



Looking forward

Inspiring the next generation

Unlocking hidden talent

Entrepreneurial spirit

Building on our region's legacy

Local inspiration

Meet our Inspiration from Innovation Award finalists



the best of lives

VSA Christmas Appeal

Now more than ever, vulnerable children and adults living in Aberdeen need your help.

Christmas should be a time of joy and happiness, but for many families and people in their later years in life, it can be a time of stress, sorrow, and increased loneliness and isolation.

Thousands of families will find themselves living in poverty struggling to heat their homes, feed their children, buy presents, or provide warm clothing for the winter.

You can help bring a smile this Christmas and help change a life by supporting the 2021 VSA Christmas Appeal.

To find out more and make a donation please visit: giving.vsa.org.uk/profile

**Or send a cheque to:
VSA Christmas Appeal, Fundraising Department,
VSA, 38 Castle Street, Aberdeen, AB11 5YU**



£300
Christmas dinner and presents for a family

£150
keep a child warm

£80
Christmas entertainment for older people

£50
a food parcel for someone living in poverty

£30
fill a stocking for a child

£40
Christmas hamper for an adult

£20
cinema voucher

£15
Christmas arts and crafts

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February's theme
Energy

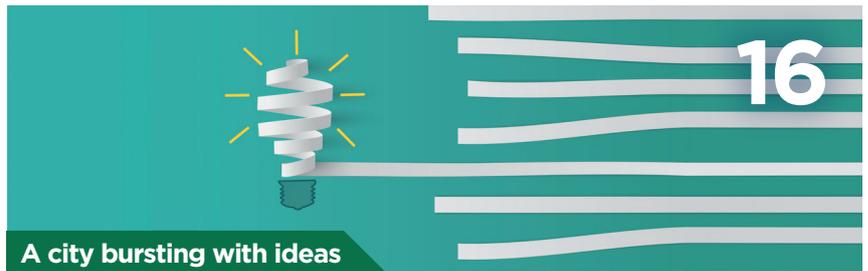
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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2021/22

Focus on **Innovation & Entrepreneurship**



Full STEAM ahead



A city bursting with ideas



Inspiration from innovation

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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 commercial director, Seona Shand on 01224 343929.

Plenty of room at the inn-ovate

IN THAT well known coffee table favourite, Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850, Richard Brown wrote:

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

This remains as true today as when it was written 170 years ago.

A small city region in the North-east corner of Scotland, Aberdeen has exerted its influence right around the planet with a long and proud tradition of invention and discovery. From subsea technology to the discovery of insulin. From the first MRI scanner to treatments for Cystic Fibrosis. Aberdonian inventor and energy pioneer Robert Davidson built the world's first known electric locomotive here in 1837. And Robert Thomson, from Stonehaven, was the acknowledged inventor of the fountain pen and original inventor of the pneumatic tyre.

All of this and much more demonstrates that innovation is a fundamental element of our region's DNA.

And our progressive nature is embodied no better than Britain's oldest registered company Aberdeen Harbour Board. Nearly 900 years after its formation it is investing £350m in an ambitious expansion programme that is one of the largest marine infrastructure projects in the UK for many decades. When it opens next year, it will provide direct to quayside access for some of the largest ocean-going vessels on the planet and underpin the region's plans to transition from being Europe's oil and gas capital to a globally significant low carbon energy hub.

A thirst for knowledge and a passion for science and engineering has been fundamental for our city region's industry for decades and Aberdeen's two highly successful universities continue to be at the heart of this. Supporting research and innovation, providing talent to support local business in energy, life sciences, architecture, engineering, medicine, health and the creative industries. And they have produced entrepreneurs, world business leaders, Nobel prize winners and award winning scientists, writers and industrialists.

Today we have Europe's largest single-site health campus at Foresterhill where groundbreaking research into cures for

contemporary diseases is saving lives.

We can boast a highly qualified workforce, with over 50% educated to degree level or over, the fourth highest in the UK. And more patents are filed here per capita than anywhere else in Scotland and this region is in the UK top five.

Our entrepreneurial spirit and wider business eco-system makes the North-east of Scotland the best location in the UK to start a business, boasting the best five-year survival rate for new companies supported by organisations such as Elevator, Opportunity North East and the Net Zero Technology Centre.

As you read this, we'll either be hurtling towards Christmas or perhaps already into another new year. And so, I'd like to propose a toast and make a collective resolution by updating a famous quote from Burns. Here's tae us! Wha's like us? Gey few, but they're NOT a' deid!

No, the innovative Aberdeen spirit is alive and well and we have it in our hands to channel it to be at the vanguard of the economic recovery following the crippling combination of the B-word (Brexit) and the C-word (Covid).

And we need to do everything in our power to ensure our young people are given the inspiration and opportunity to carry on our proud traditions.

In 2022, the Chamber continues to support our members to do better business while helping create the economic conditions that will enable the future success of our region.



Russell Borthwick
chief executive





Fiona Heinonen

First chief executive appointed for North-east children's charity

LOCAL charity Kayleigh's Wee Stars (KWS), which provides financial support for families where a child has a terminal illness, has appointed of their first chief executive officer. Fiona Heinonen takes up the new role at a pivotal moment for the charity as they move from being a Charitable Trust to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

This change positions the charity to employ more people and own property, enabling them to meet their increasing demand. Fiona's role will see her spearheading these changes, as well as managing the day-to-day responsibilities of running the charity, increasing brand awareness and investigating new revenue streams.

Fiona brings a wealth of experience in marketing and communications, along with a specialism in corporate social responsibility gained during her time in the energy sector. Fiona combines this corporate overview with the operational experience of her eight years in the charitable sector.

KWS was set up in 2012 by Jonathan and Anna Cordiner after losing their two-year-old daughter Kayleigh to a terminal brain tumour.

Founder, Jonathan Cordiner, said: "It's been a tough couple of years for everyone, but we have done our best to carry on supporting the families across Scotland who have needed our help. We're very grateful for the unwavering support of our fantastic long-term local partners and fundraisers who have continued to champion our cause whilst facing their own challenges. Without them we wouldn't have survived, and because of them we've been able to help 86 families with grants totalling almost £130k over the past two years.

Fiona added: "The work that Jonathan, Anna and the trustees have done over the past nine years is phenomenal. It's a privilege to be the first chief executive officer of KWS and as they celebrate their 10th anniversary in 2022, I will be proud to lead the charity into its next decade, ensuring it continues providing vital support for many years to come."

Four projects in drive to net zero

ABERDEEN City Council is to build on its successful drive towards net zero by developing plans for four new projects, including developing a solar energy farm, enhancing hydrogen fuel distribution and expanding the hydrogen-fuelled public sector fleet.

The Council, which has been leading the way in the transition to renewable energy, has been awarded a share of up to £1m development funding through the Scottish Government's Green Growth Accelerator (GGA).

The GGA is an outcome-based funding model, designed to help Scottish local authorities get low carbon infrastructure programmes off the ground. It will help councils bring in extra resources and technical support to accelerate pioneering net zero projects, with funding awarded to reflect outcomes including emissions reduction, unlocking net zero and green jobs growth.

The total delivery costs of Aberdeen City Council's proposed projects is estimated at £8m and following the funding award, work can now proceed on developing the business case for the projects and their future funding investment.

activpayroll named UKG Partner of the Year 2021

ACTIVPAYROLL, the leading global payroll and employee mobility specialist, has been recognised as 'Partner of the Year - HCM' at the Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG) Partner Awards. The firm has been praised for combining what it truly means to be an innovator, collaborator, influencer and white glove partner.

UKG recognised several factors that make activpayroll stand out among the crowd. Notably, the incredible responsiveness shown when working with the UKG sales team to meet with prospects irrespective of time zones or scale, the continued refinement of product functionality to improve user experience and the ability to work with other partners within the programme for the benefit of the client.

activpayroll has previously been commended by UKG and won 'Influencer of the Year' in 2019 for going above and beyond to support the sales teams, customers and integrations to influence joint revenue opportunities. This most recent award win only highlights activpayroll's continued commitment towards an unwavering level of customer service that UKG can always count on.

activpayroll chief executive, Jason Allen, remarked: "With so many fantastic organisations in the UKG partner ecosystem, I appreciate how much of an onerous task it must have been to pinpoint the one partner that sets the gold standard for the UKG partner network. The fact our commitment and efforts were recognised for this esteemed accolade is an honour and makes me so proud of the entire global team at activpayroll. Together, we have a bright future ahead of us and I cannot wait to see what 2022 has in store for the activpayroll and UKG collaboration."



James Bream

Developing the Young Workforce North East appoints new chair

DEVELOPING the Young Workforce (DYW) North East has appointed James Bream as chair to lead its drive to connect businesses and schools with the aim of engaging, inspiring and developing the region's young workforce. James will help steer the organisation as it embarks on one of the most significant periods of activity in its history.

He takes over from Alec Carstairs and joins DYW North East following a period of rapid growth.

Currently chief executive of Katoni Engineering, James is an experienced leader with a strong track record in growing and managing businesses through change. He has extensive knowledge of DYW North East, having held the dual role of director of DYW North East and research and policy director with Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce from 2013-2015.

The Tivoli volunteers to pay levy

THE Tivoli Theatre has reinforced its backing of Aberdeen Inspired's work and signed up to be a voluntary levy payer.

The Business Improvement District was voted back in by a large majority earlier this year for a further five-year term.

The Tivoli Theatre joins other voluntary levy payers such as Aberdeen Football Club, Books and Beans, Café 52, Brodies and CBRE.

Caroline Morgan, managing director of the theatre, said: "Now more than ever, businesses in the city centre need to be united as we all work towards recovery after such a prolonged and difficult period. For us it was an easy decision to become a voluntary levy payer."

Fund to help businesses recover from pandemic

ABERDEEN City Council has launched a new Business Transition Fund to provide grant support of up to £30k to local businesses with growth potential to support their recovery by adapting to meet the challenges of the post CV19 economic landscape.

As a direct result of the restrictions, many businesses have experienced their markets reduce, supply chain disruption and a requirement to shift to a more digital offering. The purpose of the fund is to support businesses which are not able, due to immediate financial pressures, to adapt to new ways of working or to make investment towards remaining competitive in a post CV19 economy.

Grants are tiered to the size of business, from £5k to individuals through to £30k for medium sized businesses.

OEG on the acquisition trail

JUST days after acquiring Lowestoft-based Fern Communications, OEG Offshore has purchased Hughes Subsea Services, an integrated subsea service company.

This latest deal strengthens Aberdeen-based OEG's package of critical products and services for the global energy space through the addition of Hughes expertise and reputation in subsea services while providing access to growth capital and investment for Hughes to expand.

It is the third offshore wind focused acquisition this year for OEG, which bought offshore welfare "gamechanger" Pegasus Welfare Solutions in April with its world-first in-turbine tower toilet and differentiated range of offshore modular welfare units.

More acquisitions are planned as OEG drives a growth strategy to bring together complementary expertise in niche specialist services, specified for the marine environment across the global energy sector.

Demand increasing for ADC services

ADC Energy, a specialist provider of dynamic integrated rig inspections, has secured a contract with a US-based global infrastructure organisation, as the business accelerates its strategic diversification plan.

The award came as the company reported a strong first half to 2021 with new business wins totalling £5m, strengthening its order book with clients in the oil and gas and renewable sectors as demand increases for its services in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

Earlier this year, the company rebranded from Aberdeen Drilling Consultants to ADC Energy to reflect its increasingly diverse operating portfolio with the offshore wind market poised as a key growth area.



Full STEAM ahead

DAVE Kerr's entrepreneurial spirit is providing new opportunities for youngsters all over the North and North-east to fulfil their potential.

What started off as simply a project to help youngsters in Caithness to develop their IT skills has grown into a major community interest operation.

It is aimed at encouraging children and young adults to develop an interest in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics), but is particularly focussed on those who might otherwise miss out on such opportunities. In addition, it is helping provide low-income families with vital technology to give them the same chance as those in stronger financial positions.

Dave's background is in engineering and he runs his own business as an IT and computer aided design (CAD) consultant. However, the majority of his time is now spent working voluntarily for Budding Engineers, the non-profit community interest company which he set up with his wife Liz.

"It started some years back when both our children were still at school," he said. "We were extremely disillusioned with the way the

technology side of things was being delivered and we thought that the skills I have developed over more than a quarter of a century was a unique opportunity to help students.

"We found that many students were simply not bothering with technical-based subjects and felt we might be able to help inspire some to study STEAM subjects to assist bridge the skills gap.

"It was very hard to attract interest at first and I actually became quite disillusioned myself. My morale took a nosedive because so many doors were closed in my face and so many emails didn't even receive the courtesy of a reply. However, Liz was my motivator and things eventually began to take off and we ran a number of workshops at Wick Youth Club. The big breakthrough came when we were invited to the Caithness International Science Festival to hold workshops for primary five, six and seven children. That led to us being invited to do workshops for 13 primary schools but we only managed 11 before lockdown stopped all our face-to-face activities.

"We carried on doing some remote workshops and have now re-started face-to-face ones too."

It was during the early days of Budding Engineers that Dave and

Liz realised there was an opportunity to offer particular support to two groups of youngsters. One group was those with special needs and they made it a priority to ensure Budding Engineers was totally inclusive and provided the same opportunity to all.

"So many with special needs are ignored or cast aside," said Dave. "We came across some very sad stories and, as we have discovered, some of these youngsters not only have hidden disabilities but also hidden talents. Some are very gifted and by helping them use technology we have seen them gain confidence and blossom."

They also thought they might be able to help low-income families without the necessary equipment to develop appropriate IT skills.

They contacted a businessman in the Borders who was recycling unwanted laptop and desktop computers for those in need and, armed with his guidance, launched a similar scheme - Tech4Tots and Teens.

Through social media and the local press they appealed for any unwanted machines and also for the names of those who might be struggling with learning because of a lack of technology.



“It is heart-breaking to hear of so many families struggling, especially in the home education system, so we are here to help if we can.”

