's Road office in Aberdeen where corporate, oil and gas and employment specialists are involved in some of the largest mergers and acquisitions taking place in the North Sea.

In the last 12 months key mandates completed included the £50m sale of a portfolio of offshore wind farms by Scottish Equity Partners and in Ithaca Energy's £2bn acquisition of Chevron's North Sea oil and gas assets, while the firm also advised on the £1bn development of 3,000 new homes in Winchburgh in a joint venture by Winchburgh Developments Ltd, West Coast Capital and CALA Homes.

## Council's transport award

ABERDEENSHIRE Council's work to promote sustainability in transportation has been recognised at the Transport Times Scottish Transport Awards.

The Integrated Travel Towns Masterplan approach took the award in the Excellence in Walking, Public Realm and Cycling category at the annual awards event.

Aberdeenshire Council has been working to improve travel opportunities in its towns by taking a focused approach to delivering the right infrastructure in the right place for the right group of people.

Towns which are designated as Integrated Travel Towns (ITTs) benefit from work and funds being concentrated on their development over a five-year period with community involvement at its heart.

## International business secures success for Enerquip

AN ABERDEEN-based company which specialises in torque machines has announced significant growth in revenue and staff numbers.

Enerquip manufactures torque machines from its facilities in Aberdeen and Caithness.

In its first full year of trading in 2016, the company achieved turnover of £2m which grew to £8m in 2018. The figure is on track to rise sharply again, with £12m anticipated during the current year.

The company employs 59 staff in Aberdeen, Caithness and Houston and expects that to double in the next two years as domestic and overseas growth plans continue. With recruitment ongoing, career opportunities currently exist in various disciplines including operations, design and purchasing.

Director Andrew Robins said: "Our strength lies in providing bespoke, customer-led solutions rather than so-called 'off-the-shelf' options and this has been instrumental in facilitating the organic growth we have seen since 2016."

## Three more flights to London over winter

BRITISH Airways is to increase its weekly flights to London Heathrow from Aberdeen International Airport by three bringing the total to 50 over the winter. The increase in frequency will start in the week beginning October 27 and the additional 1pm departure will run until March 2020.

## Heavy horse show first for P&J Live

THE first World Clydesdale Show in the UK will be held at the new event complex, P&J Live. The show will take place across four days from October 20 to October 23, 2022. Historically the World Clydesdale Show has been held in North America. The event will widen the exhibition of horses not only within the UK but also to European exhibitors.

# Hot property

**A RECENT report from PwC shows Scottish homeowners can expect the value of their properties to rise by 14% on average over the four years to 2022.**

Closer to home there are already clear signs of recovery in some sectors of Aberdeen's property market with confidence appearing to return to commercial, industrial and some residential property.

However there continue to be major challenges for retail, particularly in the city centre, and while there are positive signs in the mid to high range of the domestic market those at the lower end are not yet climbing out of the slump.

According to Amy Tyler of CBRE Advisory & Transaction Services there has been encouraging evidence that the positive signs of recovery in the Aberdeen office market during 2018 are continuing.

"We have had a steady pipeline of deals coming through and, in terms of occupier demand, there is definitely a shift to larger workspace requirements," she said. "At the moment, for example, we're working on a variety of transactions with the majority focused on best quality Grade A accommodation.

"The rise in take-up of increased space is due to a variety of reasons. For some occupiers, it's a case of natural progression - businesses have come to the end of long-term leases and are taking the opportunity to relocate and upscale to reflect their current needs and ensure they can accommodate future growth. Some of the other larger real estate requirements are due to corporate reorganisations or are the result of mergers and acquisitions.

"The opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route has definitely helped to strengthen letting activity to larger out of town lets. The long-awaited ring road has improved accessibility significantly and resulted in shorter travel times, so there's been an upturn of interest in offices in locations such as Dyce which are now within easy reach of Aberdeen city centre.

"A number of major developments within the city centre too - including the creation of the areas first digital hub, the refurbishment of the Art Gallery and completion of The Sandman Signature Hotel - are all helping renew confidence in Aberdeen."

There was positive news too from her colleague Iain Landsman, associate director at CBRE, who said:

"The performance of the industrial property sector market in Aberdeen is inextricably linked to the oil sector and we certainly saw the uplift in the wider energy sector filtering through to the market last year. Whilst it was still a challenging year, proof of the much more positive performance overall is that we recorded our highest volume of deals - 80 - in a decade.

"Following on from last year's record number of industrial transactions, the recovery of the sector and much more positive sentiment have been maintained over the past few months, so we're confident that take up in 2019 will reflect that.

"In 2018 sub 10,000 sq ft lettings accounted for 73% of transactions which suggested that smaller-scaled companies' confidence in the market was growing and they could start planning for future growth. So far this

year we've seen smaller deals once again dominating the market with 84% of all transactions in the first quarter being in the sub 10,000 sq ft bracket."

According to Richard Noble, managing director of FG Burnett, there is no doubt that the retail property market landscape is going to remain challenging: "It can be anticipated that we will see more company voluntary arrangements (CVA) being entered into by retailers, now the go-to process for rationalising a national portfolio of trading units," he said.

"For some that will reshape the business having reduced the number of shops, reduced debt and retained jobs. For others it will simply delay the inevitable of a business disappearing from the High Street forever.

"So, what happens to the units left behind? I had hoped that much lower rents and indeed capital values would entice independents to expand by taking new leases or perhaps buy a unit for their SIP but despite tremendous opportunities in the market that behaviour, so far at least, has failed to materialise which perhaps points to a wider lack of confidence.

"Locations holding their own include quality suburban centres, often anchored by a discount foodstore and neighbourhood centres, typically comprising a multiple convenience store and several smaller units.

"Occupier and investor demand for these remains steady. The 'drive thru' market remains competitive although rents are calming down for all but the very best opportunities. Supermarkets are now doing deals with 'drive thru' operators to take space in their oversized car parks, a route that seems more straightforward from a planning perspective.



“

**“Following on from last year’s record number of industrial transactions, the recovery of the sector and much more positive sentiment have been maintained over the past few months, so we’re confident that take up in 2019 will reflect that.”**

**Iain Landsman**, *associate director*, CBRE

“While everyone has bought into the need to protect the town centre, this should not be to the detriment of those retailers including Home Bargains, B&M, Food Warehouse (Iceland) and others which seek to widen planning use consents on retail parks in relation to units left behind by other retailers who may have failed or used the CVA process.”

Bob Fraser, senior property partner with Aberdeen Considine, said that the domestic property market is always a useful indicator of the local economy and it was encouraging to see a year-on-year increase in people coming to market buying and selling.

“Anecdotally, I am also seeing a lot more people selling with the intention of remaining in Aberdeen and upsizing, so a percentage of the properties are people moving house within the area with plans for the future. In the last few years we have seen a huge number of people selling second properties and investment properties and also selling to leave the area, perhaps getting out of the oil industry or leaving Aberdeen to go to oil and gas elsewhere.

“So that is the noticeable switch in the emphasis of people’s plans and that’s good news and probably encourages me more than simply the increase in the volume of transactions.

“Against that the reality is that prices for flats in particular are still falling. That is in part due to the problems we have experienced in the local economy but largely as a direct result of UK and Scottish government action to encourage first-time buyers which, by implication, is to discourage second time and investment buyers. We have flats at prices we haven’t seen for 10 or 15 years.”

He said the downturn in the oil industry meant that the tenants were no longer there for landlords who had bought flats as an investment and that, combined with tax and legislative changes, had been a ‘triple whammy’ for the housing market. And that while the decline had slowed and perhaps bottomed out for better properties it still might have a little way to go for poorer ones.

“In the mid-range £300,000 to £500,000 there is certainly a lot more activity and that’s probably the main area where people are selling just to remain in Aberdeen which has been very limited over the last few years. In the upper range, £500,000 and above, we are seeing a few sales go through up to the £1m mark and I think there have been one or two of £1m plus.”





# Standing out from the crowd

**RECENT reports have claimed that UK construction is on the brink of stagnation and the local industry in Aberdeen and the North-east has a bright future, buoyed by continued and growing investment in major infrastructure, public and private sector projects.**

Robertson has long been a part of the fabric of the North-east since its founding in Elgin in 1966. And, as the region continues its transition away from its traditional dependence on the oil and gas industry, Robertson has truly started to stand out from the crowd.

The family-owned firm has been a key partner in the development of the £333m P&J Live project, which will be a state-of-the-art entertainment, arts, business and conference hub for the North-east and will attract talent and commercial opportunities from well beyond the city limits.

To deliver P&J Live, a massive workforce with a huge array of skills and talents has been required, as has a collaborative and partnership-driven approach with clients, contractors and the local community.

Robertson's approach to collaborative working and its aim to deliver added value has meant that P&J Live has become much more than a building project. It has proven to be a vital learning arena for younger generations who, through school outreach programmes and work experience opportunities, have learned new skills

and gained invaluable experience to start them on a promising career in an increasingly modern and technology-driven construction industry.

Many school, college and university students have been involved in learning projects or work experience schemes at P&J Live. Not only has it proven to be a landmark project for the region but it's far from the only construction project that is helping the region on its transition.

Inverurie Community Campus is one of the largest school construction projects in Scotland and when it opens in 2020, it will provide a new academy school for over 1,600 pupils, a health centre, outdoor pitches and swimming facilities for the local community. A new additional support needs school is also part of the £55m project.

Engagement with the local community has been crucial to the success of the project and Robertson's community team has delivered countless workshops, community initiatives and stakeholder events so that those in the community reap the benefits of the growing North-east construction boom. Groups of local schoolchildren have also toured the site to see their new, state-of-the-art school taking shape and the modern methods of construction used in its development.

Inverurie Community Campus is being delivered in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council and hub North Scotland. Procurement frameworks like hub North Scotland allow for

greater collaboration between the public sector and contractors, and are a guaranteed way of delivering value for money.

Scape, another framework provider, is used by over 950 public sector organisations to ensure build projects are delivered efficiently, sustainably and responsibly. For many years, Robertson and Scape have worked together to deliver housing, public sector and education projects.

One of the latest projects to be delivered with Scape in Aberdeen is a new £25m science teaching hub for The University of Aberdeen. Construction is underway on the four-storey complex and it is a crucial element to a large-scale investment of the Old Aberdeen campus, which is totalling nearly £50m.

Tasked with carrying out design and construction on the complex, Robertson will provide modern facilities that will cater to students studying biological and biochemistry sciences, chemistry, geoscience and physiology.

Excluding P&J Live, Robertson has projects worth over £100m underway across the North-east and with increasing optimism in the regional market this figure is set to grow. Robertson's role in designing, developing and delivering these projects is helping it maintain its position as the North-east's preferred full-service property and infrastructure services company.



**Gordon Milne**, *managing director*; **Fraser Taylor** *operations director*; **Susan Wilson**, *commercial director*; and **John McHardy**, *business development director*.



"IN THE six months that I have been managing director of Robertson Eastern, I've been impressed with the level of dedication, innovation and proactivity the team here has taken to shift the local economy away from its dependence on oil and gas and towards diversification.

"Key to the region's continued diversification is instilling skills, confidence and inspiration in younger people. Young people are tomorrow's workforce and they are crucial to the region's success, the construction industry and, with over 22 businesses in the Robertson family, our company.

"Our Young People Strategy underpins all our efforts. The strategy aims to develop young people at varying stages of their careers, through partnerships with high schools, colleges and universities, apprentice, trainee and graduate programmes and professional development schemes.

"In the North-east, we're proud to have played a transformative role in the future careers of many students at Inverurie Academy through the new £55m Inverurie Community Campus. Our Trade Route Programme has opened up a wealth of new learning opportunities for students by connecting them with work experience in various construction specialisms.

"By ensuring students have access to work-related learning, they are learning practical skills, gaining experience and employability skills so when they finish school, not only do they have a better idea on what they want to go onto but are in the best possible position to do so.

"It doesn't stop with the Trade Route Programme. We've had over 300 children visit the site and as we reach the halfway milestone, we're continuing to offer flexible work experience opportunities, mentoring and even opportunities for art and media studies groups to be involved.

"We're incredibly proud of our work at Inverurie Community Campus and excited that we're nominated for the 'Inspiring Futures' award at this year's Northern Star Business Awards. However, the opportunities at Inverurie Community Campus can be found at all our sites across the North-east.

"We believe that this is what modern construction should be about. It's not just about delivering innovative and high-quality builds, it's about assuring a sustainable future by developing the next workforce.

"Through our efforts, we're doing our part to keep the construction industry sustainable, ensure it has a future and continues to build upon the North-east's burgeoning reputation for construction innovation and excellence."

**Gordon Milne**, *managing director*,  
Robertson Eastern

# Just the ticket



**THIS month the doors will open at P&J Live, the £333m world-class conference, concert, sports event and exhibition centre which is expected to have a significant impact on the Aberdeen city region's economy.**

On the entertainment side it can host concerts for up to 12,500 and has already succeeded in attracting top stars including Elton John, Michael Bublé, Liam Gallagher, Lewis Capaldi and Wet Wet Wet and its first conference and exhibition will be Offshore Europe, the biennial event which is expected to attract almost 40,000 visitors.

However, such is the flexibility within 48,000 square metres of multi-purpose event space, it can provide meeting facilities for parties as small as a handful.

P&J Live is expected to attract an additional 4.5 million visitors annually who will spend an estimated £113m and add £63m net GVA to the Scottish economy.

It created 600 jobs at the peak of the construction period and will

create 352 full-time-equivalent permanent positions by year 10 of operations. "There is no doubt that it is transformational in terms of the building and the customer experience which will be on offer," said Louise Stewart, head of entertainment, exhibitions and marketing.

