

# Business Bulletin

MAY 2019



Aberdeen &  
Grampian  
Chamber of  
Commerce



## Life on Marris

Spotlight on the Shire

## Band together

Advancing the  
connectivity revolution

## Wheels up

Transforming our  
transport links



# Fasten your seatbelts

TRANSPORT &  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
THIS MONTH





Aberdeen to Inverness  
Improvement Project

# Investing in your Railway

As part of the Scottish Government's ongoing investment in Scotland's Railway we will be closing the Aberdeen to Inverness line this summer to carry out major track engineering works in Aberdeenshire and Moray:

**Saturday 4th May –  
Friday 14th June (6 weeks)**

**Bus replacement  
Dyce to Inverurie.**

**Saturday 15th June –  
Friday 9th August (8 weeks)**

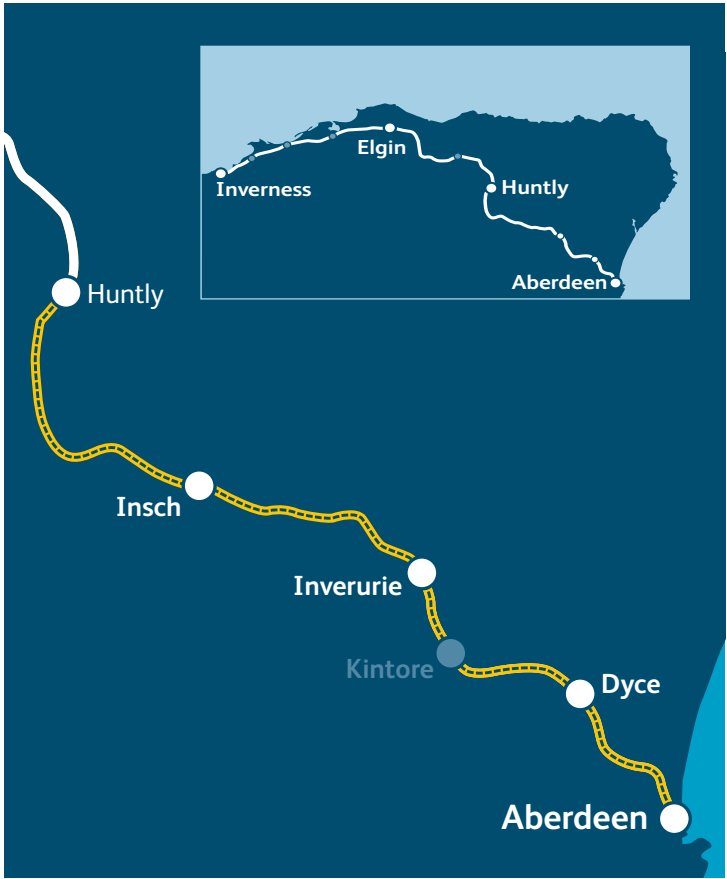
**Bus replacement  
Dyce to Huntly.**

**Saturday 10th August –  
Monday 12th August (3 days)**

**Bus replacement  
Aberdeen to Inverness.**

**Tuesday 13th August –  
Monday 19th August (6 days)**

**Bus replacement  
Aberdeen to Huntly.**



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 @NetworkRailA2I

 [www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/scotland/aberdeen-inverness-improvements/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/scotland/aberdeen-inverness-improvements/)



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**Cover image**  
Transport &  
Infrastructure

**May's theme**  
Leadership

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MAY 2019

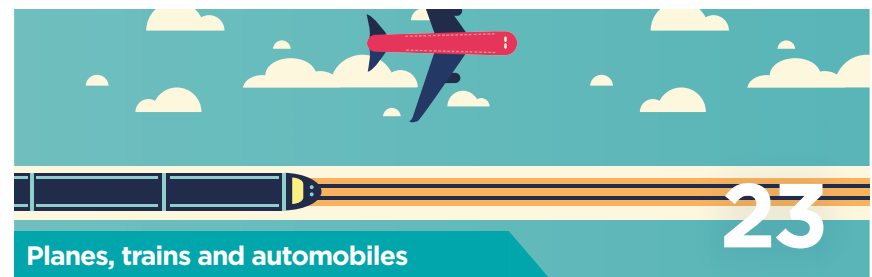
Focus on **TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE**



Simply Marnvelous



Race against the machine



Planes, trains and automobiles

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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





# Transporting the region to a new level

**WE are in the midst of an unprecedented period of transport infrastructure improvement in the North-east with our tracker telling us that around £4bn of projects are currently planned or underway and that does not include the close to £1bn invested in that new road of ours.**

Dualling of the railway line will bring improved services to the north plus a new station at Kintore and new rolling stock will make journeys south more comfortable (if not faster). There are plans to improve roads at key city pinch points Haudagain and Berryden and in a year's time, the new Aberdeen South Harbour will be open - the largest port in Scotland in terms of berthage.

Last but not least of course is the AWPR which is already transforming journey times in and across the area, improving productivity and quality of life. In turn, this will open up new markets and audiences for our transformed international airport and TECA and brings closer the Masterplan ambition of creating more pedestrian friendly areas in the city. As well as this, of course, it will make the region more accessible to visitors as we build towards the vision of being a £1bn tourism economy by 2023.

Businesses must make their voices heard to shape other committed projects such as the full dualling of the A96 to Inverness; ensuring the final plans best serve the overall best interests of the region and are delivered on schedule. While we celebrate and begin to enjoy the benefits these game-changing schemes will bring to businesses, residents and tourists, we cannot simply sit back and think: 'job done'.

This is not a case of being ungrateful for what we have received, rather a collective responsibility to ensure our infrastructure is fit for purpose to serve our renaissance region ambitions and that we get at least our fair share of available future investment.

Thinking beyond the obvious should form a part of this process. For example, the independent group of Vanguard volunteers is keen to explore the

feasibility of installing a cable car in the city. It ticks the boxes of being an iconic tourist attraction, reconnecting the city centre with its waterfront and would be a sustainable transport option capable of moving around 3,000 people per hour. A long shot? Yes, but surely we should be encouraging transformational thinking.

Last month a range of Chamber members including LNER and Scotrail, met with Transport Scotland's director of rail and Network Rail to make the case that it is unacceptable there is no plan in place to meaningfully improve journey times by train from and to other major cities. Currently travelling from Glasgow to Aberdeen, a distance of 145 miles takes around two and three quarter hours. Exactly the same as it takes to cover the 281 miles from Newcastle to London. And the 126 miles separating Aberdeen and Edinburgh is pretty much the same as from London to Birmingham. Yet the former trip takes around 147 minutes compared to 82 for the latter - and that's before HS2. The same HS2 that, according to a report by KPMG, could negatively impact our regional economy by up to £220m per year.

We welcome the establishment by Scottish Government of the Infrastructure Commission and the response from the Regional Economic Strategy partners, we must speak with a clear and single voice about our priorities to ensure we are heard. The Chamber will ensure this reflects our members' priorities at the same time raising concerns that the makeup of the group does not appear to adequately reflect the need for detailed knowledge of and focus on regions outside of the central belt.



**Russell Borthwick**  
chief executive







Lynda McGuigan, Carole Short and Jo Robinson

## Funding for Fraserburgh 48

A DIGITAL marketing campaign to encourage visitors to stay longer in Fraserburgh – 48 hours – has received a Growth Fund grant from VisitScotland. The Discover Fraserburgh tourism group has been awarded a £15,000 Growth Fund award to promote #Fraserburgh48. Their campaign focuses on three themes – history and heritage, coastline and food and drink. The campaign will promote neighbouring towns Pennan, Rosehearty and Inverallochy, as well as Fraserburgh.

A series of short promotional videos, including aerial drone footage of the stunning coastal locations as well as images for social media, will be created as well as inspirational content and ‘48-hours in Fraserburgh’ itineraries, with the purpose of increasing visits during the ‘shoulder months’ and extending the economic benefits of the tourism season.

Fraserburgh is keen to highlight the strength of the region’s food and drink offer. Fraserburgh boasts the largest shellfish port in Europe and Aberdeenshire is a major producer of Aberdeen Angus Beef. The region also offers some of the best whiskies in the world and with two new restaurants having recently opened in Fraserburgh, fresh locally-sourced farm-to-fork beef and seafood is on the menu for visitors and locals to enjoy.

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## Five-star Cala

CALA Homes, which has developments across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, has achieved the maximum five-star rating in an independent customer satisfaction survey.

The survey, from industry body the Home Builders Federation, measures customer satisfaction levels amongst new home purchasers. The five-star accolade is only given to companies where more than 90% of their customers would recommend the housebuilder to a friend. In this year’s survey CALA scored more than 93% to achieve the maximum five stars.



Deirdre Michie

## OGUK ramps up diversity effort

OIL & GAS UK has announced plans to ramp up efforts to maintain and encourage a diverse and inclusive workforce.

OGUK has launched an industry network to highlight efforts to encourage diversity and inclusion; and identify collaborative approaches to further encourage talent through the sector’s doors.

According to the Workforce Dynamics Review by OPITO, in partnership with RGU’s Oil and Gas Institute, the industry will have to recruit and retain over 40,000 people between 2018 and 2035 – this includes 10,000 new roles in areas such as data science, robotics, material science, nano-technology and cyber security.

Deirdre Michie, OGUK’s chief executive, said fostering a diverse workforce was critical to business success and ensuring a competitive position for the UK Continental Shelf. “The moral and business cases for better balance are clear and well-established and we need to embrace them if we are to ensure this sector sustains and improves its competitiveness,” she added.

“Our industry supports over 280,000 skilled jobs, but with women representing only one in four of the sector’s talent pool, there is clearly still more work to be done.”

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## Macphie scholarship

FOOD ingredients manufacturer Macphie has signed an agreement with Abertay University to create a new scholarship for students.

The scholarship, which is being funded by its employee trust, is aimed at students on the BSc (Hons) Food and Consumer Science degree, starting with those who begin their third year in September 2019.

The recipient will receive a £3,000 donation to aid their studies and will also take part in a summer placement at Macphie, providing an invaluable opportunity to build up both experience and contacts.





# Simply Marrvelous

**MARR is the largest geographical area in Aberdeenshire. Occupying almost half, it stretches from Huntly in the north down through Alford, Torphins and Banchory in the east and out to Ballater and Braemar in the west.**

It includes much of the Cairngorms National Park which provides a platform for a well-developed tourist industry based on heritage and outdoor pursuits. Elsewhere forestry and livestock are key industries but there is a wide range of successful businesses from oil and gas service suppliers and award-winning architects to distilleries and brand design specialists across its 1,136 square miles.

'Collaboration and inclusion' is the motto of the Ballater Business Association and its chairman, Michael Coletta, says that the tragic railway station fire in May 2015 and the devastating flood seven months later helped galvanise the village.

He said everyone gathered round and stepped forward to support the businesses affected and that has included investment from people outside the village. Collaboration is developing but he believes more is needed.

"The Business Association has been

working with businesses and the community council in Aboyne to help them form a business association. There seems to be a real enthusiasm and energy down there as well so I think businesses in Deeside are generally feeling positive, wanting to take things into their own hands and drive them forward," said Michael.

"What happened in Ballater in 2015 actually inspired people. We have been very strong over the last couple of years at communicating what we are doing around the area and including people."

He said visitor analysis in the resurrected caravan park showed that, surprisingly, while Ballater is attracting significant numbers from France and Germany and smaller numbers from Scandinavia, it is attracting only a single percentage from England creating "a huge untapped market."

He said Ballater's history and heritage is a major attraction. The village was established initially as a spa resort to accommodate visitors to the Pannanich Mineral Well, a favourite destination of Queen Victoria, which is located on the hillside on the opposite side of the river Dee.

"Ballater is in the heart of Royal Deeside, its culture and heritage and the quaintness of the village are its

“

**“What happened in Ballater in 2015 actually inspired people. We have been very strong over the last couple of years at communicating what we are doing around the area and including people.”**

**Michael Coletta**  
**chairman, Ballater Business Association**





Bill Dean



Mike Ward

strong points but we don't shout about as much as we should. I think the same applies to the whole of Royal Deeside and the North-east of Scotland.

"There will be a huge opportunity when the big cruise ships start coming to Aberdeen in 2020 but businesses are not ready for them.

"There does not appear to be any joined-up thinking for the whole of the Deeside corridor and I think that this stretches into Aberdeen city as well. There are massive opportunities for so many businesses but none of us are talking about it in the right manner and perhaps the Chamber of Commerce can assist in driving this - but it needs to be now. The city has a large part to play in connecting with the whole of Aberdeenshire and outlying areas and the city will benefit by feeding those businesses as well."

After a century of operation the railway line to Ballater closed in 1966, a victim of the Beeching cuts. Alford also grew up around its railway station, opening in 1859 and like Ballater closed in 1966.

The two main reasons for the rail link were to transport the famous pink Corrennie Quarry Granite from Tillyfourie and the world-renowned Aberdeen Angus cattle from their

original breeding ground. Now the Grampian Transport Museum stands on the site of the old marshalling yard and has attracted more than 1.5m visitors since it opened in 1983. It provides a window to the future of transport by bringing alive the transport of the past and recently launched its latest exhibition 'Probing the Future', which looks at autonomous vehicles.

Research has shown that the visitor split is about 50-50 between locals and tourists, with a higher percentage from local area (within 90 minutes' drive) during the peak holiday period. Research has also shown that tourists come from all over the world and many boost the local economy by factoring in a visit to the museum when planning tours of Scotland.

Curator Mike Ward said that one of the secrets of the museum's success is staying relevant and topical, vital for any museum.

He said that many people over the years have questioned why the museum is not sited in Deeside with its much heavier tourist footfall.

"We even carried out a relocation assessment as part of an options appraisal required for a major grant but we think there is nowhere better than Alford and that was accepted.

"Alford is in the middle of the North-east triangle and is really well connected by road. However, there is also a lot of emotional attachment to the museum because it grew out of the community and is supported by them. It wasn't foisted on them - it came from people with real passion, which still exists, and has been a real strength of this place. Alford and Donside is often seen as the poor relation to Deeside in terms of visitor flow but we are important to this area which in turn gives us even more support and backup.