They started off in Caithness, expanded to Sutherland and are now collecting and distributing machines right across the North and North-east. A recent £15k grant from the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations is enabling Dave to buy parts to refurbish almost 900 machines – around 100 a month – over the length of the grant.

“Prior to refurbishing we sanitise the hard drive of every machine donated

to satisfy any data protection regulations. So far we’ve saved 1.2 tons of tech waste from going to landfill.

“We are willing to travel all over the North and North-east to collect laptops and pcs from companies or individuals and then to distribute them. Donating a machine which is no longer used can have a major impact on someone else’s life so we would appeal for people to support us.

“Lockdown curtailed much of our educational activities but they are now back up and running.

“For those who are home educated, support and tuition is available for learning design and technology. We introduce primary pupils to the world of 3D design using a number of design applications including BlocksCAD; for secondary children we offer AutoCAD, Autodesk Inventor, Revit, Rhino, and BlocksCAD.

“All pupils can learn 3D design skills, spatial awareness, an introduction to coding and improve their numeracy skills using BlocksCAD. Once their design is finished, they can export it to a suitable file format ready for 3D printing.

“This can be introduced into the school curriculum or even as an after school/holiday activity.

“In addition, we offer support to students at college or university.

“Students can gain real world experience and enhance skills using CAD/IT which can only improve their prospects and help fill the gaps in the skills shortage we currently have in the country.

“Many people think that CAD is just for engineers, but it is not, it can be used in many industries.

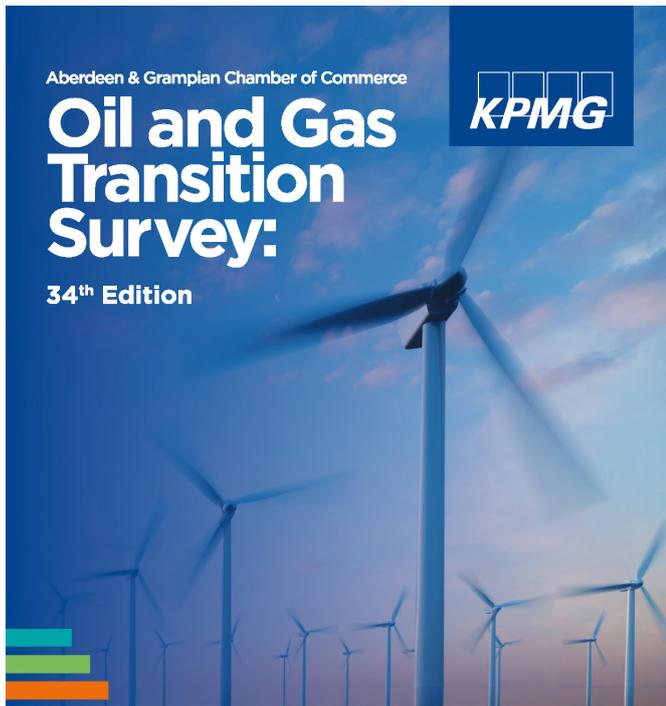
“We currently have our eye on a building in Wick and are trying to raise the funds to make our dream of creating a STEAM centre a reality. Budding Engineers hopes to increase our workforce by giving students and adults, including those with additional needs, the opportunity of apprenticeships and training focused on digital learning/3D design/ computer recycling while inspiring STEAM throughout all our projects.

“Ultimately, we would love to have STEAM centres all over the North and North-east staffed by those trained by Budding Engineers passing on their skills to the next generation.”

“

“We came across some very sad stories and, as we have discovered, some of these youngsters not only have hidden disabilities but also hidden talents.”

Dave Kerr,
managing director
Budding Engineers



AGCC launch 34th Oil and Gas Transition Survey

COMPANIES in the UK's oil and gas sector expect their businesses to transform substantially across the next decade, with firms predicting that on average, the share of their business outside of oil and gas will jump from 21% today to 47% by 2030, according to a new industry report -The Oil and Gas Transition Survey.

This is the 34th edition of this vital barometer of activity to gauge sentiment among operators and supply chain companies based in this region working in the energy sector. Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) is delighted to partner once again with KPMG UK and Fraser of Allander Institute to deliver the findings which focus on the challenges the industry faces as it looks to take a leading role in energy transition.

The overall headline findings suggest that UK's oil and gas sector is pressing ahead with diversification, but skills shortages and concerns over lack of visibility around government funded initiatives appear to be creating blockages for net zero ambitions.

Fierce is brewery of the year

FIERCE Beer was awarded the title of "Scottish Brewery of the Year" at the sixth annual Scottish Beer Awards, sponsored by Aldi.

As well as winning the top prize, Fierce Beer also collected 10 medals which included a record-breaking six golds and the prize for "Product Development Team of the Year." This award was for the focus and introduction of a core range of beers and sales strategies during the CV19 pandemic to allow phenomenal growth and quality of their beer range.

This year's medal haul makes Fierce Beer the most awarded Scottish brewery since the "Scottish Beer Awards" began - with a current total of 42 medals.

Developing smart contract solutions

STENA Drilling, an independent drilling contractor, has acquired a minority stake in and formed a three-year technology partnership with SmartChainServices (SCS), a Cambridge-based blockchain technology start-up.

The announcement follows a six-month proof of value project, where Stena Drilling applied the power of SCS' ClearDapp™, a blockchain and smart contract technology, to reduce and eventually eliminate complex transactions related to IADC reporting and payment-for-rig-performance.

Now, the companies will work together to further develop smart contract solutions for the energy sector. With aims to automate and execute the payment cycle, the technology partnership will offer the energy industry new contractual models based on milestones such as drilling speed, carbon intensity or fuel usage - all automatically validated through data.

Colin Dawson, digital business transformation manager of Stena Drilling said: "We're delighted to enter a technology partnership with SCS. We have a unique vantage point for this technology development as we continue to advance our digital transformation. We're proud to play our part in progressing the sector."

Scotland's office market showing signs of recovery

REAL estate advisor CBRE has released its latest figures on the office markets in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen during the third quarter of 2021.

Stewart Taylor, head of CBRE's Scottish advisory and transactions business, said: "Despite the fact that Scotland isn't as far down the lockdown exit road as its English neighbour, the office markets in each of the three principal cities are showing encouraging signs of recovery, with Glasgow leading the way. Each of the markets has quite distinct characteristics but the general trends are the same with occupiers considering reducing their footprints and increasing quality. The larger corporates are moving quickly through a period of analysis to determine what they will look like in the future with their strategies likely to emerge in early 2022."

With 51,316 sq ft transacting across 13 deals, up 96% from the previous three months, recovery was evident over the third quarter in the Aberdeen office market. Notable deals included Mental Health Aberdeen's purchase of Langstane House, Sport Aberdeen taking 7,597 sq ft at The Bridge of Don and DeepOcean sub-letting 7,330 sq ft at Prime Four in a deal which CBRE advised on.

Amy Tyler, senior surveyor from CBRE in Aberdeen, said: "Aberdeen is used to adverse market conditions and it is a city with tremendous resolve. The signs of recovery are encouraging and further reassurance can be taken from the amount of active requirements currently on the market. We therefore anticipate a strong level of take up in the final quarter."



Friends of ANCHOR reach fundraising milestone

FRIENDS of ANCHOR has raised £1m to “deliver the difference” when a new oncology and haematology centre opens in 2023.

The charity is raising £2m in total, to fund over-and-above additions for The ANCHOR Centre, which will be the first of its kind in the country, built at a Scottish Government capital cost of £43m.

Friends of ANCHOR chairman, Jim Milne, said: “When we launched our campaign back in 2019, we coined it ‘ANCHORED Together’ which encapsulates what has been at the centre of this campaign throughout – everyone working together to make this long-hoped-for dream a reality and to deliver the difference for the people who will walk through the doors of the Centre for treatment.

“We are so fortunate to have the NHS in this country and to know this facility will soon be in place to match the excellence of clinical care delivered by the staff day in, day out, is tremendous news for the North-east of Scotland.”

The charity must now raise the remaining million before The ANCHOR Centre opens in summer 2023.

The funds will be ringfenced to equip the facility with improved equipment, upgraded furnishings like more comfortable treatment chairs, and enhancements including state of the art tech for a dedicated teaching and training suite.

The ANCHORED Together fundraising will also go towards the charity’s dedicated complementary therapy suite; a private room with a spa-like feel, where patients can enjoy Friends of ANCHOR’s relaxing therapies like massage, as well as practical support like podiatry and hair and wig styling.

Friends of ANCHOR has directly served the needs of oncology and haematology patients receiving care in NHS Grampian for nearly 25 years. Funds have been directed to equipment to transform treatment outcomes, research investment that enables clinical trials for NHS Grampian patients, spend to enhance clinical spaces, wellbeing services at the patient chair and bed side, and development opportunities for staff.

Arctic opportunities for Scottish food

A REVIEW of food and drink enterprises and clusters in Scotland’s Highlands and Islands highlights the potential value of “place” and opportunities for engagement with countries in the Arctic region.

Scotland’s closer engagement with the Arctic region over the last few years has highlighted shared opportunities and challenges in terms of culture, demography, connectivity, economy and sustainability.

The review was led by Dr David Watts from the University of Aberdeen Rowett Institute. It aimed to identify potential opportunities for Scotland’s, and particularly the Highlands and Islands’, food and drink sector to engage with partners in the Arctic region.

The report draws out contrasts and similarities between the Highlands and Islands and the Arctic region, examines evidence of food and drink clusters and innovation in the Highlands and Islands, explores aspects of the values and behaviour of food and drink entrepreneurs and suggests avenues for further work and engagement.

Success for Digital Business Growth Programme

EIGHT digital tech businesses across North-east Scotland have launched new products, secured new international contracts and accelerated their growth ambitions as part of Opportunity North East’s first Digital Business Growth Programme for the sector.

The programme, sponsored by partners Inoapps and Sword ITS, was launched earlier this year to accelerate growth among established digital tech businesses, with a focus on developing and implementing a growth strategy including new markets, new product development and building the team to deliver.

Jen Scott, Opportunity North East’s digital development manager, said: “This marks fantastic progress for the initiative which provides leaders with tailored support to capitalise on the opportunities ahead and scale their business.”

New patents for DeltaTek Global

WELL construction expert, DeltaTek Global, has been granted US, European and Norwegian patents for its ArticLock® technology following a series of successful deployments. The patent awards strengthen its existing intellectual property portfolio and geographical footprint.

Based on a ball and socket concept, ArticLock® is a simple and robust tool capable of mitigating weather-related downtime by opening up weather windows for installing subsea equipment in more adverse environmental conditions, ultimately eliminating bending stress from rigid landing strings for a safer deployment.

Which entrepreneur has inspired you the most?



“Working for a business that helps protect ideas and brands, I come across a lot of inspirational inventors and business founders with brilliant business propositions, but in my opinion what differentiates a truly great business leader from just a good one is the way they engage with and motivate the people around them.

One example is Dragon’s Den’s Sara Davies. The well-known founder of Crafter’s Companion has always emphasised the value she places on nurturing the people she employs within her business and states that her number one business philosophy is ‘it’s all about the people’ (see Sara’s blog at sara-davies.com), including treating people with respect and giving them autonomy within the business.

I also admire Sara’s role in encouraging other female entrepreneurs, and the fact that she brings both kindness and a sense of humour to doing business. I have recently been rooting for her in this year’s Strictly Come Dancing – a chief executive who can samba.”

Fiona McKenzie, *client relationship manager*, Cameron Intellectual Property



“Those leaders who have most inspired me are Ian Sharp, Kevin Gorman, Joanne Neild and Janice Mair. In my past employment they supported me, encouraged me, gave me autonomy, recognised my efforts and acknowledged the contribution I brought to their teams.

These are the leadership traits which I value and have inspired me throughout my career. When my mental health took a negative turn Janice was supportive, enabled me to be open about my diagnosis, resulting in a good experience through an extremely difficult time. All of these leaders took an interest in what was going on with me as a person, each understood that my personal life and work life were intrinsically linked which supported my wellbeing.

Research has shown that for every £1 a company invests in wellbeing there is a £5 return on investment and this certainly starts with supportive and inspiring leaders. Ultimately, if leaders and organisations can improve the wellbeing and engage with their people, it will impact their bottom line positively.

My former leaders inspired me to grow which led me to what I do today. Everyone deserves a positive workplace experience.”

Louise Lang, *founder and director*, Lindsay & Lang



“While I have read many entrepreneur/leader books over the years, including the likes of Richard Branson, Theo Paphitis and Alex Ferguson the authors of many top-selling business and development books, I have always got the most from Jon Gordon.

Jon’s writing is very simple and can have a massive impact on your everyday life. His book ‘The Energy Bus’ is one I can say I quote from nearly every week with two key messages he relates to in this book.

Firstly, how your own personal outlook can be changed so easily if you look for the positive or good in situations rather than only seeing the negative. The second message relates to ‘energy vampires.’ If you surround yourself with negative people in your personal life or business, they can often suck the energy out of you, like a vampire. Remove these people from your life for greater business and life success.”

Ian MacIntosh, *director*, Razor Digital Media

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The offshore danger in ill-fitting PPE

PREMIUM PPE solutions provider Red Wing is leading the call for the North Sea offshore industry to come together to close the gender PPE gap and improve the safety of women's kit.

The provider said female workers were being put at risk by being given men's PPE, with many having to roll-up overall legs and sleeves, as well as not having appropriately fitting footwear. With potential hazards caused by ill-fitting PPE including sleeves getting snagged in machinery, long trouser legs resulting in slips, trips and falls – as well as fraying and damage to hem – the need for change is about more than aesthetics. There is also a danger associated with flash fires if clothing doesn't fit properly.

The call comes after a survey by the AXIS Network, in partnership with Step Change in Safety, found 62% of women said their coveralls didn't fit effectively, while 51% said their outerwear/jacket wasn't suitably sized.