“

**“All the promoters and production people we have had to visit the new building have just been blown away by it. The promoters we are talking to are the same ones we have always talked to but there is a difference in the level of act they are talking about bringing to us.”**

**Louise Stewart**, *head of entertainment, exhibitions and marketing, P&J Live*

“It is absolutely a gamechanger. We are attracting acts and artists and global conferences we otherwise would never have been able to compete for. It allows us to stand toe to toe with many other big conference, exhibition and event venues which previously we would not have been able to go up against.

“All the promoters and production people we have had to visit the new building have just been blown away by it. The promoters we are talking to are the same ones we have always talked to but there is a difference in the level of act they are talking about bringing to us.”

She explained that not only the size but the technical limitations of the AECC, which P&J Live is replacing, meant many promoters who carry all the risk would not consider it as a tour venue for major artists.

“It’s also a no-brainer for conference organisers,” she said. “Previously our maximum conference numbers were around 500 up to 750 but in the new venue we can deal with up to 5,000 so it’s a massive difference.



“

**“The planned September opening for hosting Offshore Europe is a great opportunity in itself, with the level of interest and business that the city draws in every two years for this significant calendar event creating vast opportunity for not only the oil sector but the leisure and tourism sectors too.”**

**Jamie Snowdon**, *general manager, Copthorne Hotel*

“The Aberdeen city region as a destination helps attract people because of its offering – the food, the drink, the castles, the culture the history... and whisky is always a great sell especially for the Americans.”

She said they were also able to show that there is a local demand for big

artists but people were also prepared to travel to the venue.

“For Michael Bubl  we have people coming from all over the UK but 66% of the tickets sold are from AB postcodes. The wide economy from restaurants and hotels to taxis and tourist attractions are expected to benefit from the numbers drawn to the North-east by the new venue.”

While it is inevitable that some might restrict their visits to the three new on-site hotels or accommodation at the nearby airport, it is hoped many will use the city centre as a base.

Jamie Snowdon, general manager of the Copthorne Hotel on Huntly Street said: “I welcome the opening of P&J Live as the new conference centre in Aberdeen, with the impressive state-of-the-art facilities and expansive conference spaces. It will undoubtedly attract custom which the city has not had the capacity to host before.

“The planned September opening for hosting Offshore Europe is a great opportunity in itself, with the level of interest and business that the city draws in every two years for this

significant calendar event creating vast opportunity for not only the oil sector but the leisure and tourism sectors too.

“Kick-starting the opening with this event will put a marker on the map that Aberdeen is now competing in the big league to host international conferences and events. Encompassing a far wider audience, the opening will really allow for us, as regional stakeholders within the city, to show off what our city has on offer to both business guests and leisure tourism alike.

“This development is a game changer for our city and it will be a proud moment when the doors open and we can welcome a whole new audience into Aberdeen.”

The increased visitor numbers will also offer a major opportunity, as well as a considerable challenge, for Aberdeen’s taxi industry.

Chris Douglas, director of Aberdeen Taxis, which has 95 drivers in the city, said: “It will definitely have an impact. I believe some 4.5 million visitors are expected a year which is currently more than use Aberdeen International



Airport which has its own dedicated fleet of taxis to service that demand 24/7.

“P&J Live will only require taxis when people arrive and leave and with the current number of taxis it is going to be a serious challenge.”

In 2015 there were 1,580 taxis on the road and now there are only 720.

“There are a variety of reasons for that and hopefully the opening of P&J Live will be the catalyst which brings about a reverse in the fortunes of the industry,” added Chris.

He said various factors had led to the declining number, including the oil price slump which resulted in many drivers leaving the trade, the general economic climate and the introduction of mandatory medicals by the DVLA for drivers over 55.

“With Aberdeen heading for £3.5bn of investment in infrastructure like P&J Live and the deep-water port at Nigg, it is vital that we address the problems now. One thing which could be looked at is the ‘unique knowledge test’ by Aberdeen City Council which basically involves any new driver, including

private hire cars, having to know 100% of Aberdeen streets.

“In the last calendar years of 179 candidates who sat it only 29 passed (sometimes having to sit the test six times) and those numbers speak for themselves – something needs to change. This test is from a bygone age and while technology may not provide all the answers it certainly should be reflected in a modern test.

“That means 150 potential taxi drivers have been excluded from being able to gain employment as a result of that test last year alone. These developments will be a major boost to the economy and will hopefully spur people to become involved with the industry again.

“Everyone is gearing up for P&J Live and the other developments which are going to change the face of Aberdeen and the taxi industry is going to be stretched to its absolute capacity but let’s hope we are able to rise to the occasion and be a successful part of an exciting future.”

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**“There are a variety of reasons for that and hopefully the opening of P&J Live will be the catalyst which brings about a reverse in the fortunes of the industry,”**

**Chris Douglas**, *director, Aberdeen Taxis*

# THERE'S LOTS GOING ON AT P&J LIVE...

RUSSELL HOWARD | MICHAEL BUBLE | BRICKLIVE  
CATFISH AND THE BOTTLEMEN | JACK WHITEHALL  
GERRY CINNAMON | CHEESE FEST | WWE  
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# MAC

architects

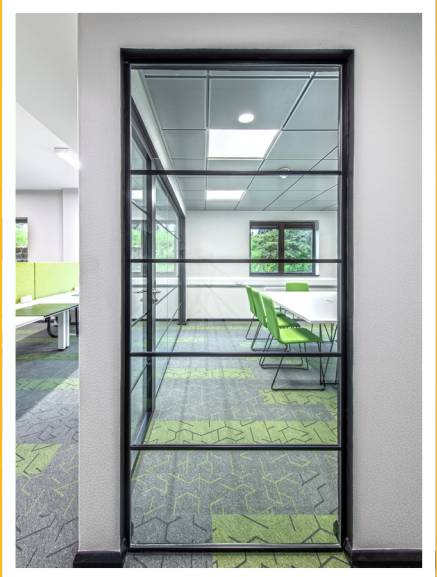
## Immerse yourself in MAC Architects

Optimising design through innovative  
technology

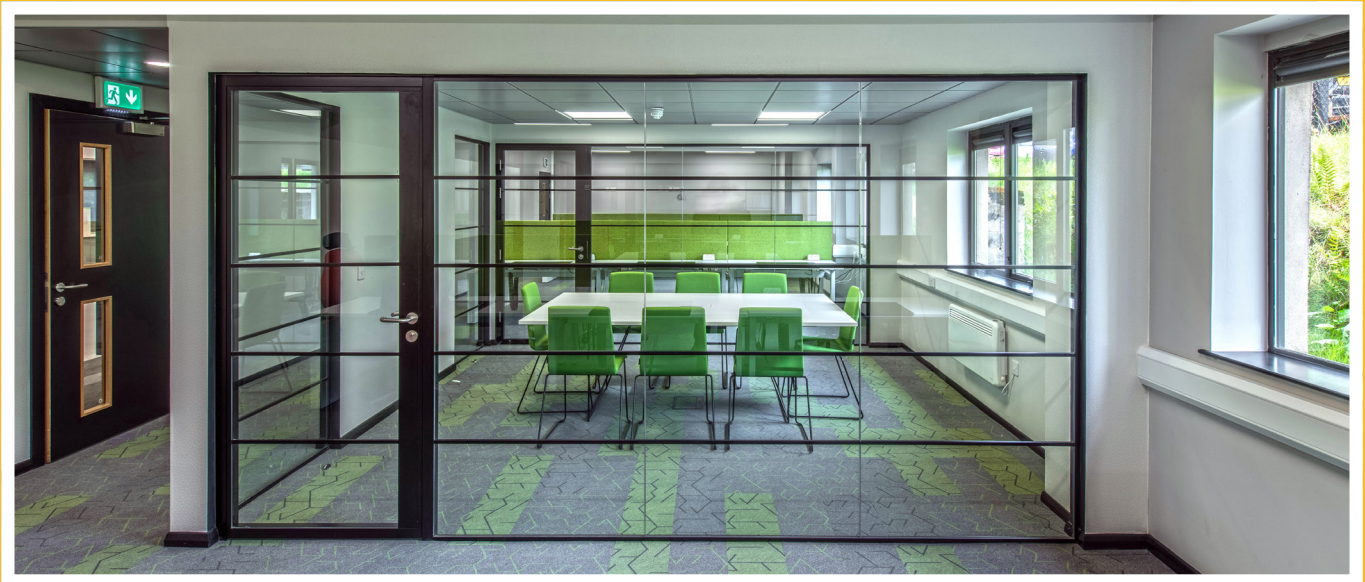
### **BIM is the buzzword.....what is BIM?**

The Building Information Modelling concept creates a virtual construction model prior to its actual physical construction, in order to increase accuracy, reduce uncertainty, maximise efficiency and simulate and analyse potential impacts. MAC Architects implement the BIM concept to every project no matter what scale.

MAC Architects are an RIAS Chartered Architects Practice based in Newmachar, Aberdeen. The dynamic practice provides a diverse range of services for both private and commercial clients.







**NEWMACHAR-BASED firm MAC Architects, established in 2011, is embracing the latest technology to ensure both its vision and clients' expectations are delivered as innovatively as possible.**

The award-winning company, owned by directors Blair Milne and Jonathan Cheyne, pulls on the pair's previous experience working for some of the country's most innovative and forward-thinking practices, to ensure it stays at the forefront of the industry.

Blair said: "There is a growing confidence in the local market and many companies are looking to the future and investing in their facilities and offices. There is a natural alignment with the MAC ethos and the North-east's predominant industries as these sectors are constantly evolving and innovating.

"While we continue to do a lot of work in the residential sector in terms of

new build dwellings, extensions and steading conversions, we are now, having recently delivered a number of commercial projects, using the technology to make inroads into more commercial work.

"Our pro-active approach and the bold decisions we took when we set up our business, ensure we are at the forefront of innovation in terms of our technology and hardware which continues to receive positive feedback from our clients."

The practice is one of just a handful in the country optimising BIM technology and offer a free downloadable BIMX app to give clients a fully immersive virtual-reality walk through of their project on any mobile device.

Jonathan added: "The MAC workflow is more efficient than widely adopted architectural practices. All creative processes utilise virtual 3D models, allowing us to make more informed

design decisions, whilst demonstrating any proposed changes to our clients in real time.

"Our virtual built models also ensure we optimise accuracy, construction efficiency and on site delivery - and all in a manner which is more cost effective to our clients."

Having recently expanded its team, MAC Architects has also been proactive in encouraging its peers and other professionals to use BIM software too. The likes of structure as well as mechanical and electrical installations can be imported directly into the virtual built models, allowing clash detection to alleviate any issues prior to construction on site.

With its expanding residential and commercial portfolio, MAC Architects' vision for 2019 and beyond is one of continued growth, inspiring design and an attention to detail that bridges from virtual to reality.

# IR35 – who's the boss?

By **Graham Bridgeford**,  
*managing partner, James Milne & Co*



## **CONTRACTORS across the North-east are facing significant changes to their tax status which could cost workers and businesses dearly.**

New rules for administering IR35 legislation come into place in April 2020 with private companies becoming responsible for determining if workers are truly contractors, or if, at least in the eyes of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), they are deemed to be employees.

The aim of IR35 is to ensure that an individual who works like an employee should pay the same employment tax and national insurance contributions as if they were an employee. IR35 or 'off payroll working rules' as they are known will force businesses and workers to examine how they work to ensure the right payments are made to the tax man.

For many workers, providing services as self-employed consultants generally leads to lower amounts of tax and national insurance contributions than if they were an employee. Where the worker provides services through an intermediary, which could be another individual, a partnership or a company – they will face smaller tax liabilities.

Contractors are commonplace in the oil and gas sector and that status is relevant where an individual moves

from one client to another regularly, works on a project basis or works for more than one client at a time. However, an individual who supplies his or her services via an intermediary but only works for one client, may be deemed by HMRC to be acting as an employee – or acting 'in payroll'.

In April 2017 the government changed rules for the public sector which made the authorities themselves responsible for deciding whether a worker should be treated as an employee and in 2020 those same changes are being rolled out to the private sector.

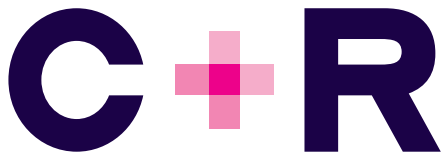
For income tax and National Insurance Contributions (NIC) the worker will be treated as if they were employed by their client and the client will therefore be liable to pay tax and NICs as they would for a normal employee if they are deemed to work for one client.

Businesses can learn from the mistakes made by the public sector when it faced these changes two years ago. Firstly, companies should ensure they look at each case individually, as contracts do differ. The liability – and accompanying fines for non-compliance – moves away from the worker and onto the business so care should be taken.

The decision on whether an employee should be 'off payroll' is based on a

number of factors and employers and contractors have complained that the process can be confusing. Determining issues include whether the contractor has any autonomy over how they deliver services – do they have a 'boss'? If the contractor cannot do a job are they able to supply a substitute? Contracts without an end date would raise alarm bells at HMRC as that implies more of an employer:employee agreement.

The changes to IR35 have already seen firms give their contractors an ultimatum – sign on the payroll or leave – but this is short-sighted and can be avoided with the right advice and scrutiny. There are exceptions to the rules, and those who genuinely provide their services as a freelance consultant have nothing to fear. Businesses are expected to exercise 'reasonable care' and there is still enough time to analyse individual cases to avoid stiff fines and keep taxation and national insurance payments fair.



# A high level of service and attention to detail are at the core of our business strategy.

**CAMERON + Ross was founded in 1993 and is now a well-established and highly respected civil and engineering consultancy based in Aberdeen.**

After a management buyout in 2014, the business is now managed under the control of the directors Alistair, Graham, Jon and Russell.

