



Another successful year

Record tonnages of cargo and shipping helped increase turnover at Aberdeen Harbour to a new high in 2005 in another successful year at the port.

Turnover reached £19.6 million, compared with the previous record of £18.3 million in 2004. Pre tax profit dropped to £5.6 million (2004 - £6.8 million), "due to significant expenditure on major development and planned maintenance throughout the year, in line with ensuring a healthy future for the port," comments Aberdeen Harbour Board Chairman, David Paton.

The Board re-invested £6.5 million last year in their maintenance and development programme, including the major reconstruction of Albert Quay West and the development of a state-of-the-art Marine Operations Centre, both for completion in the first half of 2006.

The Board announced previously that cargo and shipping handled in 2005 were both at record levels (see below).

Describing the year as "one of considerable further success," Mr Paton said: "Our current strengths as both a regional resource and a global gateway are the result of the strategic vision of the Board over many years, coupled with the judicious reinvestment, as a Trust Port, of all profits in the undertaking.

"The Board's comprehensive overview of strategy during 2005 reinforced the clear focus on moving the port forward to continued growth and success. The current five-year investment plan involves expenditure of £44 million and includes the significant provision of more space and facilities for port users."

Record cargo handling

Cargo and shipping again reached record levels at Aberdeen Harbour in 2005, reinforcing the port's strengths as a regional resource and global gateway.

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Barclay Braithwaite, said: "The figures highlight the port's existing capacity to handle increasing traffic and bigger ships at a time when further projects are underway or in planning to ensure that there are the facilities for even more activity in the future.

"The port has enjoyed a busy start to 2006 across various sectors, albeit any negative impact in the future of the Government's increased oil tax is a cause for concern."

Imports and exports totalled 4.85 million tonnes (2004 - 4.56 million tonnes), due mainly to increased shipments for the oil and gas industry in UK waters and further afield, and growth in general cargo.

Grain exports reached a new high at 72,999 tonnes, more than 10 times the figure in 2002. Shipment of animal feedstuffs – principally salmon feed to Shetland – almost doubled to around 53,000 tonnes. Landings of white fish, industrial fish and shellfish totalled 23,561 tonnes, up from 22,214 tonnes.

With the closure of one of the region's paper mills, the export of finished products more than halved to under 23,000 tonnes.

There was further increase, of over 8,500, in the number of passengers using the port, with most of the 140,952 sailing on the roll-on/roll-off ferries serving Orkney and Shetland and others on 10 cruise ships which called in 2005.

Board appointments

Members of Aberdeen Harbour Board have re-elected David Paton OBE as Chairman and Keith Allan as Vice Chairman for 2006.

Shipping increases again

While vessel arrivals at Aberdeen held steady at 8,335 in 2005, the gross tonnage of shipping was a new record for the seventh year in succession – 21.7 million gross tonnes (2004 -21.1 million gross tonnes).

In recent years, the Board have created 20 deep-water berths to accommodate larger vessels.

The port twice set records for the busiest week's shipping – the second time, vessels reaching 519,045 gross tonnes in a single week in November, compared with 497,000 gross tonnes in one week in 2004.

New Chief Executive

The new Chief Executive of Aberdeen Harbour Board is to be Captain Colin Parker, the present Operations Director and Harbour Master who will succeed Barclay Braithwaite on 1 May 2006.

Captain Parker joined the Board in 1987 as a Navigation Control Officer, becoming Assistant Harbour Master in 1990. Harbour Master since 1994, he was also made Operations Director and a Board member in 2003. Chairman of the British Ports Association's Scottish Ports Committee since 2002, he is a member of the Nautical Institute and The International and UK Harbour Masters' Associations.

Beginning his maritime career in the Merchant Navy in 1974, Captain Parker gained his Master Mariner's Certificate while on North Sea oil support vessels in the 1980s.

Harbour Board Chairman, David Paton, said: "The search for a new Chief Executive included national advertising and attracted a high level of quality interest. We have every confidence that Colin has the experience and skills to lead the port to further success in the future."

Increasing oilfield exports

Aberdeen Harbour's role as the marshalling point for shipment of oilfield equipment for use by the offshore industry continues to develop, including significant increases in cargoes for West Africa and the Caspian.