"People are genuinely fond of the museum which is not seen as a hard-headed commercial operation but as a North-east home spun, homegrown organisation and the Museums Galleries Scotland, our industry-lead body, frequently use us as an example of an innovative, self-helping initiative-taking museum.

From Loch Muick and Crathes Castle to the Royal Deeside Railway and the Dinnie Stones, there are an almost limitless number of unique visitor experiences across Marr. One of the newest - and oldest - is the recently refurbished Fife Arms Hotel which reopened in January following a multi-million pound refurbishment.

During the extensive renovations, new owners Iwan and Manuela Wirth put





The Fire room at **The Fife Arms**

a significant focus on the property's design and art collection. Co-owners of the Hauser & Wirth Gallery, the couple have brought in a large number of antique and newly commissioned pieces. As a result, the hotel's collection boasts more than 14,000 historic objects and works of art, many with close associations to the Braemar area and its history.

The hotel's collection includes pieces by artists such as Lucien Freud, Louise Bourgeois, Pablo Picasso and Archibald Thorburn. It also boasts a pencil and watercolour piece by Queen Victoria dated October 6, 1874.

But the region has also supported the growth of some major businesses whose products are known around the world. One of Scotland's best-known companies, now the biggest employer in the Huntly area, started off when Helen Dean began baking shortbread to support the local pipe band in which her husband Bill was a drum major.

The 'melt in the mouth' shortbread proved extremely popular and as word spread during the band's travels Helen had to start a small home bakery to cope with demand.

Today Dean's of Huntly exports to more than 30 countries including India, China and the USA and has around 150 full time equivalent staff.

In the early days Helen's son Bill and his three siblings used to take turns to lick their mum's baking bowl when the days' baking was complete. Now the company managing director, Bill jokes that the mixing bowls have grown over the years and mix a quarter of a tonne of shortbread at a time – just a little too big to scrape out with a spoon.

He describes the exports as the "romantic side of the business" and says that seeing their products in far flung places is a great accolade for what his mum and dad started in 1975.

"The exports account for about 10% of our turnover but we also now have around 10% of our business through the retail and cafe side of the business. That's a great marketing tool because people come from far and wide and we have a very open culture. They can come in and see the mixing taking place in the bakery. There is a two-tier café bistro with a gallery overlooking the production hall so families can come and see the robotics and the packing lines and learn a wee bit more about the business," he added.

Dean's supplies its everyday retail packs to supermarkets but it also supplies several premium private label customers. In addition, there is a growing online sector.

According to Bill, being based

in Huntly has many advantages; "It's a great environment and many people don't want to spend 10 hours a week commuting to Aberdeen for work," he said. "Being able to work here offers a better work/life balance and we have generations of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters who have worked for us and still work for us.

"From an access point of view, you could argue that we are more fortunate than the likes of Orkney and Shetland, or Wick in the Highlands. With the bypass around Aberdeen it's become so much easier to transport your products down south and it has made a big difference. It also makes it a much easier commute to meet customers or attend events in the central belt and beyond.

"It would be great to have the dual carriageway out past Huntly, and it is scheduled, but the lack of it hasn't stopped us growing over the last 44 years.

"We have a great core team of people here who enjoy the more relaxed lifestyle a country town can offer. The nearer you are to the main hub the higher the cost of living - here we have more space and no lengthy commute to endure each day."



# Road to new opportunities beckons

**NOW the dust has settled on the long-awaited Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), we can look forward to the positive effects it will undoubtedly bring for the entire North-east and beyond.**

People have commented that its arrival is 10 years too late but I believe we need to embrace the bypass now it's finally here and get on with making the most of the opportunities it presents in the months and years ahead.

The North-east has been crying out for this kind of serious investment in our road infrastructure for decades and, in some respect, we've now caught up with the rest of the country. It's difficult to overstate just how much of an impact this development will make to the region and those who work and live here.

Combined with other major projects, such as the Haudagain improvement works, the AWPR will boost connectivity and relieve congestion at traffic blackspots in and around the city.

From an operational perspective, it has certainly made it much easier to manage our own company's logistics with the supply of goods and materials heading both north and south.

Our team frequently works out of clients' operation bases in Peterhead, while the new road also creates better access to customers in the central belt and beyond.

We are already seeing benefits for all of our drivers in terms of significant time and fuel savings, but also environmentally by re-directing heavy traffic away from the city centre and other built-up industrial and residential areas.

Our drivers use the AWPR wherever possible, depending on the abnormality of the load. In most cases, we can now avoid the city centre altogether which helps improve the quality of our drivers' working lives since they don't need to navigate traffic and inconvenience other road users so regularly.

This all leads to easier movement of goods, particularly for our haulier and quayside clients who benefit from greater efficiencies by having materials delivered more quickly – up to 20 minutes on some routes.

The opening of the AWPR is a clear indication that the whole North-east is open for business. It makes the area more attractive in terms of generating new investment from companies

moving to the region for the first time and those who have already established their roots.

The start of this new chapter for the region also sees returning confidence following a testing few years for the local economy.

Throughout the downturn, we have managed to retain staff levels and are now in a position where we are actively recruiting again as the market continues to recover. We continue to invest in our people, machinery and equipment in anticipation of expected demand for our services – with the new bypass being a key route to our success.





## McIntosh Heavy Logistics Award winning experts in heavy and abnormal loads

McIntosh Heavy Logistics is based at a 62-acre facility near Echt, Westhill, which offers industrial warehouses, workshop premises, storage and distribution services adjacent to the new AWPR.

The family-run business, which also comprises parent company McIntosh Plant Hire and McIntosh Storage Solutions, can trace its roots back to 1976 and works with clients across the oil and gas, renewables, transport, construction and agricultural sectors.

Over the past four decades, the company has expanded to form a diverse business spanning:

- > Plant hire
- > Heavy haulage
- > General haulage/transport
- > Storage
- > Internal/external warehousing



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TEAM OF THE YEAR  
2018 WINNER  
**THE HEAVIES**

# What is your biggest connectivity headache?



“The clients we support often come from some of the most rural areas of Scotland, not only in the North-east but also within Moray, Orkney and Shetland, with many having limited access due to slow internet services. Whilst we must keep abreast of new developments and adapt our services accordingly we must also be aware that not everyone has the level of connectivity we see in cities or built up areas.

“Where possible, we empower people affected by a cancer diagnosis to link up with others through our community-based centres with specialist cancer support groups based within CLAN House in Aberdeen regularly connecting via Skype to clients in Shetland who benefit from connecting with others experiencing this particular type of cancer. The challenge will be how we continue to meet the needs of younger generations and millennials and how these groups will engage with us and access information in the future.”

**Fiona Fernie**, *head of income generation and business development, CLAN*



“Mobile connectivity throughout Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire is variable and to some degree you would expect that in an area with our geography. The headache however comes from feature-rich websites that just assume everyone is using broadband on a desktop device. I find some of the media companies being the worst offenders, where their sites have such a heavy load time on mobile and most of it is not related to the content you actually want to view.

“If you are on a mobile data plan, you are actually paying to wade through their pop-ups, unoptimised pics, ads and consent forms, just to read some text on a page. It doesn't take much to give a decent mobile experience to all users and still monetise content. It's something we think very carefully when designing our sites for clients.”

**Scott Graham**, *project manager, MTC /media*



“The two main connectivity headaches which we have had for some time have recently been resolved. The first relates to our office in Fraserburgh and the ability of staff and clients to get there easily. The opening of the AWPR has transformed that journey and it is now much easier, the new road has given a significant boost to the Buchan economy. Any digital connectivity problems which we have had have also been resolved by our recent move to a new office in Aberdeen's Marischal Square where we have ultrafast broadband.

“I would like to see improved connectivity from the airport both for business and person travel. It is disappointing that routes to London have been lost but having spoken to airport officials recently I understand there is a lot happening and before long Aberdeen will have the air connectivity it should have.”

**Carole Bruce**, *business development manager, VT Wealth Management Ltd*



# Race against the machine

**HIGH quality broadband connections are no longer simply desirable for business and home – they are essential.**

In this changing digital world, more and more bandwidth is required to meet our daily needs, including the growing use of online video, consumer cloud traffic, home and healthcare applications, teleworking, gaming and the proliferation of smart devices which now populate almost every house and office.

High definition TV, autonomous vehicles, 5G mobile phone services and personal mobility solutions will soon be with us which will rely on the same type of fibre optic cable infrastructure for delivery.

The good news is that Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire are ahead of the curve and businesses and residents are in prime position to reap the benefits of an ongoing technological revolution.

Aberdeen is set to be Scotland's first gigabit-speed fibre broadband city, with work already underway. Within the next couple of years, superfast broadband will also be accessible to virtually everyone in Aberdeenshire, no matter how remote.

A gigabit city provides local residents, business, government, health and

education sectors with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure, capable of meeting their data connectivity and communication needs for decades to come.

CityFibre, which has been serving the business community in Aberdeen since 2015, is investing at least £40m to roll out city-wide full fibre infrastructure, with services to residents available initially through a partnership with Vodafone. Allan McEwan, city manager at CityFibre, said one of the main reasons Aberdeen had been chosen as the first gigabit city in Scotland was the 'real appetite' demonstrated by senior council

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**“It's also beneficial for the business community that our network will cover the vast majority of Aberdeen. We are planning to pass as many homes and businesses as we can with full fibre connectivity.”**

**Allan McEwan**  
*city manager, Cityfibre*

officials and members of the business community. There is also only one other main infrastructure provider at present, BT Openreach.

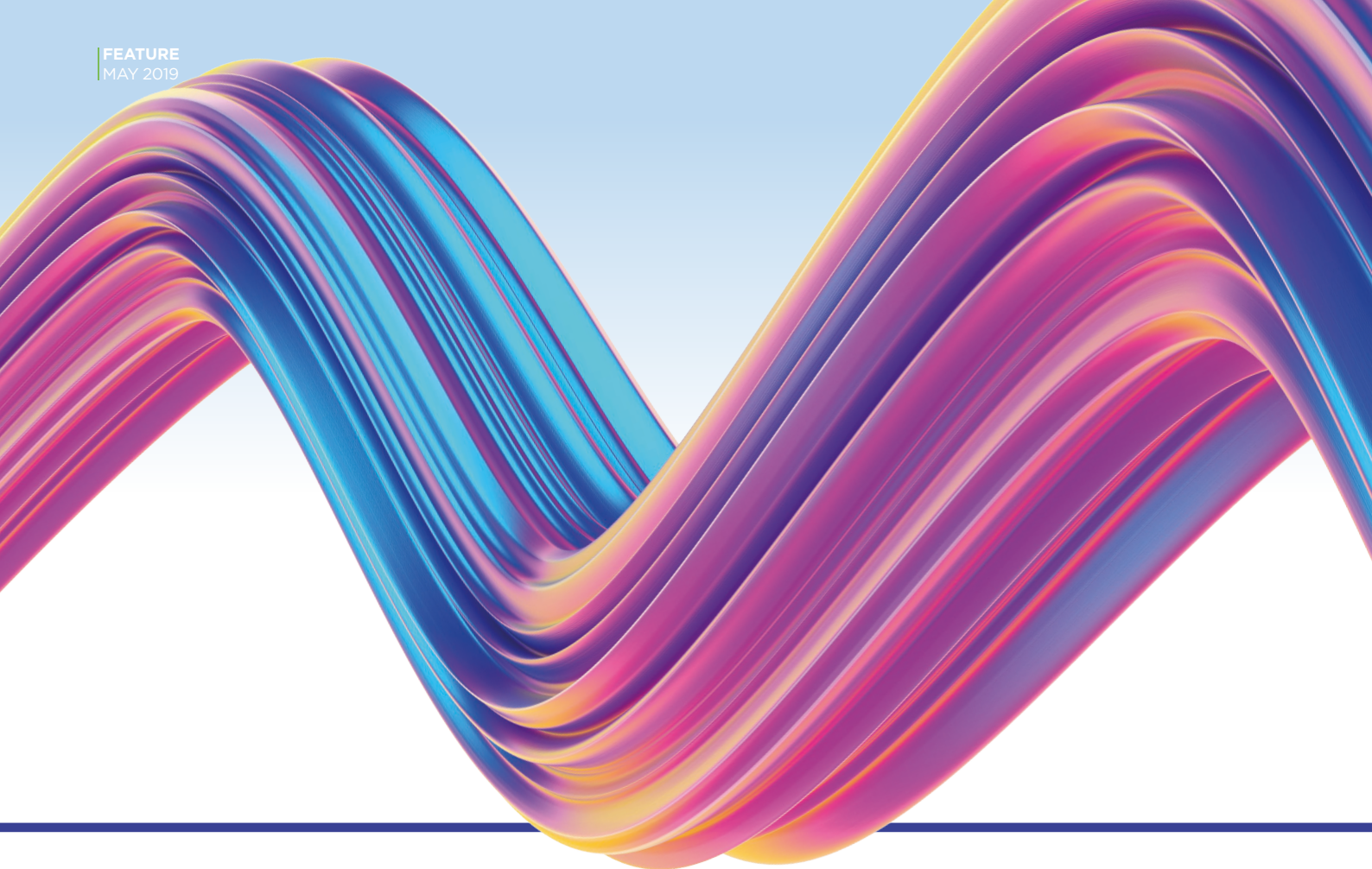
“So it's good news for everyone, both residents and the business community, because we are rolling out improved connectivity but also driving competition in the market,” said Allan.

“It's also beneficial for the business community that our network will cover the vast majority of Aberdeen. We are planning to pass as many homes and businesses as we can with full fibre connectivity.”

He said many businesses are already benefitting from its full fibre network but going down most streets in Aberdeen brings it far closer to even more businesses, making connection far more practical.

“It's important to mention that there is currently UK Government funding available to businesses which are not yet connected to full fibre through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme. Gigabit vouchers can be used by small businesses and the local communities surrounding them to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit-capable connection.

“Businesses can claim up to £2,500 against the cost of connection, either individually or as part of a group



project. Our local partners can take care of the whole process, including the paperwork and funding application.”