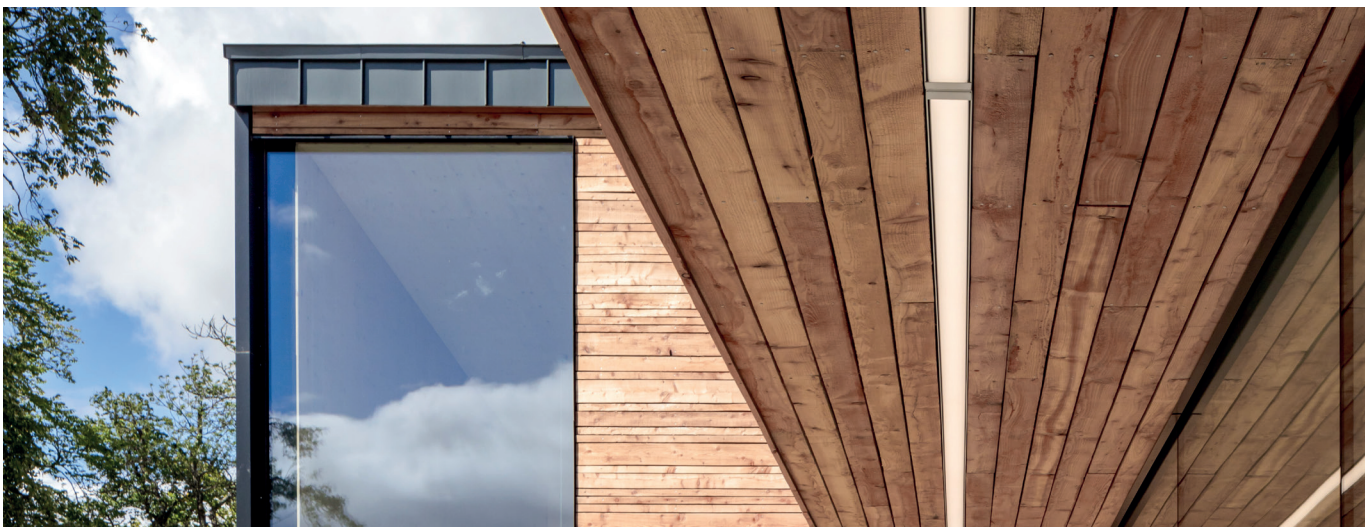
The management team is long established with the company and it is under their guidance and planning that the business continues to grow and expand, this despite the recent downturn and difficult market conditions.

Understanding their clients' needs and having the expertise and vision to handle the modern-day engineering challenges have been crucial factors in the company's continual growth plan.

Their expansion has now included a new office in Inverness where the company employs six engineers and technicians. The Aberdeen office is also about to be modernised with some major alterations. The company works very closely with its employees and recently introduced more flexible working patterns and enhanced packages.

Part of the future planning and development strategy for the company is to reinforce the business brand with a new corporate identity which will be rolled out in full very soon.

The directors are very excited about the future and look forward to working with all their clients and partners.



## **Cameron + Ross**

**Civil+Structural  
Engineering  
Expertise**

**Aberdeen  
01224 642400**

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Aberdeen  
AB10 1XB

**Inverness  
01463 570100**

Mulberry House  
39-41 Harbour Rd  
Inverness  
IV1 1UF

**[cameronross.co.uk](http://cameronross.co.uk)**

# What facilities would your dream office have?



“A Lego corner, definitely a Lego corner. It’s a great concept to use within a working environment for many reasons. If you are needing, for example, a session on team building, communication or to enhance your leadership skills then dedicated time to the corner with a suitable task will do the trick.

“The Lego corner could also be the de-stress corner. Lego has released a set for adults specifically to help them de-stress. A designated area when stressed is what everyone needs. Creativity is key in any workplace; thinking out the box and coming up with new ideas is always welcomed at Maersk Training and the Lego corner is ideal to get those creative juices flowing. Oh, and both Lego and Maersk Training are from Denmark. So, it only makes sense to have our Lego corner...”

**Adam Wright**, *head of business development*, Maersk Training



“For everyone in our office, top of the wish list would definitely be tea and coffee on tap, straight to your desk quickly followed by a pick and mix wall to ensure that we always have a readily available sugar-fix during long shifts.

“The need for connectivity is paramount in our sector so capable Wi-Fi, as we have currently, is really important for us not least because of the many things we connect to it. From laptops to phones and tablets we depend on technology in many ways so it’s crucial to be properly connected to colleagues and customers.

“An office opening out to a garden area would give daylight, a creative space and lots of fresh air. A table tennis table would be a great way of getting an active brain break and a pets’ corner would mean we could all take it in turns to bring our fur babies to work.”

**Julia Leitch**, *sales office manager*, The Aberdeen Altens Hotel



“My dream office would be one in which I spend less time because the part of my job which I enjoy most is being out and about and engaging with the schools, businesses and organisations we work with to help young people gain the skills for career success that they need to confidently take their place in the world of work. Working in partnership we enable the students to access a professional network which they may not have through their own background and contacts.

“However, needs must and I have to work from my office - which is my spare bedroom - to make the contacts, arrange meetings and plan for things like masterclasses and contact the mentors who support these young people. I have all I require in my office - a phone, a laptop and a printer - but I would love my office to be a cabin at the bottom of the garden with the sun streaming in through the window all day and a coffee machine in one corner; and an ICT support person in a cupboard.”

**Janice Duncan**, *regional manager*, Career Ready, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire

## CFINE to launch second pantry-style food poverty scheme

SCOTTISH Food Initiatives North East (CFINE), a social enterprise and charity based in Aberdeen, has been awarded a Scottish Government Oral Health Community Challenge Fund grant of £74,565.69 over three years for its Healthy Start and Smile Project, which includes a Healthy Start and Smile Community Pantry.

CFINE is taking the lead in developing Scotland's second pantry-style food poverty scheme, which is expected to launch in early autumn. The first Healthy Start and Smile Pantry aims to alleviate the pressure on food-insecure parents to provide healthy food for their children by offering a family-oriented shopping experience at a fixed weekly token price.

Based on the success of the Woodside Pantry, the first Scottish pantry opened in February 2019, the new venture is expected to sign up 100 members in the first year after opening

The pantry will be located at CFINE headquarters on the edge of Torry and will have a key role in improving oral health in early years.

## Nuart wins Aberdeen Inspired an award

BUSINESS organisation Aberdeen Inspired has received the Best Culture and Arts Scheme Award at the Association of Town Centre Management Awards in London in recognition of the street art festival, Nuart Aberdeen.

Adrian Watson, chief executive of Aberdeen Inspired, said: "Nuart Aberdeen is a festival unlike any other in the UK which this year, has truly brought Aberdeen to the attention of the world.

"We are delighted with the positivity it has brought to our city and winning an ATCM award for the best cultural event in the UK and Ireland reinforces the impact the event has had not just on Aberdeen but even further afield."

## New apprenticeship scheme for hospitality

LEADING names from the hospitality sector have united to introduce a new apprenticeship scheme giving 16 to 25-year-olds in the North-east of Scotland excellent opportunities for a career in hospitality.

Under Hospitality Apprenticeship North up to 12 prominent hotels including The Chester Hotel in Aberdeen, Meldrum House in Oldmeldrum and the Fife Arms in Braemar are offering young adults a bespoke 18-month apprenticeship programme, which will give them experience in four areas of hotel operation - housekeeping, reception, food and beverage and kitchen.

The scheme is financially supported by the participating hotels, Opportunity North East and Skills Development Scotland and delivered by Training Matters.



## Meldrum House Country Hotel launches new Pineapple restaurant

A NEW restaurant, with the focus on fish and beef, has opened at Meldrum House Country Hotel in Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire.

Pineapple launched in the 2 Red Rosette dining room with views out across the hotel's 240-acre estate. The name derives back to 1493 when Christopher Columbus discovered the fruit on one of his voyages. Historically the pineapple came to symbolise welcome, friendship and great hospitality and can be seen in many hotels, inns and restaurants as well as the turrets at Balmoral Castle.

## Award for TechX team

THE OIL & Gas Technology Centre's (OGTC)TechX team received the Best Practice in Innovation Award at an event dedicated to recognising people who have made an exceptional contribution to the UK's innovation, research and technology sector.

The Association for Innovation, Research and Technology Organisations is the foremost membership body for organisations operating in the UK's innovation, research and technology sector. Each year, it acknowledges the commitment and long-service of its community through four key awards, one of which was secured by the TechX team for its world-class technology accelerator programme.

TechX is a unique proposition, providing expertise and support as both a technology accelerator and incubator for start-ups and SMEs looking to enter the energy industry. In just two years, its flagship Pioneer Programme has attracted nearly 200 applications from over 35 countries, for just 10 coveted spaces per year.

## New pathway for social work degrees

ROBERT Gordon University and NESCol have announced a new articulation pathway to make it easier for college students to study social work at degree-level.

The new route allows those who complete an HNC in social services at NESCol to seamlessly transition into the social work undergraduate degree at RGU, helping to increase the amount of social work graduates entering the health and social care sector to meet current and future skills demands.

# First class, cost effective service

**KR Group has been serving the steel and cladding industries in the North-east of Scotland since Kenny Robertson and Nicola Fraser teamed up in business in 2003. Initially set up as a steel installation company, KR Steel has grown from strength to strength to develop a thriving steel fabrication facility in Newburgh with support from CAD detailers, welding engineers and highly skilled installers.**

The subsequent incorporation of KR Cladding and KR Solutions has led to increased capabilities and capacity in cladding consultation, design and installation, alongside a growing groundworks and plant hire company. KR Group is well placed to respond to all project needs from the initial design stage, right through to completion.

Working across all sectors, the length and breadth of Scotland and further afield, the team has gained a solid reputation for efficiency and solution focussed thinking. The high levels of expertise in the team ensures that working methods are of the greatest standard and challenges are met head on. KR Group undertakes works as the main contractor or as a sub-contractor for others. Irrespective of this, clients and customers can be guaranteed the same high levels of personalised support and service to make sure projects receive the care

and attention they require. Director Kenny Robertson has worked in the construction industry since leaving school at 16 years old and his passion for the industry remains strong.

The KR Group continues to invest in apprentices and has a steady flow of students and interns coming through the doors to learn about the industry. Nicola is a construction ambassador and passionate about raising the profile of construction in schools, linking in with young people where she can. With a professional background in psychology and mental health, the care of the team and the industry is at the heart of the company and is reflected through its values and practice. Examples of continued levels of CSR can be found on the company websites and social media pages.

Always looking to grow and diversify to stay current and relevant, KR Group is invested in the circular economy agenda and engaged with the Sustainability School. These developments build on a strong quality-focussed foundation which includes ISO9001, 14001 and EN1090 standards.

Specialists in its field, KR Group is the ideal local company to advise on steel and cladding requirements, whether it is a large organisation looking for a trustworthy sub-contractor or a local business looking for a new building.



**FIRST CLASS  
COST EFFECTIVE  
SERVICE**

KR Steel | KR Cladding | KR Solutions  
Loanhead Industrial Estate, Newburgh, AB41 6AN



Structural Steel  
Steel Fabrication  
General Steel  
Metal Decking  
Cladding/Roofing  
Groundworks  
Safety Nets/Edge Protection  
Plant Hire/Shifting

## Equinor contracts for Wood

WOOD has secured two new contracts from Equinor for onshore and offshore facilities in Norway. The contracts continue Wood's successful track record of delivering engineering and technical services to Equinor, both in-country and globally, for more than two decades.

In the first of the new contracts, Wood will deliver FEED (front-end engineering design) services for brownfield modifications to the Grane offshore facility. The scope of the FEED includes all topsides modifications required on the facility to prepare for the subsea tie-back from the GRAND (Grane Area Northern Development) project.

The second new contract is for the Kollsnes MEG Upgrade project where Equinor is Technical Service Provider on behalf of Gassco. Wood will perform the FEED for modifications to the Kollsnes gas processing plant in Øygarden, west of Bergen, and will be delivered by the company's local team in Norway, supported by systems engineers in the UK.

## Arrowdawn wins contracts worth £200,000

ARROWDAWN has secured a series of contracts, worth a combined value of £200,000.

The Cisco specialist, which supports 300 client offices across 25 countries, has landed additional projects from five companies seeking further support and maintenance for the upgrade of existing infrastructure.

Arrowdawn delivers a broad range of network services and communications products and services to customers including data network infrastructure, VPN, wifi connectivity, VoIP and security solutions. Clients include North Sea oil and gas operators and global oilfield service firms.

## Contract win for Crescent

HEALTH and safety specialist, Crescent, has been selected by MODEC do Brasil as its electronic control of work (e-CoW) provider, using Crescent's WorkSafe solution.

The contract involves all parts of Crescent's business, including consultancy, project management, e-CoW software, e-learning, and classroom-based learning. WorkSafe will be deployed initially on nine of MODEC's vessels.

## Business lift for lifting company

ABERDEENSHIRE firm Red Rooster Lifting is celebrating a 16% increase in the number of hires for 2018/19 compared to 2017/18, resulting in a 14% increase in hire value reaching almost £200,000.

The company has also bolstered its team as a direct result, adding a further five members of staff, bringing the total number of employees to 50.

Earlier this year the North-east lifting company marked its 30-year anniversary of delivering powered lifting and load measuring solutions to projects as diverse as St Paul's Cathedral and the new Queensferry Crossing across the Forth.



## Launch of youth golfing initiative

A NEW youth initiative has been launched in Aberdeen, providing youngsters with unrivalled access to golf coaching and golf courses in the area. The Kings Links Junior Fund has partnered up with the two largest providers of golf in the city, the Kings Links Golf Centre and Sport Aberdeen to provide youngsters with fully funded golf coaching and free access to Aberdeen's municipal courses.

The Kings Links Junior Fund has been offering schools in the Aberdeen area a six-week programme of instruction to encourage the next generation of golfers to take up the sport, which has seen 450 children from nine different schools benefit from the initiative so far this year.

## Build It construction and property conference return

FOLLOWING the success of the inaugural Build It – Aberdeen Construction and Property Conference in 2018, the event is to return for a second year at P&J Live on November 29.