Dez Young, HR manager of Red Wing Shoes, said: "Women not having the right PPE is something that has been accepted for too long, and the solution is out there. Over 70% of our customers feature women's-fit PPE in their safety programmes, which shows that availability and price isn't the issue. However, the kit is still not reaching those who need it.

"We know from our research that women working offshore and the purchasing teams buying products on their behalf, don't fully understand why women's PPE is so important. They also aren't aware of the tools they need to find the right fitting coverall for them.

"It's not just about comfort or looks, it's about safety, and we have a duty as an industry to keep everybody as safe as possible."

To drive compliance, the international organisation which has been making work boots specifically for women since 1926, has produced a Right Fit Toolkit complete with visual sizing guide and correct fit instructional video for offshore companies to ensure workers get the right kit.

Dez added: "There is a need to educate procurement departments to enable them to offer the right kit to the right people. We want women to know the PPE they need is available, but they shouldn't have to wait to be offered it. That's why we have created the Right Fit Toolkit – to help make the process of getting the correct PPE easier."

Award for voluntary sports organisation

ABERDEENSHIRE Clubsport SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) has won the title of Scottish Clubsport - Sports Council and Clubsport Network of the Year 2021.

Aberdeenshire Clubsport SCIO is a committee of dedicated volunteers who work hard to support over 280 affiliated clubs and individuals, promoting active and healthy lifestyles through the many sporting opportunities available in Aberdeenshire.

"There are 42 local sports councils/clubsport networks in Scotland, so we are absolutely buzzing," said Jackie Smith, the chair.

"I chair the best team ever at Aberdeenshire Clubsport SCIO. Thank you all for the many voluntary hours you give to supporting and promoting sport within Aberdeenshire. Not once during the difficulties of the last 18 months did any of you lose sight of hardships our member clubs faced and what we could and would do to help. Well done team."

RSM UK in record recruitment

RSM UK has eight new recruits in Aberdeen, including six graduates, a 100% increase on last year's total trainee intake.

The company has also increased its intake of school leavers by taking on 103 this calendar year, up by 47% from the 70 who joined last year. This demonstrates RSM UK's focus on attracting more who choose a career in professional services straight from school as an alternative to attending university.

The record intake is part of RSM UK's strategic intention to strengthen the firm from within its own ranks and, over the long term, to help become first choice advisers to middle market leaders globally. The trainees are based throughout the UK and spread across the audit, corporate finance, risk, restructuring advisory, financial reporting and IT teams.

AMS Global opens new centre of excellence

MARINE consulting and safety specialists AMS Global Group is continuing its programme of expansion with the opening of a new centre of excellence facility in Leeds to service clients operating from industrial sites and ports around the coasts of England and Wales.

From the new facility, the Aberdeen-headquartered company will offer its full range of safety services including BA, gas detection and life-saving equipment rental, sales and servicing.

The Leeds facility will also be a hub for all the other services provided by AMS's five divisions, bulk, cargo, marine technical, safety and disinfection and incorporates a specialist training facility focused on high hazard activities.



National title for Lathallan

LATHALLAN School has been awarded Small Independent School of the Year 2021 in the UK-wide awards which celebrate extraordinary and compelling student experiences.

There were a record number of nominations for the awards this year from hundreds of schools across the UK. A shortlist of 50 small independent schools was whittled down to just six finalists with Lathallan scooping the prestigious award.

Richard Toley, head of Lathallan, said: "Winning this national award is massive for Lathallan. Just getting to the final was a great opportunity for us to showcase our school and we are absolutely delighted to have won the Small Independent School of the Year 2021 award.

"New initiatives such as the introduction of alpacas to our school farm and development of our 60 acre school grounds, our remarkable teaching team and our commitment to outdoor learning is part of what makes us unique.

"Alongside this, the judges recognised our unwavering commitment to environmental education. We strive to educate our pupils to appreciate and respect the environment, to leave people and places better than they find them. Our pupils run the school eco club and learn about living a sustainable lifestyle - reducing, reusing and recycling - helping them feel that they are part of the narrative not simply observers, so that they have the power to make change."

Local children encouraged to take part in Battle of the Bots

THE Archie Foundation aim to help beat the boredom of the dark nights and are calling for youngsters to put their creative minds to the test in Archie's Bot Battle.

Children who register to take part will receive an Ultimate Bot Pack containing component parts they can use to create their own Robot or "Bot" together with a notebook and pen to start planning their masterpiece.

Participants send in photos of their Bot and a social media audience will vote to determine the 'Ultimate Bot'. The winner will receive a gift voucher for a birthday party at Jump In, Aberdeen, with seconded and third places each receiving a pair of 'Golden Tickets' for Jump In, Aberdeen.

To register for your Ultimate Bot Pack visit www.archie.org/events/botbattle.

Neptune endorses flaring initiative

NEPTUNE Energy has endorsed the World Bank's Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 initiative.

The initiative brings together governments, companies and development institutions to eliminate routine gas flaring in oil production no later than 2030.

Eliminating the routine flaring of gas is a significant and necessary step towards reducing emissions and ensuring valuable energy resources are not wasted.

Neptune Energy's vice-president operations Europe, Pete Jones, said: "Neptune has set ambitious emissions reduction targets across our operations, with our endorsement of World Bank's Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 initiative further demonstrating our commitment.

"We already have one of the lowest methane intensities in the industry at 0.02%. But we want to go further, which is why we are supporting this initiative."

Neptune will report annually on its flaring and progress towards meeting the initiative's objective.

Software to highlight workplace mental health

OMNISCIENT Safety Innovations Ltd is launching a new software management system for workplace mental health.

The system, called Chamelii, will flag mental health concerns to the business and provide preventative and ongoing personalised confidential support direct to employees.

Owner and innovator Brett Townsley said: "There is something known as the chameleon effect - when humans experience mental health harm, we attempt to disguise it and blend into the background. It's an attempt to protect ourselves from harm but the truth is we still show the changes from the impacts in our behaviours, emotions and thoughts just like chameleons.

"Our system will translate that to the business to assist them in recognising the harm and applying solutions to prevent or reduce the harm, while educating the individuals and building their own mental health fortitude to be more capable of coping with mental health impacts.

"For a business there are obvious gains in terms of health and wellbeing benefits for staff. However, there are also cost benefits with poor mental health management costing the UK an estimated £35-£45bn a year. The Chamelii solution can reduce this massively meanwhile breaking the stigma that surrounds mental illness. According to the health and safety executive 51% of all reported lost work days in 2019/20 were for work related stress, depression and anxiety."

A city bursting with ideas



THE North-east of Scotland has always been a hotbed of entrepreneurial spirit. The area has a reputation for lodging a disproportionately large number of patents for its size and Aberdeen often features in lists of the UK's most innovative cities.

In the 19th century we had the pioneering clipper builders and Robert William Thomson, the Stonehaven inventor of the pneumatic tyre. In recent times we have had Pete Cashmore from Banchory, the founder of media and entertainment company Mashable; Edel Harris whose entrepreneurial spirit transformed Cornerstone; North Sea entrepreneur Larry Kinch; and BrewDog founders Martin Dickie and James Watt.

The list goes on and on and includes a host of medical pioneers including Dr Deborah O'Neil founder of biotechnology company NovaBiotics which spun out of the University of Aberdeen's Rowett Research Institute.

The development of the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) is one of the key strategic priorities for the University's Business School. Not only a research centre that embraces world-leading academics and practice-based scholars, but the CIE also serves as an engagement platform for stakeholders to co-

create, collaborate and build solutions to global societal challenges.

One of its key initiatives is the planned launch of a pioneer MSc programme in Entrepreneurship, the development of which is led by Dr King Omeihe, head of discipline-business management.

"Our new MSc programme will incorporate student placements and business engagement opportunities with a clear focus on the application of entrepreneurial knowledge," he said.

"The programme is designed to complement the school's research-led and theoretically informed education, with a clear focus on the development and application of knowledge to real-life issues. This new world class programme combines theoretical rigour with a unique focus on experiential learning gained through direct engagement with organisations and project-based activities.

"As a pioneer programme, the MSc in Entrepreneurship offers an ideal opportunity for ambitious graduates from any background who intend to start high-impact businesses. It also provides room for more experienced entrepreneurs seeking to develop their skills further.

"The North-east of Scotland is a

prime example of a region that promotes entrepreneurship. It has always provided a very favourable business environment conducive to entrepreneurship and enterprise creation. This has been useful for the growth of innovative start-ups. A region can prosper and grow if it creates the right environment for small businesses to operate in.

"When an area drives and promotes entrepreneurship and enterprise development, the rewards can be humongous. When small businesses grow, they contribute by accelerating economic development through job creation and increased regional trade.

"The North-east is an area and society which accelerates the creation of new start-ups and provides policies and opportunities for entrepreneurship to thrive and grow from the early stages of development.

"It has always sought to provide support for entrepreneurship in terms of funding and the development of innovative policies. This also includes the design of structural policies that support firms operating within the region.

"On the part of the entrepreneurs, there is that considerable drive to remain productive and competitive, however concerted effort is needed to foster entrepreneurial values and attitudes. This can be amplified

through education and training initiatives.

“The Business School is currently unlocking entrepreneurship, not just within the university but across the whole of the North-east. It is taking the lead in providing a cross fertilisation of innovative ideas across the region.

“Support for regional entrepreneurship is very holistic and efficient and the university plays a very important role in driving and celebrating entrepreneurship, innovation and business activities.

“This has been useful in developing integral, flexible and tailor-made initiatives to support entrepreneurship across the region,” added Dr Omeihe.

He said one of the great things about the university is its ability to harness the expertise of the world's leading academics.

“Our partnerships with small businesses and industry have definitely enabled many companies to connect with new skills and technologies which are now useful in addressing the current challenges – and we are proud of our collaboration with small businesses.

“We are also proud of our collaboration with industry

partners because our highly skilled workforce is very important for technological breakthroughs which can unlock new solutions and improve enterprise development.

“Across Aberdeen, our academics are working in partnerships with small businesses and industries in terms of research, consultancies, knowledge transfer partnerships, education, mentoring, student projects and some areas of continuing professional development.

“The university also continues to provide a steady stream of graduate talent who bring benefits to local businesses.

“Our graduates continue to emerge with the requisite skills required to make a real impact locally and globally. We also have a careers and employability service team that work in partnership with SMEs, including start-up organisations. As such, our current students are able to gain valuable work experience and skills through paid internships which contribute to the local community.”

Caroline Muir meets with entrepreneurs regularly throughout her career in her role as a partner and Aberdeen head of business tax for Deloitte.

By the time her expertise is required Deloitte's clients are

normally building on success already achieved – for example she has been involved in helping companies including Deliveroo and Skyscanner to expand and internationalise.

However, she also has experience of start-up entrepreneurs having volunteered to assist Elevator with workshops and the Net Zero Technology Centre in the selection process for their incubator programmes.

When she moved to Aberdeen from Edinburgh four years ago, she offered her assistance to both organisations because of her background in energy, technology and scale-ups and because it was work she enjoyed.

Along with other experts she was asked to review the videos of applicants for the programmes to help filter out those with the greatest potential.

“It's fascinating because some of them were great and some of them lacked energy,” she said. “I don't have the technical competence to judge how much carbon an idea is going to save, or how much safer one way of doing something will be. My role was to help judge the presentation and whether an individual was credible. I couldn't judge the product.

“You want to know if they believe

in their idea and you want to see a passion. You are not going to put your money behind a person who gives the impression they have been made to make a video and hasn't put in much effort.

"You are going to put your £100k (NZTC award for the incubator program) behind the person who is engaging, enthusiastic and telling you they've just come up with the best thing ever, who is saying you have to see it and you have to help me, the world needs this.

"If you're going to invest in someone at that level you are investing in the person as much as the idea."

So, what are the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur?

"Probably the opposite of me because I'm an accountant," she said.

"I am quite rules based and process driven. I know there's a way of doing things because there's a right answer. I think entrepreneurs don't have that mentality. They have more of what I would call a growth mindset as opposed to a fixed mindset.

"They don't worry whether something is possible. They can envision something even if it's far from reality and they have a real passion for it. You see that passion energy and imagination.

"To be a successful entrepreneur you also have to have followership, because you've got to convince somebody to give you the money, to be stood at your side when you don't have investment and you're basically draining the family bank account for your dream.

"I think you need a lot of charm to be able to sell that vision to other people.

"One bit of guidance we're always trying to give to founders, is 'you need to build a team around you that aren't like you.'

"Somebody has to be the rules-based person keeping the business compliant, someone has to keep things right. Someone has to challenge.

"It's not quite bringing them back down to earth but providing the diversity of thinking. It's really important that a founder with a great idea has a good range of people around them. One of the challenges when they start is that they can't afford to bring those people onto the payroll as they are probably working off savings because at that stage they have no revenue and nobody's going to lend them money.

"That's why organisations like Elevator and the various Net Zero Technology Centre programmes are so helpful because they provide

access to people who can challenge your view and can broaden your horizons.

"That's helpful to balance out a founder. If they are a driven force of nature with a particular skill, how do they get the right skills around them?"

Caroline also devotes some of her spare time to mentoring companies pro bono and she says that one of the most important lessons she imparts is to try to get them to spend what little money they might have at the right time."

"Even though I know they have no money if it's to do with intellectual property or is so core I may say you need to pay somebody to do this properly or it could undermine the entire business.

"Knowing when to take advice is also very important and often at an early stage that is legal advice to make sure that you're not inadvertently giving your idea to someone else. You need to protect your vision, so lawyers do have a very, very important role to play."



I've got a place to

TAKE ON THE DAY



#YourJourneyStartsHere



Legal reform on the horizon in the world of Artificial Intelligence

by Ross Gardner,
partner, head of corporate,
Stronachs LLP



FOR most start-up companies and SMEs operating in the energy sector, innovation and investment in digital technology are becoming increasingly important factors as they plan for growth in a post-pandemic environment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is continually evolving as a key asset underpinning investment decisions because of the way in which it can support that innovation in a number of ways. As with many other more traditional forms of intellectual property, ownership in the output is key. Unfortunately, the existing legal framework in the UK has not yet been developed to deal with the question of ownership of intangible assets created by AI. However, that could all be about to change.