He explained that with standard broadband, the upload speed is vastly inferior to the download speed but with a full fibre connection they are symmetrical, providing key benefits to users.

“For example, an architectural practice typically uploads and works on huge files on a daily basis. People need to save those to the cloud and also share them with colleagues and clients so there are increasingly large delays with a slow internet connection. A full fibre connection is faster, more reliable and much better quality so is actually making these businesses a lot more efficient. They are far more productive with their time. A high-quality internet connection is no longer just a preference but a strong requirement and something many of us have come to expect.

“Since 2015 we have been serving the business community and we have made hundreds of connections. From 2017 onwards we also started to connect public sector sites including schools, libraries and community centres on behalf of Aberdeen City Council through our client, Capita. This will bring wider benefits to the city, aside from making businesses more efficient and productive.

This backbone full fibre network will enable smart city technologies to be rolled out which will benefit those living and working in Aberdeen. Smart city technologies can do everything from making our roads more efficient and our streets safer, to improving the environment around us.”

In Aberdeenshire the challenge is very different. Aberdeenshire Council’s service manager (industry sectors), Roddy Matheson, said it had long recognised the importance of high-quality digital connectivity for its residents and has been at the forefront of efforts to improve infrastructure.

A significant increase in the number of premises able to access superfast broadband has been achieved since April 2014 when the first publicly funded upgrades were delivered by the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme. The council contributed £16m to the DSSB programme which has helped make it possible for an additional 84,000 properties in Aberdeenshire to access fibre enabled superfast broadband for the first time. Fibre enabled broadband is fibre optic cable to a cabinet and then copper cable to individual premises.

An uptake which exceeded pre-determined targets made additional money available for further upgrades which are continuing and

will result in around 89% coverage in Aberdeenshire compared to a national average of over 95%. He said the challenge of delivering fibre broadband in Aberdeenshire is significant as the area has around twice the national average of Exchange Only (EO) lines, which are more expensive to upgrade.

In 2017, with the intention of offering a 30 Mbps connection to 100% of premises in Scotland, the Scottish Government announced a successor programme, R100, to address those premises not covered by the earlier DSSB programme. £600m has been allocated and the scheme is likely to deploy a mix of technologies. R100 is expected to start delivering upgraded connections later this year following contracts being concluded this summer.

“We believe that Aberdeenshire could be a pilot area for aligned interventions (using a variety of methods to make 30 Mbps superfast broadband available) which will have a significant impact on rural businesses,” added Roddy

“As we cross the Brexit threshold farmers support payments will move from being production focused to being environmentally focused so they are going to have to cut costs and concentrate on growing crops or animals that will make them money.



“

**“As we cross the Brexit threshold farmers support payments will move from being production focused to being environmentally focused so they are going to have to cut costs and concentrate on growing crops or animals that will make them money.”**

**Roddy Matheson**  
*service manager,*  
**Aberdeenshire Council**

That almost inevitably means there will be fewer jobs in the countryside. However, you can tell a lot about a cow if you attach a sensor to it which measures its temperature and how often it drinks. Instead of the farmer having to travel round his land all the time to check on his animals the sensor if there is suitable wireless connectivity, will send a signal to the farmer who can then intervene at individual animal level if there is something wrong. It can also make the selective spreading of fertilisers possible and all these contribute to precision farming and will aid farmers' competitiveness and profitability.

“The use of that data will be also much enhanced if it can be pooled and for that you need the fibre infrastructure. The more data intensive we get the

more infrastructure is required and a couple of years ago one of the network operators said to me that demand for capacity on the UK mobile network was increasing by 1% a day which gives an idea of the scale of the challenge.

“Aberdeenshire's population has grown by about 40% in the last 40 years, the fastest growth of any local authority area in Scotland, and BT's infrastructure investment didn't reflect that.

“That's probably why there were so many EO connections which has made the challenge here so great.”



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CONFERENCE



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# An Industry In Transition

4 – 5 June 2019

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The crucial role of Vision 2035 in driving the continued competitiveness of the UKCS will come under the spotlight at the OGUK Industry Conference.

With a 2019 conference theme of 'An Industry in Transition', delegates will hear industry leaders and keynote speakers reflect on the people, business processes and diversification opportunities needed to unlock growth as the sector continues to emerge from one of the toughest downturns in its history.

At the heart of the agenda is industry's shared ambition for the future – Vision 2035 – which looks to add a generation of productive life to the UK Continental Shelf and expand supply chain opportunities at home, abroad and into other sectors.

The agenda will take on three broad areas;

- Energy transition
- Business transition
- People transition

**OIL&GAS<sup>UK</sup>**



# An industry in transition

**WE are living in an age of change. Global energy demand continues to intensify and by 2035 will have grown by 30%. At the same time, we support the transition to a lower carbon energy economy.**

Rapid technological advances continue to bring new opportunities and, indeed, challenges. New ways of working, changing societal expectations and expanding global populations are raising big questions about how we live, how we work and how we play.

All of these issues affect our energy producers, and more importantly for us, the UK's offshore oil and gas industry. We have a membership of almost 400 companies here in Aberdeen and also in hubs throughout the UK. They are working in every part of the industry from exploration through to decommissioning and, increasingly, in renewables and other low carbon technology too. Making sense of who we are and where we are going is a key job for OGUK.

It's why our OGUK Industry Conference this year will focus on an 'industry in transition' and what it means for our businesses change, our future low carbon energy mix and the people and skills we need.

As our recent Business Outlook report showed, oil and gas represents 75% of total UK energy need and

domestic production met 60% of it. It's an impressive statistic that might surprise many people and underlines the important role we continue to play in providing security of energy supply. Ensuring this security depends on our ability to compete, not with renewables, but with imports from other international oil basins.

UK Government figures forecast that even by the 2040s oil and gas will be required to meet up to 60% of the UK's total energy need. This means that if we innovate, adapt and redouble our efforts to remain competitive we will continue to support many thousands of jobs, contribute billions to the economy and in so doing continue to benefit regions including Aberdeen for many years to come.

The same pioneering spirit, technological innovation, adaptability and skills which have made our industry such a success are the very same that we need to also support the transition to a lower carbon economy. Whether this is through our world class supply chain diversifying into other energy sectors, or expanding opportunities for companies into hydrogen, carbon capture, utilisation and storage; and renewable energy.

Our industry is far from being the enemy of the energy transition, the UK offshore oil and gas industry is at its heart. Vision 2035, our shared ambition for the future, will add a generation of productive life the UK

Continental Shelf and expand supply chain opportunities at home, abroad and into other sectors. With the industry behind it we will ensure we continue to provide secure, affordable energy to our communities, exciting and fulfilling jobs and support the transition to a low carbon economy.

Underlying Vision 2035 and key to its success is the power of our talented people and we know that delivering diverse and inclusive workplaces is a determining factor to keeping and attracting the people we need for the future. Diversity is about more than just gender, but we do know that women currently only represent one quarter of our industry's people.

A study by RGU and OPITO last year identified there are some 10,000 new roles needed in our industry in jobs like automation and predictive technologies, we need to take the opportunity of these new roles to open the door for more women and other underrepresented groups to join our industry.

Through evidence and fact, OGUK is proud to champion an industry which embraces change and remains so critical to our future. We look forward to putting these big issues in the spotlight at our conference.

# How can businesses learn from teamwork in sport?

by Jane Setter,  
Aberdeen partner, MG Search



**POWERFUL motivators are the driving force behind every successful sports team and business. In businesses, motivation is vital.**

Great sports teams succeed because they work together, successful sales teams sell well because they work together, enterprising executives exceed expectations because...they work efficiently together. Get the picture? Teamwork does, in essence, make the dream work. But how do you get the team to work together in the first place. This is the burning question for many businesses and something we hear consistently from our clients.

Our clients range from fast-moving consumer goods to oil and gas and technology - although they operate in different industries they all have the pain-point of teamwork and leadership values in common.

Some say that people are born leaders but we believe that leadership doesn't come naturally to everyone. We aim to flip that misconception on its head and help both our clients and our business lead with intent.

How are we doing this? With the help of Scotland rugby hero turned talent

and coaching expert Tony Stanger from Stanger Pro.

Stanger Pro is helping us bring the world of elite sport into the boardroom. Tony, who was most recently head of talent at the Scottish Institute of Sport, specialises in understanding how to maximise the potential of talent.

Identifying and developing top talent on behalf of our clients to help further advance business leaders and their organisations is driving this sport-led initiative. A shared passion of sport and coaching brought us to Tony and we are delighted to have secured such a Scottish legend as a partner for our business.

## What have we learned so far from partnering with a pro?

- There are many interwoven character traits that drive elite professionals in sports and business alike and those links are what we are capitalising on for both our own business and our clients. Many of the learned skills and inherent traits of elite sportspeople are hugely beneficial to business people. Attitude, confidence, commitment, taking a long term view and also the ability to deal effectively with failure.

- Business leaders can use a sports-based approach to running their business better - defining what it is to 'win', creating a clear metric that directly relates to revenue and profitability and letting your team be more involved. This will create a self-directing, self-correcting team because they see a direct correlation between their actions and the results on which they are rewarded.
- Taking a sports-based approach makes business fun and therefore inspires people.
- In team sports, every player is viewed as important and vital to the success of the team and therefore they feel involved and motivated. Is this always applied in business?

One of the most important behaviours executives can learn from business coaching from a professional athlete is how to keep a level head in a fraught environment. We all want to raise our game and performance. Often that is purely a willingness to look at things differently to ask - how can we do this better? Businesses should remember that teamwork means that 'Together Everyone Achieves More'.



# Investing for the future of the North-east

**FROM the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the Aberdeen Harbour expansion to The Event Complex Aberdeen, the Music Hall and the Art Gallery, there is no doubt that this is an exciting time for Aberdeen. The city's key infrastructure developments and those of the wider North-east region tell a story of commitment to investment for the future.**

That story is a familiar one to Brodies. Opportunity continues to be driven by client demand for its leading legal services which span all the key sectors of the Scottish economy. That sectoral diversity is also prevalent in Aberdeen, where the firm's clients include the public sector, businesses and private individuals.

The recent arrivals of Aberdeen-based partners Elaine Farquharson-Black, a recognised leader in the planning arena, and Bryan Wilson who will bolster the firm's dedicated oil and gas practice, are the latest in a number of appointments that have seen Brodies grow its team in Aberdeen to 87, an increase of 16% in the last 12 months.

Brodies' managing partner, Nick Scott, who hails from Inverurie, said: "In setting our strategic plans we listen carefully to clients and take our lead from where they tell us there will be demand for our services. In Aberdeen

we have seen that demand across all of our teams. That we continue to attract recognised experts to service those clients in the region is testament to our commitment to deliver a business that recognises the specialist skills, experience and sector knowledge that the North-east market requires."

Focusing on that commitment to sector expertise, Brodies has introduced dedicated traineeships based in Aberdeen that will cover all practice areas including corporate and commercial, litigation, personal and family, real estate and banking and finance.

"We invest heavily in our colleagues and we believe that these specialist traineeships offer real potential to create long lasting legal careers. Opportunities like this are part of how we develop talent across our business, including in Aberdeen," added Scott.

Giving back is important for Brodies. Beyond giving back to the legal profession through career development opportunities the firm is committed to its role in the communities where its people live and work. As an Aberdeen Inspired voluntary BID Levy contributor and an active voice in the Chamber of Commerce Vanguard series it is firmly behind the vision for the Aberdeen city region.

Scott continues: "We are more than an employer. Our aim is to be part of the fabric of this region; invested in its development and promotion as a great place to live and work. With many major infrastructure projects highlighting the ambition of the Aberdeen City Region we remain optimistic about its future and the opportunity for our firm to play a part in that."



**Bryan Wilson**  
and **Elaine Farquharson-Black**



Violet Teague

## Violet gives up retirement

AN ABERDEEN woman has come out of retirement – to sell homes to the retired.

Violet Teague 71, who has more than 32 years' experience selling new homes in the Aberdeenshire residential market, has spurned a life of leisure to bolster the sales team at Brio Retirement Living's Landale Court in Chapelton.

The grandmother-of-two has joined Brio as a part-time sales advisor, helping retirees find their dream home at the new town five miles south of Aberdeen.

Violet is one of a growing number of pensioners who are enjoying working part-time in their later years.

Violet, who is originally from Aberdeen and now lives in Fordoun, said: "I retired two years ago but I missed the buzz of selling fantastic new homes and meeting so many lovely people. I'm a real people person and I'm still full of bounce. I enjoy helping people find a new home and guiding them through the process.

"Finding the right home in your retirement years is such a big decision. I have a genuine understanding of what people around my age are looking for in their retirement years and I look forward to helping them on their journey to the next stage in their life at Landale Court."

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## Digital boost from ONE and ScotlandIS

PRIVATE sector economic development body Opportunity North East (ONE) and digital industries trade body ScotlandIS are partnering to develop the digital company base and ecosystem in the North-east of Scotland.

Digital is a key theme in the long-term economic vision for the regional economy and there is an established base of tech companies in the region, primarily working within energy. The new partnership will bring additional resource into the region to support growth in the established company cluster and increase the profile of the region's tech capabilities with stakeholders, regionally and nationally. A co-funded digital development manager post has been created and Jen Scott, formerly with the University of Aberdeen as manager of public engagement with the research team, will take up the role.

The new post will be based at the ONE Tech Hub on Schoolhill, where a £1.5m investment is creating a dedicated hub for digital and entrepreneurship activity in Aberdeen led by ONE in partnership with CodeBase, the UK's leading digital tech incubator, and Robert Gordon University (RGU). The ONE Tech Hub will host a range of new activity including ONE CodeBase and RGU's start-up accelerator. It will also be the natural choice for digitally-focussed alumni from accelerator programmes such as TechX and Elevator and for spin-outs from RGU, University of Aberdeen and NESCol.

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## Twin success for Exchange Communications

EXCHANGE Communications has been appointed by travel experts If Only... to undertake an ambitious expansion plan and started delivery of a full communications overhaul for leading technical textiles specialist Don & Low.

Exchange is providing an end-to-end solution at the travel firms' new headquarters in Glasgow city centre which will enable the business to significantly improve its customer contact experience.