The conference and exhibition is organised by Mearns & Gill, in partnership with the Aberdeen Association of Construction Professionals, Aberdeen Association of Civil Engineers, Aberdeen Society of Architects, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Women in Property. Scottish law firm, Ledingham Chalmers, is the main sponsor of the event for a second year.

Build It was launched to provide a platform for companies around the North-east and beyond, to share inspiring and educational case studies, lessons learned and innovations with over 200 industry professionals.



# It's business time

**IT IS NOW more than two years since the business rates revaluation which threatened to cripple many North-east businesses because of rises of 50%, 100% and even 200%+.**

While the revaluations had a pan-Scotland impact, nowhere was as seriously affected as the North-east. The revaluation process means that rates bills, despite coming into force in 2017, were based on estimated rental values as they stood in early 2015, failing to reflect the considerable impact of the oil and gas downturn.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce played a critical role in securing transitional relief, supporting our hospitality sector and offices across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, which capped bill increases in real terms at 12.5%. The Scottish Government recently committed to continue the scheme until the next revaluation, set for 2022.

The Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill, based on many of the recommendations of the Barclay Review, is now making its way through the Scottish Parliament and the Chamber is continuing to fight for changes to safeguard the interests of its members.

Shane Taylor, research and policy manager at the Chamber, said their evidence to the parliamentary committees scrutinising the bill focused on three main areas: "The first of these, and critical in our view, is that the next revaluation date for Scotland is brought forward from 2022 to 2021 to be in line with England and Wales," he said.

"While we welcome the change from five-yearly to three-yearly revaluations as outlined by Barclay, if Scotland is not aligned with England and Wales, Scotland and Scottish firms will be at a disadvantage because firms will have to continue to pay rates which do not reflect the current market conditions. Both the UK and Welsh Governments have brought their own revaluations forward to ensure firms are receiving rates bills that reflect reality and we're urging the Scottish Government to do the same."

Shane said that the financial memorandum attached to the NDR Bill shows that the Scottish Assessors Association highlights that, until now, considerable cross-border resource and expertise-sharing has been possible. This has been to the advantage of assessors as both revaluations and corresponding resolutions of appeals have been

carried out simultaneously across jurisdictions (i.e. Scotland, England, and Wales). The assessors suggest that Scotland moving out of sync with the other jurisdictions would impact on this, adding to the overall costs of the next revaluation.



**"While we welcome the change from five-yearly to three-yearly revaluations as outlined by Barclay, if Scotland is not aligned with England and Wales, Scotland and Scottish firms will be at a disadvantage because firms will have to continue to pay rates which do not reflect the current market conditions."**

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





The memorandum also illustrates the substantive cost of the bill, the majority borne by business either through increased penalties or heightened liabilities. The reforms will lead to around £40m of additional rates income and predicts that new penalty powers for businesses who are seen to be withholding information will bring in over £25m.

“With both the independent assessors and business expressing concerns about the impact and costs of moving out of sync, the question has to be – is it time for the Scottish Government to revisit this policy and bring forward the revaluation?” said Shane.

A second point of concern is the diminishing impact of transitional relief over time. Thresholds have continued to get tighter for accessing the relief, with an increasing number of firms no longer eligible to claim this support. In addition, the Chamber has heard from firms in the hospitality sector that are now approaching the maximum limit for relief, approximately £180,000, set by EU State Aid rules.

“We’re aware of some firms which are now at risk of becoming ineligible for the relief, which puts them in a particularly difficult position given some of the staggering increases they’ve observed,” added Shane.

“For hoteliers, one of the worst hit groups by the rates rises, increased tourism has helped to mitigate some of the impact on the sector from the decline in the oil price but both revenue and occupancy remains significantly below pre-downturn peaks.

“Increasingly it’s clear that we need to look at other ways to support firms in the sector. The Scottish Government recognised the problem two years ago through the introduction of transitional relief but for some that will soon be nullified. While the sector is continuing to adapt to the changes in the North-east economy, we would encourage the Scottish Government to look at reducing the burden in other ways. Bringing down the headline rate of poundage (now at a 20 year high) and reducing the large business supplement to the same rate as England, would both act to soften the overall rates burden.”

The Chamber has also expressed concern around the proposed abolition of rates relief for independent schools, which Barclay suggested would create a level playing field.

“We have two main objections to that,” said Shane. “The first is for the same reason that the Office of the

Scottish Charity Regulator is opposed to it – because it would create a more complex, two-tier charity system. However, our major concern is that it is a badly costed policy.

“Evidence shown to the committees scrutinising the bill emphasises that if only a small percentage of independent school pupils were to transfer to state provision, the policy would end up costing local authorities more than it raises in rates income.

“It is positive to see that following submissions from the Chamber and the independent schools sector, the Finance and Constitution Committee has suggested that the Scottish Government explore the financial impact further with COSLA. If parliament is to scrutinise these proposals, then it’s important they are properly costed, and we don’t believe the previous figures gave an accurate picture.

“The Bill will re-commence its progress through the Scottish Parliament after the summer recess and the Chamber will continue to closely monitor its progress and make representations to ensure that our members views are represented.”

# Directors: personal liability under contract with suppliers?



Robert McDiarmid, partner, Stronachs LLP

**THERE'S a Latin phrase - 'if you want peace, prepare for war'. I won't quote the original words, everyone's had quite enough of lawyers quoting Latin. It's an old phrase but the sentiment is more true than ever in today's business world, especially in those areas of particular contractual and legislative complexity like the construction industry.**

A recent case before the High Court, London (Donald Insall Associates Limited v Kew Holdings Limited [2019] EWHC 384 (TCC)) provided a timely reminder of the need to make sure you've got your contractual ducks firmly in a row, otherwise you could be in for some surprising and unpleasant results.

This was a construction dispute in which an architect's business (DIA) raised adjudication proceedings under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 seeking payment from the company who instructed them (Kew). The two companies battled through the adjudication process with DIA coming out successful; obtaining an order for

payment against Kew for in excess of £200,000.

Notwithstanding the result, Kew still failed to pay. DIA therefore sought enforcement of the adjudicator's award by the court. One of the two key grounds of challenge, both in the adjudication and at court, was the argument that DIA's claim was misconceived because the contract had in fact been entered into by the director of Kew personally and not with Kew itself. Therefore DIA had sued the wrong entity.

The parties burned through time and money arguing over this. Documentary evidence included contemporaneous letters and emails along with the contractual fee proposal. There were witness statements which referred to a verbal conversation in which it was alleged that it was agreed that the contract would be personal to the director. That of course was refuted.

In the event, and somewhat fortunately for the director, the court agreed with DIA and found that it was

not the director who had entered into the contract.

However, this is a good example of the kind of 'out of nowhere' argument that might turn that simple debt claim into an expensive, time-wasting and even sleep-ruining experience. DIA managed to at least mitigate this by making sure that its paper records were sufficiently clear to win the day and overcome the allegations of verbal agreements and save themselves (and also Kew's director) from even more wasted cost.

The construction industry is absolutely fertile ground for disputes like this given the complexity of the strict systems of notices and counter-notices and the interplay between the parties' contracts (ad hoc or standard form) and the construction legislation. If you're facing a customer or supplier with some creative and knowledgeable advisors on their side, you better have those ducks in a row.

If you want peace, prepare for war. Perhaps dramatic. But true.

# Stronachs



## Royal acknowledgement for volunteer and pupils

A TOTAL of 36 young people supported by Aberdeenshire Council attended a Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) presentation in the gardens of Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh.

They received their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award from guest presenter, Alison Walker, Sports Broadcaster and Journalist, after sharing their experiences with HRH The Earl of Forfar.

During the presentation, HRH congratulated the group from Aberdeenshire on their successes and heard about their DofE journeys, which took each young person 12-18 months of hard work and dedication. Those achieving a gold award have volunteered, learned a skill, taken part in a physical activity, have taken part in a week-long residential and have planned and undertaken an expedition in wild country. Widely acknowledged as the world's leading achievement award for young people, DofE programmes enable any young person, aged 14-24, to develop key skills for life and work, such as confidence, commitment and team working.

## Crane wins LinkedIn award

CRANE Worldwide Logistics, a leading supply chain solutions company, announced that Ewan Alexander, vice president of sales EMEA, has won the Insightful Seller award at the Real Faces of Sales Awards UK hosted by social media platform LinkedIn.

Crane Worldwide Logistics uses online social media to enhance its brand awareness internationally and also has a key focus on consultative selling to an online audience. The supply chain industry is in the midst of change due to digitalisation of operations, but at the same time, Crane Worldwide has recognized the evolution that is occurring in the digital world due to focused online selling methods.

## Game changing tourism course success

THE first Tourism Business Game Changer programme, developed in partnership by private sector economic development body Opportunity North East (ONE) and Scottish Enterprise, has been hailed a success with all 12 participating companies developing ambitious plans for growth.

The successful development of the North-east of Scotland's tourism sector is essential to achieving the shared ambition of growing visitor spend in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to £1bn per year by 2023.

The programme, which attracted more than 20 applications following its launch late last year, was developed to support executives, managers and owners of tourism businesses in North-east Scotland to capitalise on ongoing investment in major infrastructure and evolving consumer trends by identifying new markets and refining their business proposition.



## Secondary pupils encouraged to consider construction career

GRAMPIAN Construction Training (GCT) and Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) are working in partnership with several key partners to launch a series of construction, engineering and building services challenges, to highlight the varied and exciting careers within the sector to S2 pupils in the North-east.

The Build Your Future challenge offers a unique opportunity to bring the sector together, with the main aims of addressing the skills shortage, and showcasing the full range of career opportunities within the industry to students, parents and teachers.

Every secondary school in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire will be invited to submit a team of 10 pupils to take part, so with over 300 pupils and 10 teachers expected to register for the first year.

Michelle Forth, chair of Aberdeen Association of Construction Professionals, and driving force behind bringing the challenge to the North-east said: "We are delighted to be able to bring this new incentive to the North-east of Scotland. After 20 years of running this challenge in Edinburgh and Lothian, we are extremely grateful to Anne Galbraith from SECTT for allowing us to use her concept, and for sharing her knowledge and expertise as we put the plans in place."

# The foundations for success

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



**HAVING the right mix of property across the region is absolutely key to economic success. Getting the right planning framework is vitally important but this isn't worth much if our construction sector lacks the right support to deliver these ambitions.**

The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee at the Scottish Parliament recently embarked on an inquiry to examine the industry's performance. Access to finance was a core concern with smaller construction firms reporting that they have to consider non-traditional finance routes if they want to expand their business or take on new staff.

There's a role for government to support here and the committee suggested that Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, takes forward this issue with the new Banking and Economy Forum, a venue created to ensure that the finance provided by the banking sector is supporting the wider economy.

The report also noted a wider role for the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB), particularly to support access to finance for smaller firms. The First Minister's strategic adviser, Benny Higgins, who leads on the development of the SNIB, will be hosting a breakfast in mid-August on the purpose of the bank in Aberdeen.

I'd urge any members within the construction / property sector to attend to put your views across, or to get in touch with the Chamber team and share your concerns.

Skills was another key issue highlighted through the committee's work. This is relatively unsurprising given some of our trend data across Scottish Chambers of Commerce, with record levels of recruitment difficulties recorded within construction, particularly across 2018. The industry has some significant challenges in this regard, with Homes for Scotland estimating that the sector lost half of its workforce during the 2008 downturn, and the Federation for Master Builders predicting that about 20% of the current workforce will retire over the course of the coming decade.

That's why it's critically important to get the policy environment right and ensure that we're funding the training of the next generation in the best possible way. The construction industry is unique in having two 'levies' applied to wage bills in some instances, with large employers obliged to pay both the apprenticeship levy and the CITB levy.

A common complaint we hear from members across sectors is on the transparency and accessibility of funds related to the apprenticeship levy and this was reflected by the

construction sector in their collective evidence to the committee. With this in mind, we would hope that the Scottish Government applies particular focus to the committee's recommendation to provide a more detailed breakdown of apprenticeship levy funding – both where it is spent and what that spending achieves.

Addressing these concerns is crucial to ensure that firms have greater confidence that the levy is being utilised in a way which supports their skills needs.

As a region we have grand aspirations with a range of impressive capital projects in the pipeline. It's important that our construction industry is supported to deliver them and the team at the Chamber will continue to work to ensure that policies such as the apprenticeship levy are reformed to support both the sector and the region's ambitions.

# Why it's time to shake up training

By Mike Adams,  
co-founder, Norwell EDGE



**WITH final investment decisions on new oil and gas projects worldwide predicted to almost triple this year compared to 2018, companies are facing a double challenge: how to recruit people with the right skill set and how to quickly and effectively develop the competencies of their existing workforce.**

A self-imposed moratorium on all but mandatory training over the last three years coupled with a significant reduction in the overall workforce has left the industry asking how we can deliver the levels of training needed now, and in the future, while minimising operational disruption and cost.

## Reverting to form

The questions companies are grappling with in 2019 are how can they re-build teams and kick start projects while also revitalising out-of-date training programmes, quickly identifying competency gaps and ensuring teams are up to the task?

This is something Norwell has seen around the world, where both operators and service companies are wrestling with these challenges.

In the past companies would have just reverted to booking in classroom training sessions as and when operations allowed, accepting that

employees would likely just get one or two weeks per year out of the office.

But we all know how difficult this is, and how in reality this can lead to a lack of training, individuals falling between the cracks and growing competency gaps within teams.

## Digital solutions

One of the cornerstones of digitalisation is how digital technology can help us work better. Working smarter, driving productivity and making our teams more effective is something all companies are striving to do in oil and gas, and rightly so. Digital training can play a significant role in this.

The biggest challenges of classroom training have always been cost, scheduling and infrequency. We need to train a little bit, often and in order to do so it has to be convenient and cost effective. Many companies and individuals are now looking for digital training solutions to help them overcome these challenges.