A recent Court of Appeal case ruled against the party who had been seeking to argue that the inventor of a patent application was the AI machine. The UK's Intellectual Property Office (IPO) had determined that a real person had to be identified as the inventor and the Court of Appeal upheld that decision. The party in that case has won similar cases in Australia and South Africa where their courts

have found that the same AI system could be recognised as the inventor for patent purposes.

In the US and the UK, the courts have continued to follow the general rule in those jurisdictions that for patent purposes only human beings can be inventors. Although the law in the UK has for some time recognised copyright protection in computer-generated works where there is no human creator, it remains the case that patent protection is not available for AI devised inventions.

Businesses need more certainty around the ownership rights of AI generated assets so that they can generate research and development investment in that technology. Reform of the legislative framework in the UK is on the horizon, but first the IPO has launched a consultation which runs until January 7, 2022 as part of the UK Government's wider National AI Strategy to try and strike the right balance between providing sufficient incentives for development of AI whilst at the same time promoting human creativity and innovation.

The consultation is seeking views on a number of possible legislative changes,

to include allowing patent applications to identify AI as the inventor, to expand the understood meaning of an 'inventor' to include humans who are responsible for the creation of an AI system or possibly to develop an entirely new type of protection specifically for AI-devised inventions.

If the law does indeed develop to the point that it recognises that the AI system is the creator of new patented technology, does it follow that the AI system has separate status as a legal person in its own right? This gives rise to many difficult questions not just about the ownership of the technology but the accountability for any actions carried out by an autonomous AI system.

It's not inconceivable that the law could develop to the point that autonomous AI systems have a status similar to children, with humans being ultimately responsible for the machine in the same way as a parent or guardian is responsible for their child. It will be very interesting to see how this develops in 2022.

Stronachs



Ana Amicarella

Revolutionary transformation wins award for Ethos chief executive

ETHOS Energy's chief executive, Ana Amicarella has been recognised as Top Executive of the Year during the Experience Power conference hosted by Power magazine.

Faced with outage cancellations and postponements due to CV19, and a depressed oil and gas sector, Ethos Energy's reaction was to restructure the business to better align with customers and market dynamics. Ana Amicarella was appointed chief executive officer in December 2019 with a mission to take Ethos Energy into its next stage of strategic development and position the company for growth.

Prior to Ethos Energy, Ana spent 22 years with GE and eight with Aggreko, where she was managing director for the Latin America business.

In just one year Ana has led Ethos Energy through a revolutionary transformation. Despite the hurdles of CV19 and challenging market conditions, Ethos Energy achieved its best financial year to date and is on track for ambitious growth over the next five years.

Another coffee success for Alan

MOBILE coffee business Cafe2U Aberdeen South has won a third national title in six years.

Alan Fulton, the owner of Cafe2U Aberdeen South, has been voted Top UK Franchisee by the mobile coffee franchise.

Cafe2U UK is the market leader in non-traditional mobile coffee. It finds rewarding franchisee's an integral part of its success which allows it the opportunity to benchmark the state of the business nationwide.

Within three months of launching his business in late summer 2014 Alan secured the Supreme Bean Award for best newcomer. In 2016 he became the Franchise Partner of the Year for a top performance in all categories of business review and development. Now his hard work has been rewarded with the Franchise Partner of the year title for a second time.

Postgraduate transition training underway

A NEW Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) postgraduate training programme is underway to prepare the next generation of industry leaders with the knowledge and skills to deliver energy transition.

The Energy Transition Technology Leadership programme is a collaboration by the ECITB, industry employers, the University of Strathclyde and Robert Gordon University. Designed for professional graduate and apprentice engineers in the engineering construction industry, the course introduces the innovative technologies, organisational strategies and business models that will underpin net zero.

ECITB chief executive Chris Claydon said the aim is to prepare industry leaders and managers with the knowledge and skills required to support energy transition. Scotland is very much at the forefront of energy transition and so the University of Strathclyde and Robert Gordon University are in an excellent position to offer this course," he said.

"We want to equip industry professionals with the knowledge they need to successfully navigate their teams and companies through net zero and respond to new market opportunities."

The first cohort includes employees of international oilfield service provider Petrofac, who will, along with their tutors, develop a personalised training plan based on their professional background and future aspirations.

Industry leaders form Windstaller Alliance

INTERNATIONAL offshore energy suppliers Aker Solutions, DeepOcean and Solstad Offshore have joined forces to create Windstaller Alliance. The new partnership aims to provide the world's most cost-efficient and complete product supply, fabrication and marine services offering within offshore wind. The alliance will also pursue other offshore renewables segments.

Windstaller Alliance will combine the already well-established capabilities and expertise of the three offshore industry leaders. This will form an integrated and highly flexible one-stop-shop provider. The alliance will be able to offer product deliveries, fabrication services as well as marine and subsea operations and associated engineering services within offshore renewables industries.

"Today's supply chain for the offshore renewables market is highly fragmented and, in our view, sub-optimal in terms of efficiency, cost, risk and environmental footprint," said Guro Høyaas Løken, head of the Windstaller Alliance. "Windstaller Alliance is able to take an integrated approach where appropriate, while unlocking value for both operators and suppliers, at the same time reducing the total carbon footprint of offshore renewable projects."



Ryan Houghton, Louise Kingham and Jenny Laing

Council partners with BP for hydrogen hub

ABERDEEN City Council has selected bp as its preferred bidder for a commercial partnership which will accelerate the city's ambitions to become a world-class hydrogen hub.

Following a tender process, the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub concept will enable continued development of a hydrogen economy in the city.

A key part of the programme, phase one will involve the creation of Scotland's first scalable green hydrogen production facility, targeting first operations from 2024.

As a result, options could include using power drawn from a new photovoltaic solar farm, green power purchase agreements and a private wire grid connection to generate hydrogen for buses, heavy goods vehicles and large vans.

Future phases could involve production being scaled up through further investment to supply larger volumes of hydrogen for rail, freight and marine, as well as supply of hydrogen for heat and potentially export. This would be enabled by the expected increased availability of local renewable energy sources, including offshore wind developments that emerge from the ScotWind leasing round.

The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub programme will support Aberdeen City Council's ambitions to create a climate positive city and build inclusive growth through supporting hydrogen supply chain development, skills and training, and wider community benefits. A study commissioned by Aberdeen City Council on the growth in demand for hydrogen power estimates that if the hydrogen hub enables the export of renewable hydrogen, then 700 skilled jobs could be created in the hydrogen industry by 2030.

Aberdeen City Council Leader, Councillor Jenny Laing said: "This is a huge announcement for Aberdeen. It paves the way for the city to be a world leader in the production of hydrogen-based green fuel and energy. It will help create a cleaner, more sustainable city for local people and it also provides us with the opportunity to create hundreds of skilled jobs and add millions to the Aberdeen economy.

Louise Kingham, bp's UK head of country and senior vice president for Europe, added: "bp wants to play a leading role in Scotland's energy transition as is evidenced by this news and our transformational bid in the ScotWind offshore wind leasing round. We look forward to working with Aberdeen City Council on this exciting project and are pleased that - following the competitive and robust public procurement process - we were able to position bp as the partner of choice."

AGCC signs up to the Young Person's Guarantee

ABERDEEN & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has pledged its support for young people by signing up to the Young Person's Guarantee.

The guarantee is a commitment to connect every 16-24 year old in Scotland to a job, apprenticeship, education, training or volunteering. Introduced in the wake of CV19, it aims to give all young people the chance to succeed while offering employers the opportunity to build a skilled workforce now and in the future.

The Chamber is one of the first tranche of North-east organisations to sign up to the Young Person's Guarantee.

Russell Borthwick, chief executive of the Chamber, said: "Engaging with young people is key to ensuring that we develop and nurture a skilled workforce so that the North-east continues to be a great place to live, work, study, invest and do business.

"It is important for the Chamber to play our part and I would urge other organisations - large and small - to sign up to the guarantee."

Decommissioning solutions for a net zero world

DEEP Casing Tools (DCT), a UK based technology developer, expands their offering into decommissioning with the Casing Cement Breaker (CCB) in response to the global industry need for unique solutions across the well life cycle.

The CCB, awarded 'Emerging Technology' at the Offshore Achievement Awards in 2020, can transform both plug and abandonment and slot recovery, improving the efficiency and predictability of cut and pull or perf and squeeze operations.

DCT's sales and marketing manager, Edward Kerr said: "Introduction of the CCB into our existing portfolio of efficiency focused technologies further cements our platform for future development of the company, opening up new opportunities within the decommissioning sector and enabling our clients to reduce emissions, contributing to energy transition as we drive to a global net zero target.

"We aim to help companies, globally, on their energy transition journey, providing simple, sustainable innovation that deliver time savings, cost efficiencies, and reduce emissions across all well operations, supporting the UK government's target of reaching net zero by 2050. The CCB is one of many technologies within our suite that achieve this."

A major national oil company has now confirmed that the CCB is ready for trial runs following the successful 20 hour endurance test in Norway earlier this year.



Laura Chalmers

RGU achieves a first with Schwartz Rounds

ROBERT Gordon University (RGU) has become the first higher education institution in the UK to make Schwartz Rounds available to all disciplines to create a platform for collaborative learning and wellbeing outside the classroom.

With an original focus on healthcare, Schwartz Rounds provides a structured forum to regularly come together to discuss the emotional and social aspects of work and study.

A Round runs as a reflective space for people to share their own experiences around a central title and feel supported through discussions about the challenges and rewards intrinsic to their discipline.

Schwartz Rounds are licensed by the Point of Care Foundation and run in over 130 healthcare organisations across the UK. Earlier this year, the university became the first higher education institution in Scotland to introduce them. As part of the accreditation process, RGU was assessed on a case presentation, had to engage in a live session and undergo facilitator training.

Laura Chalmers, clinical director for Schwartz Rounds at RGU, said: "As the pandemic unfolded, we recognised that unprecedented times should be met with unprecedented, innovative measures to support our students' overall wellbeing. The Rounds have an undeniable power to move and connect people. It not only provides a confidential space for reflection and often inspiration, but a space to learn beyond the curriculum."

Evidence shows that people who attend Schwartz Rounds feel less stressed and isolated and more open to giving and receiving support. They enjoy increased insight and appreciation for others' roles and the process improves teamwork and interdisciplinary communication."

A word of advice



James Irving-Lewis,
protection specialist,
Phil Anderson Financial Services Ltd,

What is your area of expertise?

I provide businesses and business owners with financial advice. I specialise in financial protection by advising on life insurance, critical illness cover and income protection. I am an expert in key person insurance and business protection solutions, ensuring key staff members are protected within the business should the worst happen.

What should people know?

Business protection provides crucial security for employers. Many business owners might have personal protection in place but are often not fully aware of the variety of options available to protect their business. The death of a business owner can be devastating for a company and the family, especially when the life is uninsured from a business and personal perspective.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

A big mistake made by sole traders is that they often think business protection isn't required. Most companies and business owners will take out insurance on their premises and equipment, however they often fail to protect their most valuable asset – themselves and their staff. There is a need to cover the financial risk of losing the business owner or a member of staff, some things to consider is how would leases or business premises be impacted?

What's your top tip?

A relevant life plan can provide personal protection paid for by the business for employees and owners in certain circumstances, this has the added benefit of being tax efficient and can save over 50% on premiums.

Supporting the next generation – and the regional recovery

Tracey Slaven,
secretary and chief operating officer,
University of Aberdeen



MOVING to a new city in the middle of a global pandemic isn't particularly easy but when that city offers access to open space in abundance, it certainly has its compensations.

Just before the Christmas lockdown, I moved from Glasgow to Aberdeen, ready to take up the role of secretary and chief operating officer at the University of Aberdeen in the New Year.

I arrived in a very quiet version of Aberdeen and, over the last few months, have been delighted to see the shoots of recovery and the vibrancy of the city which first attracted me begin to return and I am looking forward to a much more festive Christmas this year.

When our students returned to campus in September, they brought with them experiences, insights and perspectives that energise our community and bolster the local economy. Their return symbolised not just a return to life in our classrooms and buildings but also the battle against the pandemic that the city and all of us have been on. I am particularly proud, that student adoption of CV19-safe behaviours means that the return to campus in September did not bring any increase in cases.

The pandemic has also further emphasised the vital role that the University has to play in the North-east of Scotland's recovery and redevelopment from the pandemic.

To support collaboration with our local and regional partners we have recently appointed a vice principal for regional engagement and regional recovery. This was already a key tenet of the University's 2040 strategic vision to guide our next two decades but CV19 brought the need for this into sharper focus.

From providing laboratory space to the NHS, undertaking nationally critical and CV19-related research, to delivering food to those in need and sewing scrubs for the NHS, our staff and students came together in support of this region in the most difficult of times.

It is often said that the pandemic has been particularly tough on the younger generation and, as a mother with student daughters, I have experienced the pandemic from a number of perspectives.

Despite the many challenges, we have been impressed by the resilience of our students who continued to achieve last year and many of them took up opportunities created by the move to a more virtual world,

engaging in online workshops with experts and finding new and creative ways to study and interact. Many also took up roles as volunteers and in the NHS.

It is now vital that we all do everything we can to support them. They are the future doctors, scientists, innovators, entrepreneurs and researchers of all kinds so necessary to navigate our way out of not only this pandemic but other future crises, as the Glasgow COP26 highlighted only too well.

Indeed, one of our former PhD students, Mustapha Bittaye, who came to Aberdeen from Ghana to learn from the expertise in our medical school, has gone on to play a key role in the development of the AstraZeneca CV19 vaccine as part of the Oxford University team.

What better reminder that striving to help our next generation achieve its full potential is for the benefit of every one of us.