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## Local hero

PHIL Anderson Financial Services Ltd was the winner of the Best Firm Scotland category in the NatWest Intermediary Solutions inaugural Local Hero Mortgage Awards.

These awards recognise mortgage advisers who have gone the extra mile to put customer needs and their local community at the heart of their firm.

NatWest head of intermediary mortgages Graham Felstead said: "These firms have exemplified putting the customer and their local community at the heart of everything they do, in addition to providing sound financial advice for those consumers within their locality."





AAB's **Douglas Martin**, **Tomas Carruthers** and **Edwin Hamilton** of Project Heather and **Stuart Cooper** of AAB

## Rebirth of the Scottish Stock Exchange

CHARTERED accountants and business advisors Anderson & Brown LLP has secured a seven figure equity investment for Project Heather to support the re-launch of the Scottish Stock Exchange after almost 50 years.

Project Heather, headed by financial services entrepreneur Tomás Carruthers, will be headquartered in Edinburgh with offices planned throughout Scotland.

In late 2018, Project Heather agreed a partnership with one of the world's largest stock exchange platforms, Euronext, to run the exchange on its Optiq trading platform. Following FCA approval, Project Heather plans to launch before the end of 2019 having already received significant national and international interest from businesses considering a listing on the exchange.

## RDS award for platform drilling design

RDS, KCA Deutag's global provider of engineering and design solutions to the energy and infrastructure sectors, has been awarded a contract for the detailed design of a drilling facility for an offshore platform.

The 12-month contract has follow on support executed from RDS's central London offices. This is RDS's first detail design award for a new greenfield platform since the oil price decline in 2014.

## Double cheer for airport

ABERDEEN International Airport won two awards at The Moodies which recognise the best in airport and travel retail digital, social media and marketing. The awards, now in their sixth year, shortlisted 170 finalists from airports around the world including Heathrow, Dubai and Copenhagen.

Aberdeen won the Best E-commerce award for its targeted frictionless online booking system. This relates to the ease of purchase for services like parking and the booking of the Northern Lights Lounge.

The Aberdeen team also won the Best Website award, with the judges focuses on functionality, overall structure, navigation, design and use of content. In addition, the airport was shortlisted in the Best Relaunch and Best Video Campaigns for the Northern Lights Lounge's first birthday celebrations and recent security top tips video respectively.

## Additional £1m for apprenticeships

IN COLLABORATION with Skills Development Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council is to offer an additional 134 foundation apprenticeship opportunities for young people in S5 and S6 within its secondary schools from August.

Foundation Apprenticeships are designed to provide young people with real experiences of the world of work, while gaining a qualification at the same level as a Scottish Higher (SCQF Level 6). It usually counts as one option choice and is taken alongside other S5 and S6 subjects.

Graeme Hendry, Skills Development Scotland national manager – development and delivery for foundation and graduate apprenticeships, said: "Foundation Apprenticeships are closing the gap between the classroom and the workplace, with pupils seeing the benefits. Employers are telling us that pupils who have taken a Foundation Apprenticeship are more attractive candidates for apprenticeship jobs."

Opportunities which will be available from August cover up to 12 different job types, including engineering, business, accountancy, financial services, digital technology, children and young people, health and social care and scientific technologies.

Employers keen to support Foundation Apprenticeships can obtain further details from the SDS website at: [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot).



# Hidden connections

**PERHAPS one of the less predictable outcomes of the Brexit 'journey' has been a realisation of the vital role that ports play in facilitating trade with the rest of the world. An incredible 95% of all UK trade passes through its ports, and their importance cannot be underestimated. In Scotland alone, ports handle approximately 67m tonnes of cargo each year.**

It is interesting, therefore, that when focus falls on transport and infrastructure as a theme, people still immediately think of our road and rail networks, rather than the incredible global shipping network that keeps the bulk of world imports and exports moving every day of the year.

Clearly this was not the case when, in 2012, the Scottish Government identified the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour as one of 14 strategic planning objectives within Scotland of 'national significance'. It is hoped that they believe the construction project – which is the largest investment in an infrastructure project in Trust Port history – will put Aberdeen on the map of world shipping routes and as a

potential hub for trans-shipments and multi-modal activity.

The port is located within the heart of Europe's largest oil and gas supply chain, and for the last 900 years, has been a vital element of the North-east's transport infrastructure, generating prosperity and opportunities for generations.

By 2020, Aberdeen will be the largest port – by berthage – in Scotland, and we have every intention of being a leading port in the UK and internationally. But we can only achieve these ambitions if we succeed in our mission to connect our customers to what they need, wherever and whenever they need it.

Connectivity is our hallmark and our activities revolve around it. For our customers – whether they are oil and gas majors, ferry operators or part of the vital cargo distribution network – our strategic location is of vital importance. Many of them require a close connection with the all-important supply chain and service companies, which populate the city and region. Furthermore, our harbour is rail connected to the national

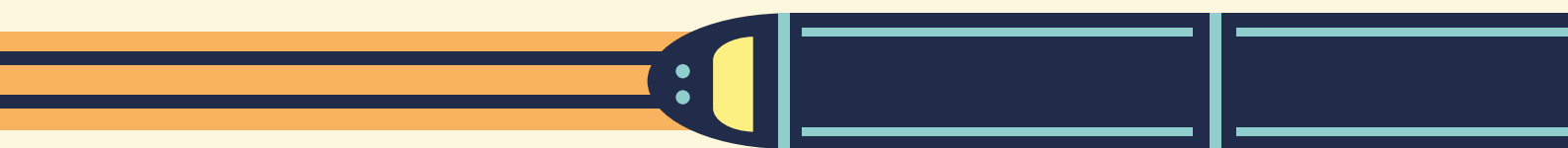
network and is a 20-minute drive to an international airport, unusual assets for a Scottish port. South Harbour has been built with the accessibility of the AWPR in mind: within minutes, our customers can be connected to the rest of the region and the rest of the country.

And that's just on land. Aberdeen Harbour has direct shipping connections with approximately 40 countries including Germany, the USA and Nigeria; and scheduled weekly services to Norway and continental ports. In South Harbour the ability to berth vessels of 300 meters alongside, coupled with a water depth of 15 meters at highest tide, will allow larger vessels to bring in more opportunities from further afield, providing our customers with an incredible opportunity for global trading.

Our connectivity, combined with our scale, experience and location is what makes us unique. Our port is open 24/7, bringing the North-east of Scotland to the rest of the world, and the rest of the world to us.



# Planes, trains and automobiles



**SCOTLAND could benefit from its own Celtic version of the famous Øresund Bridge, not to star in a detective series like the one from Copenhagen to Malmo but to provide the connectivity which is vital for Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow to realise their full potential.**

This is according to the recent 'Scotland's Urban Age report' by Burness Paull which highlights how travel connections between the cities are relatively slow and time-consuming, whether by road or rail.

"This connectivity weakness comes at a critical time for Aberdeen in particular," the report says. "The city, which is isolated from the central belt due to poor transport, is currently looking to anchor Scotland's role in the international supply chain in certain key markets. The move, which reflects a conscious diversification strategy away from a single commodity market, means connectivity is critical."

The report says that the missing link between the central belt and North-east must be tackled as a matter of priority and a version of the Øresund Bridge with fast links to Aberdeen via Dundee and to Inverness – would be "ambitious, visionary and transformative for all concerned."

While wider connectivity is weak, the local road network in the North-east has recently been given a £1bn boost by the opening of the 36-mile Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which is transforming connections.

Shane Taylor, research and policy manager for Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: "Connectivity and infrastructure act as the bedrock for business growth within the Aberdeen city region and there's been some real progress in this regard, the most striking example being the AWPR. This is only the beginning of the journey as far as the AWPR's effect on connectivity in and around the city is concerned, with real potential to decongest the city centre and drive a resurgence in retail.

"Challenges begin to emerge when we start to evaluate progress on the North-east's links to the rest of Scotland, the UK and the wider world. This broader connectivity has the potential to be the Achilles heel which constrains our ability to meet some of our ambitious economic goals for the city region. Unless we maintain and improve our existing intercity links, both nationally and internationally, we risk an uphill battle to diversify our economy.

"At the Chamber, we think there's two critical areas where renewed focus

“

**“Connectivity and infrastructure act as the bedrock for business growth within the Aberdeen city region and there's been some real progress in this regard, the most striking example being the AWPR.”**

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



**“LNER is well-placed to improve connectivity to and from Aberdeen with a number of regular services between Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Leeds and London King’s Cross each day.”**

**Felix Parker-Smith**  
*communications and public affairs manager, LNER*



could see some real gains for the region. The first is the Aberdeen to central belt rail link. Developed from a £200m commitment by the Scottish Government in 2016, the project has yet to progress. A disappointing report from consultants Arup concluded that only two minutes of journey time savings could be found for the £200m – an unworkable proposal which quite rightly in terms of economics, won’t see the light of day.

The Chamber recently met with Bill Reeve, director of rail at Transport Scotland, to discuss future direction for this project and emphasise just how important it is to firms in Aberdeen that their connection to the central belt is as fast and reliable as possible. We asked for a clear path for where this funding will be utilised and a more pragmatic, cost-effective approach to see the benefits that firms across Aberdeen are calling for.

“When it comes to our global connectivity, the ability of Aberdeen International Airport to attract and retain routes is paramount. We’ve had some challenging news recently, with two key London routes withdrawn by operators. The airport team is working incredibly hard to ensure that these

routes are replaced and that further routes are created for business users.

“The UK’s respective governments have to ensure that they support regional airports through fiscal and strategic policy.”

He said studies had indicated that reducing the rate of Air Departure Tax would contribute significantly to the viability of routes and many marginal routes might have been saved without it. The Chamber’s focus is that the Scottish Government move ahead with pace on devolution.

“Fundamentally, the expected outcomes are ones which firms in the region can support – reducing rail journey times between the central belt and ensuring that air routes become more viable by reducing the tax burden. Policy is only useful if it can be brought into real action however, and with both issues, it’s about time we saw some pace and progress from government.”

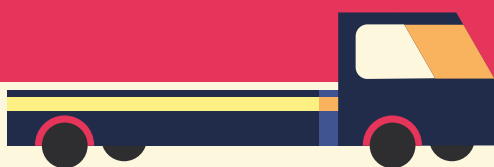
LNER, which was established in June last year, believes its new fleet of Azuma trains, soon to be rolled out across the East Coast Mainline, will be key to unlocking the full potential

of cities such as Aberdeen.

“One of our main priorities has been the introduction of new Azuma trains and we have been working very closely with the Department for Transport, Hitachi and others to deliver this exciting milestone to our customers,” said Felix Parker-Smith, communications and public affairs manager.

“The trains have undergone rigorous testing with engineers and technical staff to ensure they will meet the high standards we set for outstanding customer service. The first Azuma trains will run between London King’s Cross and Leeds with further trains being phased into service on the rest of the East Coast Main Line route into North-east Scotland over the coming months.

“Azuma represents the biggest transformation on the route in more than 30 years and will deliver more seats for an even better customer experience. We are planning to introduce the Azuma fleet to Aberdeen and Inverness at the end of 2019, following the phased introduction up the line. The new trains will bring over a 100 extra seats







in standard class on each journey.”

He said LNER has just introduced new punctuality targets, measuring train punctuality to the minute, and the information would be published making it the most transparent in Europe.

“The previous measurement system determined a train to be on time provided it arrived at its end destination within 10 minutes of the advertised time and only considered the end point of the journey. The new system will measure punctuality at every station we call at and measure to the minute. If a train is more than 59 seconds late then it is late. We will record and publish this information along with the proportion of cancellations and other performance data on our website. This transparency will go a long way to help us build trust with our customers and identify pinch points on the network.

“LNER is well-placed to improve connectivity to and from Aberdeen with a number of regular services between Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Leeds and London King's Cross each day.” Eastern Airways has been based at Aberdeen Airport since 1997 and since

then has been constantly adapting to meet the connectivity requirements of the area.

“It is most recognisable as a specialist provider of fixed-wing flights for the oil and gas sector. Roger Hage, Eastern Airways’ general manager commercial and operations, said: “As the leader in delivering charter flight solutions which integrate with offshore helicopter operations servicing energy companies, our services are tailored to the specific requirements of the ever-evolving sector in the UK or Europe.

“Whether it’s a corporate shuttle contract service, ad-hoc requirement or even a change-over of ships’ crews, Aberdeen remains a prime location for such requirements given its location and pivotal role in the offshore support sector particularly,” he said.

“This specialised support for Northern and Central North Sea activity has also been reflected in our network of scheduled services.”

He said that after 20 years as an independent operator Eastern Airways became a Flybe franchise partner in 2017, which enables it to

sell its services through Flybe’s global distribution channels.

Eastern’s network in Aberdeen complements Flybe’s and covers the length and breadth of the UK. “Both the oil and gas sectors in the North Sea are dynamic environments with continual evolution, added to the wider business markets, so we continue to adapt our business to provide the required regional air connectivity and specialist tailored provision,” added Roger.

“We also managing the challenges of increasing operating costs such as fuel, carbon offset, airport passenger duty (APD) and regulatory requirements. These challenge all operators on an increasing scale which ultimately challenges regional air service sustainability in particular.”



# On track for success

**THE Aberdeen-Inverness Improvement Project, which is funded by the Scottish Government, will reduce journey times and increase capacity on the route between the two cities. Delivered in stages, the project will deliver incremental benefits throughout the life of the scheme. This month sees the start of an important phase of works to deliver significant benefits to the economy and local communities.**

## Benefits

This summer's work builds on the successful closure of the line between May - August 2018, which saw the completion of the first phase of double-tracking between Aberdeen and Dyce.