## Continuous, flexible and auditable

Digital training platforms allow companies to provide continuous eLearning, access to comprehensive resources, virtual game-play scenarios and rapid assessment all in one place. These training resources are flexible,

can be easily tailored to a company's needs and allow learners access to material 24/7, in any location.

The modern workforce demands flexibility and leaving the office for classroom sessions can be seen as equally inconvenient by the learners themselves.

While not the single solution, providing access to regular bite-sized training and rapid assessments is a comprehensive and effective way to train across large groups of employees.

It allows companies to obtain an easily auditable picture of employee training, assuring minimum standards are met and focusing attention where needed.

And for employees it does exactly what digitisation is meant to do; it makes their lives easier. Allowing them to work smarter and in a way that suits them.



# More than a landlord

**SPEAK to any commercial property business across the country and you'll likely hear a common refrain: 'we're more than just a landlord'.**

From the outside looking in it's not hard to see why commercial property providers are eager to put forward such a message. After all, the term 'landlord' can bring with it certain – and arguably unwarranted – negative connotations, conjuring up images of ruthless money hungry organisations with little empathy for the circumstances their tenants may find themselves in.

Of course, as with everything in life, there is talk and there is action and in the commercial property world, one local business is doing everything it can to live up to the 'more than a landlord' mantra.

For just short of 20 years, Waterloo Quay Properties has focused on developing Aberdeen's harbour front into a thriving business community. Originally tenants, the founders, who were running previous business,

Seletar Shipping from Ocean Spirit House, saw potential for development in the area and decided to embark on their vision, purchasing what is now known as Merchants House in 2000.

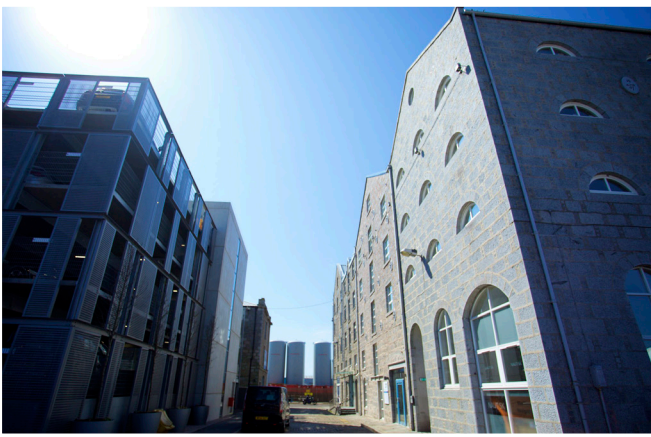
Over the intervening years the site has grown significantly and now encompasses a total of 10 bespoke office buildings (including Ocean Spirit House) and a multi-storey car park. The development has redefined the area, providing high-spec and modern office buildings in a key industrial hub of the city but crucially retains the granite and aesthetic for which Aberdeen is world renowned for.

From the very beginning, the team at Waterloo Quay Properties had its sights set on being 'the landlords with a service mentality' and more than just providers of rooms with desks and chairs, as Waterloo Quay Properties managing director Anna-Marie Eardley explains: "We knew when we started out on this journey that we wanted Waterloo Quay Properties to be something far greater than a group of office blocks where people came to

work eight hours a day. We wanted to try wherever possible to create a community feel to the site, where people made new connections and enjoyed being every day rather than out of necessity."

Early on this took the form of the purchase of the adjoining Seaforth Centre which saw the introduction of a fitness centre and squash courts and the space to establish the onsite café, 210 Caboose, which now forms the beating social heart of the complex, as well as extensive meeting and conference facilities.

Over the years the team has added many more of these extras, many of which have been tenant driven but which all add to the overall experience on site. Most recently the team has introduced services such as an onsite barber and even a resident artist. Anna added: "It might seem like a small, or even an odd thing to people on the outside looking in having an artist advise on how best to decorate the communal spaces but the amount of people who visit the site and make



comment, or the conversations it sparks between tenants makes it an invaluable part of the experience we are trying to create here.”

But it's not just small touches and added extras that make the Waterloo Quay Properties experience what it is. At the core is how they view the landlord/tenant relationship.

Anna explains: “The one major thing we try and impress upon current and prospective tenants is that we truly do view this as a partnership and that when your business is growing it's a positive thing for everyone involved. Over the years we've seen tenants grow from single desk offices through to whole floor tenancies. This has sometimes meant significant investment and redevelopment to ensure the tenants needs are met - but then that's what we view the role of the landlord as being.”

Most recently this approach has resulted in the arrival on site of businesses such as ABS Europe who recently took a 2255sq ft suite

in Voyager House, this following a £100k plus investment in the property by the landlord, on a 5+5-year term occupational lease.

Other new arrivals in late 2018 and early 2019 include Alpha Health Services, Edda Supply Ships, Palfinger Marine, Studio NEC, Anderson Quantity Surveying, Frisco Projects and the retention on new deals of GNS, Click IQ and Nimbus Blue.

And in 2018 this investment-led approach resulted in a considerable feat of engineering when the external walls of buildings built more than 100 years apart were removed, and the 1st floor of one being linked with the 2nd floor of another, in order to provide one of the sites anchor tenants Apollo Offshore, with an extra 2,500sq ft of space. A piece of work that required not only specialist equipment and expertise to remove a century old 1.6m thick granite built wall, with works spread over several weekends involving the closure of the main Waterloo Quay roadway.

Anna added: “That was a fun project to do and one that definitely improved the working conditions of the tenant as it expanded their floor space but ensured the offices were still connected and teams could meet and speak to each other with little disruption. I'm not sure I'd want to make a habit of removing granite walls too often though.”

For more information on Waterloo Quay Properties and its current availability please visit the website today: [www.waterloquay.com](http://www.waterloquay.com)



# New luxury Patek Philippe showroom unveiled

**WITH a heritage stretching back more than 285 years, Jamieson & Carry has been part of Aberdeen's retail scene for generations. The luxury jewellery store, located in the heart of Aberdeen's Union Street, has recently undergone a six-figure investment to create a new Patek Philippe showroom and experience.**

Jamieson & Carry is Aberdeen's only authorised Patek Philippe retailer, part of an exclusive club of only three retailers in Scotland and 400 across the globe. Their watches remain some of the most coveted timepieces in the world with every watch hand-assembled using the finest of materials, ensuring each finished time piece matches the standards for which Patek Philippe has become famous for.

Partner, Philip Carry said: "We are very proud of our ongoing partnership with Patek Philippe which stretches

back almost 30 years. Patek Philippe is the last independent, family-owned Genevan watch manufacturer and their family ethos is something we relate to with our own model as a family jeweller.

"We recognise the importance of providing the right experience that matches the quality of their products and our most recent investment helps us to ensure we offer the luxury retail experience when searching for a Swiss watch in Aberdeen."

As part of the redevelopment, Jamieson & Carry has doubled the size of the Patek Philippe area, creating a far more spacious and comfortable setting to enjoy a glass of champagne whilst browsing their exquisite collection. The new area allows for more watches to be on display than ever before, adding to the overall Patek experience.

The major project was completed over a six month period and the Patek Philippe team in Geneva were integral to the process, carrying out a detailed survey to design the new showroom. From there Patek Philippe UK co-ordinated the installation which brought together teams from Aberdeen and Patek's own approved contractor.

The new showroom was formally opened in June with an exhibition of the Patek Philippe collection. The exhibition included all of the 2019 models that were launched at the Baselworld watch show which took place in Switzerland earlier this year.



# IMO 2020 and its impact on the logistics industry

By **Chris Fowlie**,  
*national oil and gas development manager,*  
Kuehne + Nagel Ltd



**WE ALL know that the logistics industry has a lot of work to do when it comes to reducing emissions and protecting the environment.**

IMO 2020 is a new regulation set by the International Maritime Organisation, meaning that by January 1, 2020 all seagoing vessels will have to reduce sulphur oxides by 85%. This is great news, as it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect public health and protect the environment.

Kuehne + Nagel welcomes industry-wide approaches to help minimise our impact, so we were pleased to hear about IMO 2020.

Of course, as a logistics provider we know that IMO 2020 comes with its own issues for the industry – in particular, uncertainty around the availability and pricing of petroleum products.

Vessel operators have a few options to comply with IMO 2020: use scrubbers, which remove pollutants from the exhaust; switch to a Very Low Sulphur Fuel (VLSF); or switch to non-petroleum-based fuels.

Each option has its own positive and negative sides but the most likely choice will be swapping to the VLSF.

The big question here will be price – we currently can't tell exactly how much VLSF will cost but we do know it will cost more than the usual fuels.

Having done some calculations to see how much it may cost, here are some high level estimations: fuel which currently costs around \$896k for 14 days at sea, could rise to somewhere around \$1344k. That's a potential difference of half a million USD on a Trans Pacific sailing and around \$1.2m USD on an Asia Europe sailing, so you can really see the impact it could have. Time will tell whether our estimations are correct and we're keeping close to the decision makers so we're up to date with any changes or new information.

Supply could also be a problem, with an increase in demand meaning quality fuel may be hard to come by and expensive.

And this price increase will have a knock-on effect on freight rates. We're expecting them to increase as early as the end of Q3 2019, as the industry starts to prepare.

Our ultimate goal is to deliver excellence for our customers, and we're doing everything we can to prepare for IMO 2020. As the world's largest seafreight service provider,

we're ideally positioned to embrace the change and work through the challenges.

The shipping industry must prepare for a future with lower transport emissions and IMO 2020 will ensure that ocean transportation remains the most environmentally friendly and carbon efficient mode of transportation.



# At the forefront

OUR chief executive officer Yvonne Gilbert says that although the residential property letting market in the North-East has seen a significant drop over the last few years mainly as a result of the downturn in the oil industry, the more recent stabilisation of the oil price has certainly meant that the local market has shown a positive sign of recovery as we head through the year with a great deal of confidence noted from the oil and gas sector.

Apart from the oil industry, Aberdeen is beginning to buzz again thanks to the long-awaited Western Peripheral Route finally being completed, additional harbour capacity is under construction which will bring large cruise ships into town and help to boost tourism. A new, much larger conference and exhibition centre will shortly open and, of course, Aberdeen Football Club is continuing its rise to the top of Scottish football again and this will be aided by the construction of a multi-million pound new stadium and training facility. There is a lot of confidence coming back into the

city with all these developments and Aberdeen Property Leasing (APL) is going to be ready to continue being at the forefront of the residential property letting market.

“

**“Apart from the oil industry, Aberdeen is beginning to buzz again thanks to the long-awaited Western Peripheral Route finally being completed, additional harbour capacity is under construction which will bring large cruise ships into town and help to boost our tourism.”**

**Yvonne Gilbert**, *chief executive*,  
Aberdeen Property Leasing

We at APL are embracing the uplift in the market and energising all APL departments. Our lettings department is our core business however under the APL umbrella we have naturally developed branches in:

- Executive serviced apartments: home from home fully serviced accommodation, suitable for long or short-term stays.
- Block factoring: a professional block management division dedicated to developments throughout the city and surrounding area.
- Property cleaning: a professional cleaning service for landlords and tenants for new tenancy or end of tenancy cleaning.
- Property maintenance: we have a team that can take care of all property related maintenance matters.
- APL insurance services: tailored to the lettings market our insurance team work with bespoke property lettings policies.



**Yvonne Gilbert**, *chief executive*,  
Aberdeen Property Leasing



**Stuart Carnie**, *lettings director*,  
Aberdeen Property Leasing

Since David Lamb's appointment as managing director, last year, his focus has been to embrace the new market trends and move forward with the times. As a result, a number of new and exciting things are happening here at APL. We have invested heavily in a complete rebranding of APL which sees the demise of our previous logo 'Archie' to our new 'Key Hole Pin' along with a brand new, modern and very user friendly website [www.primelet.com](http://www.primelet.com)

Our thanks go to the team at the brand consultancy The Art Department for an excellent job in developing our new identity and website. We are also pleased to announce the appointment of our new lettings director, Stuart Carnie, to the APL team. Stuart has a wealth of knowledge in the Aberdeen property market. In his own words:

"I am delighted to have been appointed lettings director at APL and join a well established independent and local letting agency who can offer a personal and friendly client

“

**“With the local market showing positive signs of recovery I have recently seen a number of properties that have been placed under offer within early days of marketing at encouraging let prices. All very encouraging and I feel an exciting time to be taking up my role at APL.”**

**Stuart Carnie**, *lettings director*,  
Aberdeen Property Leasing

and tenant service in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. I join the company with 18 years of lettings and property management experience, having previously held the position as lettings director at another of Aberdeen's

larger lettings agency where I had 10 years service.

"I have a keen focus on client customer care along with a wealth of experience on property investment and portfolio landlords. With the local market showing positive signs of recovery I have recently seen a number of properties that have been placed under offer within early days of marketing at encouraging let prices. All very encouraging and I feel an exciting time to be taking up my role at APL."

We are all looking forward to the start of another era at APL and one which we hope will be in keeping with our new strapline of making all our clients

**HomeHappy™**



## MHA Henderson Loggie switches to Barclays to support growth

THE Dundee-headquartered professional services firm, MHA Henderson Loggie, is eyeing further growth after securing funding support and facilities of over £2m from Barclays. The established firm recently underwent a rebrand to better reflect its membership of the invitation only national accountancy association for independent firms, MHA, which they co-founded in 2011. With offices in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, MHA Henderson Loggie is growing its team and client offering across its business.

By moving to Barclays, the new funding will support the growth and strategic direction of MHA Henderson Loggie, with a particular focus on recruitment and retention of existing talent.

It will also be used to help grow the firm's audit services, for both commercial and not for profit organisations, across the central belt, and increase its accounting and tax advisory services in Aberdeen and Glasgow.

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## Expro awarded subsea contract

INTERNATIONAL oilfield services company Expro has been awarded a contract by Pacific Drilling LLC's subsidiary, Pacific Santa Ana, Ltd, for the provision of an Intervention Riser System (IRS) for PETRONAS's Chinguetti Field Phase II plug and abandonment (P&A) contract, offshore Mauritania.