Inspiration from Innovation

INNOVATION comes in many forms - from installing outdoor dining domes to technology to make North Sea operations safer and more cost effective, from protecting subsea power cables to creating new methods of business communication.

The North-east is noted for its pioneering business mentality and in February the Northern Star Business Awards 'Inspiration from Innovation' title will be awarded to one of four finalists in the prestigious competition.

Meldrum House Country Hotel and Golf Course normally attracts visitors from around the globe but lockdown stalled that and prompted an innovative and imaginative move which has paid off handsomely.

"During the first lockdown we decided to invest in two permanent, polycarbonate private outdoor, luxury dining domes on our lawns," said general manager Jordan Charles.

"It was a risky strategy at the time, however we could see from the pandemic that private dining would be popular. The fact that they were outside and guests would have their own service staff looking after them, would also be beneficial for marketing."

Two were purchased and attracted considerable national publicity which drew in customers. The

hotel invested in another dome in September and a fourth in December bringing their spend to a six-figure total. Two new larger domes are also planned.

Each dome has a different capacity but all have a 360-degree view across the estate, golf course, a herd of Highland cows and the sky.

"Since launch, the domes have been hugely successful," said Jordan.

"Not only has it appealed to our residents, but crucially, it has also brought in a whole new audience to Meldrum House. 65% of dome diners are non-residents and we've seen a demographic shift to a younger audience of 25 to 45 year olds we may not have previously attracted.

"The hospitality industry has had to be innovative to capitalise on the changes to dining in restaurants and hotels. This is a permanent solution for us which we feel any hospitality or tourism related business looking to enable higher value engagement for their customers can enjoy fully. It's perfect for the Scottish land/sea scape without being exposed to the Scottish elements.

"We've had enquiries from other hotels and restaurants all over the UK and one of our directors has taken the UK franchise for the domes and is seeing huge interest from the hospitality sector.

"The domes now contribute 20% of

our annual turnover based on sales so far and bookings to date.

"We have created five jobs as a result and it's also benefited our food and drink suppliers as revenue is up across the board."

Innovation and developing new products are in the DNA of Kaseum Technology Ltd.

It was established in March 2017 to research, design, develop and manufacture a range of electro-mechanical measurement and intervention tools for use in oil and gas wells.

It has shown consistent revenue growth, the staff has risen from four to 26, and it now supplies more than 50 companies in 30 countries in every oil and gas producing region of the world.

"As a young company almost 100% of our revenues are directly attributable to our research and development activities," said managing director, Paul Church.

"Almost 90% of our revenues are exports, almost 80% of our suppliers are in North Scotland (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Highlands) with 97% of our suppliers from Scotland as a whole.

"We involve a range of staff in the product development process, from business development and the research and development (R&D) team to the test and manufacturing teams.



Jordan Charles of
Meldrum House Estates Ltd



Steve Gibb of Balmoral Group



Graeme Gordon of IFB

“It is important at an early stage to set realistic expectations to management and business development as well as a realistic expectation that not every research and development project will result in a successful product.

“We also find it is equally important to have the buy in from the applications/test engineers and manufacturing team at an early stage. We have often developed concepts which would have benefitted from manufacturing input to save time ‘going down the wrong road’ and making a product that could not be manufactured or tested efficiently.

“Through experience you realise time spent in the design stage can save weeks and months in the manufacturing phase.”

Kaseum has three key product developments which will be delivered this year and will hopefully be as successful as its core product, the K-Set. K-Set is an electro-mechanical downhole power delivery mechanism capable of generating axial forces of up to 150,000 lbs. It is non-explosive and requires no dangerous goods to operate (or transport), offering a safer and more reliable downhole manipulation tool and avoiding the need for explosives, hydraulics and lithium batteries.

“It has also been significantly redesigned to go faster, pull more, fail less and eliminate routine servicing to successfully penetrate

the US market,” said Paul. “It is currently being trialled in Canada with over 100 successful runs to date, with our customer reporting significant safety and environmental benefits in addition to the operational advantages.”

“The fact that we have designed a product which can compete and be successful in such a tough and competitive market as US shale will stand the product in good stead for the worldwide oil and gas markets.

“Customers are continually searching for technology and solutions which will enhance the recovery from existing wells and reservoirs and make them safer, more productive and cost effective.”

For more than 40 years Balmoral has enjoyed an enviable reputation for innovation in the design, development and delivery of buoyancy, protection and insulation products for the offshore energy sector.

The company, which has a presence spanning Europe, North and South America and the Asia Pacific, helps clients resolve their technical challenges by working closely with them from concept development through design, manufacture, testing, delivery and support.

A recent innovation is its Balmoral FibreFlex™ cable protection technology for the offshore wind market.

Balmoral’s unique industry knowledge of designing and manufacturing in polymers and GRP structures enabled it to produce a novel composite of highly elastic polyurethane and polyester fibres. It has effectively created a braided hose style system for the protection of subsea fixed wind power cables.

Before this technology was introduced, offshore fixed wind power cables were typically protected by a vertebrae-style cable protection system. This allowed free movement of the cables which were not designed to perform in a dynamic environment. As a result there were catastrophic failures on several installations. Historic cable protection systems were generally designed to protect the cable during installation but not over the operational lifetime. This led to increased OPEX costs for offshore windfarms as a result of servicing and replacement requirements.

Balmoral FibreFlex™ now offers a solution to these concerns without adversely affecting CAPEX budgets.

“It’s a game changing technology in the subsea environment,” said Fraser Milne, engineering and projects director. “It takes advantage of the polymer’s highly elastic behaviour, its long-term subsea durability, excellent abrasion and impact properties, and combines them with the mechanical strength properties of the fibre.



NORTHERN STAR2022 BUSINESS AWARDS

“Balmoral identified the individual advantages of each material and conquered each material’s technical challenges by combining them into a composite structure, providing a solution which is greater than the sum of the constituent parts.

“We see significant global opportunities for FibreFlex™ technology to play a key role in the developing offshore energy transition movement.

“Innovation is the lifeblood of any industry and this is particularly true of offshore energy. The oil and gas industry has been likened to the space race in its never-ending quest for enhanced products, progressive operating procedures and materials development to improve performance and maximise returns. This philosophy is now being adopted by the renewables sector, particularly in offshore wind.”

IFB is an employee-owned organisation and every member of the team is involved in the innovation process.

“We encourage innovative thought across our team as one of our key business values,” said chief executive officer, Graeme Gordon.

“We thrive on challenge and being disruptive in our market and we pursue and support continuous improvement – in our market proposition, in our operations and in ourselves. We do this to always be relevant and innovative to our

customers in moving forward and developing the services they need.

“When we say we encourage innovative thought this means anyone in the business can freely share an idea amongst their team or the company as a whole and know that it will be taken seriously and discussed. If it’s right for the business and our customers, it will progress to the next stage.

“This is actually incorporated in our business plan through to the time and resources we apply to allow for innovation across our business.

“We run weekly company-wide knowledge share and brainstorming sessions, as well as monthly themes to discuss. We also have an annual employee survey to provide feedback and suggestions about the direction of the business. Additionally, we run beta testing with customers when creating new services.

Graeme said that IFB had become a leader in digital interculture and innovation having been the first independent ISP to deliver broadband services in Scotland; having built the first metropolitan WiFi network in the UK; operated the first useable international internet connection between Scotland and mainland Europe; and created the first Gigabit city in Aberdeen in 2015 – bringing CityFibre to Scotland for the first time.

Never has IFB’s culture of

innovation been more valuable than during the pandemic.

The company worked closely with its customers to understand their key needs brought about by the sudden and unplanned economic and business disruption.

Several challenges were uncovered as a result of home working which inspired IFB to look at new and different ways to repurpose its critical services to work at least as well in a home setting as they do in an office setting.

Three key areas were identified – cyber security, telecoms and collaboration and mobile broadband and connectivity – and three new services were developed– 5G mobile broadband, threat intelligence and Microsoft Teams Voice – to address the concerns of the new working environment.

Work is underway on extending these new services beyond their existing customer base and into multiple markets allowing businesses and organisations to operate with more flexibility across office and home working environments while maintaining productivity, efficiency and collaboration.

“We are at the forefront of the latest thinking and are using technology and innovation to drive the future” said Graeme.



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Dales achieves MoD Silver Award

DALES Marine Services has achieved a Silver Award for the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

As part of the award, Dales Marine had to meet and demonstrate a range of criteria, including employing serving and former Armed Forces members, delivering a flexible training and mobilisation commitment for reservists and cadet force adult volunteers. Dales pledged, demonstrated and advocated support to the UK Defence and Armed Forces, aligning the company's values with those of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families are treated fairly.

Michael Milne, chief executive officer, said, "We are very proud to support the defence and armed forces community, supporting those who serve our country. Dales Marine recognises its responsibilities in supporting service leavers and veterans by offering them employment, training, and a new career path within the marine industry. We also look to support reservist and family members of serving military personnel and the forces community."

Scottish asthma charity receive funds to support people with asthma

ASTHMA and Allergy Foundation is delighted to have received assets worth £255,138 with additional funds of £14k to continue to provide practical support to people with asthma across Scotland and fund asthma research.

The charity announced that they had been gifted the assets and cash sum by W Stuart Sutherland's Trust. They say the total gift to the charity will make a deep impact on Asthma and Allergy Foundation's goal to reach more families battling with poorly controlled asthma across Scotland.

Trustees of Asthma and Allergy Foundation said the funds would be used to continue to provide vital support to people with asthma across Scotland and the charity would carry out a dedicated asthma management project benefitting people with asthma in the Highland Region to fulfil the wishes of late W S Sutherland. They would be working with families, schools, the Highland Council, the NHS, and many other partners to deliver these outcomes.

Martina Chukwuma-Ezike, chief executive officer of Asthma and Allergy Foundation said: "It was a huge surprise when the initial letter came from the trustees of W S Sutherland trust, and she was delighted because the trustees saw a perfect fit between the two".

"We are elated that this has been made possible through the kind generosity of W Sutherland and his family. This will give Asthma and Allergy Foundation the opportunity to reach many more people with asthma, transform the numbers the charity can work with in future, save lives and fund asthma research towards finding a cure for this life-threatening condition"



KPMG promotions

KPMG promotes 21 colleagues in Aberdeen

KPMG UK has promoted 21 colleagues in its Aberdeen office, mirroring areas of growth for the business and the continued investment the firm is making in its people in the North-east of Scotland.

Gillian McGillivray has been promoted to director as head of HR for the UK Tax and Legal practice.

Jen Webster and Riyaz Mohammed are both now senior managers in Audit, while Debbie Hutcheon and Michael Smith have been promoted to senior managers in Tax.

Elsewhere eight colleagues have been promoted to manager in Audit and Deal Advisory and eight are now assistant managers in Audit, Tax and Deal Advisory.

The promotions reflect investments which are strongly supported by demand from the firm's clients and have been made across all of KPMG's service lines: audit, tax and deal advisory.

Martin Findlay, office senior partner of KPMG UK in Aberdeen, said: "This round of promotions is particularly significant for the Aberdeen office, following a hard year of lockdown challenges, and is testament to the hard work and diligence of all our colleagues. We have successfully guided clients through a difficult business period and enabled them to meet the challenges of a global pandemic, whilst still growing, adapting and ensuring they meet their compliance obligations.

"We look forward to a period of greater stability and growth as we emerge from the pandemic, and to all colleagues being able to fulfil their potential in the new and exciting world of hybrid working from our new base in Marischal Square.

Elgin contract for Prosafe

PROSAFE has been awarded a contract from TotalEnergies E&P UK Limited for the Safe Caledonia to provide accommodation support at the Elgin complex in the UK sector of the North Sea.

The 270-day contract will begin in mid-March 2022 with one 30-day option.



Matt Nicoll, Gary Lindsay, Gus Smart and Claire Black

ASCO's Swire contract aims for CO₂ emissions cut

ASCO has awarded a five-year contract for the provision of offshore containers and supporting services to global energy service provider Swire Energy Services (SES). The contract will develop the 35-year relationship SES has with ASCO, with a key focus around sustainability across UK operations. This will be the first contract in the company's longstanding relationship that will include deliverables and KPI's set against CO₂ emissions.

The contract, which is due to start in January, focuses on harnessing technology combined with carbon reduction initiatives which will help drive operational efficiency while setting the cornerstone for future sustainability positions for both parties. The various initiatives will contribute towards a potential CO₂ emissions reduction of 630 tonnes across the contract term.

Historic landmark to be restored

A FOUNTAIN in one of Aberdeen's most popular parks is being restored to its former glory by the City Council and community partners.

The £130k project will include the repair of stonework and will bring the A-Listed fountain in Victoria Park on Westburn Road back into working order. Funding came from the Council's Common Good Fund, Aberdeen City Heritage Trust, and FCC Communities Foundation.

Renowned Aberdeen architect J.B. Pirie designed the fountain as one of his earliest projects. The fountain comprises of a central stem featuring several drop bowls and multiple water jets, all sitting in a granite ringed basin.

Janice Lyon, secretary of the Friends of Victoria and Westburn Parks, said: "The fountain is at the heart of Victoria Park and we have been asked by park users about when it might be working again.

"Although it has taken some time to raise the funds, we are now delighted it is now being restored in what is the 150th anniversary of the park's opening."

Wood speeds up green hydrogen production

WOOD, the global consulting and engineering company, has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with HYGEN Energy to accelerate the production of green hydrogen for decarbonising transportation in the United Kingdom.

This marks a tangible step towards delivering the UK Government's strategy to achieve 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030.

Wood will bring together its decades of hydrogen experience along with its consulting, projects and operations expertise to develop solutions for future hydrogen production plants across the UK, beginning with the conceptual design for the facility at Herne Bay, Kent.

The Herne Bay facility will generate green hydrogen from existing offshore wind farms to be used in zero emission mobility transport solutions in the South-east of England. It is planned to start production by the middle of 2023 and, on final completion, the plant will have a production capacity of between eight and nine tonnes of green hydrogen per day, making it a true driving force in the UK's journey towards a lower carbon future.