Upon completion of the project in August 2019, passengers will be able to benefit from the following enhancements:

- Redoubled track between Aberdeen and Inverurie allowing for increased connectivity and service frequency
- Upgraded signalling infrastructure on the route
- Platform extensions at Inch and Elgin to support the introduction of longer High-speed Trains (HSTs)
- A new and fully accessible station at Forres
- Increased services that call at Inverurie Monday to Friday will increase from 45 to 76, with similar improvements on Saturday
- An improved cross-city service, with 27 trains per day between Inverurie, Dyce, Stonehaven and Montrose. This includes an additional direct morning peak service from Montrose to Dyce and Inverurie

## Engineering challenges

The project is a major engineering undertaking. Currently, the Aberdeen to Inverness line is approximately 108 miles long and is primarily single track with passing loops. Once the line is re-opened in August 2019, the project will have added 16 miles of new track, 19 bridge improvements, including major strengthening work on the Don Viaduct; and capacity for a future new station at Kintore.

## Impact of works

In order to deliver the proposed improvements, there will inevitably be disruption to services. From May 4 to August 19 the line will close to allow engineers to double the track between Dyce and Inverurie, carry out bridge upgrades and deliver signalling enhancements. Some of this will include night-time work to minimise the disruption to rail services. During the disruption the following replacement bus services will be in place:

**May 4 - June 14:** Replacement bus between Dyce and Inverurie

**June 15 - August 9:** Replacement bus between Dyce and Huntly

**August 10 - August 12:** Replacement bus between Aberdeen and Inverness

**August 13 - August 19:** Replacement bus between Aberdeen and Huntly

## Local community and business engagement

We're committed to working with businesses and residents. Wherever possible we have been highlighting new business opportunities arising from the project works. Our project team has been delivering letters and leaflets with details of all the current

and upcoming work to every home in the area affected by the ongoing works. Our Inverurie Compound is open on the first Tuesday of every month for any enquiries, supplementing our public meetings and regular meetings with local elected representatives and community councils.

## Safety first

The Aberdeen-Inverness Improvement Project has a partnership with Aberdeen Football Club's Community Trust to promote rail safety to young people. The British Transport Police will work with the partnership to help deliver rail safety messages, which will be rolled-out through the Community Trust's programme of holiday football camps and its extensive schools football curriculum. The Trust programme works with 13 partner schools and will engage with around 20,000 children and young players, helping to raise awareness of the dangers the railway can pose.

## Further information

For any comments or questions regarding the project, please contact our **24-hr Network Rail national helpline** on **03457 11 41 41**

You can also submit any questions or queries by email to **aberdeeninverness@networkrail.co.uk**

For the latest information, you can follow us on Twitter **@NetworkRailA21**

Or go to our website: **[www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/scotland/aberdeen-inverness-improvements/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/scotland/aberdeen-inverness-improvements/)**







# Duty free?

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



**WHEN it comes to our global connectivity, the ability of Aberdeen International Airport to attract and retain routes is paramount. We've heard some challenging news on this over the preceding months, with two key London routes withdrawn by operators.**

The airport team is working incredibly hard to ensure that these routes are replaced with attractive alternatives and that further routes are created for both business and leisure users. A clear example being the new Aberdeen to London Southend route, operated by Loganair and starting this month, which will see three new flights per day to the capital.

Current circumstances highlight that the aviation market continues to be ruthlessly competitive and, in this context, Scotland's respective governments need to take the right steps to encourage route development. At our latest roundtable with Derek Mackay MSP, cabinet secretary for finance at the Scottish Government, our focus was on upping the pace of reform across key areas for firms in the North-east, whether that was business rates or connectivity.

On aviation, our core ask to the cabinet secretary was that the Scottish Government move ahead rapidly on

Air Departure Tax (ADT) devolution. Currently, Air Passenger Duty (APD) is a duty charged per passenger on air travel, which increases based on distance, administered by the UK Government. As part of ongoing devolution, the Scottish Government were due to take control of this tax but this was delayed in the November 2017 Budget. Since then, there's been little clarity on a clear timescale to devolve the tax. The delay is driven by ongoing dispute between the UK and Scottish Governments on an exemption to the tax which applies across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, linked to EU State Aid rules.

So no surprises, a classic case of administrative headaches and bureaucracy when two governments clash but why is it important? Well, the Scottish Government has a long-held commitment to reduce ADT to 50% of the current rate immediately upon devolution and to abolish the tax completely once this becomes affordable.

There are some clear benefits from doing so. Analysis from Airlines UK indicates that reducing the rate of this tax would contribute significantly to the viability of routes, and a range of lost routes could have been saved if APD was not in place. In a September 2018 paper, the trade body suggest

that 65 new routes could become viable once the tax was abolished, several flying direct from Aberdeen.

The analysis also explored lost routes in a variety of circumstances, finding that potentially all would've been saved if APD was not in operation. If we want the Aberdeen city region to be an exporting hub for energy expertise and to diversify its economy into new growth sectors it's absolutely vital that we have a strong regional airport to deliver the connectivity our businesses and trading partners expect. Cutting and eventually abolishing this tax would immediately make a range of routes more viable, acting as a substantial boost to connectivity.

It's for this reason that the Chamber, working with our partners across the Scottish and British Chambers networks, will continue to press the Scottish and UK Governments to constructively work through this dispute. Who knows, once we see this barrier to route development removed, you could say the sky's the limit...



# Leading from the top

by Murray Whittaker,  
director of projects UK and Mexico,  
Whittaker Engineering Ltd



**HOW to manage? When considering how to manage we first have to think about what it is we need to achieve? In the past, the most common style of management was to bend people to the will of an individual manager and there are still many who think this style is the best and only way.**

Times are changing and the modern employee looks for more from an employer or manager than just the next order or instruction. Strong management and leadership are the key but it is more based on human interaction, maybe a story with a business philosophy, than a direct command. Asking people if they will do something instead of telling them to do it is a better approach. In short, management needs to find a middle ground with staff to help pave the way to making things work for all.

At Whittaker we have an interesting history. This September we are 36 years in business and some of the staff have been with us from the start. We have more than five employees who are 30 plus years in service. Our business has organically grown so we

have maintained a family feel. We have 11 sets of families working within our 130 staff at our Stonehaven base.

Without falling into the obvious and often repeated cliché that 'it's all about people', it is all about people - human capital is what ultimately defines a business. It is important to ensure that your people, a precious resource, are treated with respect and humility. In our opinion this is the only way to get the best from people, thus benefitting the business.

Simple things like leading by example and doing the right thing is important. The definition of integrity is 'doing the right thing even when no one is looking'. Attributes like this, among other things, like commitment to training and loyalty which we see as a two-way street, help to ensure a long and sustainable legacy for a company or organisation.

For us at Whittaker, being human and talking openly with the staff at all levels seems to work to ensure the right balance between being relaxed enough to chat but formal enough to

push for a deadline when it is required.

Our commitment to continuously train apprentices, around four per year, gives a really unique dynamic to the day to day running of the business. This is because the young people bring fresh blood and fresh and new ideas to the organisation which works as a good mix with some of the older staff. One of our team who is well into his sixties commented that the young people starting every year help him stay and feel young.

There is no 'silver bullet' or bespoke training that can be done to be a good, effective, well-liked manager. I believe it is a combination of factors - the most important being to treat people as you would wish to be treated. It is also important to give a little of yourself as this is vital for a day to day healthy working relationship.



# Ticket to ride

**IF YOU'VE ever been to Aberdeen International Airport you've likely spotted the Jet 727 bus service operated by Stagecoach. The frequent bus service from the city centre to Aberdeen International Airport has grown from strength to strength over the past five years and now operates up to every 10 minutes Monday to Friday and every 20-30 minutes on Saturday and Sunday.**

The buses feature leather seats, free wi-fi, USB charging and luggage racks so they make for a hassle free trip to the airport. In June 2017 the service was recognised at the Scottish Transport Awards winning the title of 'Best Bus Service in Scotland'.

The opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) created the opportunity for the local bus operator to enhance the bus connections available to the airport with the introduction of two brand new services connecting to the airport from across Aberdeenshire and Angus.

Service 747 offers a new link across Aberdeenshire and Angus hourly between Montrose and Ellon using the AWPR. The service operates

from Montrose to Stonehaven before serving Kingswells Park and Ride and Aberdeen Airport. The service continues to Ellon and some journeys extend to Cruden Bay and Peterhead.

Service 757 provides a direct link to the airport from Portlethen and Newtonhill. The 757 service operates hourly throughout most of the day, seven days a week, and also stops at Kingswells Park and Ride.

Both of the new bus services welcomed their first passengers in January and operate by low-floor easy access buses fitted with contactless payment facilities and live bus tracking available to customers through the Stagecoach mobile app.

Kingswells Park and Ride is benefitting from both of the new bus services and, as a result, journeys from the popular site to the airport are available by bus up to every 30 minutes, seven days a week.

David Liston, managing director of Stagecoach North Scotland, said: "We are delighted to have introduced two new services to our Aberdeenshire network. In our autumn timetable

consultation we received a lot of support for the new service 747 providing a direct bus connection to the airport. On reviewing consultation feedback from residents in Newtonhill and Portlethen we were able to identify a solution that means these communities are also connected to the airport. We look forward to welcoming both old and new customers on board our new services."

Steve Szalay, managing director of Aberdeen International Airport, said: "The new Stagecoach links allow our passengers from both the north and south of the city to arrive at the airport quickly and easily. The improved connectivity that the 747 and 757 buses bring mean that passengers can get their trip off to the best possible start."

Derick Murray, director of Nestrans, said: "We are delighted to see the bus services taking advantage of exactly what the AWPR was built for, improving cross-city journey times for the towns in Aberdeenshire. Providing a sustainable travel option from these towns will help to keep traffic free-flowing which will also improve air quality in and around the city."





## Fare examples

**Day return ticket:**

**Kingswells P&R – Airport - £3.80**

(zone 1 dayrider)

**Stonehaven or Ellon – Airport - £8.80**

(zone 3 dayrider)

**7 days travel:**

**Stonehaven/Ellon - Airport - £26.75**

(zone 3, 7 day megarider)



Host **Dougie Vipond**, Macphie corporate relations manager **Joanna Fraser** with Rural Employer award by **Anthony Stodart**, managing director of sponsor ArdMoore

## Double celebration for Macphie

ABERDEENSHIRE-based food ingredient manufacturer Macphie is celebrating after winning two awards at different events on the same night.

The company was recognised as employer of the year at the Scottish Rural Awards in Edinburgh and collected an award for one of its newest products at the North East Scotland Food Awards in Aberdeen.

The Rural Employer award in Edinburgh acknowledged Macphie's efforts to actively seek to attract, invest in, retain and reward talent. The Best Foodservice Product award in Aberdeen recognised Macphie's development of the first vegan-certified cake mix range for use by industry professionals both in the UK and internationally.

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## Xodus study reveals potential £59m saving

A CONCEPT study and Front End Engineering Design (FEED) project carried out by Xodus Group has determined that a North Sea operator will save up to £59m by adopting a Not Normally Attended (NNA) status ahead of decommissioning the field.

The North Sea field recently completed well plugging and abandonment (P&A) programmes for two platforms. A third platform is not due to commence for at least two years and although it operated as a manned facility, it ceased production several years ago.

The operator required support to convert the platform to a minimum facilities asset which would significantly reduce abandonment support costs over a six-year period until the final decommissioning programme commences.

Xodus initiated a concept study in October 2017 which was closely followed by a FEED project in December 2017. The transition of the platform to NNA status has now been completed.

## Business confidence dips in Scotland

OVERALL business confidence in Scotland fell eight points during March to -3%, according to the latest Business Barometer from Bank of Scotland Commercial Banking.

Companies in Scotland, surveyed between March 1 and March 15, reported lower confidence in their own business prospects at 10%, compared with 17% in February. When combined with their views on the economy overall, this gives an overall confidence figure of -3%.

Across the UK, overall confidence climbed six points to 10% as firms' optimism about the economy and their confidence in their own prospects bounced back from February's lows.

British companies' confidence in their own business prospects rose seven points to 20% but firms were evenly split on whether they feel optimistic or pessimistic about the economy.



## Donation to Brick by Brick appeal by Aberdeen group

A COMMUNICATIONS group has made a donation to help build a new wing for Scotland's only specialist neurological centre.

Jasmine, which is based in East Tullos, raised £1,000 from staff quiz nights, individual donations and auctions to support the Sue Ryder Dee View Court appeal.

Jasmine, which employs 40 people, is an Aberdeen-based communication business engaged in marketing, advertising, PR, print, digital media, emergency media response and document management solutions.

The donation will pay towards a 'brick' to help build an additional twenty more specially adapted bedrooms at the charity's Aberdeen-based neurological care centre.

## Wood's work to reduce carbon emissions

WOOD has been awarded a prestigious multi-million-dollar contract by the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative Climate Investments (OGCI CI) to provide conceptual engineering for its gas power and industrial carbon capture conceptual design work.

Effective immediately, Wood will lead this first-of-a-kind project which aims to reduce CO2 emissions. The industrial carbon capture design will initially cover five of the principal industrial emitters of CO2: the production of hydrogen, fertiliser, petrochemicals, cement and steel.

## Norvite invests £375,000 in state-of-the-art equipment

A SUPPLIER of specialist animal feed and supplements for the Scottish livestock industry is boosting its capacity with support from Clydesdale Bank. Norvite Animal Nutrition Company Ltd has used its £375,000 asset finance package from the bank to acquire a new state-of-the-art mobile milling machine which will enhance delivery of its food products to clients in pig and poultry farming.

This kind of technology is used to mix feed for the animals of farming clients at their own premises and to their own exact requirements.

The new purchase is expected to improve the business' output by up to 30%, significantly increasing Norvite's capacity to service its clients across the UK, as well as lowering business costs which were previously tied to the maintenance of older machinery.



Alan Turner

## Call for tax simplification

The majority of SME and mid-market businesses in Scotland are planning to grow in 2019 but most struggle to see the value of tax relief in driving that growth, according to new research from KPMG.

While 96% of businesses are predicting to grow at least 5% for the year ahead, less than one in three (29%) see the tax system as a key driver, highlighting the need for a better understanding of current tax reliefs and incentives on offer.

KPMG's Backing Business Growth survey covered 1,000 small to medium-sized enterprises across the UK to explore attitudes towards the tax system. Alan Turner, head of tax for KPMG in Scotland, said: "Understanding how well the tax system is working for SME and Mid-Market businesses - the engine-room of the Scottish economy - could not be more important, especially as we move towards a post-Brexit economy."