The contract, valued at \$20m, will see Expro provide its IRS system with associated surface support equipment to be deployed from Pacific Drilling's drillship, Pacific Santa Ana. The contracted work will take place for an estimated 360 days.

Worldwide Oilfield Machine (WOM) will support Expro with the provision of the subsea well access system and technical support team.

The IRS safely establishes and maintains well access throughout riser to surface operations, replicating the functionality of the blow-out preventer and providing a safe and reliable means of well control, connected directly to the production tree. With increased coiled tubing cutting and disconnect capability, the IRS system provides an alternative dual barrier, through-tubing system.

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## North-east robotics company agrees international deals

SPECTIS Robotics, a leading provider of remotely operated robotic crawlers and camera systems, has announced two international distribution agreements.

Formerly Inuktun Europe, Spectis Robotics re-branded in June with managing director Brian Storie retaining full ownership of the Aberdeen-based firm.

The new company has moved swiftly to agree a deal with Dekra Visatec GmbH, a designer and manufacturer of high-quality visual inspection camera systems for specialist industrial markets.

The German company has 20 years' experience at the forefront of innovation in the non-destructive visual testing market, including underwater and radiation tolerant camera, crawler systems and lighting modules for the nuclear, offshore oil and gas and renewables markets.

Brian Storie, managing director at Spectis Robotics, said: "We are pleased to work closely with another business in Dekra Visatec that shares the same values of our company and we look forward to growing together and further developing this relationship to the advantage of our clients."

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## Hiretech leaves the EU

INDEPENDENT equipment rental, sales, service and maintenance company Hiretech Limited has officially left the EU.

Whilst the UK continues in its preparations to leave the EU, Hiretech has moved quickly to adopt the movement by ceasing to use its .eu registered domain.

The company, based at Fintray near Aberdeen, has been using the domain hiretech.eu to promote its online presence since the company was founded in 2010. However, since the movement was passed for the UK to leave the EU, advice from the European Commission has stated that as of the withdrawal date, organisations that are established in the UK but not in the EU will no longer be eligible to register or renew .eu domain names.

This advice has remained changeable as Brexit discussions continue, with no certain outcome yet clear. Hiretech has therefore taken a proactive approach to avoid future issues in the continuity of its operations as it continues to promote its services online to the world.

Andy Buchan, chief executive officer at Hiretech, said: "With the current uncertainty over the UK's continued membership of the EU, we received notifications that we would not be permitted to use the .eu domain indefinitely in the event of Brexit. Uncertainty is not good for business, therefore we took the decision to change over to the hiretech.rentals domain in a time frame that suits us. It was important to get the deal done."

Hiretech, which offers pumping spreads, powered umbilical reels, hydraulic power packs and supporting equipment, has invested over £1.5m in new equipment during 2018, with a similar level of investment ongoing throughout 2019.

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# Wave of activity leads to increased growth for Neptune Energy

**WITH strong growth ambitions and solid financial results, private-equity backed operator Neptune Energy continues to demonstrate why investment in the North Sea is increasing once again.**

The operator's flagship UK asset – Cygnus – is the largest gas basin discovery in the southern North Sea for more than 30 years and contributes 6% of UK gas production, enough gas to heat 1.5 million UK homes.

The operator is progressing development plans for two UK fields after adding 35% of the Seagull field and 50% of the Isabella prospect to its portfolio.

According to Pete Jones, Neptune's UK managing director, Seagull will be developed as a tieback to BP's Etap central processing facility with first oil expected by the end of 2021.

"The North Sea remains vital to our long-term strategy and we have strengthened our portfolio with Seagull and Isabella and will continue to invest in the right opportunities. With Cygnus set to continue operating into the 2040s, we are here for the long term," he said.

The UK business contributes around 11% to the global business' production total, with assets in Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Asia Pacific and North Africa.

The high-pressure high temperature (HPHT) Seagull prospect gives Neptune an additional 50,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day across its 10-year design life. Neptune has delivered a quarter of all HPHT projects in the UKCS since 2000.

"We have worked hard to secure a high-quality, long-life and low-cost portfolio and now have a promising mix of gas and low OPEX fields. We carefully scrutinised our existing projects and discovered more oil and gas than was originally anticipated. That allows us to be selective with our M&A opportunities; they have to be the right fit and add tangible value. We're also continuing to grow organically."

Pete believes the growing exploration and production activity in the North Sea should encourage companies to set longer-term plans.

"The evolution of the asset ownership landscape has provided a space for more nimble operators to focus on

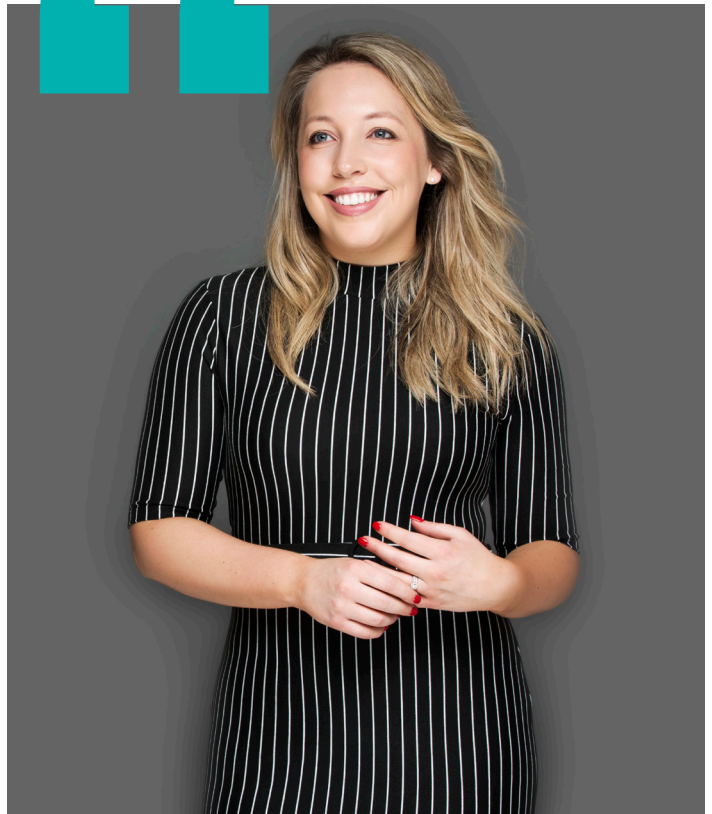
maximising returns from technically-challenging wells and the North Sea's many small pool reserves. This also supports the supply chain with a longer-term commitment."

Neptune, which has more than 1,900 employees globally and around 150 in Aberdeen, has demonstrated efficiency gains. The group's operating costs have reduced significantly over the past year to \$10.2 per barrel, with its UK operations hitting the \$6.9 per barrel mark. The company revealed pre-tax profits of £906m in its 2018 Annual Report and has considerable spending power.

Pete added: "The most effective way for an operator to demonstrate its intent to grow is to explore and push forward with development plans. We're looking forward to spudding an exploration well at the Isabella development later this year. It's a really exciting prospect for the central North Sea and there's a lot of industry interest in the outcome. It's definitely one to watch."

# Flying the nest?

By Natalie Allan,  
*solicitor, The Law Practice*



**ONE of the most satisfying parts of my job is being able to help first time buyers secure their first home. Being a first time buyer is an exciting yet daunting time, which I never under estimate. Of course, the Aberdeen market has not been as buoyant as we would like in recent years but this has allowed for a very 'buyer friendly' market and an ideal time for first time buyers to secure their first home.**

As well as first time buyers having the pick of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire market at the moment there are also some helpful options available to the first time buyer to help make the jump onto the property ladder that little bit easier. There are often many hurdles to overcome in order to be in a position to purchase a first home, money being the biggest in most circumstances, so I always advise clients to make the most of the options available to them.

Some of the options to explore are:

## Open Market Shared Equity Scheme

This is open to first time buyers who struggle to fund the total cost of the purchase (even with a traditional mortgage). This scheme allows the buyer to receive assistance from the Scottish Government in order to purchase their home. Normally the

buyer will pay between 60% and 90% of the cost, with the assistance of a traditional mortgage lender, and the Scottish Government will fund the remainder.

## Help to Buy ISA

These have become extremely popular amongst first time buyers in recent years and are certainly a 'no brainer' for those thinking about purchasing their first home. Most banks now provide the Help to Buy ISA and they are very easy to open. Saving money into a Help to Buy ISA means that when the buyer is ready to purchase, the Scottish Government will boost their savings by 25%. So, for every £200 saved, the buyer will receive a government bonus of £50. A maximum bonus of £3,000 can be received towards the purchase.

## First Time Buyers Relief

Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) can be crippling for first time buyers, as it is an extra lump sum of money required at the time of purchase (often not an insignificant amount). It is brilliant that Revenue Scotland is now providing a relief specifically for first time buyers which raises the zero tax threshold for first-time buyers from £145,000 to £175,000. Those buying a property above £175,000 will also benefit

from the relief on the portion of the price below the threshold, meaning everyone will benefit from the relief by up to £600.

I would encourage my clients to consider these options well in advance of purchasing. When the time comes to push the button, it is my job to make sure the legal jargon and the process as a whole is fully understood by my clients so that all worries are alleviated, making the process as enjoyable as possible.

# Industry is changing - is your workforce ready?

## **IT IS CLAIMED the Fourth Industrial Revolution is already disrupting industries and transforming economies across the globe.**

Due to rapid technological advancements, the World Economic Forum reports that there will be an average global shift of 42% in required workforce skills over the 2018–2022 period. It suggests that to fully leverage new opportunities, businesses should embrace continuous retraining and upskilling. *The Future of Jobs Report, 2018*

However, in a world where agile learning is so important, the UK government has found that existing provision isn't meeting business requirements. An independent panel report to its Post-18 Education and Funding Review claims that current access to education is ill-suited to career development and highlights the need for greater flexibility and access to shorter periods of learning.

**In-demand Skills, On-demand Learning.** Responding to growing concern over versatility of workplace learning, the University of Aberdeen is shaking up rigid, on-campus delivery

and traditional degree structures. This year the university launched **On-demand Learning**, a new site for Masters level online short courses.

Open to all, many of our short courses have no formal entry requirements. You decide if the course is right for your business and staff development needs. Employees can study part time and on any device. Some courses are 'always on', so they can enrol and study when it suits, 24/7.

### **Accessible, skills-focused courses.**

The changing landscape of industry means that focus is shifting towards 'microcredentials', away from degrees. The World Economic Forum reports that governments and industries are already looking for ways to encourage 'periodic skills upgrading'.

Our focused short courses carry academic credits. They can be studied standalone, allowing your employees to gain the specific skills they need, when they're needed. Or they can be built up to create recognised postgraduate qualifications, up to a full Masters degree.

Without having to commit to the

cost of a full Masters, there are financial benefits too. The flexibility is there for you to repurpose your workforce capabilities, paying as you go, one short course at a time with the Scottish University of the Year. *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019*

**Looking to the future.** One of the Scottish Funding Council's objectives in its Strategic Plan is to have a 'stronger, more productive and resilient economy with economic growth supported by innovation from our colleges and universities.'

From decommissioning to emotional intelligence, from nutrition to human factors, **On-demand Learning** offers a range of cutting-edge courses aligned to the needs of today's industry. We're delivering learning that's fit for 21st century life and professional development. Without taking time off work, your staff can develop in-demand, sector-relevant skills that will enable your business to thrive in this era of technological revolution.


Learn more:  
[on.abdn.ac.uk](https://on.abdn.ac.uk)

# September

**151**  
**courses**  
run by the Chamber



Covering

**55**   
**different**  
**subjects**

Attended by

**951**  
people in North-east  
businesses



**4 Wed**

1 day

#### **Talent Management**

Get on top of your talent agenda and maximise potential

**4 Wed**

1 day

#### **Investigation in an HR Context**

Plan and manage investigations effectively

**5 Thu**

1 day

#### **Time Management**

Identify time wasting activities and manage time more effectively

**10 Tue**

1 day

#### **Presentation Skills**

Deliver a dynamic and motivational presentation confidently

**10 Thu**

1 day

#### **Understanding Exporting**

Demystify international trade concepts and procedures

**11 Wed**

1 day

#### **Import Rules Fundamentals**

Avoid the obvious pitfalls in importing to reduce complexities and errors

**11 Wed**

1 day

#### **Customs Procedures and Documentation**

Explore the various customs systems, procedures and documentation

**11 - 12**

**Wed-Thu**

2 day

#### **Finance for Non-Finance Managers**

Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business

**12 Thu**

1 day

#### **Improve your Professional Confidence**

Promote a positive and confident self-image in a professional manner

**17 Tue**

1 day

#### **The Effective Director**

Learn how to become an effective director and address responsibilities

**17 Tue**

1 day

#### **Customs declaration training**

Learn the new process to follow and new forms to complete

**19 Thu**

1 day

#### **Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction**

Learn how to establish and maintain budgets

**19 Thu**

1 day

#### **Essential Supervisory Skills**

Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks

**25 Wed**

1 day

#### **Coaching Conversations**

How to coach others to improve and be their best

**25 Wed**

1 day

#### **Negotiating and Influencing Skills**

Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success

**26 Thu**

1 day

#### **Customer Service Excellence**

Discover the techniques to excel at customer service

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#### **For more information**

Susan Staniforth, training team leader

T 01224 343917 E [training@agcc.co.uk](mailto:training@agcc.co.uk)



# October

<b>1 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Performance Management</b> Establish processes to improve employee performance in line with organisation objectives
<b>1 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>Inward and Outward Processing</b> Understand the methods of claiming relief from customs duties
<b>2 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Emotional Intelligence for Business</b> Develop situational awareness and influence outcomes
<b>2 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>HR for Non-HR Managers</b> Understand responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements
<b>3 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Personal Effectiveness</b> Improve your self-management by changing the way you work
<b>8 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Making Meetings Work</b> Establish how to plan and deliver effective meetings
<b>8 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Winning More Bids</b> Produce professional proposals/tenders that stand out from your competition
<b>9 Wed</b> 1/2 day	<b>Understanding the Oil and Gas Industry</b> Gain an understanding the basics of oil and gas production and processing
<b>9 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Essential Supervisory Skills</b> Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks
<b>10 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Reviews and Appraisals</b> Assess performance constructively and increase reviewee's motivation
<b>11 Fri</b> 1 day	<b>GDPR Essentials</b> Demystify the new regulation and principles in a digital landscape
<b>11 Fri</b> 1/2 day	<b>INCO Terms 2020</b> Understand the benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers
<b>23 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Change Management</b> Learn the tools to drive change
<b>24 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Bias: is it having an impact?</b> Understanding why bias creates risks to your business
<b>25 Fri</b> 1/2 day	<b>Cash Flow Management</b> Maximise cash flow with effective cash collection techniques
<b>30 - 31 Wed - Thu</b> 2 day	<b>Essential Management Skills</b> Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager
<b>30 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>HR Business Partner - Masterclass</b> Explore key HR topics and feel confident in taking HR to the next level



**2**

**Understand your responsibilities, the potential penalties for getting it wrong and the techniques to succeed**



**11**

**Understand what has changed with the introduction of GDPR and how it affects you**



The Vanguard volunteers enjoyed beer and burgers at Brewdog as they laid the plans for their exhibit at the P&J Live open event on August 10.