Planning application for new Aberdeen Market has been submitted

A PLANNING application has been submitted to create a new Aberdeen Market which would be a destination venue featuring international-style food and drink outlets.

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

The planning application can be viewed at Simple Search (aberdeencity.gov.uk) using the reference number 211517/DPP. It should be emphasised that the designs may evolve during the planning process and consequently the artists' impressions may change. The planning application will be dealt with in the usual planning process.

Councillor Jenny Laing, leader Aberdeen City Council said: "Union Street remains the beating heart of our city. As part of our regeneration programme for Aberdeen, we have committed £150m towards reshaping the city centre as a destination of choice and I am delighted that we have managed to leverage in an additional £20m in Levelling Up funding to help deliver this project."

Aberdeen City Council city growth and resources convener councillor Ryan Houghton said: "The new market has the potential to reshape the future of the city centre. The £20m award from the UK Government shows that others see the potential this investment can have to unlocking the city centres future as part of the £150m commitment to the regeneration of the city centre."

Supporting talent from schools to join the Scottish tech ecosystem

Robin Macpherson,
head of college, Robert Gordon's College



THE Logan Review 2020, a report commissioned by the Scottish Government, highlights the need for Computing Science to be a major growth subject in Scotland to accelerate the growth of the Scottish and global tech ecosystem.

This is to reverse a national trend which has seen a significant and worrying decline in the number of pupils taking SQA qualifications in Computing Science in recent years which highlights a significant gap in the skills required within the Scottish tech industry now and in the future.

What can the education sector, schools and industry do to reverse the trend?

The problem is circular, in that a lack of pupils taking Computing Science in schools leads to a decline in graduates, which leads to a decline in new teachers, so the subject is no longer offered. To crack this problem, we need to break the cycle.

Robert Gordon's College, in collaboration with University and industry experts, is offering a solution via the launch of a new external online learning service for students aged 16 and 17 to help them

understand how and why technology is going to underpin so many careers in the future.

RGC Online offers students across the country the opportunity to study Higher computer science and higher mathematics being taught by teachers from Robert Gordon's College. An important component of the new service is to offer live teaching, and deeper learning than the traditional curriculum, complemented by additional modules in Artificial Intelligence, data science, software engineering and Entrepreneurship which are not currently part of the Scottish educational curriculum.

The modules have been established with the support of strategic partners from industry and universities based in the UK and the USA to further extend the knowledge of students and align with the needs of the global tech sector where technology is going to be immersed with health, food supply, finance, tourism, law and many new sectors that will emerge in the decade ahead.

Offering a new way for students to learn the foundational skills in computing science and mathematics, irrespective of their location, is an

important step forward in the delivery of education that better aligns with the skills shortfall identified in the Logan Review.

New study options, like RGC Online, will equip the next generation with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for a career in Scotland and the wider global tech ecosystem.



Scott and Rachel Willox

Goldstar named best large business in the Trades Awards

AWARD-winning Aberdeen cleaning and maintenance enterprise, Goldstar Cleaning Services, is delighted and proud to have been named Best Large Business in the Trades Awards 2021.

This is the second time the family-run Aberdeen business has won this prestigious award, having been successful in the same category back in 2018.

Goldstar director, Scott Willox, said: "We couldn't be prouder to be recognised in this way. The entire Goldstar team are dedicated, passionate and so proud of what we deliver every day across our diverse customer base."

Access2Funding awarded silver status by Investors in People

ACCESS2FUNDING has become one of just 15% of businesses to have been awarded silver status from Investors in People.

The UK's fastest growing research and development (R&D) tax specialist has been working towards the prestigious award to cement the business as an employer of choice, and provide teams with the best support possible when it comes to personal development.

Silver accreditation means that the right principles are in place but more than that, it means people and leaders are making active efforts to make sure that there's real consistency and everyone in the organisation are feeling the effect.

Dawn Coker, chief executive officer at Access2Funding said: "We embarked on working towards Investors in People after we experienced large-scale business growth over the last 18 months and recognised the need to put our people first. Achieving silver not only further cements our place as a leader in the field but is also a huge testament to the hard work of the team."

Vysus Group celebrates one-year anniversary with global volunteering effort

LEADING engineering and technical consultancy Vysus Group celebrated its one-year anniversary on November 1 with a globally coordinated volunteering effort to aid local communities.

Throughout October and November, numerous projects took place across its global sites including at its Aberdeen office, where staff are painting and garden clearing at a school for children with complex needs, tidying up the garden at a house for adults with learning disabilities and litter picking.

Further volunteering efforts were carried out globally including charity food drives in Houston and Maine, a beach clean-up in Oslo, the creation of a community garden in Kuala Lumpur, and presenting to a technical college in Atyrau, Kazakhstan. Where restrictions allow, the community initiatives were followed by various social events to celebrate the milestone since Vysus Group's formation following the strategic carve-out of Lloyd's Register's energy division.

This comes off the back of a successful year where Vysus Group has experienced double-digit percentage margin improvement, further diversifying beyond oil and gas into power, renewables, and complex infrastructure, creating an exciting vision and culture fit for the future.

CNR International help Maggie's Aberdeen deliver vital care to cancer patients

MAJOR North Sea operator CNR International (UK) Limited is helping cancer support charity Maggie's Aberdeen provide care to those affected by the illness by donating £5,000 to help fund the centre.

The company has donated the cost of running the centre, which is based in the grounds of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, for two days, meaning the charity can continue to provide support for those diagnosed with cancer, as well as their family and friends.

Barry Duncan, CNR International's vice president and finance director, said: "While it's been an uncertain time for many businesses and the wider economy, we want to continue to support this incredible charity. We are proud to support our local Maggie's centre and the excellent work they do."

Richard Stewart, centre fundraising manager at Maggie's Aberdeen, said: "Every day is important at Maggie's. We never know who will walk through the door, but we know for sure that whoever it is, they will need our support, and we will be able to help them."

"That's why we are delighted CNR International has chosen to support us. We rely entirely on voluntary donations to allow us to keep on developing our unique programme of support for people living with cancer."

Transformation on the agenda

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



FINDINGS from the Chamber's recent Oil & Gas Transition survey suggest that the UK's oil and gas sector is pressing ahead with diversification, but skills shortages and concerns over lack of visibility around government funded initiatives could create blockages for net zero ambitions.

COP26 may now be behind us but it has brought into sharp focus the global imperative that is climate change. But interestingly, less than a quarter of firms surveyed believe that the conference has acted as a net zero accelerator, suggesting that this is already work in progress.

This was the 34th edition of the Chamber's vital biannual barometer of activity and sentiment among operators and supply chain companies based in this region working in the energy sector. And a refreshed report focus looks specifically at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector as it looks to take a leading role in energy transition.

The report covers four main themes. Current trends and future confidence levels. Progress towards diversification. Ensuring the transition is just. And recruitment and skills

When it comes to general industry conditions, the research illustrates a mixed picture, with confidence and activity in the domestic sector trending below levels observed in international markets. However more businesses are now working at optimum levels than in the last survey. And pleasingly, we are seeing large increases in the value of renewables work.

Overall, the sector continues to be positive about the future, with 69% of companies expecting revenue to rise in 2022, double the confidence levels we saw looking ahead to 2020 at this point two years ago. Well over half of firms are forecasting significant jobs growth to support this.

The vast majority of respondents believe that strong sustainability credentials are critical to their long-term success. The survey shows that the industry continues to take its commitments to decarbonise seriously. 80% of firms indicated that strong sustainability credentials were critical to their long-term future.

2% of our sample were class swots, having already met their carbon neutral target. A fifth have committed to doing so by 2030. Just over a quarter have not yet set a deadline.

Concerningly 41% have not yet decided on or committed to their carbon reduction strategies. However, this is pretty much in line with other sectors across the country. Reinforcing the Chamber's policy recommendation that support must be urgently stepped up to enable businesses to understand the journey and take their initial steps.

Three quarters of companies report being either 'moderately' or 'extremely' optimistic about Aberdeen, Scotland and the UK playing a leading role as a future energy hub.

Respondents expect their businesses to transform substantially across the next decade, with firms predicting that on average, the share of their business outside of oil and gas will jump from

21% today to 47% by 2030.

When asked what factors might act as disincentives to diversify operations, there was a three-way tie in first place between: generating sufficient return on investment made, ability to access available funding, and embedding the necessary skills into their organisations.

Companies were actively pursuing solutions to these issues, with 62% investing in retraining existing staff, 47% focusing on graduate recruitment and 31% seeking to rebrand or reposition their company to be more attractive to new recruits.

The research suggests that additional action is needed to support firms in the sector to attract and retain the key talent which will drive the transition. The report was compiled in partnership with KPMG UK and delivered by the Research Chamber with support from the University of Strathclyde's Fraser of Allander Institute.

The Research Chamber is an independent research and insight agency within the Chamber of Commerce that helps businesses make better decisions and unlock growth through understanding staff, customers, markets and competitors.

Find out how our team can support your business, visit the website:

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To access a copy of the full report, visit **www.agcc.co.uk/research-chamber**

2021 training calendar

Management and Leadership	December
Essential Supervisory Skills Bridge the gap between doing and supervising and become confident in delegating tasks	7

Finance	December
Finance for Non-finance Managers (2 days) Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business	8-9

International Business and Exporting	December
Customs Procedures and Documentation Explore the various customs systems, procedures and documentation	9

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Are you looking for help to get started on your net zero journey?

We are planning to introduce a new training programme that is currently being piloted with 30 companies.

The aim of the programme is to build the resilience of SMEs in the North-east of Scotland by building knowledge around the climate emergency and carbon reduction. The programme will help businesses understand how they need to adapt to operate in a net zero environment and to the impacts of climate change. It will focus on companies that have limited knowledge and resources to address these issues and who have been impacted by CV19, with a specific focus on those in the energy supply chain, construction, manufacturing and third sector. The programme will be open to both Chamber and non-Chamber members.

Before setting firm dates, we are looking to assess likely levels of interest.

If you'd be interested in finding out more and with no obligation, please register by sending an email with the subject '**Net zero training**' to training@agcc.co.uk with your name, job title, company details and contact information.

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Adrian Watson

Employers encouraged to keep cash local with the Aberdeen Gift Card

EMPLOYERS across the North-east are being urged to support the local economic recovery and shop local by rewarding staff and loyal customers with an Aberdeen Gift Card for Christmas this year.

Since it was launched last year, more than £200k has been retained in the local economy through sales of the gift card.

The Aberdeen Gift Card can be redeemed at more than 200 businesses in Aberdeen city, including independent and national traders such as Marks & Spencer, Primark, Finnie's, Jamieson & Carry, Chaophraya and many more.

It is available for employers to buy from £10 to £500 and recipients can use the card like currency, either in one transaction or across several, choosing from a huge range of retail, hospitality, services and leisure outlets.

Each Aberdeen Gift Card is a prepaid Mastercard which is valid for 12 months from purchase, offering employers a secure way to gift. Cards can also be purchased online and delivered straight to the recipient.

Investment will fast track AAB's expansion

ANDERSON Anderson & Brown (AAB) has announced a significant investment from August Equity to fast-track ambitious growth plans and realise AAB's strategic vision of becoming a key UK regional player in the accountancy and wider business services market.

August's investment in AAB will facilitate considerable investment in people, both existing and those who recognise the exciting opportunities being created across the group. In addition, it will allow AAB to invest further in technology following the doubling of spend in this area during 2021. It will also provide significant firepower for AAB to pursue merger and acquisition opportunities across the UK.

The partnership with August will enable AAB to continue to build on the momentum already created this year following the merger with Glasgow-based accountancy firm Hardie Caldwell and the acquisition of Edinburgh-based Purpose HR.

Mineral Carbonation International win COP26 Clean Energy pitch battle

THE NET Zero Technology Centre has announced the winner of the COP26 Clean Energy Start-up Pitch Battle, hosted by the centre's award-winning TechX programme.

The winning company, Mineral Carbonation International (MCI) from Australia, has developed a scalable carbon platform technology that safely converts industrial CO₂ emissions into solid bulk materials, which has the potential to help accelerate the transition to net zero. MCI will receive a package of tailored support and the opportunity to pitch for investment or for a place on the TechX Clean Energy Accelerator. As well as widespread industry exposure, the winner will be invited to meet Kate Forbes MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, to discuss their scale-up plans.

Sophia Wang, chief operating officer of winning start-up MCI, commented: "MCI are thrilled to win the Net Zero Technology Centre's Clean Energy Start-up Pitch Battle - it is a wonderful encouragement for our carbon capture and utilisation technology.

"Transforming emissions into useful materials for the circular economy can help us to decarbonise and create new global industries. Winning this battle will absolutely help us to scale and accelerate our plans to lock away one billion tonnes of CO₂ into useful materials by 2040."

Electra Learning relocates to City's West End

IT CHANGE management and learning specialist, Electra Learning has relocated to a new premises in Aberdeen's West End, as the business sets its sights on continued growth.

The business previously operated from Original House on Craigshaw Drive, West Tullos.

Commenting on the move, managing director, Donna McWilliams said: "The new office provides us with a prime location right in the heart of the city, with all the benefits that brings, such as easy access to public transport and local amenities.

"It also means that we are closer to many of our clients, which will make meeting up much easier.

"In addition to this, we have recruited several new team members in recent months while we diversify our service offering, and so the new office will give us the space and flexibility we require to continue to expand.

"Finally, remaining in the city centre demonstrates our continued commitment to Aberdeen and the North-east region, as we embrace the current energy transition movement."

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Whitebox team

Whitebox to shake up the RTD market with premium canned cocktails

A NEW canned cocktail company has launched in Edinburgh, following the success of a 100ml Negroni drink which has sold more than 60,000 cans in the UK.

Based on the business motto - "better canned cocktails" - all Whitebox products are mixed to adapt to being stored in cans and have a similar alcohol by volume (ABV) percentages to drinks served in the world's top cocktail bars.