Annual exports to West Africa have almost doubled in the first half of this decade – from 19,353 tonnes in 2001 to 37,774 tonnes in 2005, with the port's growing involvement in supporting "hot spot" markets there. Shipments this year had topped 7,000 tonnes by mid-March.

With nine vessels calling at Aberdeen in January and February, another seven have been scheduled for March. Shipping companies, Safmarine and Universal Africa Lines, have established services to West Africa, and there are also specific charters. Searoutes, Nor-Cargo and Seletar are involved as local agents.

This year's shipments of almost 5,800 tonnes of equipment to the Caspian by mid-March compared with under 2,500 tonnes in the whole 12 months of each of the previous two years. Agencies supporting services to the Caspian are Euroline, Nor-Cargo and Searoutes.

Room for more

The next phase of the redevelopment of the Point Law Peninsula is underway, to provide extensive back-up space complementing the recently completed reconstruction of Albert Quay West.

Now operational, the £4.75 million quay project has provided 212 metres of common-user berthing, dredged to -7.5 metres and capable of accommodating two medium-to-large vessels.

The demolition of buildings will create 20,000 square metres of surfaced area to support quayside operations and is another example of measures being implemented by the Harbour Board to expand capacity for increasing activity.

Funding for Harbour Gallery upgrade

The Aberdeen Harbour Gallery in the award-winning Aberdeen Maritime Museum is being upgraded in a major project, costing around £95,000 and highlighting the long history of the port.

It is being part-funded through a £45,000 contribution from the Harbour Board, which made a similar contribution when the gallery was added in 1997. Since then, more than 500,000 visitors have toured the gallery.

With space recently doubled as a result of the relocation of exhibits elsewhere within the building on Shiprow, John Edwards, Keeper of Science and Maritime History, said: "The time is now right to take full advantage of this additional space, not only to improve the exhibits, but also to make the most of the magnificent room with views of the modern harbour."

Barclay Braithwaite, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Harbour Board, said: "We are very aware that today's world class port is the result of centuries of development and a long tradition of service, and we are delighted to encourage the public's interest and understanding of the port, both historical and modern, through our continuing support of the museum."

Computer consoles will allow visitors to access the history in depth, with different programmes including port history, a day in the life of the harbour, people at work, then-and-now photographs and the Harbour Board's DVD. Younger audiences will have the benefit of tailor made hands-on exhibits and a new guidebook.

Opening in early Spring, a key to the remodelled gallery will be its ability to change displays frequently and update the audio-visual presentations.

* Aberdeen Maritime Museum is open from 10am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday, and from 12 noon to 3pm on Sundays. Admission is free.

SBS expands

SBS Logistics has become one of the largest oil and gas logistics companies in the UK with the acquisition of the business and assets of Seaforth Maritime, giving it an anticipated turnover of around £75 million in 2006.

The assets, in North-east Scotland and Great Yarmouth, include the Waterloo Quay offshore supply base at Aberdeen Harbour where SBS already operates from Pocrá Quay and Mearns Quay.

Mike Porter, Managing Director of SBS, said: "Bringing together the assets and workforce of SBS and Seaforth will enable us to support our existing logistics clients better, by offering a more effective vessel turnaround service in Aberdeen. The additional facilities will also give us the capacity to grow and further strengthen our position."

"The marine gas oil storage tanks at Waterloo Quay give us the opportunity to further develop the fuel services side of our business."

Searoute acquisition

Searoute Port Services has expanded further with the acquisition of Aberdeen Cargo Handling Services from Seaforth Maritime.

Rod Palmer, Operations Director of Searoute, welcomed the development as "a positive and progressive move for both companies, each of whom share different aspects of commercial trades which serve the port of Aberdeen. The meld is a solid base on which to grow a healthy enterprise."

Operating as a division of Searoute, Aberdeen Cargo Handling Services' activities include movement of wood pulp and road salt. Searoute, part of the Freight Management Group, is operational agents for Safmarine Line, with regular services to West Africa, and BBC Chartering + Logistics, involved in transporting steel pipe from Mexico and Argentina for the offshore oil industry.

Testing response

The Harbour Board were among a number of organisations which earlier this month participated in an emergency fire and evacuation exercise, based on a simulated engine room fire on board the NorthLink ferry, *MV Hjatland*, at the port.



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