The business of CSR came under the microscope at a breakfast briefing on June 27 where delegates found out how working as partners can be a positive force for good.



The Chamber met with Mark McDonald MSP to discuss the North-east's need for rapid rail connectivity and the key findings from the latest Oil and Gas Survey.

DYW North East hosted an employer event at the Village Hotel Club in June to help businesses discover how they can tap into young talent and build a pipeline of employees for the future.





**Allan McEwan,**  
*city manager - Aberdeen, CityFibre*

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

CityFibre is transforming the nation's digital capabilities with a UK-wide roll out of future-proof full fibre, bringing gigabit-capable broadband within reach of millions of homes and businesses for the first time. We are leading the way with swift city-wide delivery. Unlike traditional fibre-to-the-cabinet (FTTC), which relies on ageing copper cables for part of the connection, our fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) network utilises end to end fibre optics, delivering much faster, much more reliable internet. Working alongside our B2B partners and our first residential ISP partner, Vodafone, we are offering greater choice in the market, improving standards and driving competition.

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

Although our rollout on a street by street basis is considered minor works, a city-wide project of this nature, in a relatively short period of time, is not without its challenges. We need the full support of the relevant local authority - something we are fortunate to have here in Aberdeen. Nationally, there will be a significant increase in demand for skills and resources to build, maintain and manage full fibre networks, something which CityFibre and others in the industry must continue to address in the short term before it becomes a challenge.

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

That not succeeding at something is part of the journey. It can be difficult when things don't go the way you planned but over time, you learn to accept failure as a stepping-stone to success.

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

Be an excellent listener and treat everyone with the same level of respect.

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

I'm very proud to be in my current role, leading transformational change in our city which will bring huge benefits to the region and the people of Aberdeen for generations.

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

Knowing the social and economic benefits of gigabit-capable broadband, it would be fantastic to have every home and business in the North-east connected to full fibre. A reliable network, accessible to all and with the resilience and capability to meet our future needs, will revolutionise how we work, live and play.



# Quick fire round

**What was your first job?**

My first real job was fundraising and marketing administrator with Inspire (formerly Partnership Housing), on a 12-month work placement as part of my uni degree - a superb experience with a fantastic local charity.

**When would you like to retire?**

I'd like to be in a position to be able to retire, if I want to, by 50.

**What did you have for breakfast?**

Home-made frozen berry smoothie - I can't say it's as healthy an option every day.

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

My family.

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

Book - Darkest Hour / Film - Secret Life of Pets 2 with the kids.

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**MOVING home is one of life's biggest decisions and Stewart Milne Homes has ensured that no detail has been overlooked at their exclusive neighbourhood, The Gardens at Crathes, where the housebuilder has created a truly stunning collection of four and five bedroom luxury homes.**

#### **Highly sought after location**

Situated within Crathes in Royal Deeside, the new community is surrounded by rolling countryside and inspiring views of the River Dee. The picturesque surroundings provide the perfect retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life and are complemented by the highly sought-after homes.

The Gardens is ideal for growing families with Crathes Primary School close by as well as the award-winning Banchory Academy.

The new community offers the best of both worlds, with excellent connectivity to Aberdeen city centre, just 16 miles away. Access to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and A90, provide excellent links to the airport, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and beyond.

The nearby town of Banchory provides a host of excellent amenities including a bustling high street with boutiques, cafes, restaurants and bars as well as a choice of supermarkets.

#### **Stunning homes**

This aspirational community features a range of luxury four and five bedroom homes. Each has its own distinctive style and features but all share the quality of workmanship and build on which Stewart Milne Homes has built its reputation.

Careful consideration has been given to the interiors of each home, many of which include bespoke kitchens from Kitchens International and Villeroy and Boch bathrooms. This same level of detail has been applied to the finishing's and includes premium integrated appliances, feature downlights throughout, solid oak doors and mirrors and chrome finishes in the bathrooms. Buyers have the chance to personalise their new home with a choice of kitchen finishes, vanity units in the bathrooms as well as Porcelanosa tiling. Each driveway features a unique pavier design and both front and back gardens have been individually designed and landscaped, ensuring buyers can enjoy their new home from the minute they move in.

Homes include the impressive Gordon, a stunning four bedroom detached property perfectly combining style with space for all the family to enjoy. In addition to the breakfast area, the kitchen also features an expansive open plan family room - complete with a beautiful curved bay window, offering natural light as well as access to the rear garden.

#### **Support throughout the buying process**

With over 40 years of experience Stewart Milne Homes understands the buying process and with a range of initiatives can help to make it as easy and stress free as possible. You can even sell your current home in as little as five days with our part exchange service, leaving you free to prepare for moving into your stunning new luxury home.

Prices at The Gardens start from £599,995 for the five bedroom Thornewood.

For further information on The Gardens at Crathes, call **0845 672 9358** or visit **[www.stewartmilnehomes.com](http://www.stewartmilnehomes.com)**

# Supporting food businesses to reformulate for health

By Joanne Burns,  
*reformulation project manager,*  
FDF Scotland



**THE impacts of a poor diet and obesity are profound in Scotland and a holistic approach is required to tackle this challenge. The Scottish Government's 'A Healthier Future' strategy highlights the visions and ambitions of improving diet and health across our nation.**

To make a real difference to the health of the Scottish people, the whole food supply chain needs to get involved, from producers and retailers to consumers. Product reformulation is rated as the most effective way the food industry can help tackle obesity. It provides an excellent opportunity to meet public health targets as well as consumer demand.

Reformulation is where a product is made healthier by changing the recipe, altering the way it is prepared or providing clearer information on portion size. Initially, reformulation was about reducing specific food ingredients in a product – cutting the salt in products such as pasta sauces, stock cubes and savoury snacks; or lowering the sugar content in foods such as yoghurts, desserts and chocolate bars.

Nowadays, however, food companies are also reformulating recipes to make them healthier by adding ingredients, such as fibre or vitamins, to everyday products such as bread and cereal.

It sounds so very simple, doesn't it? But it isn't - reformulation is actually a very challenging process. Food producers need to make sure their products still taste great, are cost effective and comply with food regulations. Supporting businesses to reformulate successfully requires involvement from a variety of industry experts, including research and development, food technology, nutrition and consumer insights.

When looking for ways to reformulate, each function of an ingredient must be considered. Sugar for example plays many different roles in a recipe - it gives the rise, colour and texture in a cake as well as adding flavour. Food and drink companies carrying out recipe reformulation take great care to ensure that these changes are made without compromising a food's safety, quality or taste.

In Scotland, 95% of food and drink companies are small to medium businesses. These companies may not have the time or resource to focus on reformulation but it is vital that they get involved – to help the nation's health, to enhance Scotland's reputation for food and drink and to keep up with changing consumer tastes.

That is where I come in. The Scottish Government has funded my post,

hosted in FDF Scotland, to help small to medium food companies make their products healthier. This service is free of charge, for FDF members and non-members, and includes advice on retail products as well as products made for food service.

Each food company will have different reformulation challenges. I will work closely with each business individually to find a tailored solution to help your company. This may include helping you to reduce fat, salt and sugars from products; or it may involve increasing levels of fibre and nutrients within foods; or even looking at portion size and clearer labelling information. Where businesses have similar challenges, there could be opportunities for cross-collaboration such as peer to peer support or working with ingredient manufacturers.



## European first for Serco NorthLink

SERCO NorthLink Ferries has become the first European ferry operator to introduce a pioneering digital platform that helps maritime operators to manage their crews.

Ankaa Marine is a unique cloud-based portal and app for collecting, storing and processing seafarer information. It replaces outdated software applications or even paper-based systems and is the only product of its type available on the market. The simple and easy to use interface connects directly with employees in real time and offers the company a simple overview and analytics of the crew pool.

NorthLink, which runs ferry services to the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, has around 370 marine staff who, alongside the crewing department, will benefit directly from the innovation.

Stuart Garrett, Serco's managing director for NorthLink Ferries, added: "We never stand still and are always looking for ways to improve our operations. Usually this is for the benefit of our customers. But on this occasion, we're pleased to be doing something directly for our staff, ensuring that we keep up with technology and bring the benefits of digital services to our unique workplace. This is a proven solution to something that affects every maritime operator and we're proud to be in at the start of a transformation in crew management."

## Matthew runs miles and miles for North-east children's charity

WHILE his friends are looking forward to August beach and pool holidays, Matthew Milne will be running miles – all 496 of them – as he undertakes a challenge to raise funds for a North-east charity.

The keen athlete had pledged to run corresponding miles every day in August to match the date – starting with one mile on August 1, and working up through the calendar to running 31 miles on the final day of the month.

The graduate remote electronics engineer with Kintore-based pipeline technology specialist, STATS Group, is no stranger to mathematical challenges and if successful he will run 496 miles in August - or the equivalent of almost 19 marathons.

His employer has donated £250 to start his fund raising push and all monies raised will go to Oldmeldrum-based charity Kayleigh's Wee Stars.

## Marine Technical Limits continues to support young talent

FPSO and marine integrity management specialists, Marine Technical Limits (MTL), has hired three summer placement students from Strathclyde University to gain invaluable work experience.

The organisation, which is based in Kintore, Aberdeenshire, has hired Jamie Fuery, Fergus McConnell and Patrick Reid to carry out hands on engineering and naval architecture scopes.

The paid placement will see the first and second year naval architecture and mechanical engineering students creating general arrangement and detailed ship drawings in Rhino (3D modeler), creating 3D models of hull structures, details and equipment. They will also be set tasks and objectives for the duration of the placement and they will be required to provide a presentation of their achievements to the MTL management team.

Matt Lewin, technical director of MTL, said: "We have consistently supported the development of young talent since MTL's inception. It's important that these young minds have the chance to gain real hands on experience and be rewarded for their efforts."



## Strong six months for CALA Homes (North)

CALA Homes (North) has reported a strong first half of the year, with encouraging sales, a series of new appointments and more developments underway in Aberdeen than any other housebuilder.

Indicating growing confidence from house hunters in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, the leading developer has sold over 25% more homes in the first half of 2019 than it did in the same period last year and is on track to build 35% more homes in the region this year.

And with 13 new recruits so far in 2019, and eight sites currently going through the planning system, compared to four 12 months ago, the homebuilder is forging ahead with significant investment in the region.

Signalling continued growth for the second half of the year, the North-east team is currently recruiting four new members of staff including an engineering manager, architectural manager, a buyer and sales advisor who will join the expanding team.

# A lifetime partnership

by **Nicholas Cochrane-Dyet**,  
*chairman, British Business Group*



**A FEW weeks ago, my first book was published. It recounts my memories of growing up and living in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Apart from stints away for education and in the British army, I have spent my life in Abu Dhabi. For the past 30 years I have been an 'adviser' to BP UAE but prior to that I worked in banking in Dubai after leaving the army.**

My association with the British Business Group in Abu Dhabi goes back over 20 years. I became chairman of it in 2017.

The Group aims to promote and develop business relations in and between Abu Dhabi, the UAE and the UK by providing a forum for the British business community. It helps UK companies identify new business opportunities, specifically in Abu Dhabi but also (with our sister organisation in Dubai) in the UAE more generally, mostly through making introductions and connections with the wider business community. We are currently in discussion with the British Chambers of Commerce about becoming a member of their Global Business Network, to reinforce our outreach to UK chambers.

The UAE's economy is quickly adapting to much needed changes, with a spate of bank mergers being a current example. Reforms are also

being introduced across a wide range of other sectors, such as energy, property ownership, taxation and healthcare.

Brexit is not as much a distraction here as many in the media and politics would have us believe. I suspect that is the case in most other non-EU countries which are UK trading partners. The UAE government is mystified by it, as is much of the rest of the world, and at grass roots level our business (over £17 bn of it annually) goes on.

I enjoy our regular newcomer's breakfasts. I meet representatives of new British companies to the market, often replacing ones in more traditional sectors that have left or gone out of business. Healthcare and education are now priority areas here, in which there's both a local need and the UK has world class expertise. Of course, energy is another, as is infrastructure.

The UAE has declared 2019 the Year of Tolerance, marked by the visit of Pope Francis in February and the Special Olympics World Games in March. In my long experience here, this is a trademark of the UAE.