Assisted by Johnston Carmichael, one of the UK's top 20 accountancy firms, the Whitebox team has just completed a pre-seed £350k funding deal to support a production site in Sighthill, Edinburgh where the products are mixed, blended and canned onsite.

Edinburgh based Ben Iravani, Whitebox chief executive officer and co-founder, insists the new brand is already a market leader.

Ben said: "Wherever you are, take a look in your nearest store, you'll see formulaic brands doing cocktails by numbers. We are doing the opposite. Each cocktail is unique and excellent, and the passion we have for making excellent drinks comes through in every detail.

"With Whitebox we're not going to take the traditional approach of branded line extensions. We're just going to make the best possible canned Negroni. If you like it, try our other drinks. It is refreshingly simple, and an enjoyable way to create our products."

Ben also owns cocktail bar Orchid in Aberdeen which was closed for most of 2020 due to the pandemic. The team, led by multi award winning and internationally recognised bartender Alex Lawrence, launched a 100ml Negroni gifting service to raise spirits during lockdown.

Alex, Whitebox co-founder, said: "We basically just dipped our toes in the water with the initial Negroni can product and were pretty surprised at how well it went. We quickly realised that with some of the world's best bartenders in our team, along with in-house production and design capabilities we could do something pretty unique on a much bigger scale."

Aberdeen Airport's five-star sustainability rating

THE efforts of AGS Airports, which owns Aberdeen International, Glasgow and Southampton airports, in working towards a more sustainable future for aviation have been recognised by the sustainability organisation Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB).

Described as a mission-driven and investor-led organisation, GRESB provides standardised and validated environmental, social and governance (ESG) data to the capital markets.

Southampton was ranked as the best performing UK airport in the GRESB benchmark. Together with Aberdeen, it received a five-star rating for its sustainability performance and all were recognised as "airport transport sector leads."

Southampton, Aberdeen and Glasgow were ranked first, second and third respectively within the UK Transport: Airport Companies categories. In the European category Southampton was second, Aberdeen fourth and Glasgow fifth. In the same worldwide category Southampton was third, Aberdeen seventh and Glasgow ninth.

Mark Beveridge, operations director for Aberdeen International Airport, said: "As one of the UK's largest airport groups, we are committed to ensuring that we balance the undoubted economic and social benefits delivered by our airports with our climate responsibilities.

"We are delighted to be recognised by GRESB once again for all the hard work staff and colleagues continue to do and continue to work hard rebuilding our connectivity which will play a vital role in supporting the economic recovery of the North-east."

Imrandd and Baker share top award

TECHNOLOGY, data intelligence and engineering company, Imrandd was the joint winner of the Company of the Year award with Baker Hughes at the AFBE-UK Scotland (Association for Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers) Awards and Gala in Aberdeen.

The category encourages and recognises an outstanding company in the area of diversity and inclusion. Imrandd, a progressive and innovative SME, was shortlisted alongside Spirit Energy and Baker Hughes.

Innes Auchterlonie, Imrandd's chief executive officer, said: "Our industry is in late life and still faces challenges with a marginalised workforce of a certain age and gender. Without diversity and new, innovative ways of thinking the opportunity for transformation and long-term sustainability will be missed. This is particularly true when it comes to environmental issues and energy transition."

"We hope our approach influences more energy companies to make D&I a real focus. If a relatively small data analytics SME can continue to promote diversity across its workforce, then it's logical to expect larger organisations to implement changes and apply a lasting commitment too."

Top artist and new distillery help save Dee wildlife

A LEADING Scottish artist has joined forces with a new Highland whisky distillery to raise awareness and funds for one of the country's most ambitious nature-restoration projects.

To celebrate its launch, the Burn o' Bennie Distillery collaborated with Peter Howson to commission a unique series of major oil paintings and sketches entitled "The World is on Fire", on the theme of the environment ahead of COP26. The Banchory distillery has also produced a rare and old whisky series to support the River Dee's #milliontrees campaign.

The art-whisky initiative will culminate in the auction next year of an original preparatory Howson sketch, along with the first of the limited bottles of 30-year-old Aberfeldy from a single cask. A leading auction house will be conducting the sale, and has valued the joint lot at £5.5k.

This is the first in a series of sponsorship initiatives by Burn o' Bennie Distillery, with a total value of more than £100k to help plant one million native trees along the Dee's tributaries.

To register an interest in purchasing a numbered bottle of the Aberfeldy with a limited-edition Howson print, visit www.Burnobennie.com/onemilliontrees.

North-east road safety partners launch 'Be Bright at Night' campaign

PARTNERS from Road Safety North East Scotland (RSNES) and Getabout have launched the 'Be Bright at Night' campaign to encourage people to dress brightly when travelling in reduced daylight over the darker months.

Chair of Nestrans, councillor Sandra Macdonald said: "A lot of sportswear and children's school bags come with reflective strips these days but in winter it can be easy to find yourself in a dark outfit. Dressing brightly doesn't mean that you're expected to be head-to-toe in yellow with reflective stripes. If your winter jacket is dark, consider a brightly coloured hat or bag. Adding something bright in your outfit is a simple way to help other road users to see you."

The 'Be Bright at Night' campaign aligns with Police Scotland's North-east Division's 'Light for Dark Nights' initiative. The project will see community officers from across the North-east on patrol, engaging with cyclists and handing out sets of bike lights provided by Getabout.

A range of winter road safety advice can be found online at getabout.org.uk/wintertravel.

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signal filming at Vysus Group

signal celebrates 10th anniversary with a series of contract wins

DIGITAL media production company signal has secured a number of significant contract wins following the company's busiest six months in business.

signal has completed over 40 unique films for new and existing clients, with filming taking place across three continents and Scotland, in conjunction with several local organisations.

The latest round of contract wins so far equals a 300% increase in business this financial year, with the new contracts totaling over £150k.

Jamie Baikie, signal managing director, said: "By January 2021, we started to see some enquiries returning and by March 2021 we were very busy. By the summer, the number of projects had increased to the point where we needed to hire a new member of staff."

This year marks signal's 10th year in business and, to mark the occasion the company has lent its support to Aberdeen-based charitable fund, supPORT-all. The initiative is part of Aberdeen Harbour Board's new £30k community support programme for charities and groups undertaking work local to the port.

"While the pandemic prevented us from holding any celebrations to mark our 10th anniversary, we wanted to celebrate in a more creative and kind-hearted way," explained Jamie. "We are proud to be a part of supPORT-all in helping a number of good causes in our hometown of Aberdeen."

Aside from its charitable endeavours, the signal team is pleased to report a number of high-profile projects undertaken thanks to the new contract wins, which include Vysus Group, Shell, ORE Catapult and Equinor UK.

Looking ahead to the future, Jamie said the signal team remain optimistic about what the future holds, "After such a challenging and unpredictable 18 months, we are delighted that the outlook is looking healthy for the remainder of 2021 and beyond,"

Shepherd and Wedderburn launch Environmental, Social and Governance Advisory Group

SHEPHERD and Wedderburn has established a dedicated Environmental, Social and Governance Advisory Group to assist clients with their sustainability, workforce and regulatory commitments.

The group comprises lawyers with relevant, specialist expertise drawn from across the firm and is already supporting clients active in a variety of sectors in developing their ESG strategies.

ESG considerations are now at the top of many board agendas. Under proposals announced by chancellor Rishi Sunak at the COP26 climate summit, financial institutions and companies with shares listed on the London Stock Exchange will be required to publish their net zero transition plans from 2023. With increasing reporting requirements and pressure to demonstrate commitments, now is the time to act.

Neptune Energy awarded 'Gold' status by OGMP for methane reduction plans

NEPTUNE Energy today announced it has been awarded Gold Standard status by the Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) in recognition of setting ambitious targets and establishing credible plans to reach a net zero methane intensity by 2030.

To achieve Gold Standard companies are required to outline a credible and clear path to reduce methane emissions by 45% or more and to report their progress annually.

Neptune's Gold Standard achievement was featured in the United Nations inaugural International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO) report, which also highlighted Neptune's 2025 methane emission intensity target of 0.0015% as being the most ambitious of all the participating oil and gas companies.

The importance of tackling methane emissions was a major focus at COP26 in Glasgow, and the IMEO will play an integral role in the Global Methane Pledge – a US and EU-led effort by more than 30 countries to slash methane emissions by 30% by 2030 – by establishing a global public record of trusted and transparent methane emissions.

Neptune Energy's vice president operations Europe, Pete Jones, said: "Emissions reduction is an area in which Neptune is demonstrating leadership through our actions. We already have one of the lowest methane intensities in the sector, at 0.01%, compared with the industry average of 0.23%, and want to go further, with a target of net zero methane emissions by 2030."



Sarah Downs,
co-founder and director, Doqaru Limited

What does your company do that others don't?

Doqaru Ltd are a sales enablement consultancy and the only company in Scotland with access to a global dataset of over two million sales professionals, which we use during our data-driven salespeople, sales management and sales leadership competency analysis offering. We then use the findings to support the C-Suite to create and deliver on the appropriate strategy for growth with the right resources and with a focus on return on investment (ROI). We work internationally with sales and marketing teams, in various sized companies and across many sectors.

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

As we move toward some kind of 'normal', sales is still fundamentally different than it was just a few years ago. With an urgent need for digital transformation and a shift to virtual interactions, companies have had their share of challenges. Many teams have struggled to build trust online, get in front of decision makers and close deals. With a change in buying behaviours and mentality, it's taking a lot of work from sales leaders to adopt a new strategy for the digital world and it's an area we've had the privilege of helping a lot of our clients with.

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

That sometimes you just need to say "no". It could be walking away from a business opportunity that isn't a

good fit, turning down a voluntary role with a local charity you'd love to help or mentoring someone that needs it. But the reality is that we can't be all things to all people, and if we try to be we will inevitably burn out and be able to help no one. This has been hard for me to grasp over the years as I want to help people and have struggled to get the right balance.

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

To celebrate the small wins along the way. Sometimes when we are climbing the mountain it's too easy to focus on only looking up, at how far we still need to climb, instead of looking down and appreciating how far we've already come. This is true for almost everything in life, but certainly for business.

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

My successful (albeit hard) career transition from trauma nursing into business. I had no idea where I was headed or how I would find something else that aligned to my purpose, but I finally got there. It was probably one of the hardest journeys I will ever go on, but I learned so much along the way about myself and I'm proud of where I've ended up. If you had told me back then that I'd end up running a business or stand on a stage and speak, I would never have believed you!



Quick fire round

What was your first job?

A paper round in Stonehaven at 12 years old

When would you like to retire?

I honestly have no idea, but I would like the freedom by 2035

What did you have for breakfast?

Coffee and Ketones

Who, or what, inspires you?

I am inspired by people – we really are amazingly resilient creatures!

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

I recently went to the cinema to see Respect, which was about the life of Aretha Franklin



Jane Spiers

Jane Spiers steps down as chief executive of Aberdeen Performing Arts

ABERDEEN Performing Arts has announced that chief executive, Jane Spiers, will step down in Spring 2022.

On leaving Aberdeen Performing Arts, Jane Spiers said: "If I listened to my heart, I'd never leave Aberdeen Performing Arts but after a lifetime working in the arts, my head is telling me it's time to step away. I've lived my dream job for the last 10 years and it will be hard to say goodbye to my wonderful work family especially after what we've been through together in the last 18 months. I'm immensely proud of the values led, people-centred culture that has driven our success over the last few years and seen us through the pandemic."

Jane added: "As we emerge from the pandemic and welcome audiences into our venues again, we are optimistic for the future and I'm sure that Aberdeen Performing Arts will emerge stronger and more resilient than ever. Jobs like this don't come up very often and it will be an amazing opportunity to take a great team, an engaged board and invested partners beyond 2021 to deliver our shared ambitions for the arts in Aberdeen, the North-east and in Scotland."

Jane joined Aberdeen Performing Arts in 2012 and has overseen a significant period of development for the independent charity. Under Jane's leadership the organisation delivered the £10m Music Hall redevelopment, introduced three new festivals to the city, Granite Noir Book Festival, True North Music Festival and Light the Blue youth arts festival, expanded and diversified work on all stages, deepened engagement with communities, and established Freshly Squeezed Productions to commission and produce work in the North-east. In 2019, Aberdeen Performing Arts was named Business of the Year in the North-east at the Northern Star Business Awards, the first cultural organisation to be presented with the award. Jane also being that year's recipient of the Life Time Achievement Award.

SME Spotlight



Stephen Hepburn,
senior agent,
NFU Mutual, Aberdeen City & Shire Agency

What does your company do?

We provide an integrated general insurance and financial services proposition to rural businesses, commercial businesses and private individuals. We also provide tailored health and safety products and services to help business owners meet their obligations in this important area.

What is unique about it?

It's our local service proposition delivered by local people and our mutuality that sets us apart. You can contact us directly by phone or come in and see us at the Agency at Thainstone Centre near Inverurie. We also have four agents, including myself who are always out on the road seeing clients or prospects and this is quite unique these days.

What do you hope your customers say about you?

More than nine out of 10 customers renew their policies with us each year. As a result of this I would hope they say that we provide a fantastic service, with market leading products at a fair price. And most importantly that we are there for them when they need us most.

What is the priority for your business right now?

Our priority will always be our customers. However, we created Aberdeen City & Shire Agency through the merger of two smaller agencies and our internal priority right now is bringing the teams together and creating the right culture and operating structure to deliver on our ambitious business plan going forward.

What are your ambitions for the future of your company?

To become one of the most successful NFU Mutual Agencies in Scotland.

What has been most valuable to you as a member of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce?

We are in the early stages of our journey with the Chamber but from experience it will be the platform it gives us to meet other business owners and decision makers that will be most valuable.



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The clock is ticking



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

DO YOU import goods from the EU? December 2021 marks the end of 'staged custom controls' as we have known them ahead of HMRC introducing full custom declarations in 2022.