## Aberdeen to host world championships

CURL Aberdeen is to host the World Mixed Curling Championship 2019 from October 12-19. A year ago the venue hosted the World Junior Curling Championships. This is one of two world curling championships being held in Scotland in the 2019-2020 season. The LGT World Men's Curling Championship 2020 will be played in Glasgow's Emirates Arena from March 28 to April 5.

The World Mixed Curling Championship is an open entry event, for the World Curling Federation's 61 member associations. Mixed curling consists of two female and two male athletes - with no alternate - and follows the same rules as 'traditional' curling except games will be played up to a maximum of eight ends.

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# Keeping the region connected

**CONNECTIVITY with London is a pressing issue for commerce in Aberdeen and the North-east, with business people often facing a challenge to get to the UK capital at a time that suits their schedule.**

The situation worsened when easyJet's withdrawal from its Aberdeen-Gatwick service at the start of February was followed two months later by Flybe/Eastern Airways scrapping of the Aberdeen-Newcastle-London City route.

In addition, the oil and gas industry in particular was hit by the unfortunate demise of flybmi, which meant the end of that airline's services to Bristol, Oslo and Esbjerg.

Loganair was acutely aware of the reduced options for the city's business community and has now stepped into the gaps left behind by these losses.

Scotland's Airline was pleased to recently announce that it was launching a new route from Aberdeen to London Southend.

This means that the Granite City will have three non-stop flights to London Southend each way every weekday from May 12, including a morning 'red-eye' service, all operated by Embraer 145 regional jet aircraft. There is also a Sunday service.

The schedule is designed to enable a full working day in the capital before an evening flight home.

Journey time is just one hour and 35 minutes from Aberdeen – followed by a speedy 53-minute train service from Southend Airport's own railway station directly into central London's Liverpool Street.

The schedule is designed to offer maximum flexibility for passengers regardless of their requirements – whether that's a one-day return, overnight stop or a longer visit. It will also be attractive to business or leisure customers from South-East England wishing to come to the North-East.

It should be highlighted that Southend has been voted the UK's Best Airport three times, perfectly complementing Loganair's recently-earned European Airline of the Year accolade.

Loganair has also stepped in to secure the three key air routes to Bristol, Oslo and Esbjerg so important to Aberdeen-based oil and gas companies, considerably expanding the airline's presence at Aberdeen International Airport.

The first time Loganair has ever flown to Denmark will provide daily weekday rotations between Aberdeen and Esbjerg, departing the North East at 10.20am, and arriving one hour and 20 minutes later. The return flight goes airborne at 1.15pm.

Six services per week are also offered to Oslo, Norway's capital, on weekdays and Sunday, with an early 9.30am flight on Mondays and a 1.40pm trip scheduled for the remaining five days – another new destination for Loganair.

Customers can travel with Loganair to Bristol six days per week, excluding Saturdays, with two southbound services now scheduled each Sunday.

Lead-in fares to Oslo begin at £99.90, at £48.00 to Esbjerg and £69.99 one-way to Bristol. All tickets include 20kg of complimentary hold luggage and passengers are eligible to join Loganair's loyalty programme, Clan Loganair.

Fares start from £49.99 from Aberdeen to London Southend. Loganair will be the only airline flying to London whose fares all include a 20kg checked baggage allowance and complimentary in-flight service.

Tickets can be booked online at [www.loganair.co.uk](http://www.loganair.co.uk) or by calling **0344 800 2855**



## Start the journey to a tourism Oscar

EAT On The Green and Meldrum House Country Hotel and Golf Course have both been successful at the Scottish Thistle Awards, the nation's tourism Oscars

Eat On The Green picked up the national award for best eating experience, while Meldrum House was named most hospitable hotel. There was also special commendation in the best cultural event or festival for street art festival Nuart.

Now other operators and individuals have the chance to follow suit by entering the Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Awards (ACSTA). The scheme acts as a regional final of the Scottish Thistle Awards, meaning that local winners go on to represent the area nationally.

The annual awards aim to highlight businesses and individuals which are helping the tourism sector to thrive, attracting visitors to the area and ensuring best possible standards of customer service.

There are 16 categories in this year's awards which look at every element of the tourism industry from accommodation and food to festivals and partnership initiatives. There are also individual awards for those who go the extra mile for visitors.

The awards are suitable for businesses of all sizes, for independent operators as well as venues which operate as part of a chain. There is no cost to enter and the application process involves answering only three questions.

## Ellon Energy efficiency initiative

AN INNOVATIVE project has launched in a bid to make a North-east town one of Scotland's most energy efficient.

Energy Efficient Ellon (EEE) is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Aberdeen-based social enterprise, Scarf, and aims to bridge the knowledge gap stopping owner occupiers from making improvements to the efficiency of their property.

By offering a bespoke free and impartial advice service and access to government loan funding and a trusted trader database, home owners can be supported to make changes recommended on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to bring their home in line with the Scottish Government's target of all Scottish residential properties having an EPC rating of 'C' or better by 2040.

# Top Tweets

A month in social media



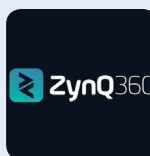
**David Horne**  
@DavidHorne

Good to have the opportunity to meet Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber member businesses today and talk about the benefits @LNER's Azuma trains will bring, and discuss the need for journey time improvements Aberdeen-Edinburgh with @transcotland.



**chambertalk** @chambertalk

Constructive meeting today between Chamber members and Bill Reeve, director of rail at @transcotland. Significant progress already across the region's rail network, but important that business sees a clear path to improved journey times to the central belt.



**ZynQ 360**  
@ZynQ360

📢 We are proud to announce that we have officially become part of the @chambertalk Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce !! 🤝  
For more information, please visit our website at [bit.ly/ZynQ360VAM](http://bit.ly/ZynQ360VAM) #digitaltwin #digitaltrasformation #innovation #technology #ZynQ360



**The Picky Fork**  
@pickyfork

RT @EconDevAbshire: Excellent, thought-provoking discussion on the massive problem of single use plastic in the #food and #drink industry at today's #shireconnections sponsored by @Aberdeenshire Council and hosted by @AGCCevents @chambertalk



Join the conversation

@chambertalk



# Focused on the future

**NESTRANS is the Regional Transport Partnership for the North-east of Scotland with a statutory duty to produce and deliver a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) to set the vision and direction for transport in the region for the next 20 years.**

The first RTS received Ministerial approval in 2008 and was subsequently updated in 2013. It contained significant infrastructure investment proposals for both roads and railway as well as actions for public transport and active travel. There has been considerable progress in delivering these infrastructure improvements in recent years, in partnership with Transport Scotland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and amounting to over a billion pounds of investment in the transport network.

**This has included:**

- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- Dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tippetty
- A new bridge over the railway at Inveramsay enabling the removal of the single-track signalled section of the A96
- A third crossing of the River Don by the construction of the Diamond Bridge
- Airport Link Road and Craibstone Park and Ride site;
- Reopening the station at Laurencekirk in 2009
- Re-doubling of the Aberdeen to Inverurie railway line to enable much higher frequency of train service
- Introduction of a new cross Aberdeen local rail service between Montrose and Inverurie
- A large number of active travel projects
- Maintenance of roads and bridges on the strategic road network
- Upgrades of Peterhead and Fraserburgh bus stations, improvements at other interchanges and extension

of Ellon Park and Ride site

- Improved information for bus passengers both at-stop and through mobile phone apps

**Alongside these achievements, works are also underway with commitment to construction for:**

- A new railway station at Kintore which is now under construction
- A grade-separated junction on the A90 at Laurencekirk
- Haudagain roundabout improvements
- Dualling the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness
- Aberdeen to central belt railway journey time reductions
- Upgraded access to the new Aberdeen South Harbour.

**Non-infrastructure achievements include:**

- The creation of the multi-partner Getabout group to promote sustainable travel and behaviour change
- Launch of the multi-operator smart Grasshopper bus ticket
- The Health and Transport Action Plan ensuring collaboration with NHS Grampian
- A number of pre-project studies to make the case for improvements
- Lobbying at Scottish and UK level for improvements to air and rail travel to improve connectivity to and from the North-east





**The private sector has also made significant contributions to improving our transport offering through a number of major improvements including:**

- Extension to Aberdeen International Airport runway
- Extension to Aberdeen International Airport terminal
- Improvements at Aberdeen, Peterhead and Fraserburgh harbours
- Introduction of a new airport bus services, 727 with new buses and the recently introduced 747 & 757 services
- New buses introduced on the Buchan corridor routes amongst others

**Further developments are underway including:**

- Construction of a new South Harbour at Nigg Bay in Aberdeen
- Refurbished trains to be introduced on the Scottish inter-city routes
- New trains to be introduced on the Aberdeen to London route

**Therefore, by the turn of the decade the North-east will have achieved some significant benefits from these interventions. These include:**

- Reduced journey times across the region and reduced times to and from Aberdeen
- Significant savings on the Peterhead/ Fraserburgh/ Ellon journey times for both bus and car users
- Congestion at hotspots such as around the airport and Kirkhill Industrial Estate significantly reduced
- A cross-Aberdeen rail service enabling enhanced frequencies on the train service (including doubling

the number of trains calling at the smaller stations)

- Bus services from some Aberdeenshire towns direct to the airport (and surrounding employment areas)

A significant proportion of the current Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) will have been achieved and it is felt that the time is now right to look ahead to the next 20 years, building on the investment that has already been made and shifting the focus from infrastructure investment to thinking about how we are going to make best use of the infrastructure we have now put in place and to put greater emphasis on issues such as climate change, equality, health and technology.

When considering whether there is a need for further transport improvements, we need to consider the region's aspirations for growth. In the past, economic growth has generally meant a greater transport demand and subsequent increases in car travel, congestion and pollution. The next RTS will however need to strongly address the challenge of achieving this growth whilst also achieving a cleaner, quieter, more pleasant city centre. A reduction in traffic will be required in order to achieve this. There is also a need to take into account the national and global agenda and consider what the region is prepared to do to address issues such as climate change, improving health by cutting pollutants from vehicles and making walking and cycling more attractive options.

There is therefore an argument that the need for a strategy to bring all these issues together towards an agreed approach is stronger than ever. To feed into this process, we are exploring in more detail issues around demand management, rural accessibility and looking at best practice case studies from comparable city regions across the UK and further afield to see how successful city regions have achieved mode shift and improved quality of life.





**“When considering whether there is a need for further transport improvements, we need to consider the region’s aspirations for growth”**

**Rab Dickson**  
*acting director, Nestrans*

New and emerging technologies will almost certainly play a key role and, whilst it is difficult to predict how new technology will change transport and how we travel around, both the UK and Scottish Governments agree that petrol and diesel cars will need to be phased out. Our strategy will need to be flexible enough to embrace the evolution of technologies and place the North-east at the forefront of emerging fuel technologies. It should also be ambitious in envisaging how technology can facilitate changes to how we access and pay for travel and how it can help to promote the provision of transport in both urban and rural areas.

We are just at the start of this process and keen to give stakeholders, businesses and the public the opportunity to be involved in and shape the directions of the next RTS which will guide transport investment in the region over the next 20 years. It is also an opportunity to help shape the national transport agenda with the development of

a National Transport Strategy which is being carried out by the Scottish Government in 2019. This will be followed by a Strategic Transport Projects Review which will direct transport investment across the country for the next two decades. Identifying our regional transport priorities will enable us to feed into this national review and ensure that the North-east is given fair representation at the national level.

The vision of the next RTS is ‘to provide a cleaner, more resilient, inclusive and accessible transport system in the North-east, which contributes to improved quality of life through healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities’. The new strategy will be structured around four key pillars each with equal weighting and which provide a common link to the National Transport Strategy:


- Helping the North-east economy prosper
- Improving health and wellbeing across the North-east
- Taking action to reduce impact on climate change
- Promoting equality across the North-east

We will be working with partners during 2019 to develop our policies under each of these headings and welcome input from businesses and communities in this process. We have established a website which will be the focus of all our consultation and engagement activities on the developing strategy and would encourage all members of the Chamber to visit [nestrans2040.org.uk](http://nestrans2040.org.uk) to provide opinion and comment to help influence the long term vision for transport in the North-east.

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



Covering

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

Attended by

**951**  
people in North-east  
businesses



**5 Wed**

1 day

### **Motivation and Delegation**

Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation

**6 Thu**

1 day

### **BCC Letters of Credit – Methods of Payment**

Ensure your letter of credit is not rejected and compare payment methods

**6 Thu**

1/2 day

### **Digital Transformation for Leaders**

Learn how to future-proof your business

**6 Thu**

1/2 day

### **Blockchain and Cryptocurrency 101**

Introduction to blockchain technology, cryptocurrency and decentralisation

**11 Tue**

1 day

### **Business Development Accelerator**

Develop a powerful sales structure that will drive results

**12 Wed**

1 day

### **HR Business Partner – Masterclass**

Explore key HR topics and feel confident taking HR to the next level

**12 Wed**

1 day

### **Improve your Professional Confidence**

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

**13 Thu**

1/2 day

### **Understanding the Oil and Gas Industry**

Gain an understanding of the basics of oil and gas production and processing

**19 Wed**

1 day

### **Boost your Sales Success**

Maximise your sales success to attract new business and open new doors

**19 Wed**

1 day

### **HR for Non-HR Managers**

Understand the responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements

**20 Thu**

1 day

### **Essential Supervisory Skills**

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

**21 Fri**

1 day

### **Customs Declaration Training**

Learn to meet customs requirements fast and efficiently after the UK leaves the EU

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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)



# July

- 2 Tue**  
1 day  
**Essential Supervisory Skills**  
Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks
- 2 Tue**  
1 day  
**Customer Service Excellence**  
Learn the techniques to excel at customer service
- 3 Wed**  
1 day  
**Supervisors Next Steps**  
Improve techniques and develop new areas of awareness and understanding
- 3 Wed**  
1 day  
**Building Effective Teams**  
Understand what makes a great team and learn how to build one
- 3 Wed**  
1/2 day  
**BCC INCO Terms**  
Understand benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers
- 3 Wed**  
1/2 day  
**HM Revenue and Customs END Use Awareness**  
Take advantage of Shipwork End Use (END) system and navigate the rules
- 4 Thu**  
1 day  
**Dealing with Difficult Situations**  
Understand the variety of personalities and determine how to alter your approach for each
- 4 Thu**  
1/2 day  
**Taking Notes & Minutes**  
Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes
- 4 Thu**  
1/2 day  
**Resilience, Survive and Thrive**  
Explore the benefits of managing stress



**3**

Learn how to build a strong team



**17-18**

Take the next step in your management career

- 17 - 18**  
2 day  
**Advanced Management Skills**  
Grow as a manager and improve the performance of your team

# August

- 13 Tue**  
1 day  
**BCC Export Documentation Explained**  
Understand what is involved in documentation to save time and money
- 14 Wed**  
1 day  
**Personal Effectiveness**  
Improve your self-management by changing the way you work
- 15 Thu**  
1 day  
**Assertiveness at Work**  
Clearly communicate your point of view without causing conflict



The Chamber hosted a wide-ranging session with Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work Derek McKay on March 22, discussing business rates reform, transport, additional powers for city regions and business preparations for Brexit.