In a region which is frankly not well known for peace and reconciliation, the UAE has striven relentlessly to

remain open to business, culture and new ideas. It has ministers of Happiness and Tolerance and has just announced a ministry of Possibilities. Some may see this as a gimmick but the UAE government is deadly serious about how it wants to create a well-adjusted, innovative and successful society and economy.

The UAE remains a close and loyal trading partner for the UK. EXPO in Dubai next year reinforces that. The BBG is ready to help any UK companies that want to explore the myriad of possibilities here.





# The Planning Bill matters

**AT AURORA Planning we're conscious that every planning decision - whether for 300 houses, a business park or a neighbour's kitchen extension - impacts on where people live and work, how they move around, value of property, quality of the environment and, ultimately, the quality of people's lives; it affects us all, professionally and personally, every day.**

So, the passing of the Planning (Scotland) Bill in June, described as 'a radical shake-up of planning laws', should be of interest to us all.

The Bill is the output of a review of planning announced in 2015, focussed on 'delivering a quicker, more accessible and efficient planning process, in particular increasing delivery of high quality housing developments', whilst also ensuring planning plays a positive and effective role in creating high quality places.

In doing that, the Minister then responsible for planning recognised the need to take a holistic approach, looking beyond the nuts and bolts of the system to also consider how infrastructure is funded and planning resourced to ensure the system really delivers.

But has the Bill created the radical new framework anticipated to

achieve these aspirations?

The starting point is the purpose of planning, now defined in statute as being: '...to manage the development and use of land in the best long-term public interest'.

However, planning has always been carried out in the public interest so it is questionable whether this purpose is sufficiently ambitious to go beyond that bare minimum and deliver the high-quality places envisaged.

This sets the tone for the Bill as a whole. There are individually welcome changes within it but, overall, it sells planning short.

The provisions are too numerous to recount here but some notable introductions to the system and our observations on them include:

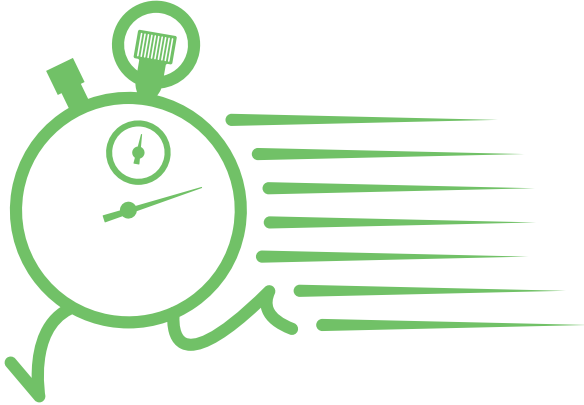
- planning authorities to set targets for meeting housing need - although it is not clear how this overcomes current obstacles to consenting and delivery of much needed high-quality housing
- the ability for councils to adopt masterplan consent areas to facilitate delivery of development - this though requires councils to buy in to the concept and be resourced to do so

- compulsory training for councillors involved in determining planning applications - a change welcomed by anyone who has ever wondered how some planning decisions have been reached
- provision for the introduction of a levy to fund infrastructure essential for delivery of development - but with no commitment to implement that provision
- Local Place Plans, allowing communities to set out proposals for the use of land in their area - which may be seen as justifying continued opposition to calls for an equal right of appeal, whilst adding another layer into an already complex process

In trying to balance efficiency and inclusiveness, and many competing interests in the Bill's passage through Parliament, compromises inevitably had to be made with the ultimate output not nearly as radical as it might have been. Planning is often seen as a black art by those not directly involved in it (and indeed even sometimes by those who are) and the new legislation does not change that. It is though only part of the story, what we now do with this will determine the impact it will have in creating great places.

# August

29



Grow your network and increase brand awareness

**29 Thu Speed networking**

11:45am-2pm  
The Spiritualist

Our Speed Networking events are a fantastic way to grow your network and bring you new business opportunities within a short period of time. The highly popular lunchtime event enables people with busy schedules to spend time effectively by building business connections and increasing brand awareness over lunch. The format of the event is similar to 'speed dating', you meet a new contact every four minutes and leave with up to 20 new business contacts, having also increased your company's profile in the area.

**30 Fri Maximise your membership**

8:30am-10am  
AGCC

Think you know the Chamber? Think again. Whatever your business challenges, membership uncovers access to a network with a wealth of experience and support that will help you achieve your company's ambitions. Our aim is to create the buoyant, diversified regional economy that will enable our members and their employees to be more successful and prosperous. This event is ideal if you're thinking of joining the Chamber, have just joined or are new to a member organisation and want to find out more.

# September



**Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce**

## Offshore Europe Business breakfast

Tuesday, September 3  
07:30-09:30am | P&J Live

Get ready to connect with a global network of industry professionals

**3 Tue Business Breakfast - Offshore Europe**

7:30am-9:30am  
P&J Live

This popular biennial business breakfast will once again launch the SPE Offshore Europe. Hear speakers Paul Bogenrieder, economist and energy futurist, EY; Liv Hovem, CEO oil and gas business area, DNV GL; and Neil Saunders, president and CEO, BHGE Oilfield Equipment, discuss energy transition and what this means for the UK North Sea and supply chain.

**11 Wed We Mean Business: Cultural competency**

11:45am-2:00pm  
The Aberdeen Altens Hotel

During this event Kate Dodd, diversity and inclusion consultant at Brook Graham, will discuss challenges and biases we have around human behaviours, languages, communications, actions, values, religious beliefs, social groups and ethic perceptions. Looking at both practical and legal terms, you will be encouraged to work collaboratively to bring about organisational change in your establishment.

Thanks to our sponsors



# September

**18 Wed**  
8.00am-11am  
AGCC

## Organisational development and change: manufacturing focus

The breakfast briefing will centre around a series of table discussions on key factors accelerating human performance such as reducing human error, decision making, collaboration, communication, fatigue, stress and situational awareness. The session will also look at optimising your ability to make decisions under pressure and the importance of creating a safety critical culture in your organisation.

**26 Thu**  
6:30pm-12:30am  
P&J Live

## Northern Star Business Awards

From pioneering innovation and outstanding customer service to excellence in people development, environmental outlook and marketing prowess, the Northern Star Business Awards provide the a high-profile platform for showcasing success. The winners will be unveiled during a glittering black-tie ceremony.



# Northern Star 2019 Business Awards

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## THE ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE 19

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Burness Paull

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**Date:** Thursday November 14, 2019  
**Time:** 8am - 4.30pm  
**Venue:** The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa, Aberdeen

# Views and reviews

"It allowed us the chance to hear from people that we would not normally get access to. Plus, the networking and new connections made are always great" - Mark Morgan, Stellas Voice"  
**Business Breakfast**

"Great event, well worth attending - would look forward to more of these in the future!"  
**Business Breakfast**

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**Seona Shand**

The Chamber has promoted Seona Shand to the new post of director of membership and events. This is a reflection of the terrific contribution she has made during her nine years with the organisation. As part of the move, Seona will also join the board as the third executive director.



**Carolynne Yule and Murray Duguid**

Continued growth at Converged Communication Solutions has led the firm to expand its workforce with the appointment of two new staff members. Recent additions to its service portfolio and a growing customer base have seen the IT company welcome customer service specialist Carolynne Yule along with project and process developer Murray Duguid to its team. Carolynne will work with clients to understand their entire IT and telephony requirements and support the delivery of these services. Murray takes up the position of project manager, bringing over 20 years of experience in project and process management, service delivery and business development roles in the IT, multimedia and e-learning sectors.



**Ian Orme**

ICR Integrity has appointed a new head of sales to support the continued expansion in the Middle East. Ian Orme was previously business development manager for the company's chemical injection solutions division. He will be responsible for leading and managing all regional sales activities in the Middle East and Caspian.



**Emma Waterman**

Johnston Carmichael, Scotland's largest independent accountancy and business advisory firm, is forecasting ongoing growth at its office in Inverurie. That news comes as a new leadership team steps up to lead the practice on the retirement of managing partner Jim Porter. Emma Waterman, business advisory director, will take on Jim's role as office head.



**Colin Allanach**

Nestrans has appointed Colin Allanach a new non-councillor board member following approval from the Cabinet Secretary. Mr Allanach is a chartered mechanical engineer and has been involved in helping to develop cycling schemes in the North-east. He was instrumental in the recent establishment of the Grampian Cycling Partnership.



**Ben Walker**

Neptune Energy has appointed Ben Walker as general counsel, based in London. He will take up his new role in September. Mr Walker is currently general counsel and company secretary of Vivo Energy plc, a pan-African fuel retailer and distributor. Prior to joining Vivo Energy, he held the roles of senior legal counsel with Centrica plc, and Associate with Slaughter and May.



**Carol Benzie**

The former boss of Aberdeen Airport has been appointed director of finance and corporate services with Aberdeen Sports Village. Carol Benzie, who is a qualified accountant with 20 years in senior leadership, has taken on the role on a part-time basis and will also continue as chief executive of local charity, Citymoves Dance Agency.

thorpemolloy  
Recruitment

Recruitment Challenges Solved

RECRUITMENT EXECUTIVE SELECTION



### Andrew Walker and Sandy Manson

As part of the Johnston Carmichael's ongoing succession planning Andrew Walker has been appointed chief executive officer replacing Sandy Manson who has held the role for the past 12 years and has become chair. Under Mr Manson's guidance the firm's revenue has grown from £18m to £49m and it now employs 800 people across 12 locations. Mr Manson, who has also become Johnston Carmichael's head of client service has replaced Andrew Shepherd as chair. Mr Shepherd is continuing with the firm in a client facing role as well as supporting the development of the next generation of talent.



### Nicole Strachan

Munro's Travel has appointed Nicole Strachan as business development executive to help explore new opportunities for the organisation.

In her new role Nicole will be responsible promoting the brand and the development of new clients.

## Other recent appointments

Nucore Group has expanded its range of products and services with the appointment **Brian Wallace** as offshore door services manager. Brian has 15 years of technical experience, working offshore in Angola, Caspian region, Europe and UKCS in senior service technician roles. He has both technical and project management experience.

Flowline Specialists has made a series of changes to its senior management team. **Ross Whittingham**, who was previously the firm's engineering manager, has taken on the role of chief executive officer. In addition, group operations manager **Graeme Chalmers** – who is based in Dubai and leads the firm's Middle East division Flowline Specialists DMCC – becomes chief operating officer.

DM Hall has boosted its expertise in the country's most northerly mainland region with the appointment of Thurso-based **Lesley Coghill** who will share her residential property expertise with clients in Caithness, north Sutherland and the island of Orkney.

eGroup, has strengthened its senior management team with the promotion of several key figures following the amalgamation of four separate divisions – eBlast, eClad, eFab and eTest.

**Christopher Noble** has been promoted to the newly created role of chief operating officer. Reporting directly to chief executive officer and chairman **Neil McDonald, Scott Duguid**, operations director for eBlast and eTest, will also form part of the board. **Alan Little** has been promoted to operations director for both eClad and eFab. Co-owner **Linzie McDonald** has formally joined the board of management as an executive director.

Bank of Scotland has appointed **Alasdair Gardner** as head of commercial banking, responsible for all the bank's business clients in Scotland.

Mattioli Woods, has strengthened its employee benefits division with the appointment of **Sean McSweeney** into the newly-created employee benefits team director role.

MHA Henderson Loggie has appointed **Kimberley Thomson** as tax partner in its Dundee office. **Diane Wright** meanwhile has taken up the role of senior tax manager in the accountancy firm's Edinburgh office.

Westhill-based Vulcan Completion Products has appointed technical account manager **Nur Syazana Ishak** to head up its new Kuala Lumpur office, where a recently formed alliance has secured a five-year contract.



### Andrew Third

The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has appointed Andrew Third as industry advisor. In his new role, Andrew will advise on practical issues affecting the fishing industry in relation to the operation of oil, gas, renewables and other offshore operations in the marine environment. Andrew is an experienced fisherman with 30 years at sea.



### Kevin Friar

Hoover Ferguson has appointed Kevin Friar as CEO in a planned transition of senior leadership. Friar joined Hoover Ferguson as president in January 2019 to succeed outgoing chairman and CEO, Donald Young. Young will remain involved with Hoover Ferguson and return to the board of directors where he originally started with the organisation.



### Richard Foster

FG Burnett has appointed Richard Foster as head of rating where he will take charge of client rating revaluation appeals as well as ongoing rating work. Richard joined as a director from the regional assessor's office where he gathered almost 12 years of rating experience most recently in the role of senior valuer.



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**T** 01224 740338  
**E** aberdeen@ffolkesoffshore.com  
**W** www.aksisuk.net  
**C** Babek Afrashteh, company director

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**C** Jane Grove-White, business manager

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**W** www.albynhospital.co.uk  
**C** Karen Benton, sales and marketing manager

## **Cordant People**

**T** 01224 034227  
**E** claire.buchan@cordantpeople.com  
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**C** Claire Buchan, branch manager

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**E** info@doqaru.com  
**W** doqaru.com  
**C** Sarah Downs, director

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**E** roula.samaha@interstatehotels.com  
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**W** www.hf-group.co.uk  
**C** John Elsey

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**C** Emily Reid, sales executive

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**E** ronagrimmer@spillconsult.com  
**W** www.spillconsult.com  
**C** Rona Grimmer, director

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**T** 01467 647092  
**E** christopher.noble@theegroup.co.uk  
**W** www.theegroup.co.uk  
**C** Christopher Noble, chief operating officer

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**T** 07868 397844  
**E** info@ukmarineservice.com  
**W** www.ukmarineservice.com  
**C** Vrinda Kamble, company director

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**T** 07818 437560  
**E** kelsey@vitatech.co  
**W** www.vitatech.uk  
**C** Kelsey Abernathy, managing director, UK office

## **Young Smile Dental Care**

Dental practice.

**T** 019755 64456  
**E** jill@youngsmiledentalcare.co.uk  
**W** www.youngsmiledentalcare.co.uk  
**C** Jill Young, practice manager

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