Businesses of all sizes are being warned to prepare for the changes coming into play from the beginning of the year. A number of conversations lately among Chamber members have revealed some confusion on when the transition period will end. A lot of customers believe this transition will last until July 2022 but this is not entirely the case.

From January 1, 2022, the UK's latest Border Operating Model comes into force and will include the following changes:

- full custom declarations will be required for all imported goods
- full customs controls and customs checks will apply along with the requirement for full custom declarations. Businesses that still wish to use deferred declarations or import simplified frontier

declarations will be required to apply for Customs Freight Simplified Procedures (CFSP) approval - the Chamber can help you with this.

- customs checks will begin on imports into GB and from the EU
- pre-notification through Import of Products, Animal, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) and documentary checks will be required for imports of agri-foods (live animals and animal bi-products)
- Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) will go live for EU to GB imports when passing through GB ports that are not inventory linked (this includes Dover, Eurotunnel, and Holyhead)

Another important change that will be introduced from January 1, 2022 applies to plants and plant products:

- pre-notification requirements and documentary checks (including phytosanitary certificates) will be required for low risk plants and plant products

- physical SPS checks on high risk plants and agri-food and feed (including products of animal origin and high-risk foods not of animal origin) will take place at Border Control posts rather than the place of destination

In essence, if your business brings in goods from the EU and it feels like nothing has changed since Brexit you need to think again.

Maybe take this as your final written warning!

The Chamber is across all these changes and is ready to help businesses navigate the changing import landscape. Visit www.agcc.co.uk/helping-your-business/international-markets/chamber-customs to find out more.



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Don't just join, join in



Get ready to kickstart your SPE Offshore Europe experience

Jan 15 - 23

Dubai
£600

Dubai Expo Trade Mission

The Scottish Chamber of Commerce international network is inviting applications from Scottish businesses to attend the Dubai Expo trade mission focusing on clean energy and climate change.

Businesses that would benefit from participating include renewable energy, low carbon heat, low carbon transport, offshore wind, blue and green hydrogen and oil and gas transition. A week of activities is being organised for the delegation, along with some free time for delegates to attend Dubai Expo and the World Future Energy Summit.

This trade mission is open to any business in Scotland looking to access international markets and companies do not need to be a Chamber member.

Jan 28

08:30 - 10:00
AGCC
Free

Maximise Your Membership

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

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

Free to attend, come ready to join in.

Feb 1

07:30 - 09:30
P&J Live
£55 members
£75 non-members

Business Breakfast - Energising the race to net zero

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



Sponsored by:



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

To see our full programme of events, visit agcc.co.uk/events



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Speed Networking

Speed networking is a fantastic way to grow your network and bring you new business opportunities.

Over the hour you'll continue to meet everybody one by one and there'll be the opportunity to continue to network and talk to delegates collectively over lunch, allowing you to connect with up to 50 delegates in a short time.

Feb 10

11:45 – 14:00

AGCC

£35 members

£50 non-members



Let's network

Northern Star Business Awards

The Chamber believes marking the achievements of local businesses is more important than ever as the local community comes to terms with the impact of the CV19 pandemic.

The Northern Star Business Awards seek to recognise the exceptional accomplishments of organisations across the Aberdeen city region.

Real people, black tie – lots of sparkle!

Feb 10

18:00 – 23:00

P&J Live

Tables of 10

start at £1,475



Time to shine a light

Maximise Your Membership

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

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

Free to attend, come ready to join in.

Mar 25

08:30 – 10:00

AGCC

Free



Book your free place at www.agcc.co.uk

We are here to support your business



Andy Imrie

Commercial cleaning and packaging specialists CS Group has appointed Andy Imrie as managing director as part of ambitious growth plans aimed at doubling group turnover over the next three years. The plan focuses on continued expansion in Grampian as well as the Highlands, Tayside and Fife, along with new product and service lines into existing and targeted markets.



Lesley Birse

Wood has appointed Lesley Birse as executive president of people and organisation (P&O). Lesley assumes the new role having previously worked as president of Wood's global operations business unit. She brings over 20 years of global HR experience and a passion for harnessing the potential of people to deliver strategic business outcomes.



Gary Lindsay

Swire Energy Services (SES) has appointed Gary Lindsay as general manager UK. Gary joins the UK regional team from SES' Kuala Lumpur office and will be based in Aberdeen, reporting to Wayne Manning, vice president, oil and gas. Prior to his appointment, Gary was commercial manager for SES in the Asia Pacific region.



Stacy Angus

Osprey Housing has appointed Stacy Angus as chief executive officer. The former director of housing services for Osprey succeeds Glenn Adcock who is retiring after nearly 11 years with the organisation. She first joined Osprey's forerunner, Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership, in 2006 as a customer services assistant.



Corrie Deans

FG Burnett has appointed Corrie Deans as director within its property management department. Corrie brings extensive facilities management experience to the business, having worked for OCS Group in a key FM role. In his new position with FGB, Corrie will work alongside head of department, Jonathan Nesbitt.



Jeff Hailey

3D technology specialist Eserv International has appointed Jeff Hailey as digital solutions lead to support the growth and development of its transformative brownfield digital twin solution. The AS-TEG™ system has been developed to create a digital twin ecosystem enabling desktop surveys and visual inspections.



Andrew Beedie and Andrew Michel

CBRE has appointed two new members of staff in its Aberdeen office for its growing project management and building consultancy department. Andrew Beedie has joined as a surveyor following two years running his own practice in Orkney, working on both commercial and residential instructions. Prior to that he worked in Aberdeen with FG Burnett. Andrew Michel has joined as an associate director having worked previously with Space Solutions. In his new role Andrew will focus on leading the building surveying service line in Aberdeen assisted by Andrew Beedie.



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Cameron Birnie

Converged Communication Solutions has appointed Cameron Birnie to its cyber security team in Aberdeen. The appointment brings the cyber security team staff to five. Cameron gained a first-class honours degree in computer network management and design from the Aberdeen university in 2020.



Ryan Crighton

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has appointed Ryan Crighton as policy and marketing director. Ryan has spent the last seven years supporting the national expansion of law firm Aberdeen Considine and is also the co-founder of luxury barbering brand, Sovereign Grooming. He was also elected as Aberdeen Inspired's vice-chairman earlier this year.



Arthur Stautzenberger

Coretrax, the global well integrity and production optimisation leader, has reinforced its commitment to Norway with the appointment of Arthur Stautzenberger as its first Norway country manager to lead business growth in the region. Based in Stavanger, Mr Stautzenberger joins Coretrax from Halliburton.



Gavin Duncan

Online Electronics Limited, based in Blackburn, has appointed Gavin Duncan as research and development manager. Gavin is a chartered electronic and electrical engineer with 33 years' experience in R&D and engineering roles and has spent 20 years working in senior management positions.

Other recent appointments

AquaTerra Group Ltd has made three appointments. **Steven Bunting** has joined as specialist access manager; **Martin Longmuir** as NDT manager / TA; and **Stewart Gilchrist** as head of oil and gas / head of renewables and energy transition.

LHR Marine has appointed **George Byers** as operations manager. With a remit to deliver strong leadership to his team and be a key driver to develop the LHR Marine business, George will play a key strategic role within the company's leadership team.

Kevin Murray has joined J + S Subsea as a senior subsea controls engineer. Kevin has worked in the offshore industry for more than 20 years as a subsea control engineer and has gained experience with all phases of subsea control system design and operation.

Sofiane Kennouche has joined Well-Safe Solutions as marketing and communications executive. Sofiane is an experienced communications professional with in-house and agency PR and journalism experience across the subsea, engineering, not-for-profit, technology, automotive, FMCG and retail sectors.

KPMG UK has promoted 21 Aberdeen staff mirroring areas of growth for the business and the continued investment the firm is making in its people in the North-east of Scotland. **Gillian McGillivray** has been promoted to director as head of HR for the UK tax and legal practice. **Jen Webster** and **Riyaz Mohammed** are both now senior managers in audit, while **Debbie Hutcheon** and **Michael Smith** have been promoted to senior managers in tax. Eight staff have been promoted to manager in audit and deal advisory and eight are now assistant managers in audit, tax and deal advisory.

A world-leading theologian and ethicist is to join the University of Aberdeen. **Professor David Clough** will be joining the divinity department as Professor in Theology and Applied Sciences. Professor Clough specialises in non-human creation and is currently undertaking an Arts and Humanities Research Council follow-on project in relation to this work.

Aberdeen digital media production company signal has welcomed **Piers Deseilligny** to its growing team. Piers came to Aberdeen in 2017 and gained a first-class honours MA in anthropology and international relations at Aberdeen University. Piers is a creative filmmaker who will be mostly focused on cinematography and colour grading on short films and corporate projects.

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SPE Offshore Europe 2022

- putting the action into interaction

TO SPUR and support energy transition, SPE Offshore Europe 2022 - Europe's first major face-to-face energy event since 2019 - will host a hydrogen hub, energy transition theatre and zone, future opportunities theatre and future talent hub.

The event, which takes place at the P&J Live, Aberdeen, from February 1-4, follows the hugely successful virtual conference which took place in September. Registration is now open for the live event which includes three halls of exhibition space, conference and specialist theatre zones.

Jonathan Heastie, portfolio director - energy and marine at Reed Exhibitions

(RX), co-organiser with the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), said: "Like the offshore oil and gas industry that we have represented for the last 50 years, it's time for change, and that change will be inclusive of the whole supply chain. We will continue to provide a platform for all companies operating in the upstream energy industry to learn, share and showcase.

"Industry support for the return of SPE Offshore Europe has been phenomenal and we are encouraging companies to book now while there is space remaining."

The new visitor attractions will lay the groundwork for more extensive changes to the exhibition and

conference in 2023 and beyond. More features will be announced over the coming months.

SPE Offshore Europe 2022 will also include two days of high-level energy transition conference content curated by SPE. A tailored programme will be created post-COP26 to consider the reality of the energy transition and the steps needed to refresh the roadmap to net zero.

www.offshore-europe.co.uk





Colin Anderson and Mack Mackie

Mackie's wind turbines surpass 100 million kWh milestone

ONE of Scotland's largest food and drink brands has generated more than one hundred gigawatt hours of renewable energy through its wind turbines.

The climate positive family business, Mackie's of Scotland, saw the meter on its three original turbines tick back to zero, after it had reached the 100 million kWh mark last month.

Mackie's has been generating power from its wind turbines since 2005 and has produced enough energy to supply 2,500 family homes with electricity for 10 years or drive an electric car around the world more than 14,000 times.

The Aberdeenshire farming business is continually investing in ways to reduce its footprint, from wind turbines to its solar panel array. Mackie's is currently installing a £4.5m low carbon refrigeration system which will cut the farm's energy use by up to 80%.

Colin Anderson, renewable energy consulting engineer, said: "This is a tremendous feat for Mackie's and certainly stands as one of the most influential accomplishments in renewable energy production by a private business.

"Mackie's has been a trailblazer in renewable energy production, becoming one of the first companies to install its own wind turbine in the 1980's. It now has the capabilities to harness wind and solar energy, as well as biomass.

"Attitudes have continued to change over the years, and there is an increased acceptance and understanding of the benefits renewable energy generators, such as wind farms, can bring.

"More and more businesses are looking at ways in which they can produce their own renewable energy following the template set by Mackie's.

"Scotland's potential for renewable energy is one of the greatest in Europe, and through developing these technologies our nation's dependence on fossil fuel-based electricity can be reduced."

Mac Mackie, managing director at Mackie's of Scotland, said: "We are continuing to invest in new methods which will increase our renewable potential and cut down our carbon footprint.

"Reaching 100 million kWh is a significant landmark for the farm and we are looking forward to hitting the 200 million mark in the years to come."

Scotland's best gin festival announced at P&J Live

GIN fans from across the North-east of Scotland will be spoilt for choice as they have the chance to meet the makers behind over 50 premium gin brands at The Gin To My Tonic Show, just announced at P&J Live on Friday 26 and Saturday, August 27, 2022.

Paul Hudson-Jones, managing director of The Gin To My Tonic, says: "Scotland has a vibrant, innovative and highly respected craft gin and distilling scene and The Gin To My Tonic Show is there to celebrate this. Our ethos has always been to unite gin makers with gin lovers in a fun and immersive way, with a passion for showcasing small batch craft gins and crafts spirits that are not always readily available. The festival is unique due to the number of makers in attendance, but also in that you can try multiple spirits onsite as part of your ticket in order to find a new favourite. Having run the festival in Glasgow for three years and winning various awards, including Industry Choice Gin Event, we are beyond excited to be adding additional dates, such as Aberdeen and helping fly the flag for Scottish gin makers."

Claire-Lena Miller-Davis, exhibition sales manager at P&J Live, says: "The popularity of gin has gone through the roof in recent years, with many new independent and well-known favourites coming to market with new and unique flavour twists, much to the surprise and delight of gin connoisseurs. We are really pleased to welcome the Gin To My Tonic Show to P&J Live next year, and look forward to gin-dulging in everything that it has to offer."

TEXO launches new app

TEXO, the leading engineering, fabrication, asset management and survey company has announced that it is launching its very own app. TEXO APP, which is available on the App Store and Play Store, keeps users up-to-date with all things TEXO.

"We wanted to give our staff and our customers an easy, no-hassle way to keep in touch with everything that's going on at TEXO," said Chris Smith, TEXO managing director. "We know that people are overwhelmingly using their smartphones to access information, and it made sense to develop an app that is easy to use, easy to access and gives people valuable and useful information."

The app is dashboard-style, and pulls all TEXO's latest news, social media feeds, case studies and videos into a single place. Users can decide what sort of content they want to see and can set up alerts for new posts or feeds. In addition to company news, the app will have a dedicated section for TEXO Recruitment. This will feature all current vacancies and allows users to go straight to the application process.

"We embrace technology in all our project work," explained Chris Smith. "So of course, we want to adopt the latest technology for our communications too. This app is a great development in our customer service and relationship-building with customers, suppliers, the wider industry and our staff and we're looking forward to its success."

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