Constructive meeting between Chamber members and Bill Reeve, director of rail at Transport Scotland, on April 9 to discuss progress already across the region's rail network and the path to improved journey times.



The Visit Aberdeenshire Tourism Conference saw over 200 people gather at the Music Hall on March 20 to hear about the importance of advocacy and intermediaries to the growth of our visitor economy. Speakers included Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop.

Plastic in the food and drink industry was under the spotlight at the last Shire Connections event which took place at Barra Barn on March 26.



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**Brian Menzies,**  
*director, XS Resources Ltd*

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

XS Resources is a community interest, not-for-profit company, based in Stonehaven. We noticed that many businesses and organisations had working IT equipment sitting in cupboards and stock rooms, the equipment was no longer needed but nobody wanted to see it go to waste when it could benefit others. In partnership with Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) and Re-Tek UK Ltd we collect your unwanted equipment, data-wipe it and re-sell it, with items that cannot be re-sold being responsibly recycled.

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

XS Resources is new and with the unusual nature of the IT collection service we are providing it is so important to work imaginatively to market the service. A challenge is that for most of our target companies, disposing of old IT equipment is a low priority. Our work is a demonstrator of a circular economy project, the latter possibly being something which many readers have read about, but where there is not then a lot of clarity about what this actually means. We deliver on this, by extending the life of valuable resources (PCs, servers, laptops etc) and creating economic opportunity in the process.

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

I don't know if it is a hard lesson but one of the most important is how I think about and manage communication - the importance of being a good/better listener and to be comfortable letting

everyone have their say.

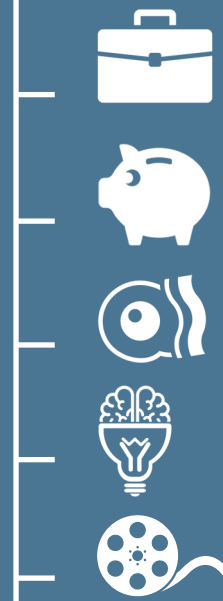
Also, in terms of how I communicate, emails have obviously become an indispensable tool for many, if not most of us, but too often in the past I sent these when a phone call or face to face meeting would have been infinitely more effective and rewarding. I can think of very few instances when I have regretted discussing projects, proposals etc face to face, and wished that I had done it by email.

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

The importance of 'intellectual capital' in a business venture and how money in the bank can be less important. It sounds a little pompous but this was advice given back in 1998 from a chance encounter with a chap who owned and built a large, multi-national food company. It helped me think through new business ideas I was struggling with, but coming up with barriers, too often associated with a lack of funding. So, instead of worrying about this I decided to slum it for a year, did a masters to build my knowledge/understanding in a new field that I was passionate about, and haven't looked back.

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

Helping to secure funding for a number of rural development projects in Ghana while working there in the 1990s, which were set up and operational before I came back to Scotland. I had a facilitative role and the processes I used were to help various local communities identify their preferred projects, and to understand how they might be self-sustaining.



# Quick fire round

**What was your first job?**

Design and development engineer.

**When would you like to retire?**

Age 70 feels like it might be an ok point to start doing a bit less.

**What did you have for breakfast?**

Porridge, made from milk, drizzled with honey - god's own dish.

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

Nelson Mandela and Rickard Hawkins are two people, in very different worlds, who have come through hardship with humility and an amazing sense of humour.

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

'Poverty Safari' by Darren McGarvey. Fascinating views from a man with a perspective/honesty which I have rarely come across.

# Bringing connectivity and technology to the fore

**AS WE head further into the 21st century, it's clear to many that in today's world, congestion, pollution and environmental sustainability are challenges that we all have to consider when meeting the ever-changing demands of business and the consumers that they serve.**

At First Aberdeen, our network is key in providing the city and its population with a sustainable transport system that offers real travel solutions in an increasingly congested world. For example, one full bus has the capability of removing 75 cars from our city's roads, thereby reducing congestion. At present, our fleet of 176 buses travel over 16m miles each year, all delivered by a team of nearly 500 staff dedicated to keeping Aberdeen moving.

Connectivity and technology development are at the forefront of making our services easier to use than ever before for our customers. First Aberdeen was the very first operating company within our business to introduce contactless payments across our fleet of buses and, such was its success, we became the first major bus operator to extend this facility to its entire UK fleet. As well as offering customers more payment methods, contactless travel also delivers operational benefits to our business through reduced dwell times

at bus stops and, in turn, faster journey times across our network.

On the back of this success, First Aberdeen is once again leading the way through a planned trial of contactless payment capping scheduled for June, which will automatically charge customers the best value price for their journeys with a simple tap. First Aberdeen has made a commitment, through continued development of contactless payments and our ticket range, that 80% of all journeys made on our network are done so on a cashless basis by 2022.

Our Commuter Travel Club is another way in which we work with local employers to make bus a realistic choice for more of the population. The club can offer a tailored package to employers and their workforce that encourages them to ditch the car and catch the bus.

We've also made journey planning and M-ticket purchases easy to do through a combined smartphone app, which gives customers the confidence to plan for and buy their journeys in advance while on the move. The app now also gives customers real time bus information on a stop by stop basis through interaction with GPS data provided from the ticket machines across the network. Further journey planning enhancements within the

app to take the consumer experience to the next level are planned for the future, including live bus tracking on a map overlay basis.

Exploring alternative fuels plays an important part of our commitment to delivering our services in an environmentally sustainable manner. With plans for an Aberdeen Low Emission Zone already taking shape, business and industry needs to work together and do more to tackle the issues of traffic congestion and air quality.

We're always looking at ways to provide services that are kinder to the environment. Through successful partnership working with Aberdeen City Council, we currently operate four buses that use hydrogen fuel cell technology. Both buses reduce carbon emissions and air pollution by only emitting water vapour. They also deliver a quieter and smoother journey to customers. Talks are currently ongoing to look at an extension to this, taking the Aberdeen hydrogen bus project to the next level within the partnership through further fleet investment.

While we're excited about what the next phase of the hydrogen bus project will bring, advancement of traditional engine technology is also playing a key role in our efforts





to make our services kinder to the environment. Indeed, all brand new combustion engine buses are now fitted with the very latest Euro VI ultra-low emission engine technology, making them cleaner to run and compliant with the strict standards that low emission zones demand.

We're always willing to look at alternative fuel options and work in partnership with local stakeholders to achieve a more sustainable future. For example, we're about to embark on a trial in Glasgow which will bring into service, the first large passenger electric buses. The trial, which is in partnership with SP Energy Networks, will also future proof depot infrastructure in preparation for more widespread electric bus operation.

Changes in attitude to environmental sustainability and advancements in technology make it an exciting time to be part of a forward-thinking transport industry. Bus travel has an important part to play in our journey towards a better connected, cleaner, greener Aberdeen that can be enjoyed by future generations of the city.

As an employer of choice and one of the largest employers in the region, we're in the process of challenging the common perception that a career in the bus industry is only for men. One of the areas we have already

made an impact on this is through our driver recruitment programme. We no longer look to recruit bus drivers who then need to be trained in customer service skills – we now recruit employees with a proven customer service background who we simply teach how to drive a bus.

To redress gender imbalance within First Aberdeen, we're encouraging more women to come and talk to us and find out more about the various roles that we offer and the doors that it can open for them in terms of a fulfilling career within the transport industry. We recently held an event on March 8 to mark International Women's Day, where attendees came along to try their hand at driving a training bus in a safe and controlled environment. The event was a huge success, so much so that we've recently welcomed the youngest female bus driver in Scotland to the team.

# The value of happy customers

by Ivan Franssen,  
*general manager,*  
Macdonald Norwood Hall Hotel



**ALTHOUGH the effects of the 2014 economic downturn were felt keenly by the tourism and hospitality sector across the North-east, as luxury experiences were squeezed from people's budgets, there are signs that the market is beginning to recover.**

My role has become more sales-focused as a result of the downturn, and we continue to seek innovative ways to maintain profit margins amidst the most challenging economic climate of my career.

I've worked as a general manager for Macdonald Hotels for 20 years, across a number of locations in Scotland. There was a time when mid-week business took care of itself and the weekends were the downtime. But we've had to become a lot better at selling leisure business recently - nowadays we focus quite heavily on the wedding and golf sectors, two important market segments for us. We host around 100 weddings a year and our menus and highly trained chefs are a key draw. We also have a huge focus on food, beverage and hospitality, highlighting the award-winning Tapestry restaurant and our use of fresh, seasonal and locally-

sourced ingredients.

Recruitment remains a challenge. I believe there is an industry-wide need to create a better work-life balance for the next generation of chefs and hoteliers - it's a rewarding industry in which to work but it's a high pressure environment, the hours can be antisocial and you need to be able to hit the ground running.

I thrive on having happy customers and providing exceptional levels of service, that's why I went into the business and I try to convey this passion to my team. I tend to adopt a traditional approach - I care a lot about the details; it's the small things that make the difference where customer service is concerned. I'm quite hands on and regularly do the rounds of the hotel, checking breakfast is running smoothly and so on. In the end, happy customers are my priority.

My marketing philosophy is to have everyone walking out of the front door of Norwood saying 'this place is fantastic' - if 99 out of 100 customers are singing our praises, that's worth a fortune. Potential clients are equally important - whether its couples

enquiring about wedding venues or companies scouting out conference facilities, we try to go get them in the door. Once they're here the venue sells itself. Then we go the extra mile to ensure they leave having had the best possible experience.

The recent investment projects across the North-east are all good news for the tourism and hospitality sector. Whether these are improvements in infrastructure, in the shape of the new bypass and the recent airport expansion, or in venues themselves such as the new events complex and the Art Gallery, all these things are fantastic for the city and help to sell the region as a destination.

Throughout the year our mid-week guests are generally business travellers but, between April and September, there is a marked increase in international guests and last summer we had more foreign tourists than ever with a clear growth in the golf market. Our conferences and meetings market has also more than doubled over the last two and half years, so demand seems to be picking up across a range of sectors.





## Maggie's Culture Crawl marches on

MAGGIE'S Aberdeen Centre is gearing up to host its third annual Culture Crawl on June 21, after the success of last year's walk with 500 walkers taking to the streets to raise over £115,000.

Each year the cancer support charity creates a new 10-mile route exploring some of Aberdeen's most iconic landmarks. With Aberdeen now leading in terms of both participation and fundraising across all 14 Culture Crawls held nationwide, Maggie's is looking to set the bar even higher.

Following the format of previous years, the route and locations will remain a closely guarded secret until the event. At each venue along the way, the participants will enjoy captivating cultural performances, live music, and delicious food options.



## Dean's draws away from its rivals

HUNTLY shortbread bakers Dean's is celebrating after success at the North East Scotland Food & Drink Awards where the company won the Best Retail Product award for its new Steven Brown Art Collector's Edition shortbread gift tin range.

Dean's brand manager Siobhan Ingram said: "A lot of hard work went into getting these tins to market. It's a team effort and everyone in the business will be justly proud of this achievement. Steven Brown and his team are a delight to work with and have shared our passion for this product range from the start."



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# The benefits of being direct

by **Lorraine Neish**,  
*export documentation team leader,*  
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of  
Commerce



**THE tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians, passed on from one generation to the next, says that when you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. In modern life however, a whole range of far more advanced strategies are often employed, such as changing riders, threatening the horse with termination, appointing a committee to study the horse, lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included, reclassifying the dead horse as 'living-impaired'...you get the idea.**

Sometimes however, the most direct action is the most efficient. Take Brexit for example. The powers that be keep finding alternative ideas and proposals, when what they should be doing is giving clarity to the businesses whose day to day activities depend on the outcome of the deal.

The Chamber is focused on providing the best practical, on-the-ground advice and services to our members to deal with the uncertainties caused by Brexit. UK manufacturers and traders currently enjoy free access to sell goods to EU countries without customs formalities and with minimal licencing requirements. Trade with EU member states is mostly the same as trading within the UK with minimal procedures. This, however, is different if you trade with the rest of the world where businesses are faced with

customs checks and procedures.

With the UK leaving the EU this status quo in customs arrangements will most likely change. But even if it doesn't, we are helping North-east businesses by adding to the suite of services we provide to make it even easier for organisations to trade with the world.

The Chamber's core export documentation services include Certificate of Origin, Arab British Certificates of Origin, preference certificates, Letters of Credit and we can also arrange for documents to be legalised either at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or at an embassy.

In addition to this, we have just been granted a licence to issue ATA Carnets. A temporary admission document, these documents act as a 'passport for goods' for three main categories of community status goods:

- **commercial samples**  
*(the ATA Carnet is a commercial document, and as such values shown must reflect the current retail value in the UK)*
- **goods for presentation or use at trade fairs, shows, exhibitions or similar events**
- **professional equipment**  
*(which is solely for use by, or under the personal supervision*

*of the holder or their nominated representative)*

Using an ATA Carnet cuts out red tape at border points, avoiding cash deposits etc in the country of temporary importation. It can be used for multiple trips, is valid for one year and covers 61 countries.

The second service in the pipeline is Chamber Customs, a declaration service for UK importers and exporters, of all sizes, in every region of the UK. Offered direct to businesses and through UK freight forwarders, it will ensure that customs clearance is accurate, timely and avoids additional costs through delays or errors.

With direct links to the HMRC Customs handling system and all inventory linked ports, it will provide assurance that goods, no matter where they enter or leave the UK, will be cleared for onward transportation smoothly. For businesses, it means keeping the time sensitive supply chains moving efficiently and economically.

We know that navigating trade documentation can be complicated. We believe our direct action will help businesses increase their international competitiveness, limit time delays on physical borders and allow for seamless customs clearance.





# Houston opening for WBD

**WOMBLE Bond Dickinson (WBD) will be celebrating the opening of its new Houston office with a launch party, billed for mid-May.**

The newest addition to WBD's 26 existing offices across the UK and US comes as part of the transatlantic law firms desire to expand its offering in the global energy, advanced manufacturing, technology and life sciences sectors. Central to the firm's growth strategy, the Houston office has initially launched with four new partners, supporting clients with transactional, intellectual property and litigation needs.

Jeffrey S. Whittle serves as Houston's office managing partner, joining the firm from Hogan Lovells with a focus on global, complex intellectual property transactions. Joshua Davis recently joined the firm from Reed Smith and handles a variety of IP litigation matters involving multiple technologies, including life science patent disputes.

Paul B. Turner joins the firm from Reed Smith as a corporate and securities lawyer serving clients in the energy sector with a focus on commodities trading. Joining him is veteran local

energy and environmental litigation partner Tony Guerino, who brings more than 20 years' experience to the team. Of counsel in Houston, Mark Shelley, served as in-house counsel to a major international oil and gas services company and managed the intellectual property assets of several of its large divisions. In that role, he also drafted all manner of agreements, conducted due diligence for the acquisition of drilling technologies, supported several litigation matters and counselled his client regarding intellectual property issues in the oil and gas sector.

More lawyers and professionals are expected to join the Houston team in the near future to further build the firm's offering in these and other key sectors. Many of the firm's top 500 clients have operations in the greater Houston area making it a logical choice for the firm's newest US office, following new locations for WBD in Boston, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles and Orange County in 2018.

Jonathan Blair, co-chair and UK managing partner, said: "WBD is located in many key areas for our clients throughout the US and the UK and we are always looking to build our

presence where we can offer strategic support. Houston has long been on our radar due to its rapid growth and its importance to innovation in a wide variety of STEM fields, especially in energy."

Richard Cockburn, Aberdeen-based Partner in WBD's UK energy sector team, commented:

"WBD is among the leading law firms working in the energy sector in the UK from strategic locations including London and Aberdeen. Now with the addition of this office in Houston and our US energy lawyers, we are even better positioned to help and advise clients in all aspects of the energy market across the Atlantic and globally."

WBD has been immersed in the energy industry sector for decades, giving the firm a great depth of experience across the various different forms of energy and power. WBD's energy team covers the full spectrum of oil and gas work, including oilfield services, and all types of electricity generation projects, including renewables.



Discover how the cross-border environment is changing

## May

**2 Thu**

8am - 10am

No.10 Bar & Restaurant

### Speed Networking

Kick start your day with this fast paced and exciting Speed Networking session. Leave feeling empowered and ready to tackle the day with new contacts and strengthened relationships.

**3 Fri**

9am - 11am

David Lloyd Clubs, Garthdee

### Feel Good Friday with David Lloyd Clubs

Let go of the week's stresses and join us for a unique networking experience at David Lloyd Aberdeen. Experience a new and dynamic workout class followed by a healthy breakfast and a chance to network with likeminded individuals

**9 Thu**

8:30am - 10am

AGCC

### Comply and determine a path in a new cross-border trading environment

Join us at our next international trade event to hear expert speakers on how the cross-border trading environment is changing in a post-Brexit Britain and discover the steps your business should be taking to prepare.

**10 Fri**

7am - 9am

Marcliffe Hotel

### Imagine there's no Brexit Breakfast

Our next Business Breakfast will look at the real-world, practical issues that must be addressed for businesses to drive growth. It will put the focus back on business-critical issues which have been lost in the Brexit blur. Speakers include Dr Adam Marshall, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce and Stuart Bennett, head of G10 FX Strategy.

**30 Thu**

8:45am - 11:30am

The Aberdeen Altens Hotel

### We Mean Business - Interactive workshop with Rikki

A practical exploration of how businesses can engage more effectively with transgender and gender non-binary people. In this practical, interactive workshop Rikki will help us to demystify the topic and explore the challenges and difficulties faced when engaging with transgender and gender variant staff and customers.

**30 Thu**

11:45am - 2pm

The Aberdeen Altens Hotel

### We Mean Business - Gender Expression in the workplace

Hear Rikki Arundel explore the world of gender difference, helping make sense of the multitude of labels, terms and identities and outline how we can make the workplace more inclusive of gender variance and how Charlie Craggs is tackling transphobia through education and empowerment. Charlie will share her story talking about the success of Nail It, a travelling manicure station nailing transphobia, and she will reveal why the lobster emoji is so important.



Find out how embracing diversity can boost your business

Thanks to our sponsors





## June

5

**5 Wed****Shire Connections: Inward Investment**11:45 - 2pm  
Castle Fraser

With outstanding supply chain links, pioneering technology, buoyant business environment and a pool of talent, the Aberdeen city region is of interest to organisations across the globe. We continue to see and reap the benefits of inward investment across the city and shire through enhanced transport networks, an upskilled workforce, job creation and a more fruitful economy for today and generations to come.

**12 Wed****Business Breakfast: The Ultimate Business Show**7am - 9am  
AECC

In a world that seems more uncertain and sensitive than ever it's perhaps easier to be cautious and conservative with your brand, to wait and see what happens. But that would be a mistake. Our speaker Ed Brooke of the Leith Agency, will talk about how now is the time to be bold, to challenge convention, to push on and change the game.

This breakfast launches the The Ultimate Business Show 2019.

**12 Wed****The Ultimate Business Show**9am - 4pm  
AECC

It presents the perfect platform for you to source products or services locally that can help save you money, while helping keep the North-east economy buoyant. Following on from its past successes, this year's show will welcome over 700 attendees and have over 75 exhibitors across the region showcasing their products, services and solutions. Fantastic free seminars throughout the day which will provide the right tools and knowledge to secure new business and raise your company's profile.

**18 Tue****Meditate your way to success**11:45 - 2pm  
Crowne Plaza  
Aberdeen  
Airport

It has been reported that the impact of your mental wellbeing can not only affect you but those around you and can even impact on team productivity. Companies who embrace and promote positive mental wellbeing practises can see a decline in employee turnover, reduction of absenteeism, improved customer service and individual performance. With an extensive background in health promotion, psychotherapy, advanced clinical hypnosis and Neuro Linguistic Programming, Vicki Rebecca joins us to share her incredible story as well as practical techniques that will allow you to tackle daily stresses, improve mental health and start showing up as the best version of yourself.

**18 Tue****Maximise your Membership**11:45 - 2pm  
AGCC

What does the Chamber do? How can the benefits and services we provide support your business? The membership team can answer these questions and more. From international market access to staff training, and profile-raising to market research, we're here to help.



Hear how the Aberdeen city region is reaping the benefits of inward investment

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**Roy Buchan**

OPEX Group, the Aberdeen-based provider of predictive analysis services, has appointed Roy Buchan as senior vice-president. In this new role Roy, who has more than 30 years' experience in the oil and gas industry, will help to shape the future direction and growth of the company, ensuring the firm's services support customer needs.



**Jonathan Merchant**

Arrowdown, a Cisco specialist, has given a year's work placement to Jonathan Merchant, a third-year student at Robert Gordon University. The BSc (Hons) computer network management and design student is gaining an insight into networks, communications and cybersecurity at Arrowdown, which was established 19 years ago.



**Claire Crawford**

Savills has announced promotions across its Scottish business. They include Kirsten Hall in rural energy and projects in Aberdeen to associate and Claire Crawford, in the development department Aberdeen, to associate director. A chartered surveyor and registered valuer, Claire's work will include residential development consultancy and transactions.



**Mike Wilson**

CLAN Cancer Support has appointed Mike Wilson, director of Aberdeen-based creative marketing and event management agency Mearns & Gill, to its board. Mike has a diverse business background within the wholesale distribution and construction industries. In 2016, Mike acquired Mearns & Gill, as the business was celebrating its 80th birthday.



**Stuart Dinwoodie, Colleen Lloyd, Kyle McAskill, Dave Benzie and Jasmine Brock**

Aberdeen-based Aiken Group has announced a cluster of appointments and promotions sparked by an upturn in demand for the company's extensive portfolio of products and services. Robert Gordon University graduate Jasmine Brock takes up the role of administrator and Colleen Lloyd has moved into the position of finance assistant. Having previously worked at Aiken Group as an HVAC and Refrigeration apprentice, Kyle McAskill recently returned to the company as sales manager and Dave Benzie has returned to the architectural engineering team. Stuart Dinwoodie has joined the team as project manager.



**Alistair Geddes**

International oilfield services company, Expro, has made two key executive management appointments. Current executive vice president, Alistair Geddes, has been promoted to chief operating officer and Keith Palmer has been promoted to executive vice president - product lines and will be responsible for Expro's product lines, technology and group engineering.



**Niall Urquhart**

Reactive Downhole Tools has appointed Niall Urquhart as VP Eastern Hemisphere, to support its growth plans for the regions. Niall has more than 10 years' experience in the oil and gas sector, including as a project engineer for Baker Hughes and regional sales manager - Middle East for Interwell.





**Kenneth Coutts**

Kenneth Coutts has joined Katoni Engineering as a lead structural engineer. Ken will focus on supporting existing clients as well as working on a range of new opportunities. Katoni will also be announcing a range of new recruits in mid-April to support new contract wins early in 2019/20.



**Martyn Everett and Clive Fenton**

Independent housebuilder and timber systems manufacturer, Stewart Milne Group, has made two new board appointments. Clive Fenton and Martyn Everett have been appointed as non-executive directors, following the retirement of Tim Redburn and Hugh Mackay.

Having been at the helm of McCarthy & Stone and with many years' experience as a main board director of Barratt plc, Mr Fenton brings extensive knowledge of the housebuilder sector. A highly experienced finance director, Mr Everett has held executive and non-executive directorships in a number of sectors including housebuilding, engineering, retail and media.



**David Henderson and Neale Henderson**

Bank of Scotland has made two new appointments. David Henderson joins as real estate relationship manager with considerable experience working in the banking sector. His focus will be supporting the Aberdeenshire property market and further growing the bank's property investment and development portfolio. Neale Henderson also joined the SME team to focus on servicing its manufacturing and oil and gas clients in the north of the city. He has over 13 years of commercial banking experience and brings a wealth of knowledge of the oil and gas sector having joined from the oil field services team.



**Gerry Grant**

North-east IT company Converged Communication Solutions has appointed one of Scotland's foremost cyber security experts, Gerry Grant, to help businesses better combat the growing threat posed by cyber crime. Until recently Gerry was the chief ethical hacker at the Scottish Business Resilience Centre. He has joined as chief security officer.

## Other recent appointments

Ideas In Partnership is expanding throughout Scotland and has appointed **Mark Maniukiewicz**, **Carol Grove** and **Sarah Murray** to its team. Mark has joined as business development manager and has a background of working in logistics and training. Carol and Sarah have been appointed as project executives.

Developing the Young Workforce North East has announced a series of appointments to its board. **Eleanor Sheppard**, chief education officer at Aberdeen City Council; **Gerry Lawrie**, head of workforce and development at NHS Grampian; and **Morag Stark**, general manager at Malmaison, bring further knowledge and experience to the board, broadening its scope across the education, healthcare and hospitality sectors.

**Stuart McAleese** has joined KCI as international business development executive to develop KCI's global business. Stuart brings has 35 years of diversified experience in the international oil and gas business working in more than 40 countries.

DM Hall has strengthened its Fife-based commercial property team with three new appointments in its Dunfermline office. In addition to the promotion from surveyor to associate of Dunfermline-based **Duncan Fraser** who covers commercial valuation in Fife, **Leigh Nisbet**, a commercial surveyor and agent, has moved from DM Hall's Dundee office and **Linda Morris** has been appointed office administrator.

Add Energy has appointed a new vice president to oversee the continued growth of its asset and integrity management division in the USA and Canada. **Susan Steyn** will be based in the firm's Houston office and will be central to delivering the division's ambitious global expansion strategy.

Active Schools Aberdeen was recently awarded funding to recruit a designated active assistant at Kittybrewster Primary School. Graduate **Joanna Bell** will focus on increasing participation levels in sport and physical activity of inactive and hard to reach groups of children.

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E drummond.lawson@subseatek.com  
W www.subseatek.com  
C Drummond Lawson, CEO

## The International School of Aberdeen

Independent school from age 3-18 years old

T 01224 730300  
E nlittle@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk  
W www.isa.aberdeen.sch.uk  
C Nicholas Little, head of school

## The Spiritualist

Bar / restaurant

T 01224 587717  
E Hannah.McConnachie@signaturepubs.co.uk  
W www.thespiritualistaberdeen.co.uk  
C Hannah McConnachie, sales and marketing executive

## The Trussell Trust

We are a charity which supports over 54 foodbanks in Scotland

T 07585226964  
E Ann.McLaughlin@trusselltrust.org  
W www.trusselltrust.org.uk  
C Ann McLaughlin, Scotland partnership co-ordinator

## Zynq360

Visual asset management

T 01224 582430  
E BrendaHarrison@zynq360.com  
W www.zynq360.com  
C Brenda Harrison, global sales and marketing coordinator

To see the full member directory visit [www.agcc.co.uk/directory](http://www.agcc.co.uk/directory)





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Annual Calendar Chronograph Ref. 5905R

To arrange a private viewing please contact the Jamieson & Carry showroom on 01224 641219

*Jamieson & Carry*

142 Union Street, Aberdeen  
Tel: 01224 641219